

Board's experts during the year. In the northern part of the district the results are not so satisfactory, and some provision for the assistance of the teachers there appears to be desirable.

The large attendance at the course of lessons in *singing* given in Napier in the early part of the year showed that the class was much appreciated, and we believe that material benefit has been derived from it. Similar arrangements are proposed for other centres next year.

Special mention should be made of the progress of the *sewing* during the year. In the centres the *woodwork* instruction has also produced very good results.

Pupil-teachers and Probationers.—Most pupil-teachers joining the service have previously covered the requirements for a partial certificate, and their course of study is therefore limited to some extent to groups III and IV of the syllabus for certificate examinations. They should therefore receive a greater amount of practical instruction in school management and teaching, accompanied by regular criticism lessons on subjects previously prepared.

Physical Instruction.—We have had the services of two physical instructors during the year, their visits including many of the less remote country schools. The work is progressing satisfactorily, but there is again need for training-classes for the teachers.

Medical Inspection.—In May of this year Dr. E. Irwin took up the work of medical inspection in this district, and since then has been constantly engaged. She has paid visits to all the principal schools, including those in which medical inspection had been hitherto unknown, and her services have been greatly appreciated by all. A school nurse was also appointed to the district, and has done much useful work in visiting the parents of children reported as being in need of medical treatment. We are glad to note that many of the parents have acted on the advice of the Medical Inspector, but there are cases where lack of means prevents the necessary attention to the child being given, and some provision should be made to meet the difficulty.

Manual and Technical Instruction.—Classes are held in five centres, and the instruction afforded is very satisfactory indeed. No progress has been made in the direction of providing for the pupils in S6 and S5, numbering 413 children, in Napier centre. We would again, therefore, draw the attention of the Department to the urgency of this case.

School-books.—Owing to the greatly increased cost of school books and materials we have suggested to the Board and to the teachers the need for reducing as far as is compatible with efficiency the number of text-books required to be purchased by each child. In view of the supply of supplementary readers and the extension of school libraries, we feel that there is no need for the miscellaneous reader in the standard classes above Class P. A cheaper form of arithmetic book containing nothing but examples is desirable.

Uncertificated Teachers.—We feel satisfied with the results obtained by the students who attended the winter and summer schools last year. A winter school for uncertificated teachers was held at Hastings in June, and was well attended. The opportunity was taken to include a course of physical instruction.

Classification of Pupils.—In considering the annual returns forwarded by teachers at the close of the year, in which is set forth the general classification of the pupils, we do not feel altogether satisfied with the way in which promotions are in many cases made. Taking as a basis the marks assigned by the teachers, we cannot see how promotion can possibly be justified, and subsequent investigation made in the schools has led us to conclude that much greater care and discretion must be exercised. In some cases we find pupils promoted "on trial," and we have reason to believe that this course is prompted by desire to meet the wishes of the parents. There would be less objection to this if a reasonable trial were actually given, but once the child is promoted he nearly always remains in the higher class. Promotion in such cases does not change the fact of retardation—it simply demands the impossible from the child; and to allow him to go on lacking power to cope with the work only makes a bad matter worse. If he is promoted under such circumstances the fact that he must continue to receive special attention cannot be overlooked. For these reasons we have been led to think that in the smaller country schools at any rate promotions should be decided by the teacher and Inspector in conference on the occasion of the annual visit, which should mark the end of the school year. This would not affect the existing arrangements in respect to the larger schools.

Grading of Teachers: Appeals.—Appeals in respect to grading were lodged by twenty-six teachers. Most of these were merely formal in character, requiring quota adjustment. Of the remainder, four were upheld.

We have, &c.,

The Director of Education, Wellington.

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D. A. STRACHAN,	
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