

*Swimming.*—In view of the importance of having instruction given in swimming wherever possible the Board sincerely trusts that the Department will see its way to reinstate the payment of capitation on school classes conducted in this subject. In the opinion of the Board every encouragement should be given to enable school-children to receive instruction in a subject which should be made compulsory wherever facilities are possible.

*Interruptions to School-work.*—For some considerable time past the Board and the Inspectors have been of the opinion that an appreciable part of the teaching time in our schools was being appropriated by outsiders in various ways—*e.g.*, for the purpose of addressing the pupils on certain aspects of social life and activity, or of canvassing for the support of charitable institutions. In order to obtain information regarding the matter the Board held a conference with representatives of the School Committees and headmasters of the town schools. As a result of its deliberations the Board has passed regulations which will prevent in future the school hours being encroached upon by outside activities, unless the latter are of undoubted necessity and worth.

*Medical Inspection.*—The School Medical Officer, together with the school nurse, continue to do excellent work in this district. When the scheme for the medical inspection of school-children by the School Medical Officer was first put into operation a certain amount of opposition was shown by parents; instead of opposition we now find that parents are only too eager to co-operate with the Medical Officer, who receives frequent requests from parents for a conference.

*School Dentists.*—Early in the current year (1923) the Board was advised that two school dentists would be appointed for this district on condition that the Board provided a suitable building, rent-free, and bore the necessary expense of fitting it up. The Board readily agreed, recognizing the urgent need for a scheme of dental treatment. In accepting the conditions under which a school dental clinic is to be established in Invercargill the Board is desirous to know why, in one education district at least, the cost of fitting up a room was borne by the Health Department, while this Board is called upon to pay the cost of the necessary fittings.

*Physical Instruction.*—The Department's physical instructor reports that during the year he paid two visits to sixty schools, and one visit to 110 schools. The instructor reports that the work done at the schools this year shows a great improvement both in the quality of the instruction given by the teachers and in the general physique of the pupils.

*Organizing Teachers.*—The Inspectors report that the Board's organizing teachers continue to do yeoman service among the teachers under their charge.

*Buildings.*—For some years past the Board has carried out its building programme—new buildings, additions, maintenance, &c.—with its own staff of workmen. While recognizing that the ordinary repairs to school buildings and teachers' residences can be carried out more satisfactorily by day labour, the Board is now strongly of the opinion that all new works should be tendered for, a course that is being followed by all public bodies dealing with Government grants, and by practically all commercial firms. During the past year the following works were completed: Gore (new school); St. George (addition); Morton Mains Siding (new residence). The works now in hand are—Erection of a new school at Otama; additional conveniences at St. George; addition to residence at Lochiel. Owing to the action of the Government in reducing the amount of the maintenance grant for 1922 by 10 per cent. (approximately £600) the Board has been somewhat hampered in carrying out its general repair work in connection with school buildings and teachers' residences.

*Financial.*—A reference to the Board's balance-sheet will disclose a considerable improvement in regard to the Board's financial position. The credit balance at the beginning of the year was £3,924 3s., and at the end of the year this stood at £8,715 11s. 2d. The total receipts during the year were £138,881 4s. 4d., and payments £134,089 16s. 2d., to which must be added £1,585 2s. 10d. issues from workshop in excess of purchases. Although the Board has a credit balance at the end of the year of £8,715 11s. 2d., it is to be noted that practically the whole of the Rebuilding Fund, amounting to £3,500, is earmarked for expenditure in 1923.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

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HORACE E. NIVEN, Chairman.