

The difficulty experienced by children in remote parts of the country in securing post-primary education has been met during the year in various ways—namely, by the establishment of additional district high schools, by the provision of secondary courses of instruction in country schools, by consolidation, and in the case of the most remote districts by the provision of secondary courses of instruction by the Department's Correspondence School. So far as funds permit, the policy of consolidating small schools will be continued, while the staffs of country schools will be further strengthened by the provision of trained certificated teachers in as many cases as possible. It is gratifying to note that the number of uncertificated teachers in country districts has been substantially reduced, and the young teachers who are now sent out by the training colleges are well able to give efficient instruction in secondary subjects.

Efficient courses of instruction in rural subjects, such as elementary agriculture and dairy science, have been prepared by the Inspectors and agriculture instructors, and are in operation in all primary schools. In many of the higher schools similar courses are provided, but there is no doubt that more should be done in this direction in order that the high schools may provide a good grounding in those subjects upon a knowledge of which depends the prosperity of the primary industries of the country. I propose that all types of schools shall play their part as effectively as possible in counteracting the undoubtedly dangerous drift of population from the country to the towns. It must be understood, however, that while the schools can give material assistance in this matter, the problem is not purely an educational one, as it is indispensable that boys and girls after being trained in rural pursuits shall be given an opportunity to make a comfortable living on the land. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Government has placed land-settlement in the forefront of its policy, and will vigorously foster it in any and every way that is feasible. In the Budget presented by the Right Hon. the Minister of Finance an intimation is given that in addition to existing authorities, the House will be asked to authorize the borrowing of up to £5,000,000 for land-settlement. A special Land Development Branch of the State Advances Office is to be set up for the purpose of assisting those who are willing to take up and develop sections of waste land, and the Government intend to proceed resolutely with the cutting-up of large estates suitable for closer settlement.

During the year Government grants to University colleges were consolidated with the object of putting the finances of each of these institutions on a sounder footing. The activities of the newly established Massey Agricultural College were further extended, and it was gratifying to note the popularity of the short courses provided at this college for the benefit of those actually engaged in the dairying, pastoral, and agricultural industries. Assistance was also given to the Canterbury Agricultural College to improve its courses. It may not be generally realized, although the matter was referred to in last year's report, that the State gives very liberal assistance to students desiring to undertake University courses. Last year fifteen held agricultural bursaries, eighteen engineering bursaries, fifty-six home-science bursaries, sixty-six educational bursaries, while 1,628 secured free University education by holding University bursaries or teachers' training college studentships. The total number of free students at University colleges was 1,893, or 44 per cent. of the whole—27 per cent. men and 17 per cent. women. During the last session of Parliament the University Act was amended in order, amongst other things, to provide for the appointment of a University officer who should take charge, under the authority of the Council, of the activities of the University. The main functions of the University remain unchanged—namely, the holding of examinations for degrees and diplomas. The University is not a teaching body, nor does it at present, at all events, exercise much control over the activities of the four constituent University colleges. The University Act of 1926, following on the University Commission report of 1925, gave the University power to exercise a certain degree of control; but the Council, after thoroughly debating the matter, decided that the constituent colleges should not be interfered with, but that the University should be satisfied with the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor to manage its own affairs. There are certain disadvantages in the Government not being able to look