

additional cost to the State, greatly reduce the work of the Inspectors. My Board likens the organizing teachers to headmasters in charge of a number of side-schools for whose welfare they are responsible, and the present high standard of efficiency in the small country schools in the remote parts of Taranaki is attributed in no small degree to their valuable advice and assistance.

Official Visits.—On the 1st February the Hon. Mr. R. A. Wright, as Minister of Education, visited New Plymouth and discussed with the Board matters relating to unemployed teachers, accommodation, septic-tank systems in schools, agricultural instruction, and finances.

Administration.—A statement of the Board's income and expenditure is attached and shows—

				£	s.	d.
Credit on all accounts brought forward, 1927	..	..	..	5,990	6	11
Receipts from all sources, 1928	..	..	..	159,526	5	6
Total	..	..	..	165,516	12	5
Total expenditure and disbursements, 1928	..	..	..	162,089	18	10
Leaving a credit on all accounts on 31st December, 1928, of	..	..	..	£3,426	13	7

During the year my Board has been greatly exercised by the growing tendency towards centralization of administration in the Department. There are yearly a growing number of Orders in Council and Regulations, and the Education Act of 1914 has now become so complicated that an early effort to consolidate the Act is most urgent. The appointment of teachers has undoubtedly become over-regulated, and as a result many useless changes take place in schools, which not only create unrest among the parents and Committees but adversely affect the education of the children. Boards are convinced that if they were given more discretionary powers in the appointment of teachers many unsuitable appointments could be prevented.

Buildings.—Generally, the condition of the school buildings in Taranaki is satisfactory. There are still six or seven schools of the old type, built in the later "eighties," and it is my Board's wish to have these replaced by buildings of a modern type. On 11th October, the Ngaere School was totally destroyed by fire. The fire occurred during school hours, and but for the prompt action of teachers the results may have been much more serious. On the 31st December there were 162 school buildings belonging to the Board, and twelve for which either a rental was paid or, being household schools, no rental was paid. There were seventy-eight teachers' residences, of which seven were not occupied by the teacher, and ninety-three schools without residences attached.

Scholarships.—The Bayly Memorial Scholarship, of £10, for athletics, was won by Bruce Fisher, of Stratford School. There were thirty-seven entries. The Cuthbert Shield, awarded to schools of Grade 3A and upwards, for arrangement and care of school-grounds, was won by Lower Mangorei. The Tisch Shield, awarded to schools below Grade 3A for arrangement and care of school-grounds, was won by Kiore.

Manual Instruction.—The expenditure on elementary handwork and manual instruction is now approximately £6,288 per year, or 11s. 7d. per unit in average attendance. The standard-class pupils in all schools are taught some form of handwork and agricultural science. In Standard V and Standard VI 967 boys are taught woodwork, and 827 girls cookery, and at those schools in sole charge of a male teacher thirty-seven sewing mistresses have been engaged.

Boys' and Girls' Agricultural Clubs.—It is pleasing to note that this work is increasing, and the Boards' thanks are due to the Agriculture Department and many well-known farmers in the district for their hearty co-operation.

Medical Inspection.—Under the existing arrangements, where the Medical Officer of Health also acts as School Medical Officer, we now find much better co-ordination of health and educational activities in this district. Dr. McCreedy presents the Board each month with a report upon the schools visited by his Department, and the Board is grateful for many valuable suggestions and recommendations. As a result, circulars have been sent to Committees, impressing the importance of daily attendance to the school sanitation, &c., to teachers, in reference to cleanliness, clothing, and lunches of pupils. Not always can the Board give immediate effect to the Doctor's recommendations, but they are held for attention.

Physical Instruction.—The instructor provided by the Department for this district is assisted, so far as certain schools are concerned, by the organizing teachers. Reports upon the schools visited are submitted to the Board monthly, and in a number of cases the reports have warranted a special note of commendation for the good quality of work.

Dental Clinics.—There are now clinics at New Plymouth, Stratford, Eltham, and Hawera. Where possible, the five nurses extend their work from the centres to include junior pupils attending neighbouring schools. It seems, however, a great pity that this service cannot be further extended to include the remote schools, such as Ohura.

Conveyance of Children.—This service is of great benefit to children residing some distance from school, but my Board is of opinion that the allowance should be extended to include payment of horse-back allowance to children who ride over two miles to a school. Approximately 280 children travel by conveyance to school, for which a grant of 6d. per return trip is made; 170 travel by school buses under contract; and boarding allowance is paid in respect to seventeen children. Approximately 500 children were also conveyed to manual-training centres, at a cost of £508. The aggregate cost of these services was approximately £2,905.

Subsidies.—The sum of £1,852 has been raised during the year by voluntary contributions, social evenings, &c., upon which a subsidy has been paid by the Department.