

Finance.—The Board's finances may be said to be in a satisfactory condition. Careful administration of the Buildings Maintenance Fund has resulted in the accumulation of a small credit, which will enable the Board to carry out necessary work without anxiety. Three funds in which the Government grants are not sufficient to meet requirements are Committees' Incidentals, School and Class Libraries, and Conveyance of Children, and it has therefore been necessary for the Board to assist these to the extent of £1,212 6s. 1d. from its General Fund, which, fortunately, is at present in a healthy condition.

Conveyance and Boarding.—The total number of pupils who received conveyance-money was 2,214, while ninety received boarding-allowance. The total expenditure on conveyance and boarding has been £12,956, of which sum the Board has contributed £568.

School Committees.—School Committees generally continue to raise quite respectable sums of money for school purposes, including the purchase of pianos and gramophones. Against this must be recorded the regrettable fact that in too many districts the parents are not sufficiently interested to attend the annual meetings of householders. Various reasons are advanced for this state of affairs, such as inability to obtain a desired teacher, meagre powers of a Committee, insufficient funds, or satisfaction with the existing Committee; but, whatever may be the cause, such apathy in school matters is not good for a district, and every effort should be made, in the interests of the children, to revive educational enthusiasm where it is waning.

Manual and Technical Instruction.—Reports from all parts of the district again tend to show that effective use has been made of elementary-handwork material as a medium for hand and eye training. As usual, the material was supplied by the Department; it was of good quality, and there was sufficient to meet all requisitions. A limited quantity of kindergarten material was also supplied, and this was distributed amongst selected schools in accordance with the advice of the Senior Inspector. Approximately 35,000 children received instruction in elementary handwork, and at forty-five small schools where there was no female teacher on the staff tuition in needlework was given by a local instructress.

Negotiations in reference to the acquisition of Reserve 1579 for purposes of the Board's afforestation scheme are still in progress. It is expected that a decision in reference to this matter will be arrived at early in 1929.

The *Pinus radiata* plantation established by the Board at Aranui School has made satisfactory progress. About 1,200 trees were planted this year in replacement of losses.

Medical and Dental Work.—The school doctors and nurses continue to carry on a valuable work amongst the children. The dental clinics are being gradually extended, surgeries having been established at Lyttelton, New Brighton, and Opawa during the year. It is pleasing to note also that the case of the subnormal child is being given greater consideration, and it is hoped that more special classes will be planned in districts where they are required. The above institutions are keenly appreciated by parents, and thanks are due to the Education and Health Departments for their activities in placing the services at the disposal of young people of the Dominion.

Refresher Courses.—Very successful refresher courses for teachers were held in Christchurch, Timaru, and Greymouth during the year. These were so keenly appreciated that it has been necessary to modify some of the courses for the forthcoming year so that the classes may not be unwieldy. The Board's thanks are due to the Inspectors and instructors who gave up much time to make the classes a success.

General.—The year just concluded has seen a change of Government and a new Minister of Education appointed. The Hon. H. Atmore, to whom the Board extends its hearty congratulations, is energetically making himself acquainted with educational requirements throughout the Dominion, and his pronouncements, particularly with respect to junior high schools, will be awaited with great interest.

To the Department for its reasonable consideration of the many requests placed before it, and to my fellow-members on the Board, my thanks are due for their courteous and unfailing support in the conduct of the Board's business. To the four hundred School Committees, to whose activities the public owe such a debt of gratitude, the Board's thanks are also extended; and, finally, the work of the Secretary and his staff has been carried out efficiently and promptly, making the conduct of our business effective and pleasurable.

I have, &c.,

W. H. WINSOR, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

As required by the Education Act, 1914, I have the honour to present the following report of the Education Board of the District of Otago for the year 1928:—

Board.—In April Mr. L. Sanderson, a member for the Urban Area for over six years, resigned, the vacancy being filled by the election of Mr. W. R. Brugh, a former member. Mr. James Wallace was re-elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing two years.

Probationers.—The number of applicants coming forward has steadily decreased since 1925—the numbers being—1925, 200; 1926, 151; 1927, 125; and this year, 93. The appointees comprised 11 males and 43 females.