

schools. In most instances no increase in staff has been necessary at the central school. This consolidation taking place throughout the Dominion must have played no small part in accentuating the unemployment among teachers.

Truancy and Irregular Attendance.—One hundred and fifteen notices were served on parents for the irregular attendance of their children. One hundred and twenty-four cases of irregular attendance were investigated. Four penalty summonses were issued during the year, and convictions obtained in all cases.

Moray Place Special School.—The teachers report that progress in scholastic work is very slow with the backward children who are catered for in this school. The individual attention which the children receive assists them to develop what ability they have—usually in some department of handwork. The report comments on children leaving at the age of fourteen and to the benefit they would derive from a further two years' instruction. Many of these children will find it difficult to secure suitable employment, and it seems very necessary that care and supervision be continued after they leave school. The Board will be pleased to assist in the formation of an after-care association such as is in operation in Wellington.

Class for Hard-of-hearing Children.—This class was reopened at the beginning of the year, when the services of a teacher from the Sumner School were made available. Forty-four pupils were enrolled by Miss Williams, and there are still seventy names on the waiting-list. It is quite evident that teachers and parents are realizing the advantage of these classes. There is actually work here for three teachers, and the Board would stress the need for increasing the number of trainees. It is suggested that the matter be brought before training-college students, some of whom, actuated by the right spirit, may be willing to spend their second year at Sumner.

Sara Cohen Open-air School.—The School Medical Officer's report on this school is embodied in the Inspector's report. She is able to report definite improvement in the health of the children. It is evident that an open-air school in this climate, aided by special attention in the form of rest periods, sun-baths, cod-liver oil, milk, and a supervised midday meal, is demonstrably suitable for the type of child admitted—viz., the physically subnormal. The Board is pleased to meet the cost of milk and cod-liver oil, and it appreciates a grant from the Minister towards the cost of the midday meal, but it still thinks that assistance by way of subsidy would be an incentive to the securing of organized local effort for this purpose.

Grading of Teachers.—After some years' experience of the working of the present system of grading teachers the Board is satisfied that it does not produce such good results as could be secured under a more elastic system, while it is a cause of friction and dissatisfaction. The Board agrees that it is desirable that teachers should be graded in order to secure systematic promotion in the service, but it is of opinion that the end would be as well served by a classification of teachers in groups coequal with the classification of positions. Such a system would avoid any necessity for attempting to gauge the whole teaching profession in numerical order, which is a proposition incapable of realization, and it would enable Boards to select from each group the teacher best qualified for any particular appointment. In the opinion of the Board it would act as a spur to effort and solid service, and the general advantage of the cause of education.

Teachers' Library.—There has been some delay in equipping the library with books and in initiating the scheme, but everything is now in working-order, and each school has been furnished with a catalogue of books.

School Committees.—The School Committees as a whole are doing splendid work, and are anxious to assist teachers in their plans for improving the school equipment and environment. When a Committee is apathetic it is very often the fault of the teacher in not seeking its co-operation in any plans he may have for the benefit of the school. The view which was prevalent for a time, that there was not much left for a Committee to do but pay the cleaner and the fuel bill, is fast being dissipated, thanks largely to the energy and initiative of many of our younger teachers. A live teacher can be so full of ideas for the good of the school and the community that a Committeeman is made to feel that membership is no mere sinecure.

Department.—The Board's applications for grants always receive fair treatment at the hands of the Department. It may not be out of place to point out that the departmental attitude of over-caution in dealing with applications for additional class-rooms at schools where the attendance has increased frequently results in increased expenditure when the addition not sanctioned has eventually to be proceeded with as a separate work. Cordial relations continue to subsist between the Board and the departmental Inspectors, and if at times there is a difference of opinion it is because the Act places too much power in the hands of the Senior Inspector—particularly so in the appointment of teachers—and makes the Board subservient to the opinions of that officer.

I have, &c.,

J. WALLACE, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, 1914, the Southland Education Board has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year 1928 :—

The Board.—The members retiring by rotation in the month of July were Messrs. A. W. Jones (Invercargill Urban Area), J. C. Thomson (West Ward), J. D. Trotter (Central Ward), and S. Rice (East Ward). Messrs. Jones, Thomson, and Rice, being the only candidates nominated, were re-elected for the Invercargill Urban Area, the West and the East Wards respectively. For the