

expended in assisting the unemployed. Under vote "Labour" provision is also made for the appointment of additional Inspectors of Factories and for the purposes of the Fair Rents Act. The increase in the amount of the vote is £193,000.

Public health.

In the view of the Government, among the most urgent matters requiring attention are more adequate provision for safeguarding the health of the people, better facilities for education, and greater assistance to the aged and infirm.

In the field of health activities, provision is made in the estimates for the appointment of additional officers for the school medical service and a considerable expansion of the dental service. To permit of these services being made available in all districts, approximately double the present number of trained dental nurses are needed, but by taking immediate steps to increase the number of trainees it is anticipated that staff requirements will be fully met within a few years. A properly equipped training-school for the training of students is to be established in Wellington.

Milk for school-children.

A daily supply of milk for children at school is another matter receiving attention, and provision is made on the estimates for the inauguration of this important service. Owing to the varying circumstances it will probably be necessary to deal with each centre separately, but by next year the service should be fairly general throughout the Dominion.

Plunket Society grants restored.

Grants to the Plunket Society have been restored to the former level.

Maori hygiene.

The Government is also concerned to raise the standard of health of the Maori, and for this purpose seven additional nurses and six additional Inspectors are being appointed to the Maori hygiene service.

Subsidies to Hospital Boards.

Increased requirements of Hospital Boards are reflected in an increase of approximately £78,000 in subsidies payable under the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act. The chief factors in the increase, apart from restoration of salary and wage cuts, are improvements in the staff conditions and hours of duty and better and more extensive facilities for treatment on the institutional side.

Education.

These and other items have increased the vote for "Health" by £146,000.

For education, as previously indicated, an extensive building programme aimed at improving the standard of accommodation in our schools has been arranged. Provision is made in the estimates for an additional £655,000 to cover teachers' salaries and other expenses arising out of the admission of five-year-old children to the schools, larger allowances for school committees, and transport and board of post-primary school-children living at a distance from a school. Free conveyance of school-children to technical and other secondary schools has in the past been confined to those who were able to take advantage of railway services. It is now proposed that assistance should be given towards the cost of transport by road for those for whom rail facilities are lacking, a conveyance allowance being paid as in the case of primary-school children.

School buildings, grounds, &c.

The maintenance of school buildings has fallen into arrears, and provision is made for a considerable increase in most of the items under this subdivision of the vote. An amount is also included for the improvement of school-grounds.

Kindergartens, and W.E.A.

Full restoration of the capitation payments to free kindergarten schools is provided for, and the grant to the Workers' Educational Association is restored.

Pensions.

The vote proposed for pensions is £5,480,000, compared with an expenditure of £3,770,000 for last year. As a community we have a definite responsibility to ensure that those who are not able to fend for themselves, because of infirmities or old age, are able to enjoy a reasonable standard of comfort. As already indicated, it is the intention of the Government to establish a national health and superannuation scheme that will provide or insure every one against these contingencies. In the meantime we must, as a matter of urgent necessity, do something to increase the inadequate pensions at present paid. As a commencement it is proposed, as from 1st July last, to do the following:—

Increased pensions.

War pensions:—

- (1) Increase the rate of economic pensions payable to war pensioners to 25s. a week:
- (2) Fully restore economic pensions payable to war widows and widowed mothers: