

Manual and Technical Instruction.—A satisfactory state of efficiency has been maintained in woodwork and cookery instruction, and the work in agriculture, nature study, and science. Owing to unforeseen circumstances, however, there was no Agricultural Instructor available to visit the schools in the northern portion of the district.

The reinstatement of the grant, in part, for handwork material was very gratifying, and the Board is particularly pleased to know that the grant has been still further increased for the purchase of material, &c., for 1937.

School Committees.—A very much appreciated decision during the year was, that of the Government to provide substantially increased grants to School Committees. The increase was approximately 55 per cent. and there was a definite condition that a certain proportion of the grant was to be used for ground improvements. The extra grant will do much to enable Committees to provide for the proper cleaning and heating of their schools and for other essential services. The Committees continue to fill a very necessary part in local education administration, and members have willingly given of their time and energy to the work of improving the schools and the school environment. It is rarely that a Committee confines itself merely to the expenditure of the incidentals grant; it is mainly due to the efforts of Committees that a continued improvement is being effected in school amenities, and in the appearance of school-grounds.

Intermediate Schools.—The Board is glad to learn that you are definitely in favour of the intermediate-school system. This question has been a fruitful source of discussion locally during the year. The Board has, however, every reason to be gratified with the success of the Napier Intermediate School, a success which becomes more apparent every year; and it is only natural that the Board, prompted by its experience with this school, should be anxious to extend the intermediate-school system to other centres. Definite proposals are now before the Department for the establishment of an intermediate school in Gisborne, where complete unanimity in favour of the establishment of such a school has been reached by the School Committees and the Gisborne High School Board. Proposals are also under consideration for the establishment of an intermediate school in Hastings. In Hastings there has been a great deal of propaganda against the intermediate-school system, but the Board feels that much of it is based on inexperience and lack of knowledge of the actual working of these schools.

WELLINGTON.

(Chairman, Mr. W. V. DYER.)

The readmission of the five-year-olds was responsible for the increased roll number and for the slight decrease in connection with regularity of attendance due to the fact that the compulsory provisions of the Education Act do not apply to such children. The Board is pleased to record its appreciation of the Minister's decision to still further improve the grading and staffing of schools by the acceptance of 95 per cent. of the average roll number at a period during the year when the attendance is nearer its peak. This reform has been strongly urged by Education Boards and is warmly welcomed.

The Education Department's Child Welfare Branch has again earned the Board's thanks for the help given in dealing with the more difficult cases of irregularity, both in the city and country areas, and in causing parents to realize more fully the obligations which are imposed on them in regard to their children's welfare.

Training College.—The Board desires to thank the Minister and express appreciation of his action in reopening the Wellington Training College. In the opinion of the Board the decision to resume teacher-training in Wellington was a wise one, and has been amply justified. In previous years attention has been drawn to the inadequacy of the accommodation for both students and staff, and it is hoped that the provision of a new college site and building sufficiently spacious to meet the needs of the Middle University District will soon be an accomplished fact.

Report of Inspectors.—The annual report of the School Inspectors for the year 1936 indicates that the general efficiency of the schools in the Wellington District has been maintained, and the Board thanks all those teachers who by honest endeavour have contributed to this result. It commends to the careful attention of teachers the comments and suggestions of the Inspectors made for guidance and for assistance to greater efficiency in certain respects.

Children's Sports.—The Board appreciates the efforts of those teachers who have organized sports gatherings in various parts of the district, and trusts that those in charge of schools, particularly in the larger centres, will consider seriously the question of reviving the excellent gatherings which were a feature of school-life a few years ago.

Manual Instruction.—The report of the Supervisor indicates that another satisfactory year's work has been accomplished. This form of training is exceedingly popular with both girls and boys. The Board is especially pleased with the interest taken in light woodwork, and hopes to extend the system in the country districts where there are no facilities to enable the children to attend the manual-training centres.

Nature Study and Elementary Science.—The Supervisor's report shows that this section of the work is being developed along sound lines, also that both boys and girls are being encouraged in their agricultural-club activities and in their calf-rearing and home-garden competitions. This section of the work of our schools was again featured during the year, and was the subject of much favourable comment.