

age, thereby permitting the enrolment of children in public and Native schools on reaching the age of five years, validated Orders in Council fixing the basis of computation of grants to be made to Education Boards, and amending regulations increasing the allowances payable to training-college students, authorized Education Boards to pay increased honoraria to Chairmen of Education Boards, empowered Education Boards to expend moneys for maintenance or improvement of school-grounds from the special fund for the maintenance and repair of schools and teachers' residences, made provision for the establishment of special classes in the homes of crippled children, amended the provisions as to the appointment of teachers to fill advertised positions, provided (after 30th September, 1937) for the discontinuance of the Proficiency Examination and of the issue of certificates of proficiency and competency, and made retrospective the effect of proposed regulations increasing the allowances of student teachers in technical high schools.

Preliminary consideration was given in 1936 to the question of the reorganization of the education system and the consequential consolidation of education legislation. Towards the end of the year, however, opportunity was given to educational authorities, associations of teachers, and other associations interested in the welfare of education to express their views in regard to the resolutions and recommendations of the Parliamentary Recess Education Committee, 1930.

The school-year was somewhat abruptly brought to an end a few days before the date fixed under the regulations, because of the decision to close the schools as a preventive measure against the outbreak of infantile paralysis, which threatened to assume serious proportions about this time. This decision was arrived at after a careful and searching survey of the position and its threatening dangers, in consultation with the Director of Education (Mr. N. T. Lambourne) and the Director-General of Health (Dr. M. H. Watt).

The total number of children actually committed under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act to the care of the Child Welfare Branch of the Education Department throughout the year shows a slight decrease as compared with the previous year.

An important part of the work of Child Welfare officers is concerned with the readjustment of conditions in homes and families in order to prevent the committal of children or the need for their appearance before the Children's Courts.

For the many cases placed under the supervision of Child Welfare officers by the Courts, the Department utilizes the services of the Big Brother Organizations, both Y.M.C.A. and Catholic. In addition, honorary Child Welfare officers of both sexes are appointed for most country communities, and are giving valuable service in the work of the Branch.

A section in the Statutes Amendment Act, 1936, provides that the punishment of whipping shall not be inflicted on any child or young person by order of a Children's Court established under the Child Welfare Act, 1925.

The New Zealand Educational Research Council has been asked to report on the intermediate-school system.

At the beginning of 1936 a new secondary school for boys, the King's High School, was opened at South Dunedin, and the status of West Christchurch District High School was changed to that of a secondary school, the control of the school passing from the Canterbury Education Board to the Canterbury University College Council. The establishment of the additional school in Dunedin brought much-needed relief to the accommodation at Otago Boys High School. Towards the end of 1936 it was decided to combine the Wairarapa High School and the Masterton Technical High School in a single institution to be known as Wairarapa College.

I wish to express my appreciation of the whole-hearted interest that the Education Boards, the governing bodies of post-primary schools, the School Committees, and the Parents' Associations have taken in the schools, and of the loyal, diligent, and efficient manner in which the teachers and the officers of the Education Department have carried out their duties.

The year recorded in this report is the first complete year of the present administration, and cannot be expected to show the fulfilment of the whole of the programme outlined on the first page hereof, but a very substantial beginning has been made.