

having the services of so many parents and friends of the schools to work in co-operation with the teachers for the benefit of the children.

Consolidation of Schools.—This has constituted one of the major activities of the Board for the year, and the prediction in the 1935 report—"as the advantages become more widely known and appreciated, the parents themselves will take the initiative by asking for consolidation"—has been amply justified.

Fourteen schools were closed during the year, and the children conveyed to larger schools.

Intermediate School System.—In April the Director of Education visited Palmerston North and laid the advantages of this system before a very representative meeting of School Committees. As a result, the meeting unanimously decided in favour of the establishment of an intermediate school in Palmerston North.

A sub-committee of the Board later investigated the matter of location of the proposed school, and, at the end of the year, negotiations were almost finalized for the purchase of a site of $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres. As the establishment of such a school will relieve the accommodation difficulties at a number of city schools, the Board trusts that the necessary grant for the erection of buildings will not be unduly delayed.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(Chairman, Mr. C. A. MADDISON.)

Maintenance Grant.—During the year, owing to the fact that increased funds were available, maintenance work, including painting, proceeded steadily, and all but a few of the schools are now in a reasonable state of repair. Some of the buildings are, however, so old that heavy expenditure for renovation is not warranted, and their replacement by new buildings must be considered.

In this connection should be mentioned the provision of funds by the Government for the purchase of material for ground-improvement schemes, the labour being provided out of the Employment Promotion Fund. A great deal of work has been done by this means, but, unfortunately, while the Public Works Department in Napier has been able to proceed with the work authorized, no progress has been made in the Poverty Bay district with the fairly substantial jobs that have been authorized in that area. The Board trusts that further provision will be made for ground-improvement schemes, as still more can be done to improve the school-grounds both from the utilitarian and aesthetic points of view.

A fairly heavy programme of work was undertaken at the Department's request in connection with the maintenance of Native schools.

One of the most pressing needs in the district is the provision of further school residences and the improvement of existing residences. Regarding the latter, the Board has been engaged in a survey on the lines of the housing survey conducted in the cities and larger towns of New Zealand, and as a result it is found that many of the residences are by no means up to the standard of comfort, convenience, and hygiene which should be provided. The Board is hopeful that during 1938 it will be able to proceed with a definite programme of improvements to residences, but as the funds which it can provide for the purpose out of maintenance are limited it may be necessary to ask for special assistance in order to complete the programme. Some of the teachers' residences in the Board's district should be condemned as not worth further expenditure.

Grading and Staffing of Schools.—Undoubtedly one of the most progressive moves in educational administration in recent years was the decision to adopt 100 per cent. of the average roll as the basis for grading and staffing of schools instead of the average attendance as in the past. Further, the decision has been applied in a manner to give the schools the very greatest benefit, because the average roll is not taken over the whole year, as the average attendance used to be taken, but for a period of only four weeks—the first four weeks of the third term. Happily, now all the adjustments that had to be made when the average attendance was adopted as a basis are no longer necessary; and the grading of the schools, the staffing of the schools, the finances of School Committees, &c., will no longer be subject to the fluctuations in attendance caused through epidemic sickness, bad weather, and so on.

There was a distinct shortage of teachers during the year, particularly from the commencement of the second term, and the position was acute towards the end of the year. Married women ex-teachers were employed as relieving teachers, but by the end of the year it was difficult to obtain any more of these teachers for temporary work in the schools. Another result of the shortage was that schools which could well have done with some extra assistance could not be provided with it because the teachers were not available.

The Board learned with pleasure of your decision to increase still further the enrolments at the training colleges, with the object not only of overtaking the leeway in the training of teachers, but in order to provide extra teachers for reduction in the size of classes.

School Committees.—The increased grant provided during the last two years to School Committees has resulted in a definite improvement in the finances of Committees, and has enabled them to increase the wages of their cleaners and caretakers, to purchase adequate supplies of fuel, and generally to make better provision for the little amenities which help to make school life more enjoyable. Apart from the ground-improvement work which has been done by the Public Works Department, School Committees themselves have carried out many commendable improvements to school-grounds. The Committees continue to fill a very necessary part in local educational administration, and members have given willingly of their time and energy in the carrying-out of their duties.