

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

In the formal education of children nothing is more important than the school library. It is an indispensable factor in the self-education of the pupils; it supplements the instruction in nearly every subject. The grant in aid of libraries was substantially increased, and distributed among the Education Boards *pro rata* of their primary-school population. Its subsequent re-distribution by the Boards took various forms: in some cases the Board made a money grant to individual schools; in others the Board purchased wholesale well-selected stocks of books and distributed these to the schools. Other means were found in some districts for supplementing the official library grant; in Taranaki, for instance, schools grouped themselves voluntarily for musical festivals, and the proceeds from these excellently patronized entertainments go into a library fund for the schools of the particular area. Such schools are therefore enjoying the delights not only of achieving proficiency in music, but also of having at their service an unfailing supply of suitable reading material.

In connection with the supply of reading matter, it might be appropriate to mention that, though the annual prize-giving function is, as far as the great majority of primary schools is concerned, a thing of the past and never likely to be revived, there are still a number of schools with none too adequate library facilities which spend a considerable sum of money annually in picnics and prizes. There are many who maintain that prizes and picnics were appropriate only to a period of New Zealand's development that has passed away. So far as prizes are concerned, it may be said that school life is now so popular with the young folk that inducements in the form of prizes are no longer necessary, even if it were possible to determine the most deserving recipients. The books thus awarded are often unsuitable, and if read at all are read by the recipient only. It is questioned also whether in this age of quick and universal transport and varied entertainment and recreation picnics really serve a worthwhile purpose. These remarks are merely intended to suggest that School Committees might with advantage review occasionally the expenditure of their resources to secure the maximum educational value therefrom.

## BROADCASTING TO SCHOOLS.

The number of schools equipped to receive broadcast lessons is steadily increasing. There is an improvement in the quality of the talks broadcast and of the booklets summarizing and illustrating the talks and issued to the pupils by the National Broadcasting Service. So far the service to the schools has been given from three centres, largely independent of one another; the demand has become so great that a greater degree of co-ordination would enhance the value of the talks. Furthermore, the production of a successful talk makes such a demand upon the speaker's time that if the talks are to be of the high quality necessary the fees paid should be in some degree commensurate with those paid to other broadcasters.

## THE PHYSICAL SAFETY OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN.

During the year the Education Department has continued to co-operate with the Transport Department in the interests of the safety of children on their way to and from school. In addition to advice issued to teachers through the *Education Gazette*, a pamphlet of relevant statistics and advice was compiled by the Transport Department and sent with the approval of the Education Department to every school. Similar action was taken in the issue of attractively printed and illustrated posters through the *Education Gazette*, and of wall-charts for the guidance of young cyclists and pedestrians. The Transport Department also sought the advice of the Education Department in the selection and training of a Traffic Officer for Schools and in the making of a traffic film for that officer's use. A high tribute must be paid to the Transport Department for its unremitting attention to the physical safety of the school-children. Automobile associations and the schools, and in many instances the Committees, have done good work. In some cases a system of pupil patrols has been established for the safe conduct of pupils across busy streets in the immediate vicinity of the school; so far this system has worked well, but official approval has been withheld pending full inquiry into the nature of the responsibility that might devolve on the pupil patrol, the teacher, and the motorist should an accident occur. In America, the home of the system, agreement on its merits is far from unanimous; while in England opinion is definitely opposed to placing on primary-school children, no matter how willing they may be, so serious a responsibility. The English authorities say that we must consider the mental effect on a pupil in later years should a serious accident or fatality occur through some mistake on his part while on patrol duty.

Accidents with detonators continuing still to recur, the Department this year arranged for a fresh supply to all schools, public and private, of an adequate number of wall-notice containing dummy detonators and appropriate instructions.

Fire and earthquake drill is regularly carried out in many large schools, particularly in two-story buildings. From the point of view of safety the single-story buildings now being erected represent a great advance on anything hereto supplied.

To assist in combating the menace of hydatids, the Department published in the *School Journal* and in the *Education Gazette* articles by Sir Louis Barnett, of the New Zealand Medical School, Dunedin, on the nature of this disease and the steps necessary to prevent its occurrence.

In physical education there is not much evidence of an improved standard. The present system is not well understood by many head teachers, whose lack of training does not enable them to use the present text-book to advantage. There is also evidence that the best use is not being made in some schools of the large number of young teachers who leave our Training Colleges every year and who possess a good knowledge of the subject. Physical education has suffered for some years from the lack of an expert supervisor for the whole Dominion and of district instructors. The position of