

in common with women in other spheres, taken up new responsibilities most efficiently; but any further loss of men must have a serious effect upon the work of the schools. For this reason, teaching was last year declared an essential industry. This has given the Boards rather more power to use their teaching strength to the best advantage. Only a few small schools have had to be closed, but great difficulty is found in keeping some positions filled. Many married women have re-entered the profession, and retirements on superannuation are not permitted without special approval.

Expenditure.—The total expenditure on education, not including revenue from reserves vested in post-primary schools and University colleges (£50,377 last year), for the year ending 31st March, 1943, was £5,038,395.

Buildings.—The increasing pressure of war needs resulted in a greatly reduced school building programme, on which £226,567 was spent, as against £486,536 for 1941–42. Major buildings completed during the year included Takapuna, Westport North, Tapawera Consolidated, Lyttelton Main, and Ohai public schools, Invercargill East Intermediate, Otaua Native School, and the first portion of a new school and dining block for Nelson Boys' College.

Conveyance.—I am pleased to report that, even when the petrol and tire shortage was most acute last year, the Government managed to avoid making major cuts in school conveyance services, of whose vital importance to country districts it is fully seized. Some services were subject to slight reductions and some children had to walk rather longer distances. In general, such unavoidable reductions were very reasonably received, and I have promised that many of them will be reconsidered before the onset of winter in 1943. The expenditure on school conveyance (other than by rail) was £280,000, as against £257,000 in the previous year.

Accrediting for University Entrance.—Perhaps the most important educational event of the year was the final acceptance by the Senate of a system of accrediting for entrance to the University. To make this possible the Government has promised to compensate the University for the consequent loss of examination fees and to provide the salaries of four liaison officers who will act as the points of contact between the University colleges and the post-primary schools. For over fifty years the secondary schools have been largely dominated by the demands of the University Entrance Examination, which has become for the business community as well as for the University the hall-mark of a completed secondary education, and which has consequently compelled many pupils with little academic ability and with no intention of going to the University to study subjects for which they were entirely unfitted. After 1943 the University Entrance Examination as we now know it will cease to exist (although a modified examination will remain for those unable to qualify for accrediting) and the Department's School Certificate will replace "Matriculation" as the accepted mark of a completed post-primary course. This involves the final acceptance of the principle that the post-primary school has two functions of equal importance—the first, to prepare the few for higher education, and the second, to prepare the many for immediate participation in the life and work of the community. To perform this second function to the full it will probably be necessary to make considerable changes in the curriculum of some of the post-primary schools. Fortunately, there is now nothing to prevent the Department and the schools from making such changes. Recognizing that this will probably mark a major turning-point in post-primary education, I set up during the year the Consultative Committee on the Post-Primary Curriculum, under the chairmanship of Mr. W. Thomas, M.A., LL.B., to study the implications of the introducing of accrediting and to advise me on the changes necessary to enable the schools to make the fullest use of the new freedom so generously offered by the University Senate. The Committee will report during 1943.

Vocational Guidance.—It is proposed that in April, 1943, the Education Department should take over full control of the Youth Centres, which hitherto have been run jointly by the Education and National Service Departments. Started originally to deal with depression conditions, the Youth Centres have, paradoxically enough, found the need for their services greatly increased by the present strong demand for juvenile labour. Skilled vocational guidance is essential if the country is to make the best possible use of its limited man-power and if young people of ability are to be protected from the temptation to enter unskilled and blind-alley occupations for the sake of high wages in the immediate future. The assumption of full responsibility for this work by the Education Department follows from the recognition of the principle that educational and vocational guidance is a function of the education system hardly less important than its more commonly recognized function of instilling knowledge. The school cannot regard its obligations to the child as completely fulfilled until he is established in an occupation for which he is well fitted. In addition to their normal functions, the Youth Centres have taken over for the National Service Department the administration of certain parts of the Industrial Man-power Emergency Regulations for young people. They have also been asked by the Rehabilitation Board to undertake responsibilities in connection with the rehabilitation of returned servicemen desirous of further training for civilian occupations. These additional duties will necessitate an expansion of the Youth Centres during the coming year.

Raising of the School Age.—It is the Government's intention to raise the school age to fifteen years as from the beginning of 1944. The Education Amendment Act, 1920, made provision for this as from a date to be determined by the Governor-General in Council. Owing to constant shortage of teachers and accommodation, these provisions have never been put into operation. I am convinced that if we wait till every additional building and teacher is ready, we shall wait for ever: I would prefer to raise the school age now when the need is greatest, even if we have to make use of rather make-shift accommodation for a few years. Owing to war conditions there are an increasing number of young adolescents who are missing the discipline of a normal home, and it is essential that the school keep its grip upon them during these very critical years, even if it cannot give them quite the facilities one would wish for. At present children can slip out of school even before the age of fourteen if they have completed Form II. This, also, must be stopped. For some years the Government has been training more teachers than are necessary to make good normal wastage, with the idea of reducing the size of classes and raising the school age. The armed Services have, unfortunately, had to drain away this surplus, but temporary means will be found to meet the increased demands for teachers in 1944 and to carry the additional load until the war ends. As for buildings, it is proposed to devise some simple kind of temporary room that will meet the situation where it arises. In many schools surplus