

(8) The field staff has increased from 39 in 1935 to 100 in 1945 to provide for the extended work of the Branch. The number of honorary officers, who give very valuable service, rose from 156 to 255. New district offices have been opened at Rotorua, Ashburton, and Masterton, and one will be opened in Taumarunui during 1946.

(9) Efforts to introduce systems of staff training for officers of the Branch have been seriously hampered by the war. There is no more urgent need than this, and I am hopeful that one of the University colleges will be able in the near future to provide special courses for Child Welfare Officers and workers in related fields.

Mr. J. R. McClune, who has been with the Department for forty-three years, and has been Superintendent of Child Welfare since 1938, went on retiring-leave at the end of the year. He has given very valuable service to the Department and will be greatly missed.

### **Vocational Guidance**

The policy of providing post-primary education for every child necessarily involves the provision of a system of educational and vocational guidance to help each child to choose the school course and the life's work for which his particular abilities best fit him. So, in 1938, the Education and Labour Departments combined to set up a system of educational and vocational guidance in the four main cities. In 1943 the Education Department took over full control of these four Vocational Guidance Centres, and since then their staffs have been strengthened and their activities greatly expanded. A centre has been opened on a part-time basis in Invercargill, and another will be started in Wanganui during 1946.

The Centres have, during the past two years, assumed new and important responsibilities in connection with the guidance and rehabilitation of ex-servicemen. For example, applications for rehabilitation bursaries are referred to the Vocational Guidance Officers for report.

I believe that the Vocational Guidance Centres are giving a valuable service to the children of New Zealand, and save large numbers from the unhappy fate of a life-time spent in work for which they have neither aptitude nor taste. When a child has decided on the type of work he prefers, the Centre helps him to find a suitable position and follows him up later to see if he needs further assistance. Needless to say, no parent or child need make use of the Centres unless he so desires.

### **University Education**

I am convinced that the University should have the greatest possible autonomy, and, although they are very largely dependent upon the State for finance, the Government has in no way made this an excuse for increasing its control over University institutions. Within my experience as Minister, and with possible very minor exceptions, the Government has never refused any requests for financial assistance from the University colleges, although the policy of stabilization and the difficulty of having buildings erected have admittedly limited demands to some extent in recent years. Plans are now under way for a major building programme in the University institutions.

The Government is well aware that its policy of giving free secondary education to all who can profit by it must inevitably lead to big increases in University enrolments. It is recognized that the present high student roll may represent a temporary peak, but, even so, the country must be prepared to support a bigger University than ever before.

Increased Government assistance over the past decade to the University and to University students includes the following:—

(1) For the year ended 31st March, 1936, the Government grant to the University of New Zealand itself was £4,570: for that ended 31st March, 1946, it was £15,105.

(2) The Government grants to the constituent colleges totalled £56,873 in the year ended 31st March, 1936. In 1939 a five-year plan was agreed upon, and the total grants to the colleges for the year ended 31st March, 1944, the last year of the plan,