

(2) Increased grants were made to School Committees for incidentals. The grant for 1946-47 was £242,932; the figure for 1945-46 was £197,511. One purpose of the increase was to make it possible and obligatory for all School Committees to pay full award rates to caretakers and cleaners, and to establish higher standards of cleanliness in the schools.

(3) Provision has been made for granting financial assistance to groups of school-children going on approved educational visits under the supervision of teachers.

(4) The return of ex-servicemen to the schools has made it possible to build up a strong field staff in physical education and to give greater assistance than ever before to the post-primary schools. The itinerant field staff in physical education numbered eighty last year, and a record number of forty-two specialists were trained.

(5) The new scheme of art and crafts is now well past the experimental stage and was introduced with considerable success into 250 more schools during the year. The specialist staff has been strengthened, and short training courses for practicing teachers are held in each new area before it comes into the scheme.

(6) The Department took over during the year full responsibility for the National Film Library. Some 2,500 films, both sound and silent, are sent out free to the schools every month, and there are about 2,000 films altogether in the library. In addition, libraries of film strips are being built up in every Education Board district for free distribution to the schools.

Teacher Training

The supply of teachers is a matter for some concern. We have for several years been training a number of teachers far in excess of what would normally be required for replacements, but the number of resignations, due particularly to the marriage of women teachers, has been extraordinarily high and quite unpredictable. In July, 1946, there were 1,575 students in the four training colleges, of whom 730 could be expected to enter the schools in 1947. In addition some 500 returned soldier-teachers were expected to become available at the same time. The normal rate of wastage before the war was in the region of 500 teachers a year. Yet the adequacy of the supply for 1947 depends on factors such as marriage, which no one can foretell. If the shortage should continue into 1947, it will be necessary to give serious consideration to the possibility of opening another training college. A greatly increased number of teachers will be necessary to enable the size of classes to be reduced and the period of teacher training to be extended by a year and to deal with the increased rolls resulting from the rising birth-rate.

Rural Education

Country schools have shared with town schools the advances already mentioned, and country children have gained most from the more generous bursary provisions. In addition, there have been certain developments benefiting country children, specifically :—

(1) For the year ending 31st March, 1947, £466,275 was spent on school conveyance by rail or by road; in the previous year the expenditure was £407,187.

(2) The Department's Correspondence School is growing rapidly on the post-primary side, largely as a result of the new demands made upon it by the raising of the school leaving age. With the end of the war it has been found possible to restore some of the special services to pupils which had been suspended. The total roll is now 4,492, of whom 1,851 are in the primary department and 2,635 in the post-primary. In 1947 the School will celebrate its jubilee, to the expenses of which a special grant is being made.

(3) The establishment of six new district high schools was approved during the year. District high schools have gained marked advantages through becoming in effect part of the post-primary school system proper. They have been given grants for many