

Parent-Teacher Bodies.—The movement to form these bodies continues to grow, and is regarded as one of the important signs of educational progress in this district. Inspectors have attended meetings from time to time, and there is a good deal of evidence to show that through addresses on, and discussion of, common problems a very real sympathy and understanding have been built up between home and school.

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Joint Committee.—The Joint Committee (Dunedin), comprising representatives from the Training College, the Headmasters' Association, and the inspectorate under the chairmanship of the Principal of the Training College, continues to meet monthly. Standards of work in the basic subjects, the infant reading report, and Standard I arithmetic were the main topics this year. This bringing together of the three branches solely for the purpose of discussing current educational problems affecting the primary-school child has proved highly successful and has been most productive.

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Buildings, Furniture, and Equipment.—Increasing awareness of the importance of school buildings, furniture, and equipment has revealed itself in modifications of design and additions to equipment during recent years. It behoves all engaged in education to help to find a solution so that, on the one hand, floor space is available for activities such as project work, practical arithmetic, and dramatization, and, on the other, adequate surfaces are available for art and handwork. If our schools are less attractive than other public buildings as regards floors, mural decorations, and general facilities, the efforts being made by the Department, the Board, and many of our teachers encourage the hope that before long no child will be asked to work in conditions that are unhygienic or unattractive.

"Form follows function" has become the basic principle in planning. This involves constructive criticism by those who actually use the facilities provided so that there shall be no physical impediment to those who desire to introduce activity and groupwork into their daily programme.

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EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

The existing services for the education of handicapped children, in special classes, schools for the deaf, occupational centres, and speech clinics have been maintained. To allow for an extension of these services in the education of the deaf, and in speech remedial work, more specialist teachers are being trained. A beginning has been made in providing special education for myopic children by the establishment of two sight-saving classes, and the class-rooms are being fitted with the special equipment and lighting necessary for the protection of the limited vision of these young people. It is proposed to extend this service when surveys have been made by the Medical Officers of Health in the various districts. Classes for spastic cases and hard of hearing pupils are also under consideration.

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS

One large intermediate school (at Lower Hutt) was opened during the year, and plans are well advanced for several new intermediate schools in various centres. The raising of the school-leaving age has inevitably led to expansion at the top of some of the older intermediate schools to accommodate pupils who will not continue their schooling after the age of fifteen. The provision of a curriculum suited to the needs of these pupils has led to some interesting modifications of the usual syllabus.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Teachers are showing greater interest in the aims of physical education, and in many schools excellent work is being done. Appropriate costume is still needed in some schools. Equipment issued by the Department included small balls and ropes to all schools, and mats to sole-charge and two-teacher schools. Now that equipment is more readily available it is hoped that all schools will be fully supplied by the end of 1950. Special emphasis was given to the Learn-to-Swim Campaign in February. Teachers and training-college students gave instruction to children in schools throughout the Dominion.