

**PHYSICAL AND MILITARY DRILL.**—The report of the Board's Inspectors shows that proper attention is given throughout the district to physical instruction, and that in a majority of the schools deep-breathing exercises are practised daily. Military drill is described as generally good; the commanding officer reports that the work of thirty-four of the thirty-five companies and detachments ranges from good to excellent. The total number of cadets in the four battalions on the 31st March was 1,906. Very favourable reports were received of the work and conduct of the Manawatu-Hutt Battalion, which encamped at Petone. The handbooks of physical instruction and Infantry training recently issued by the Department should prove very helpful.

**MEDICAL INSPECTION.**—The Board has expressed its approval of the medical inspection of school children, and has, by way of experiment, undertaken an inspection of about 300 children, kindly carried out at the end of the year by Drs. Pollen and Webster, who will report when some special cases have been considered.

**DECALOGUE.**—During the year the Board received, as a gift for each school in the district, a copy of the Decalogue, mounted on rollers, and the necessary authority to exhibit on the school-walls was given to each head teacher.

**BUILDINGS.**—Last year was a year of rapid expansion, and of consequent building activity. The fires which devastated considerable areas in the North Island destroyed the school and residence at Nireaha, and the school at Maku. Grants being provided, the former were erected on the old site. The latter is being built in a different position, to enable the Board to consolidate the schools in the Mangatiti-Maku-Pukehinau districts. The removal of the Mangatiti School completes this change. New schools, provided by grant, were also erected at Dyerville, Waterfalls, Lansdowne, and Maranui, and additions at Masterton, Worsler Bay, and Levin. A new school is under construction at Petone West. New schools are being provided at Upper Hutt, Martinborough, and Waikanae, and additions at Johnsonville, partly by grant on account of increased attendance, and partly by the Board on account of rebuilding. At Pahiatua the removal to new site of the best parts of the old building is being carried out in conjunction with the erection of several new rooms. New residences have been provided by grant at Longbush and Mangatiti; additions at Manakau and Paekakariki. The Board removed and improved the residence at Levin. The most urgent building requirements of the district at present are new school at Eastern Hutt, and additions at Brooklyn, Muritai, and Wadestown, together with residences in all districts where settlers have no room beyond the bare requirements of their families. The Board is pleased that in several of such districts residences will be provided shortly by grant. Maintenance work has been carried out to the full extent of the means of the Board. Forty-one schools, mostly the smaller, and twelve residences have been overhauled, new latrines have been provided at nine schools, shelter-sheds at five, high-pressure water-supply at five; cookery fittings were completed at South Wellington, and introduced at Carterton, Greytown, and Otaki, and science fittings at Newtown District High School. Last year it was necessary to provide a considerable number of sites, especially in the suburban area, and, though in most instances half-cost was provided by grant, the Board has found payment of the balance a great tax on its resources. Consequently the rebuilding of several of our older schools, now admittedly desirable, has of necessity been postponed. Another problem is presented by the steady decrease of attendance at Te Aro and Mount Cook Schools through the encroachment of the business on the residential area. At Mount Cook Boys' and Girls' Schools the numbers have decreased by half. For this reason, and on account of the increasing ages of the buildings, it appears to the Board that amalgamation of the Mount Cook Boys' and Girls' Schools on one site will be necessary in a short time.

**FINANCE.**—The year began with a debit balance of £558 16s. 7d. The receipts were £112,396 2s. 4d.; the disbursements £111,620 1s. 1d., leaving a credit balance of £217 4s. 8d. Much useful work has been possible at several of the district high schools and at a number of the primary schools through substantial donations to the district high school funds of the former, and to the manual and technical funds of the latter.

**IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND SCHOOL GROUNDS.**—The Board has steadily endeavoured to improve the equipment of its schools by judicious additions to the existing furniture, maps, and pictures. Its Inspectors have been requested to make special note where expenditure is here required, and where local effort merits encouragement. It notes with pleasure the successful endeavours of Committees and teachers to beautify and improve the surroundings of a number of our best schools, a praiseworthy example which the Board hopes may be followed at others where at present this important educational influence is almost entirely absent.

**FREE SCHOOL BOOKS.**—The Board will endeavour to carry out the wishes of the Government in the matter of the supply of free school books to children of the lower classes.

The Board acknowledges with thanks the continued encouragement to proficiency in arithmetic, writing, and composition given by the Wellington Chamber of Commerce through the prizes offered to pupils attending Wellington City Schools. The Board regards with warm approval the improvement in the conditions of teaching, and of the employment of teachers resulting from the passing through your instrumentality of "The Education Amendment Act, 1908."

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The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

ROBERT LEE, Chairman