

**FREE BOOKS.**—The Board has not altered its opinion as expressed last year respecting this gift. As the grant is not made in time to allow the books to be on hand at the beginning of the year, the teachers are at their wits' end to know how to provide the pupils with reading-matter. When the books do come to hand, there are serious difficulties in grouping to be faced. As the duration of the life of a school-book is limited, the question of reinstatement will presently be on the horizon.

**SCHOOL BATHS.**—The Board is gratified with the progress made by so many pupils in swimming and life-saving. The schools are affiliated with important life-saving societies. Baths have been built on the school grounds at Eltham, Wanganui District High School, and Sedgebrook. The Hawera, Queen's Park, and Feilding pupils attend at the town baths, and it is expected that bathing facilities will presently be provided for the children of the Marton, Taihape, and Palmerston schools. Full advantage is taken of the instruction and facilities thus afforded, and the number of certificates of proficiency issued is gratifying.

**ARBOR DAY.**—This was celebrated on the 20th July, the following being the programme: (1.) Assembly, National Anthem, saluting the flag. (2.) Addresses. (3.) Lessons—advantages of tree-planting. (4.) Lessons on practical tree-planting. (5.) Tree-planting by children; juniors present pictures for walls and hang them up under supervision of lady teachers. (6.) Half-holiday. The parents and general public attended these functions, and in some cases the occasion was signalized by a social evening.

**SATURDAY CLASSES.**—There seems to be a general indisposition on the part of our adult teachers to turn out to Saturday instruction classes. The pupil-teachers, of course, attend, and also teachers desirous of securing or improving their classification. But the great majority, even though the classes may be held at places quite convenient to them, prefer professional stagnation to attendance at such a subject as drawing taught by men of the first rank in their profession. It is their own affair, but sooner or later the pupils must suffer.

**TEACHERS' CLASSIFICATION.**—It is two full years since the Board initiated its system of classification and promotion of teachers, viz., giving a maximum of 100 marks—for service (10), teaching-skill (30), organizing (10), discipline (10), attention to environment (10), educational standing (20), and personality (10). It has proved in every way satisfactory, and, now that its operations are more fully understood and the impartiality of its administration recognized, both teachers and Committees find the change has been considerably for the better. In this connection there is an agitation afoot for a Dominion scheme of classification and promotion, but as only two Boards—Auckland and Taranaki—have followed Wanganui's example, it would perhaps be wiser to wait until all the Boards of the Dominion have recognized the wisdom of basing their appointments on scientific principles, instead of the clumsy methods formerly in vogue. Almost all the appointments are now made by transfer, although the Wanganui Board is still noted for the number of outside teachers who are appointed to schools under its control. There has been an agitation afoot for an alteration of the law to allow the aid of the Appeal Board to be invoked in cases of transfer where promotion is not given, but it is to be hoped that the Minister will not give way in a direction which would wreck the whole system established under the aegis of this method of dealing with teachers' appointments.

**CANDIDATES FOR PUPIL-TEACHERSHIPS.**—Candidates for these positions were examined in February at Hawera, Wanganui, Marton, Feilding, and Palmerston North. The total number of candidates was 53, made up as follows: Matriculated, 13; Civil Service Junior, 13; Senior Free Place, 2; secondary-school pupils, 13; proficiency-holders, 12. Last year the matriculated candidates were 5, and those who passed the Civil Service Junior examination 7. It will hence be seen that the positions are falling to the lot of highly qualified pupils. That every candidate should hold at least a Civil Service Junior pass were a consummation devoutly to be wished.

**EDUCATION CONFERENCE.**—At the instance of this Board, a conference of delegates from nearly every Education Board in the Dominion was held in Wellington, and from the report of the proceedings it will be seen that splendid work in the cause of education was done there.

**INSPECTORIAL STAFF.**—The statistics and other information given by the Inspectors in their report seem to indicate that on the whole the schools are in a satisfactory condition. The Board is still convinced that full power of classification should not have been given to all teachers alike. That the withdrawal of this regulation would be beneficial to many of the teachers and children is amply evidenced by the Inspectors' reports. Pupils in this district are examined for the proficiency certificate at their own schools. The Chairmen of Committees see to the supervision, and the duty, at once honorary and onerous, has been performed in a manner entirely satisfactory. Towards the end of the year it became evident that, owing to the increase in the number of schools, it would be necessary to make further provision for inspection. Again it is desirable to recognize the great work in the cause of education carried out by Chief Inspector Braik and his assistants, Messrs. Milne and Strong. They show that considerateness and desire to assist teachers in their work which is the true function of Inspectors, and all praise is due to them for it. Of Mr. Braik it is impossible to speak too highly. He is equal to every emergency, and displays a genius and foresight in educational work which is only equalled by his devotion to his duties. At the same time the Board believes that the work of Inspectors in future will develop more upon the lines laid down in the appointment of Mr. D. Stewart, head teacher of the Dunedin Model School, to the position of Assistant Inspector and Organizer of School Work, than upon the old-style method of an Inspector who is here to-day and gone to-morrow. The idea is only in its infancy at present, but its development is in the direction of an Inspector taking a group of schools in hand, spending as much or as little time at each school as its condition requires, organizing the school-work, assisting the teacher to attain the best ideals in school-work, giving ocular demonstrations of the latest methods employed, and heartening up the efforts to meet the exhaustive requirements of modern