

*Free Reading-matter.*—It is believed that the new regulations governing the issue of free books will be entirely beneficial. Any step taken to foster the reading-habit in school or at home must react favourably on the minds of the children. It is but a truism to say that children who read on their own account are more intelligent than those who do not; but behind the truism there is a truth which, when perceived in all its force, should induce teachers, parents, and Committees to do all in their power to stimulate the reading-habit by the provision of worthy reading-matter. In the Department's offer of free continuous readers and subsidies on voluntary contributions towards school libraries, Committees have an example worthy of emulation. The Board is hopeful that under the new conditions new school libraries will be formed, and old ones restocked.

*School Environment.*—As will be seen from the reports of the supervisors, teachers and Committees continue to interest themselves in the environment of their schools. Hitherto the best of our schools have taken a legitimate pride in their scholarship and athletic achievements. Another source of legitimate pride is now added—delight in the appearance of the school-grounds. It may be difficult for small schools to make a name in athletics or scholarship, but it is quite possible for them to aim at having the neatest and most attractive school-grounds in their vicinity. Competitions for the best-kept school-grounds as well as for the best-kept school-gardens take place all over this district. The educative value of the attractive school-ground is not all appropriated by the pupils: it extends to other schools, and may be diffused over an entire district, as, for instance, where the pupils are found to take great interest in their gardens in their own homes. As Mr. Browne, supervisor for the northern district, says in his report, "Before long there will be few schools with gaunt buildings set in bare paddocks."

*Health of the Pupils.*—On the whole, the pupils enjoyed good health during the year. Great efforts are made to reduce the risk of disease and increase the material comfort of the pupils of the district. Breathing-exercises have been taken regularly at each school for many years. The pupils of no fewer than thirteen schools take swimming regularly at first-class baths, five of which are on the school-grounds. Not only so, but the pupils of several schools take swimming lessons regularly in adjacent rivers. We doubt whether there is any district in the Dominion where instruction in swimming is so largely given. The Committees, with few exceptions, see that the school paths are kept dry and the drains in good condition. In nearly all the town schools the closets are operated by the automatic-flush system, and a satisfactory beginning has been made in several country schools with the dry-earth system and concrete holding-tanks. The schools are using disinfectants before the commencement of sweeping operations, and each room is fumigated at the close of the week. The Board feels that the appointment of Medical Inspectors and physical instructors is in itself a wise step, but at the same time believes that had special grants been given in trust to the Board for sanitary improvement a greater amount of good could have been done. The school-sanitation problem is one of grave importance and great difficulty, and in the light of its recent experience the Board is in a position to say that it cannot be attacked successfully without a liberal expenditure of money and an enlightened view of the latest developments of sanitary science.

*Scholarships.*—For the scholarships examinations, fifty-six candidates presented themselves for the Junior Examination and forty-seven for the Senior. Of these, thirty-seven passed the Junior and thirty-five the Senior Examination. The following were awarded scholarships: Board's Junior—Five from Palmerston North High, one from Taihape District High School, two from Queen's Park, one from Wanganui East, one from College Street (Palmerston North), and one from Wanganui District High School. Board's Senior—Three from Palmerston North High, three from Wanganui Collegiate, two from Wanganui Girls' College, and one from Marton District High School. Junior National—One from Raetihi, one from Eltham District High School, one from Terrace End, and one from Marton District High School. There were in force at the close of the year twenty-two Board's Senior, eighteen Board's Junior, and ten Junior National Scholarships, of a total annual value of £1,233 8s. In addition to these, the Board, as controlling the Wanganui Girls' College, gives free tuition to scholarship pupils and those who qualify for a scholarship, without any compensation from the State. It is a question whether competitions for Junior Scholarships should not be confined to the pupils of primary schools pure and simple, and not include pupils of colleges and high schools.

*Junior School Cadets.*—The Board views with approval the abolition of the Junior School Cadet system in connexion with small schools. What cannot be done well in school should not be attempted at all, and there is no doubt but that military drill in the smaller schools of this district was an unqualified failure, besides being a burden that the teachers could neither divest themselves of nor carry with credit. The Board, on the advice of its Inspector, has decided that unless a company of fifty strong can be formed in connexion with a school there shall be no military drill. If a company of that minimum strength can be formed it is left to the head teacher and his staff to say what shall be done.

*Education Commission.*—Wanganui was fortunate in being given an opportunity to demonstrate to the Education Commission the great work being carried out in this education district in technical training and its localized control, model-school buildings and furniture, and scientific agricultural instruction, as well as the handicap the Board has been under in the enormous number of returns and the unnecessary labour involved in compiling them. It is satisfactory to be able to state that, with the exception of those relating to technical instruction, great improvements have since been made by the Education Department, but it is impossible to understand what useful purpose numbers of the returns even now required are likely to serve, and the expense to the Department and the Boards must be very considerable. The Board trusts that many of the important recommendations made by the Commission will be given effect to at an early date.

*Appeal Court.*—During the year the Board had to incur the trouble and expense of defending an appeal to the Teachers' Court of Appeal against the dismissal of a teacher. The Court was composed