

*Regulations.*—In August the Board issued in pamphlet form its new regulations. These had been in preparation for some time, and to their preparation the Board members and officials had given much thought and careful consideration. It is hoped that School Committees and teachers will make themselves familiar with these regulations, and will thus help the Board to keep its administrative machinery running smoothly.

*School Committees' Allowances.*—At the same time the scale of incidental allowances to School Committees was revised, and the payments slightly increased on the whole. The grants, however, are now made to vary in accordance with the grades of the school, and are not paid on a capitation basis, as was formerly the case; and on account of this change the grants to a few schools may be reduced, although they are as liberal as the Board's income will allow. On account of the large number of small schools in Southland these allowances, while probably above the average for the Dominion, may be less than those paid in education districts where there is a greater proportion of large city schools. For this reason the Board urges upon the Government the necessity of drawing up and adopting a Dominion scale of allowances to Committees, in the same way as it has adopted a Dominion scale of teachers' salaries. The present system of capitation is wholly unfair, and penalizes unduly the inhabitants of sparsely populated territory. The basis of payment is entirely wrong, because Boards controlling thickly populated parts have a great advantage over those administering large rural tracts. Till the Department recognizes the just claim of the outback settler in this respect and fixes a sum adequate for carrying on the small schools there will be dissatisfaction.

*Payment of Salaries.*—In July the Board changed its system of payment of salaries. Formerly these were paid by cheques issued from the office; now all teachers and other officers draw their salaries from the nearest branch of the Bank of New Zealand, to which the money is remitted in one sum from the office. The new system, which has been in operation in some of the other education districts for some time, has resulted in a considerable saving of clerical work in the office, has been favourably received, and has worked almost without a hitch.

*Physical Training.*—The teaching of drill and physical exercises continues to receive an increasing amount of attention from teachers, and, though there are still to be found some who take little interest in the physical training and games of their pupils, still the majority of Southland teachers realize that their duties include not only the cultivation of the minds, but also the training of the hands and the exercise of the bodies of their pupils. In September the teachers of Southland were assembled at Invercargill and Gore for a fortnight's physical training under the Department's special instructors, and, though they had to give up their term holidays in order to attend these schools of instruction, the teachers enjoyed the experience, and gained an insight into modern methods of physical education that should be very helpful in their school-work. Not a little of the success of these classes was due to the management, tact, and enthusiasm of the late Mr. Ian Galloway, who recently sacrificed his life in endeavouring to save one of his pupils, and whose death has been mourned by the teachers and pupils of the schools of Southland, with whom he was a great favourite.

*Medical Inspection.*—During the year the Department inaugurated its system of medical examination of school-children, and most of the Board's larger schools were visited by Dr. Ada Paterson. At the first visit the examination was confined to the pupils of Standard II and a few others selected by head teachers; but it is proposed gradually to add children from other standards. The Board considers this a step in the right direction, and is willing to assist the Medical Inspector as far as it reasonably can in carrying out her duties.

*Buildings.*—Besides the periodical overhaul of a large number of school buildings and residences, the following buildings were completed during the year: New schools at Morton Mains Siding, Wairaki, Tuatapere, Ermedale, Tussock Creek, and Raymond's Gap; new residences at Woodlands, Oteramika, and Tussock Creek; and additions to the schools at Waikaia and Merri-vale. The works in hand at the end of the year included new schools at Queen's Park and Wild Bush, a new residence at Wild Bush, a new infant school at Winton, additions to the school at Papatotara, and additions to the residences at Brydone and Waituna.

*School Furniture.*—The Board has had under consideration for some time the question of improving the school-desks, and it has been decided to discontinue the manufacture of the old type of desk, and to substitute a dual desk. Undoubtedly the ideal desk is the single adjustable desk, the height of both the seat and the top of which can be fixed to suit each pupil. But the cost of these desks is prohibitive, and there is not sufficient space for them in the majority of our schools. When arrangements are completed for making the new furniture the Board proposes gradually to substitute the new for the old. The cost for refurnishing all the schools of Southland would be nearly £8,000, so that many years must necessarily elapse before the renewal is completed.

*Financial.*—The chief items of expenditure were as follows, the corresponding figures for 1912 being shown in brackets: Teachers' salaries, £47,111 (£45,434); incidental allowances to School Committees, £3,567 (£2,769); office salaries, £2,235 (£1,981); office contingencies, £1,109 (£1,463); manual and technical classes, £6,671 ls. 10d. (£6,842 16s.); maintenance school buildings, £7,667 (£5,629); new school buildings, £5,891 (£2,628). The sum spent on the maintenance and repairs of school buildings was considerably more than the Government grant for that purpose, but owing to the exceptionally wet season the calls on the Board for repairs to roofs and buildings generally, for drainage, for shingling, and asphaltting were much heavier than usual. The Board will in the near future have to replace several old school buildings, and will also have to incur considerable expense for school furniture, so that the drain on the building funds is likely to continue.

*Conclusion.*—The Board wishes to return thanks to the Education Department for the consideration given to the many applications for grants during the year; to School Committees for the work they have done gratuitously for the cause of education in their districts, and for the interest that most of them have taken in their schools; and to its teachers for their unflinching devotion to their duties, and for the loyal way in which they have responded to the demands of the Board and its Inspectors.

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The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

JOHN FISHER, Chairman.