

Manual and Technical Instruction.—The numbers under instruction in the following recognized classes were :—

	Schools.	Pupils.
Agriculture	120	2,080
Home science	36	1,571
Woodwork	37	1,618
Handwork	205	20,247
Swimming and life-saving	15	1,169

In agriculture there was an increase from 80 to 120 schools undertaking a recognized course. Owing partly to the spring school, improvement is observable both in matter and method. The services of a third instructor were secured after the end of the year, so that more frequent assistance and supervision will be available.

Scholarships.—There were current at the end of 1918 twenty-four Senior and forty-five Junior Scholarships. On 31st December, 1918, five Senior and eight Junior Scholarships expired. There were awarded on the results of the 1918-19 examination sixteen Senior and twenty-one Junior Scholarships.

Mr. J. L. Heckler has very generously established the "Heckler Memorial Scholarship," which will be awarded for two years, each year up to 1931, to the son of a fallen soldier, and is of amount sufficient (£61 10s.) to meet all charges at Wellington College. The Board has received so few of such benefactions that it records this one with the greater satisfaction.

Medical Inspection.—The Board recognizes with appreciation the excellent work accomplished by the Medical Inspector and her assistants. It notes with pleasure an intention to extend the work in the near future.

Buildings.—The main building of the Normal School, Kelburn, was under construction, and the Board notes with extreme satisfaction that at last effective steps have been taken to provide a technical college for Wellington. The ordinary maintenance work of the district has been carried on in conditions of much difficulty, owing to scarcity of skilled labour and high price of material. Owing to increased numbers, and to the condition of the premises, a great deal of work could be no longer delayed, and such as was necessary has been carried out at greatly increased cost. New schools were erected at Opaki (to replace one destroyed by fire), at Pukenui, and a side school at Seatoun. Additions were erected at Karori, Upper Hutt, Levin District High School, Hutt District High School, Island Bay, Lyall Bay, and Muritai, and residence additions at Porirua. Maintenance overhaul was undertaken at twenty-five schools, eleven residences, with improvements in five. New conveniences and shelter-sheds were provided at eight schools, and other works were carried out at eleven schools. Accommodation is now urgently required at Berhampore, Eastern Hutt, Lansdowne, Poroporo, Kilbirnie, Mangaroa, South Miramar, Martinborough, Petone West, Solway, Carterton, and Wantwood. The Board appreciates the offer of increased comfort in the home of the country teacher.

School Precincts.—For four years the Board has supplied trees to those schools where the Committee and the staff undertook to prepare the ground, plant and protect the trees. The reports reaching the Board indicate success. At many schools excellent progress has been made towards creating beauty and taste in the school precincts. The Senior Instructor in Agriculture remarks, "The general appearance of our school-grounds shows steady improvement. Hedges, shade and shelter trees, and lawns in many cases have replaced tumbledown fences and unsightly fields."

School Libraries.—The Board commends to Committees and teachers the opportunity for establishing and extending the school library by subsidy on moneys locally raised. The library policy of the City Council has benefited twenty-five schools. To the pupils 62,800 individual loans were made from a total supply of 6,703 books.

Finance.—On the 1st January, 1918, there was a net balance to credit amounting to £14,367 2s. 3d. Following is a summary of the receipts and payments for the year: Receipts, £192,258 1s. 10d.; payments, £195,956 8s. 3d. On the 31st December, 1918, the net balance to credit amounted to £10,668 15s. 10d. The balance to credit at the bank on the 31st December was £696 12s. 5d. The amount of unrepresented cheques was £1,027 16s. 7d. There was on deposit for rebuilding the sum of £11,000. Forty School Committees applied for Government subsidy on local contributions totalling £766 12s. 11d.

General.—The Board observes with pleasure the measure of benefit conferred on teachers by the recent salary increases, and it recognizes with what untiring effort you have endeavoured to secure improved conditions. It assumes, however, that the whole question of the emolument and status of the teacher is receiving that attention which its importance and urgency demand. Already great harm has resulted from years of delay. No measure can be adequate which fails to recognize as a minimum of emolument a rate at least equal to that of equivalent ranks in the Civil Service, which does not make substantial increase of emolument to the teacher of the country school, and which does not provide a sufficient allowance to permit of every teacher's undergoing a sufficient training. Let the facts be faced kindly, firmly, and justly. If the child is the most precious possession of the State, let that be our guiding conviction in the measures for its education. The Board welcomes the increasing recognition of the need for increased expenditure on education to secure efficiency. It trusts that as a measure of justice the refund to it may be approved of moneys necessarily expended in excess of grants in—(a) Purchase and extension of sites, and (b) erection of new buildings. Large expenditures are advisable as soon as conditions approach normal.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington,

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T. FORSYTH, Chairman.