

*Schools.*—132 schools were open at the end of the year, this number including eight side schools, two part-time schools, and four secondary departments of district high schools. It is a matter for regret that the number includes an undue proportion of Grade 0 and Grade I schools. Wherever possible the Board endeavours to arrange for children who live beyond reach of a school to be boarded with relatives or friends in preference to establishing household schools, with the result that the number of such schools in the district has been reduced during the past two years. A more substantial grant towards the cost of children's board would be the means of further reducing the number of household schools, and would probably effect a saving in finances.

*District High Schools.*—[See E.-6, Report on Secondary Education.]

*Teachers.*—There were 143 certificated or licensed teachers and seventy-four uncertificated teachers employed at the end of the year. In addition twenty-three pupil-teachers and eighteen probationers were also employed. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in providing satisfactory staffing for a number of schools, and work in some instances has been carried on under adverse conditions. The steps taken to improve the salaries of teachers during the year should assist in securing the entrance of suitable candidates to the profession. The Board, however, is strongly of opinion that where teachers are asked to take up duties in remote districts they should have special monetary compensation for so doing.

*Organizing Teachers.*—The Board desires heartily to commend the Department for making provision for the appointment of organizing teachers to control the work carried out in small schools. Three organizing teachers have been appointed in this district, and the benefit of their supervision over the schools under their control will bring the work in these schools to a higher level. In recent years a number of teachers who have taken up work in Grade 0 and Grade I schools have had no previous teaching experience.

*Scholarships.*—At the examinations conducted at the end of the year eleven Junior National Scholarships and four Senior National Scholarships were secured by candidates in the district. The number of awards made cannot be regarded as satisfactory, seeing that seventy-nine candidates entered for the junior and thirty-seven for the senior examinations. The necessity for increasing the value of these scholarships is apparent. Actually some scholarship-winners, who would require to board, are unable to take advantage of the scholarships owing to the insufficiency of the allowance.

*Attendance.*—I regret to record a decrease in the total number of children on the rolls of the public schools. At the end of the year the number was 7,004; at the end of 1918 the number was 7,146. The average attendance for the year was 6,390, as against 6,258 for the previous year. Regular attendance has been interfered with by the prevalence of epidemic disease during the year.

*Buildings.*—An adequate programme of improvements and renovations to buildings and grounds under the Board's control has been carried out during the year. All properties in the Takaka and Collingwood Counties have been overhauled and renovated, and this applies also to the majority of school buildings in the Waimea and Buller Counties. The principal new works undertaken during the year were the erection of schools at Stockton, Mahana, and Sherry River, whilst the Will's Road School was shifted to a new site at Harakeke and enlarged, the Granity Side School was enlarged by the addition of a class-room from the Summerlea School, the Pokororo School was removed to a new site, and a small school was erected at Mailman's Creek. Further steps were taken during the year to acquire an addition to the school-site at Motueka, and also to acquire the Lutheran Church property adjoining the Girls' School in Nelson. In view of the withdrawal of the grant for rebuilding, the question arises as to how rebuilding and remodelling of schools should be carried out. There are many evidences of faulty design in our school buildings, and where enlargement is necessary the Board desires to urge that instead of adding to such buildings they should be entirely remodelled and should conform to some standard that should be adopted regarding design of school buildings. I have to express regret that a curtailment of the programme of repairs and maintenance of buildings has had to be enforced owing to the ever-increasing cost of material and labour. The Board is assured that good work is being carried out in connection with repairs and maintenance, and it is highly desirable that the grant for this work should be increased in conformity with the increased expenditure required.

*Manual and Technical.*—Considerable improvement has been effected in the management of the manual classes and classes for handwork held in public schools. The classes for manual training—*i.e.*, woodwork, ironwork, cookery, dressmaking, agriculture, &c.—were conducted in a highly satisfactory manner, and a large number of senior pupils in the district received instruction in one or more of these subjects. Owing to inability to secure an instructor for classes in woodwork, no classes were conducted at Reefton during the year, but with this exception, in spite of difficulties in staffing, the Board is assured that good results were obtained. Ample supplies of material for handwork were made available in spite of the high cost, and generally an increased interest was shown in these branches of instruction. The payment of grants by way of capitation, however, leaves much to be desired. In a district like Nelson, with a large number of small schools, the capitation earned is not sufficient to enable an adequate scheme of manual instruction to be provided, and the proposal that instructors shall be graded and paid salaries accordingly is welcomed by the Board. Satisfactory work continues to be carried out in the technical schools at Nelson and Westport. At Nelson the chief progress has been made in connection with the classes for engineering, and when all the equipment required is available this branch of instruction should prove an important feature of the work of the school. The accommodation at the school is fully taxed, and it will be necessary to consider the advisability of re-erecting the school on a larger area of ground. It is satisfactory to report that arrangements were made during the year to place the Technical School under a Board of Managers on which representatives of the Board, Urban School Committee, Nelson City Council, Waimea County Council, Farmers' Union, and Society of Carpenters and Joiners are represented. The work at the Westport Technical School has been efficiently carried on, and the engineering department, which is a feature of this school's work, continues to be well attended. Other subjects of technical instruction are also catered for. The erection of technical-high-school buildings, for which a grant of £16,000 was made available recently, will materially increase the interest and scope of work which is now being carried on under circumstances which are not free from disadvantages.