

The following payments were made by the Department on account of secondary education during the year ending 31st March, 1923 :—

Payments to Education Boards for—	£
District high schools : Secondary teachers—Salaries	36,311
National Scholarships	10,082
Payments to secondary schools and colleges for—	
Salaries and incidental expenses	159,013
Manual-instruction capitation	2,649
Subsidies on voluntary contributions	408
New buildings, equipment, furniture, sites, &c.—Education Purposes	
Loans Act, 1919	44,480
Rebuilding high school destroyed by fire	1,994
From reserves revenue in accordance with Education Reserves Amend- ment Act, 1914	9,085
Conveyance of pupils to secondary and district high schools	6,789
Marlborough High School : Statutory payment	400
Inspectors' salaries	1,270
Inspectors' travelling-expenses	426
Total	£272,907

2. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 9th June, 1923.

WORK OF THE YEAR.

In the earlier portion of the year practically all the secondary schools of the South Island, together with the Wellington Girls' College, were inspected, from three to five days being spent in each school. Detailed reports upon the organization, the methods of teaching, and the standard of work attained were forwarded, as hitherto, to the Principals and Boards of Governors concerned, and in many cases these matters were also discussed in conferences with the staffs or sections of staffs. Several registered private secondary schools in Dunedin and Christchurch were also visited and reported upon, and certain private schools in Dunedin, Invercargill, Timaru, Christchurch, and Wellington were visited in connection with their applications to be registered as secondary schools.

In the latter part of the year Ashburton and Marlborough High Schools were inspected, and all secondary schools in both Islands were visited in connection with the award of senior free places and leaving certificates on Principals' recommendations; twelve registered private schools were also visited in connection with recommendations for higher leaving certificates only. Candidates for senior free places were in practically every case given written tests in English and arithmetic, and brief written or oral tests were frequently given in French, mathematics, and science. As a result of our investigations free places were awarded in accordance with clause 7 (c) to over 2,200 candidates. Some 390 higher and 210 lower leaving certificates were also issued on the Inspectors' recommendation.

Since the introduction of the grading system much of the time during each visit to a school must necessarily be devoted to a close observation of individual teachers at work. The knowledge obtained by this means and also as the result of careful and prolonged consultation with the Principal enables the Inspectors to arrive at a reliably accurate estimate of the teacher's efficiency in practically every instance. It is upon these estimates that the revision of the classification list in December is based.

The sittings of the Appeal Board took up less of the Inspectors' time than in the preceding year. It was found unnecessary for the Board to sit either in Dunedin or in Christchurch; six appeals were heard in Wellington and five in Auckland. Only seventeen teachers out of a total of over four hundred appealed against their classification; four of these appeals were subsequently withdrawn, two were allowed by consent, three were allowed by the Appeal Board, and the remaining eight were unsuccessful. The above figures appear to justify a belief that there is general satisfaction with the grading system, and that on the whole it is being applied equitably and reasonably. A few anomalies still persist, but in process of time these will naturally disappear.

STAFFING.

The comments in our last report on the inability of many schools, especially those in remote or small towns, to secure suitable teachers apply with equal force to the staffing conditions that obtained during the past year. There was still the same marked disinclination on the part of teachers to leave schools in the large towns in order to take up positions of a higher grade and salary in the smaller centres. The payment of reasonable transfer expenses would no doubt induce several married men to take up these new positions, but it would not serve to overcome the present marked reluctance of the unmarried men and the women teachers to do so. The regulations bearing upon the classification of secondary-school teachers were amended early in December. The most important effect of the amendments was to reduce materially the length of service required by teachers to qualify for the various grades, and as a consequence the last annual classification list contained a larger number than usual of promotions of teachers to the higher grades. An examination of the list as published in December shows that there were at that time thirty-three A grade teachers, thirty-four B grade teachers, and forty-four C grade teachers waiting to obtain positions of a higher grade than those they held. In order that vacancies may be filled by the appointment of sufficiently qualified teachers it is highly desirable that there should be such a "waiting list" of some considerable magnitude. It is to be hoped, therefore, that during the present year the smaller schools will be more successful in securing teachers than in the past.