

Consolidated School.—The establishment of the consolidated school at Piopio by the closing of a number of small schools in the vicinity, and the conveyance of pupils to a central school, was much in the nature of an experiment. The experiment has, however, proved successful. The residents are satisfied that the quality of the education given to their children is much better than when they were attending the small isolated schools. They consider that the corporate spirit engendered among the children will make for their betterment as citizens in the future. So far as the Board is aware, no parent would be willing to revert to the old condition of affairs.

Conveyance of Children.—The experiment of a consolidated school brought about a new departure in relation to the conveyance of children. The Department recognized that where schools were disestablished in order that the pupils might attend a central school the onus of providing conveyance rested upon the Department. At Piopio three motor-vehicles were bought for the purpose, a motor mechanic was hired to look after the maintenance of the vehicles, and the teachers were granted an allowance for acting as drivers. This plan has been found to work well.

Subsidies.—The Committees of the Auckland Education District still continue to show keen interest in the schools under their charge. This is clearly shown by the large amounts contributed by the residents of each district for the improvement of school-grounds, for the establishment of school libraries, and for other suitable school requirements. The increased interest is a most hopeful sign for the advancement of education in the future, and should be encouraged by the granting of liberal subsidies.

School Fund Allowance.—During the year your Department authorized a special grant of £3,000 to be allocated *pro rata* in the various education districts in aid of the School Committees. This allowance has proved a boon to many School Committees, and has allowed them to overcome difficulties which appeared insurmountable.

Religious Instruction in Schools.—During the year the Rotorua School Committee was granted authority to establish the Nelson system of Bible-reading in schools in their district. This is probably the forerunner of applications for similar authority from other districts.

In conclusion the Board desires to express satisfaction with the cordial relations existing between the Board, the School Committees, the teachers, and the Education Department. The School Committees have shown great interest in all matters that pertain to the welfare of the schools under their jurisdiction; the teachers have done their utmost in the interests of the pupils under their charge; and the Department has met the requirements of this Education District as far as was possible with limited financial resources.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

A. BURNS, Chairman.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, 1914, I have the honour on behalf of the Taranaki Education Board to present the following report of our proceedings for the year 1924.

Board Members.—The personnel of the Board during the earlier part of the year was as follows: Central Ward—Messrs. R. Masters, M.P., and F. H. Sims; North Ward—Messrs. H. Dempsey and P. J. H. White; South Ward—Messrs. H. J. Eaves and A. Lees; Urban District of New Plymouth—Messrs. R. J. Deare and S. G. Smith, M.P. In August the biennial elections were held, and Messrs. Masters, White, Lees, and Deare were returned unopposed. In October, Mr. R. Masters, M.P., found it necessary to resign his position, my Board recording its hearty appreciation of the valuable service he had rendered to education. As a result of the subsequent election, Rev. J. L. A. Kayll, M.A., was elected to fill the vacancy. Fourteen ordinary, special, and extraordinary meetings have been held throughout the year, and individual members have given much valuable time to meetings of sub-committees, and in visiting various localities for purposes of administration.

Representation.—The following were the Board's representatives on various educational bodies: Committee of Advice, Wellington Training College—Mr. H. McIntyre, Feilding; Council of Education—Messrs. J. R. Kirk, M.B.E., and T. U. Wells, M.A.; Board of Managers of Technical Schools—Stratford Technical High School, Messrs. J. L. A. Kayll and H. Trimble; Hawera Technical High School, Messrs. A. Lees and H. J. Eaves; New Plymouth Technical College, Messrs. P. J. H. White and R. J. Deare; New Plymouth High Schools Board, Mr. H. J. Eaves (Otakeho).

The Attendance Officer has paid two hundred visits to schools, and investigated twelve cases through the Court for infringements of the Education Act.

Buildings.—The past year has been very active in building operations. As a result the Board are gradually having the school buildings brought up to a high standard. The following new work was completed: At Bell Block and Riverlea, additions and general remodelling; additions in wood at Warea, Mahoe, and Okato, and in concrete at Vogeltown. A new residence was completed at Rahotu, and the old Fitzroy residence was removed and reinstated at Newall Road. The Board have also specialized in a movable type of school building. One was completed at Kaipikari, and one of two rooms at the Central School. The Board have quite a number of these buildings in different parts of the district, and they are proving very satisfactory. At Eltham and Westown two large schools in concrete were started, and are now nearing completion. In addition to the above, a considerable number of schools and residences received painting and general renovation.

Board's Workshop.—The Board's workshop, established in 1916, has proved a complete success, and is now probably one of the best-equipped in the Dominion.