

*Buildings.*—It is to be regretted that two school-buildings were again destroyed by fire—Matau School and Tataraimaka residence. On the 31st December, there were 163 school-buildings belonging to the Board, and twelve for which either a rental was paid or, being household schools, no rental was paid. There were eighty-one teachers' residences, of which two were not occupied by the teacher, and ninety-four schools without residences attached.

*Manual and Technical Instruction.*—Agriculture: In spite of certain difficulties, this important branch of the curriculum has made a pronounced advance in country schools. Recognizing the national importance of agriculture, my Board requires all schools in the district to have a rural bias. The special branches of agricultural effort in the schools have developed in an astonishing degree. The boys' and girls' agricultural club movement is extending, and it is noticeable that the keenness of the pupils is reflected in the parents and farmers. In South Taranaki the work has so developed that an association including the Farmers' Union, the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, and other interested bodies has been formed to control the administration. The number of children competitors approximates one thousand. The competitions include calf-rearing, judging dairy types of cows and calves, root-growing, &c. The development of senior clubs throughout Taranaki aims to make possible a continuation of education in agriculture from the school to the farm.

The lessons of the past few years in *afforestation* have been well learned, and plants can now be seen in all stages of development, from seedlings to planted-out trees. Rough portions of school-sites, once a source of danger and expense from noxious weeds, are gradually being planted out, and will in time be a valuable asset to the Board. In town schools where facilities for larger operations do not exist the Board has been content to develop cottage gardening.

*Survey of Schools.*—Early in the year a survey was made of all pupils attending the primary schools with the object of comparing the standard of attainment, &c., of Taranaki children at various ages with children from other districts and countries. So far as can at present be judged, Taranaki children reach the recognized standard in most subjects, and in some subjects are actually above the standard in England and America. A special arts and crafts class to provide for those children who do not readily respond to the ordinary conventional methods of teaching was established at West End School, and is proving an unqualified success.

*Medical Inspection.*—The Health Department has made New Plymouth the headquarters of the District Medical Officer, Dr. Mecredy, who also acts as School Medical Officer. During the year the Board's offices were enlarged to provide office accommodation. The arrangement has proved most satisfactory, and shows the value of active co-operation between the two departments.

*School Libraries.*—A large number of supplementary readers were provided to all schools, and school libraries are now established in the majority of the schools.

*Conveyance of School-children.*—Approximately 215 children travel by conveyance to school, for which a grant of 6d. per return trip is made; 105 travel by school buses under contract; 690 children ride 620 horses to school, many long distances, and board allowance was paid in respect of 20 children; 185 children were also conveyed to manual training centres. The aggregate cost of these services was £2,331 11s. 2d.

*School Committees.*—On behalf of my Board I wish to pay a tribute to the fine work done by Committees during the year. Never have so many applications been made to subsidize money voluntarily collected to improve sanitary conveniences, grounds, and the interiors of schools. I should like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the splendid spirit of co-operation and loyalty existing between my Board and the Committees, which reflects the smoothness with which the present system of administration is working.

I have, &c.,

SYDNEY G. SMITH, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

## WANGANUI.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the proceedings of the Board for the year ending 31st December, 1927:—

*Board.*—During the year Mr. W. W. Hedges, one of the members for the Wanganui Urban Area, resigned from the Board, the vacancy being filled by the election of Mr. A. Hickford. The personnel of the Board at the end of the year was as follows: Messrs. W. A. Collins (Chairman) and E. F. Hemingway (West Ward); Messrs. H. McIntyre and J. K. Hornblow (South Ward); Messrs. A. J. Joblin and W. Adams (North Ward); Messrs. D. W. Low and W. S. Woodroffe (Palmerston North Urban Area); and Messrs. J. Aitken and A. Hickford (Wanganui Urban area).

*Schools and Attendances.*—New schools were opened at Otamakapua and Omatane, and the Ngawaka School was reopened. The Kirikau, Hinau, Mangahoe, Tiriraukawa, and Whareroa Schools were closed during the year.

*Efficiency of the Schools.*—The Inspector's reports reveal that the estimated efficiency of the schools was as follows: Good to very good, 81; very fair, 102; fair, 15; weak, 3. This shows an increase over last year of two in the number of schools classified as good to very good, and of seventeen in those under the heading of very fair.

*"Adopted" Schools.*—The system of adopted schools was continued throughout the past year, and the results obtained have far exceeded anticipations. It has been found that the adopted schools have derived valuable help from the larger schools, and a noticeable feature is the improvement in the quality of the work done by the pupils of small schools. The success so far attained is largely due to the enthusiasm of the teachers taking part in the scheme, and the thanks of the Board are due to all concerned.