

*Schools.*—During the year schools were opened at Cattle Creek, Hawarden (consolidated), and Slaty Creek; while those at Boddytown, Evans Creek, Fyvie, Okarito, Horsley Downs, Hurunui, Mason's Flat, Medbury, and The Peaks were closed, the last five being consolidated into one central school at Hawarden.

*Buildings.*—Considerable difficulty was experienced in dealing with the needs of all those schools requiring extra accommodation due to increased attendance and consequent additions to staffs. The Board has endeavoured (where circumstances warranted) to provide a room for every teacher in charge of a class, but has had to fall a long way short of this ideal. The following shows the districts furnished with new schools, additions, &c., during the year: New schools—Hawarden (consolidated), Training College (east wing); schools rebuilt after fire—Ohoka, Spreydon; schools remodelled—Jack's Mill, Taylorville; additions—Fairlie, Methven, Opawa, Prebbleton, St. Albans, Somerfield, Woodend; new residences—Harihari, Kairakau (addition).

*Finance.*—By careful administration, the Building Fund has been nursed back into a more healthy condition than has been the case for some time past. It is pleasing to note, however, that the buildings maintenance grant has been reinstated on the old basis, and that the Board will thus be able to carry out works that were in danger of being unduly delayed. The increase of conveyance contracts and consolidation schemes has meant a greater call on the General Fund, and it is apparent that if demands for these services are to be met satisfactorily the Department will have to consider an increased capitation or a review of the whole position. School Committees continue to raise large sums for school requirements, most of which money earns subsidy.

*Conveyance and Boarding.*—The total number of children who received conveyance-money was 2,034, while 142 who lived too far away from a school to be able to attend regularly were paid boarding-allowance. In addition to the above, special bus services were in operation at Hawarden, Mackenzie, Oxford, Orari, and Tinwald. The total expenditure in the above connection has been £11,796, of which sum the Board has provided £714 from the General Fund.

*School Committees.*—The great majority of Committees continues to take a very live interest in their schools. Large sums of money are raised for the purpose of improving grounds and buildings, and making alterations that tend to the comfort and welfare of the children. Dissatisfaction certainly exists at the limitation of Committees' powers, more especially in respect to the appointment of teachers, but it must be admitted that misfits due to the present method of selection are not numerous. The Board takes this opportunity of expressing its appreciation of the good work that is being done in a voluntary way throughout the district, and of the loyal co-operation that is displayed by Committees with the Board in its endeavour to promote the welfare of the schools under their charge.

*Manual and Technical Instruction.*—Reports from all parts of the district clearly indicate that effective use has been made of elementary handwork material as a means of correlating this instruction with other subjects of the syllabus. The material supplied by the Department was of good quality, and there was sufficient to meet all requirements. A limited quantity of infant-room material was also received from the Department, and was distributed to schools selected by the Senior Inspector.

The keenness for agricultural instruction in its various branches has showed no diminution; rather there is evidence to indicate that the interest in this important branch of education is on the increase. Three hundred and eleven schools were recognized as taking elementary agriculture as a class subject during 1927—a marked increase over the previous year's figures.

Favourable reports have been received from the Education Department regarding possibilities of the Education Board obtaining a suitable title to Reserve 1579, New Brighton, on which to carry out a forestry endowment scheme amongst schools situated in Christchurch and its environs. It is expected that the scheme will definitely be put in operation during 1928.

*Physical Instruction.*—Systematic instruction is carried out by the special instructors, Messrs. G. A. Webb, T. L. Barnes, and Miss I. Greenwood, who endeavour to visit each school at least twice a year. The district to be covered, however, is very wide, and the instructors cannot spend nearly as much time as is desirable in the schools. A very fine display by Christchurch pupils was arranged by Mr. Webb on the occasion of the visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

*Medical and Dental Work.*—The school doctors and nurses have been kept busy examining pupils and aspirants for the teaching profession. New dental clinics were established at Ashburton East, Pleasant Point, St. Albans, Sumner, Waimataitai, and Winchester.

*General.*—The relations existing between the Hon. Minister, the Department, and the Board have been most cordial. Visits of the Minister and his departmental officers are always welcomed, as they undoubtedly enable each side to see matters from the other's point of view, and thus eliminate the undesirable misunderstandings that are too prone to arise when discussions have to be carried on solely by means of correspondence.

My warmest thanks are due to my colleagues in office for their loyal support, counsel, and advice, which have been invaluable to me in carrying out the duties appertaining to my office.

I have, &c.,

C. S. THOMPSON, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.