

In the Native schools steady progress has been maintained, and the teachers have shown keen interest in the introduction of a revised syllabus. Approval was accordingly given and organization arranged for refresher courses for Native-school teachers at the beginning of February, 1936.

The Child Welfare Branch of the Department continues to perform its duties with care and efficiency. With the aid of a large number of honorary Child Welfare Officers, the Branch keeps in close touch with local conditions and maintains a keen interest in its young charges, whether they are cared for in institutions, private homes, or in the Department's own homes and schools.

Several Acts, including the Education Law Amendment Act, 1934-35, passed during the year, and amendments to the Department's regulations, affected the Education service, but only in a minor degree.

Twenty teachers were selected under the regulations relating to exchange of New Zealand teachers with members of the teaching profession from other parts of the British Empire. These went to England, Canada, and Australia, and should derive benefit from their experience in the schools in those countries. During the coming year it is hoped to extend the scheme to include the United States of America and Honolulu.

During my predecessor's term of office arrangements were made to enable the Director of Education, Mr. N. T. Lambourne, M.A., to proceed overseas for the purpose of studying educational methods and administration in Europe and America.

On assuming control of the portfolio of Education I found that the most pressing educational question before the Government was that of the readmission of children of five years of age to the public schools. The decision to admit these children involved reconsideration of the supply of teachers, and the rapid absorption during the year of teachers who had been employed as supernumeraries under the rationing scheme made it evident that a shortage would be experienced towards the end of 1936, due partly to the normal losses from the service and partly to the readmission of children of five years of age.

It was decided accordingly to increase the admissions of first-year students to training college in 1936 to eight hundred. The numbers in training in 1935, slightly over four hundred, were easily accommodated in the Auckland and Christchurch Training Colleges, which were reopened at the beginning of the year. In view of the greatly increased numbers to be accommodated in 1936, it was deemed advisable to authorize the reopening of the Wellington and Dunedin Training Colleges. The allowance to training-college students, which was greatly reduced during the years of the depression, will come up for review early next year. It is hoped that it will be found possible to provide for an increase.

It will be the aim of the Government to restore as soon as possible the educational facilities that were curtailed during the past few years.

The Government will address itself to the improvement and ultimately the reorganization of the education system. The survey made in 1930 by the Parliamentary Recess Education Committee will be brought up to date and a plan of reorganization adopted within a reasonable period. In the development of the system provision will be made for a liberal and suitable education for all the young people of the Dominion, and every endeavour will be made to give the country children the same educational advantages as are enjoyed by those who reside in the cities.

The consolidation of the Education Acts and the regulations is long overdue, and this matter also will come up for review as soon as possible.

The need for better school-buildings is realized, and an effort will be made to overtake the work that must be carried out in the matter of new schools and the maintenance of existing ones. Another question that will receive attention as soon as opportunity offers is the improvement of our school-grounds.

The importance of the work performed by the School Committees and the home and school associations is fully recognized and warmly appreciated by the Government. It is felt that some better provision should be made to augment the incidental expenses of School Committees, and every endeavour will be made to provide for a substantial increase in this connection.