

28. CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOLS.

Activity with regard to consolidation of schools was necessarily restricted in the early part of the year under review by reason of the fact that replacement of existing buildings was avoided wherever possible. More recently, however, a strong demand has arisen in many districts for consolidation, and the suitability of a number of suggested schemes is being investigated. This may be taken as indicating that the success of consolidations already effected is appreciated by the community.

At one of the large consolidation centres, Otorohanga, where the conveyance of children under private contract has presented special difficulties, negotiations were undertaken with the object of instituting a system of conveyance by departmental buses in charge of teacher drivers and supervised by a driver mechanic. This arrangement is similar to those in operation in connection with the Pio Pio and Ruawai consolidated schools.

29. CONVEYANCE AND BOARD OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN.

During the year the conveyance of children to public primary schools and Native schools was continued under the same conditions as have been in force for many years. There has been a strong and insistent demand for assistance in the transport of children by road to post-primary schools, technical schools, and combined schools. The Government has accordingly recognized the necessity for inquiry into the possibility of giving at least some assistance.

At present vehicles engaged in carrying no other passengers than school-children are exempt from the requirement that certificates of efficiency under the Transport Licensing Act should be obtained, reliance being placed upon the assistance of local bodies' traffic inspectors in ensuring that such vehicles are suitable for the purpose. Doubt, however, has arisen whether this is a satisfactory arrangement. While helpful co-operation has been extended in some cases, in others local bodies have shown reluctance to accept any responsibility for the mechanical efficiency and proper loading of the vehicles. Consideration is therefore being given to the question of revoking the Order in Council of 3rd December, 1934, which provided for the exemption, and substituting regulations for the inspection of school buses by officers of the Transport Department.

The restoration in 1934 of the payment of the allowance of 5s. per week towards the cost of board of children who are compelled to board away from home in order to attend a public primary school is appreciated.

There is a strong demand for the payment of boarding-allowance to all post-primary pupils who cannot attend school without living away from home. The Government is making inquiries into this question.

TABLE V.—COST OF CONVEYANCE OF PUPILS TO SCHOOLS AND TO MANUAL CLASSES BY RAIL, MOTOR-VEHICLE, ETC.

Type of School.	1934-35.			1935-36.		
	Rail.	Other.	Total.	Rail.	Other.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Public primary.... ..	1,769	59,926	61,695	1,749	65,225†	66,974*
Private primary.. ..	1,850	..	1,850	1,868	..	1,868
Manual classes in connection with public primary	4,930	2,880	7,810	4,832	2,576	7,408
Manual classes in connection with private primary	138	..	138	136	..	136
Secondary departments of district high schools	1,183	715	1,898	1,196	708	1,904
Secondary	4,353	153	4,506	4,387	..	4,387
Combined	578	..	578	681	..	681
Technical	6,093	..	6,093	6,151	..	6,151
Private secondary	931	..	931	1,089	..	1,089
Native	50	3,219	3,269	49	3,810	3,859
Totals	21,875	66,893	88,768	22,138	72,319	94,457

* This sum includes the cost of conveyance of children to consolidated schools and intermediate schools.

† This sum includes £193, the cost of conveyance of children to intermediate departments of secondary schools. Board of children: Public schools, £2,899; Native schools, £1,013: total, £3,912.