

schools, as at Dannevirke, Pukekohe, Ashburton, &c., there has developed in the outlying districts a strong demand for post-primary education. The provision of even meagre transport facilities seems to give an impetus in a district to the desire for post-primary education, and it is not long before increasing numbers necessitate the working-out of new and more extensive conveyance routes. In 1935 there were 31,500 pupils in attendance at post-primary schools, exclusive of the Correspondence School; in 1938 there were 34,200, and this in spite of the increasing demands of industry for adolescent labour. District high schools must necessarily be affected by this development of conveyance. Some have been consolidated on the nearest post-primary schools, as in the case of Norsewood and Manaia; the attendance at others has been reduced by the tendency of pupils to make use of regular passenger services to desert established district high schools in order to attend bigger schools offering more diversified courses of instruction; in other districts, as for example around Levin, the provision of transport for post-primary pupils has made it unnecessary to establish district high schools in the smaller places. There is, I think, no need to regret the effect of conveyance on the district high schools. Their main function has always been to provide for country districts as good an education as possible until such time as more fully equipped and staffed post-primary schools could be established. Many of our large post-primary schools began life as district high schools. It has been noticeable throughout this century that as district high schools became converted into full post-primary schools other district high schools sprang up in smaller centres, and already the growth of the conveyance system, as it closes some district high schools, is making possible the opening or the building up of others in more scattered or isolated districts.

The growth of conveyance services, both primary and post-primary, is shown by the number of contracts arranged over the past three years—in December, 1936, there were, in round figures, 260 contracts; in 1937, 490; and in 1938, 640. Nineteen school buses were constructed for the Department and placed in service in 1938.

The full cost of conveying pupils to manual-training centres for manual and technical classes was taken over by the Government in 1938 at an additional annual cost of approximately £600.

AGRICULTURAL CLUBS.

To say that the Government is determined that the country child shall have as good an education as the town child is not to say that he shall invariably have exactly the same education in every detail. Every effort is being made to adapt the curriculum to the social and economic background of each school. The teaching of agriculture is made a special feature in the rural schools, and the growth of the boys' and girls' agricultural clubs is evidence that success is being achieved. In the year 1935-36 there were 5,210 entries for competitions from these clubs, and 4,000 completed projects; in 1936-37 the corresponding figures were 9,000 and 6,750; in 1938 they were 19,558 and 15,188. Projects were undertaken in the rearing of calves, lambs, chickens, bees, and pigs, and the production of crops. More valuable work than this in relating the activities of the school to the life of the community it is difficult to imagine.

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL.

In the very remote areas where neither a local school nor conveyance can be provided the Correspondence School continues to do most useful work, as it does also in the case of children unable to attend school through lengthy illness or for other causes. Craft and club activities of a kind not usually associated with correspondence courses have been developed, and efforts have been made to generate a corporate school spirit. To assist in this direction I approved of the holding of a vacation school for Correspondence School pupils at Gisborne in May, but the floods in that area made it necessary at the last moment to abandon the idea. I have since approved of a vacation school in New Plymouth in May, 1939. Another method of developing the personal contacts that are essential in education has been to send senior Correspondence School teachers into the field to visit pupils