

PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION FOR TEACHERS

The difficulties that are being experienced by teachers in securing private accommodation, particularly following appointment to new positions, are adversely affecting the efficiency of the schools. In quite a large number of localities Education Boards are unable to fill vacancies because no suitable boarding-accommodation is available. This shortage is not confined to country areas, but is equally bad at the main centres.

SOLDIER TEACHERS

During the year the work of the Soldier Teachers' Grading Adjustment Board was completed. The regulations under which the Board functioned gave wide powers. The practical result has been to improve the grading position of most applicants. During the year, 386 teachers and others desirous of taking up teaching, assisted by bursaries provided by the Rehabilitation Department, took full-time University courses mainly in arts and science subjects. Concessions in academic qualifications required for admission to training college were continued to suitable ex-soldier applicants.

LIBRARIES

The present library facilities are far from adequate. At the present time, books are supplied to schools in various ways. The Schools Section of the National Library Service maintains a valuable loan service to over 1,700 schools. In some districts the local-body public library has a Children's Section available for use in the schools. The library grants to Education Boards have been increased and Boards expend this grant in various ways. In one district a small committee of teachers and Inspectors was appointed to consider how best to use the grant, and in another district a survey was made of the library facilities to ensure the fullest use of what was available. In this district the staff of each school selects the books up to the amount of its grant, usually purchasing from local sources. There is obvious need for a thorough survey of the methods of supply, selection, and housing of books for use in the primary schools.

Towards the end of the year a large special grant was made available for the purchase of reference books in history and geography. These books should be in the schools in 1948. In each of the main four centres the training-college authorities now offer splendid library facilities to teachers. Greater use is being made of this service.

DUTIES OF ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Head teachers in the larger schools were urged to delegate to their senior men and women assistants wider responsibilities and a greater share in the organization and management of the school. Senior men assistants are looked on as potential headmasters and should be given opportunities of gaining the experience that should fit them for future responsibility. It is hoped, too, that a wider acceptance of this practice will free head teachers for more constructive work with the younger and less-experienced teachers on their staffs.

POLIOMYELITIS

In December an epidemic of poliomyelitis resulted in the closing of the schools for the remainder of the year. Teachers remained at their posts in order to complete the school records. In most districts special refresher courses were arranged and plans were made for 1948, including the preparation of school and class schemes and the making of teaching apparatus.

THE CURRICULUM

The review of the primary-school curriculum is now almost complete. With the exception of music and physical education, every part of the curriculum has been studied by Revision Committees consisting of teachers and officers of the Department.