

schools where there are twelve boys over twelve years of age military drill is insisted on. The number of cadet corps continues to increase, but in this matter the Board's interest is not so strong as it would be if the different corps were under its immediate supervision.

ARBOR DAY.—Arbor Day was fitly celebrated on the 22nd July. A definite programme for the event was suggested: National Anthem, salute flag, addresses, songs and recitations, presents of pictures and specimens to school, decorating of the school walls, tree-planting, social function. This programme was carried out more or less completely at many of the schools, and from a return of the planting done it was possible to infer that a number of the schools will by-and-by benefit in shelter, shade, and show.

BATTLEFIELD PARK.—For transmission to the Quebec Memorial Fund there was raised in pennies the sum of £18 18s. 7d. It is believed that in contributing his mite each child realised vividly the existence of his kith and kin in Canada, and the growth and greatness of the Empire. In this connection it may be stated that the Board requires that the schools observe Empire Day not merely as a holiday, but as a day, so to speak, of Imperial stock-taking.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—At the close of the year there were in the Board's service fifty-four pupil-teachers—nineteen boys and thirty-five girls—three being in their first, fifteen in their second, twenty-three in their third, and thirteen in their fourth year. It is a matter for extreme gratification that really good boys are now seeking appointment, and that the qualifications of candidates continue to improve year by year. For instruction in singing and drawing the pupil-teachers attend at centres for six months—three at the beginning and three at the close of the year; while during the winter months they pursue their studies exclusively under the guidance of head teachers. The Board looks forward with no little interest to the working of the scheme by which the probationer becomes the raw material of the teaching profession of the future; but it is difficult to secure candidates at the small remuneration offered.

INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.—The Reports Committee carefully examined all the reports on schools submitted by the Inspectors during the year. On the whole, there was much to commend and not much to complain of, though it was now and again necessary to apply remedial measures peremptorily and thoroughly. The committee also examined month by month the head teachers' reports on the work and conduct of pupil-teachers; the reports of the Board's special instructors; the reports of the instructors on the Saturday training classes; and, quarterly, the reports of the head teachers on the work and conduct of the staff of their schools. With respect to the detailed inspection and examination of the schools, the Board views with some apprehension the handing over of the entire work of examination to the teachers. In many cases the power will doubtless be wisely exercised, but there is a danger that in many cases the fundamental virtue of thoroughness may fall into disrepute, and that the absence of the stimulus of independent criticism of each pupil will lead to apathy. The Board has endorsed the opinion of the North Canterbury Board, that in our schools more attention should be given to English grammar, political geography, and history.

SCHOOL FURNITURE AND APPARATUS.—In erecting new buildings the Board assumes that the people of the Dominion are willing to pay for suitable accommodation, lighting, heating, and seating. It is positively cruel to require children to sit in badly lit, badly heated, badly seated, and badly crowded rooms, which lead to the undoing of much that the teacher endeavours to do. In pursuance of its policy, the Board has supplied single desks to all new schools, but it is found that the Department's grants for buildings and equipment do not cover the cost. It is desirable, to say the least, that the school room should be worthy of the quality of the education given in it. Apparatus is supplied on a liberal scale, and the teachers are required to fill in an exhaustive return, which, with the apparatus, must be produced to the Inspector at his annual visit to the school.

NEW WORKS.—There is considerable divergence between the views held by the Board and the Department as to what constitutes new works at primary schools for which special grants are made. For instance, a number of boroughs have installed sewerage schemes of late, and have made it mandatory that the pan system should be abolished and more modern methods adopted. This has necessitated an expenditure of nearly £1,000, and the Board consider that, as there was no real necessity for the change so far as depreciation of the existing buildings was concerned, the installation of the sewerage system is decidedly new work, and should not be provided out of the Maintenance Fund. Unfortunately for our finances, the Department thinks differently.

METHOD OF PAYMENT OF TEACHERS' SALARIES.—To minimise the injustice of making teachers pay exchange on cheques for salaries which they are entitled by law to receive in full, the Board has made arrangements by which the teachers may draw the amounts by cheque direct from the bank. This is not quite so expensive as the ordinary method of payment by cheque, but it is difficult to understand why the salaries provided by law should not be paid in full by the State at the homes of the teachers.

FINANCE.—The Board began the year with a debit balance of £5,131 13s. At the end of the year the debit balance was £2,818 13s. 2d. Taking into account the money assets and liabilities, including the balance of the maintenance grant, the balance at the end of the year was credit £1,527 16s. 4d.

POSTAGE AND TELEGRAMS.—Nothing has been done in the direction of compensating the Board for the withdrawal of the privilege of sending letters and telegrams free, an impost placed on the finances of at least £300 a year. While it must be pleasant to be able to show an apparent increase in the postal revenue, as a result of this reform, it is discouraging to those possessing a genuine interest in education to find their efforts nullified and their work cramped at every turn.

TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP.—On the recommendation of the Inspectors the Travelling Scholarship was awarded to Mr. W. A. Curteis, of Kakarama School, on the strength of a paper entitled "Correlation in a Country School." The papers of Mr. Hills, of Ruahine, and Mr. Thomas, of Eltham, on "Agriculture as a Mean of Correlation," and "Some Notes on the Teaching of Outdoor Geography," respectively, were very highly commended.

AGRICULTURE AND DAIRY-WORK.—The Board recognises the value of the work done by Mr. Grant and Mr. Browne in these departments of instruction, and also the excellent work done by many of the head teachers of the schools. Nothing could be better, for example, than the gardens at