

relief could be given. Doubtless the improved scholastic conditions—better remuneration, superannuation, freedom of classification and of selection and arrangement of school work—will ere long attract to the teaching profession numbers sufficient to enable the Minister to bring the staffing clauses of “The Education Act, 1908,” into operation. It would be well, however, in the meantime to bring these clauses into partial operation as far as the supply of teachers will permit. This might be done by increasing the staffs in certain grades of schools, but, better still, by increasing the staffs of the more necessitous schools, as recommended by the Inspectors through their Boards. What the Inspectors say in connection with the extension of the school age is worthy of serious consideration. For such extension, legislation is necessary. In the meantime the technical schools might be more freely used as continuation schools. In addition to subjects bearing on the temporary vocations sought for by girls to prepare them for their special vocation, a full course of domestic science should be provided and made compulsory.

**TRUANCY.**—Cases dealt with for the year ending 31st December, 1908: 1,260 notices were posted to parents and guardians for infringements of “The Education Act, 1908,” section 153; thirteen notices were served on parents whose children were not attending any school, section 152; 134 cases of irregular attendance were investigated; 129 penalty summonses were issued under section 153. Under the above 129 summonses, 124 convictions were obtained, two cases were dismissed without prejudice, three cases were withdrawn by certificate. The total fines inflicted for the year amounted to £30 19s. 6d.

**DRILL AND PHYSICAL EXERCISES.**—These exercises have been regularly practised during the year in all the schools under the jurisdiction of the Board.

**SCHOOL LIBRARIES.**—The Board earnestly desires the hearty co-operation of teachers and Committees in promoting in every school district a library of interesting books that will tend to kindle in the children a desire for good reading, to foster a taste for what is good in literature, and to develop the reading habit, than which hardly anything more valuable can be acquired in school. To assist Committees and teachers to achieve this end the Board has had prepared, printed, and sent to every School Committee in the district a catalogue of about five hundred books eminently suitable for school reading and school libraries. They are books of fairy tales, of adventure, of healthy fiction, of history, of biography, of travel, and of natural history. They are selected with the view to provide interesting reading for every class from P. to Standard VII. They are strongly bound, and well printed, and they are marvels of cheapness, about a third of them ranging in prices from 1d. to 4d., and most of the rest from 6d. to 1s. 6d. Hence, there can be purchased for a few pounds quite a large library of books of sufficient interest to kindle in the children a desire for reading, and foster a taste for what is good in literature. To induce the hearty co-operation of teachers and Committees in the movement, the Board resolved to provide the necessary shelving, and to contribute 10s. for every £1 raised locally, the annual contribution not to exceed £2 10s. for any one school. Several of the Committees have already taken the matter up, and, judging from the progress made, the Board has reason to believe that the year saw the beginning of a movement that will result in great moral and intellectual gain to the schools.

**ATTENDANCE.**—The returns for the year show a decrease of 337 in the number of pupils enrolled during the year. The number of pupils enrolled at the Dunedin schools shows a decline of four. The number in attendance at all the schools in December last was 384 more than at the end of the previous year. The number on the roll of the Dunedin schools in December was 3,190, being thirty-six more than in December of the preceding year. The average attendance over the district was 17,473, an increase of 321 pupils for the year. The average attendance at the Dunedin schools shows an increase of forty-five pupils as compared with 1907. The average attendance expressed as a percentage of the weekly roll was 89·8, being an increase of 0·8 per cent. for the year. The average percentage for the Dunedin schools was 91, the same as for the preceding year. The mean weekly roll for the district was 19,448, and the average percentage gained implies that 1,975 pupils each school day were absent. During the year an epidemic of measles visited several of the districts and seriously affected the attendance of the schools. Notwithstanding this, the attendance has been good, the district showing an average of 89·8. Many of the School Committees, realising the importance of regular attendance, energetically support their teachers in their efforts to secure it. The head teachers' monthly reports are carefully considered, and steps are taken even by individual members towards amendment or progress. In some instances the Committee has been stirred to action by the fall of the school to a lower grade, and the consequent loss of a teacher. It is not always realised that the staffing of the schools is a matter of Department regulations, and is wholly beyond the power of the Board and its officers. When the average attendance is bringing a school into proximity to enter a higher or a lower grade, and there is prospect of the gain or the loss of a member of the staff, the head teacher should definitely place the position before his School Committee. By a fraction of an attendance in the average for a quarter the strength of the school staff may be affected for nine months, and this may be a matter within the influence of the Committee or of its members individually.

**TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.**—The following is a summary of the receipts and expenditure in connection with the special and school classes for manual and technical instruction for the year 1908: Expenditure: Maintenance (salaries, material, &c.), £2,359 3s. 7d.; fittings and apparatus, £2,184 13s. 3d.; total, £4,543 16s. 10d. Receipts: From Government—Capitation, £2,130 9s. 1d.; special grant for training of teachers, £300; buildings, fittings, and apparatus, £1,665 1s. 3d.; fees, £286 8s. 3d.; total, £4,381 18s. 7d. Dr. balance for year, £161 18s. 3d.

**FINANCE.**—A statement of the Board's receipts and expenditure for the year is given below. The sum expended in teachers' salaries, including lodging allowances, was £66,158 16s. 6d.; the amount paid to School Committees for incidental expenses was £5,798 9s. 9d.; the amount expended (excluding contractors' deposits) in the erection, enlargement, and improvement of school