

of school work. But in too many cases the endeavour to secure improvement strained almost to the breaking-point the good relations that should exist between the teacher and the Inspector. There were cases where the teachers remained indifferent or obdurate for years, though all the time their assistants and even pupil-teachers were keeping satisfactory schemes and lesson-books on their own account. We believe that we have seen the last of the ill-judged opposition to a departmental regulation, and of a species of neglect that has come so much into prominence as almost to put one's view of school work out of perspective.

SWIMMING AND LIFE-SAVING.—It may be recorded as a testimony to the energy of our Committees and head teachers that the number of children now receiving instruction in swimming is something to be proud of. Baths have been erected on the schoolgrounds at Eltham, Wanganui District High School, and Sedgebrook, while the pupils of the Hawera, Queen's Park, and Feilding Schools avail themselves of the facilities offered by the Corporation baths. It is understood that the pupils of the Taihape, Marton, and Campbell Street Schools will presently be provided with similar facilities.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—During the year, in addition to the scholarship course, a practical course of instruction was taken at Hawera, Patea, Marton, Taihape, and Feilding. Reference to Table XI will show the relative numbers of pupils taking each course [table not reprinted in full]. The same programme is being carried out at the same schools during the present year (1911). So much has recently been said of the advantages of the rural course that, beyond recognizing the good work done at the schools named, we content ourselves with an indorsement of an opinion elsewhere expressed that an extra special assistant should be provided in schools where the course is taken, and with the announcement of a further opinion that, if the Department is really in earnest in the matter, it should decline to recognize any district high school failing to supply a sufficient number of pupils to admit of the course being introduced.

EDUCATION BOARD'S LENDING LIBRARY.—The library continues to serve a useful purpose in bringing within reach of all the Board's teachers the most modern works on the science and art of teaching. This year seventy-five teachers obtained books, of which about two hundred were issued. Considering the fact that there are, with the exception of pupil-teachers and probationers, to whom the books are not issued, some 350 teachers in the Board's service, we do not think nearly as many avail themselves of the library as ought to. Here is an opportunity for the earnest teacher to keep in touch with modern educational thought, and at small cost to himself. We trust the Board's efforts to help the teachers in this direction will meet with more enthusiastic support during 1911.

ENVIRONMENT.—Environment is on the one hand the physical setting of the school, its attractiveness inside and out; on the other hand, it is the tone of the school, the absence of evil example, and the presence of good. On the whole, we have made considerable progress in school and school-ground beautification. Much has yet to be done, especially in the direction of making the grounds attractive by means of flower-plots and ornamental shrubs. Having aided in the establishment of school gardens throughout the district, the supervisors of agricultural training will now be in a position to devote more time to the improvement of the appearance of the schoolgrounds. The interest taken in the school gardens by the great majority of the teachers cannot be too heartily or too highly commended; and there is every reason to suppose that this interest will be extended to the schoolgrounds. The natural complement of well-kept grounds is hearty play, a phase of school life that receives general recognition at our schools. The Board's injunction that the teachers should initiate and supervise organized games for all pupils has been for the most part sympathetically received. It is not so very long ago since the main interest of the school was centred on the subjects taught, an interest which is at last being transferred to the children, who are clearly coming to their own.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—We desire to place on record our appreciation of the good service done to the cause of education by—(1) the ladies who ably examined the candidates for the domestic arts certificate; (2) the head teachers of the observation schools; (3) the instructors of the school technical classes; (4) the teachers of all ranks. The timely assistance rendered by Mr. Grant in the work of inspection towards the close of the year should also be recognized. To Mr. Stewart, who comes to do a work of the first importance in our schools, we extend a cordial welcome.

We have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Wanganui.

GEO. D. BRAIK,	} Inspectors.
JAS. MILNE,	
T. B. STRONG,	

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wellington, February, 1911.

We have the honour to submit the following report on the condition of primary education in the Wellington District.

The number of schools in operation during the year was 163, an increase of one for the year. Two small aided schools were closed, and three new ones were opened.

In addition to the 163 State schools, eleven Catholic schools were visited and reported upon.