

and S6 were conducted at the Oamaru municipal baths, and also at the Alexandra, Coal Creek, Duntroon, Tapanui, and Naseby Schools. The average attendances at these special classes were: Cookery, 1,334; woodwork, 1,440; swimming and life-saving, 1,120. The Board notes with appreciation the Department's decision to continue the payment of capitation for the teaching of swimming. The expenditure on manual and technical instruction was: Salaries, material, &c., for school classes, £7,097 12s. 4d., and for special classes £93 0s. 4d.; buildings, furniture, and fittings, £4,438 7s. 3d.: total, £11,628 19s. 11d.: being an increase of £2,895 18s. over the previous year.

*Agricultural Instruction.*—The rural science course has been continued in the district high schools, while the school-garden forms part of the school equipment, and has been used as a method of instruction in 215 primary schools. The new science-room at Alexandra has now been completed, and sufficient furnishings and equipment will be available to allow of individual work being carried on in the laboratory during the current year. Port Chalmers District High School, however, still remains inadequately equipped for this purpose. With a view to assisting teachers and pupils in their efforts to beautify the school surroundings, a further distribution of trees and ornamental shrubs from the Training College students' garden was made in August last, 5,000 trees and shrubs being distributed to sixty-five schools. This last addition brings the total number of the plants distributed during the past seven years to 24,900, and the improved appearance of the grounds of the recipient schools amply justifies the Board's assistance in this regard. The school-garden competitions were continued during the year.

*School Buildings.*—The Board's building operations have, for the year 1921, been carried out under slightly easier conditions than in the past few years. Sufficient labour has been available for all that could be undertaken, and a slight drop, which has been most welcome, has taken place in the price of certain lines, particularly hardware. The difficulty in keeping the buildings in a fairly satisfactory state of repair with the money available for maintenance is, however, still acute. For some time past the Board has been obliged to restrict its expenditure to £800 per month, and, consequently, contemplated improvements to a number of schools and teachers' residences have had to be postponed, although a great deal of such work is badly needed. In pre-war times the Board's aim was to have all buildings repainted outside every seven years, but this is now impossible, and some of the buildings have had to stand over for ten years before being repainted, while the interiors of schools are being almost entirely neglected. The Board would again urge upon the Department the great necessity for an increased maintenance grant at the earliest possible date to enable more of this most necessary work to be undertaken. The works carried out during the year have included—North-east Valley Infant School, a brick building of five class-rooms, with cloak-rooms, teachers' rooms, &c. A manual-training building (in brick) has been provided on the Arthur Street School ground: at Alexandra a similar building has been erected (in concrete) providing accommodation for cookery, woodwork, and science classes for the pupils of Central Otago who are within reach of Alexandra; the Training College building has during the year been enlarged by adding another story to the original two-story building; Beaumont School was extended and altered, the extension taking the place of a room no longer fit for occupation; at Hinahina an unused creamery was purchased and altered and has provided a very comfortable school building; the cookery room at Kaikorai has been altered and furnished as a class-room; the school at Tahakopa has been shifted to a new and more central site of 5 acres donated by the residents, and an additional room built; a room of the Mosgiel District High School damaged by fire has been reinstated and remodelled, and alterations have been effected at the Glenomaru, Island Cliff, and Spottis Creek Schools; a new brick residence has been erected at Tapanui; alterations and additions to out-offices have been carried out at Tarras, Cambrians, Sutton, Blackstone Hill, Waitahuna West, Otaike, Duntroon, Windsor, and Elderslie. Repairs and improvements have been undertaken at numerous schools, a number of concrete tanks have been repaired, and in some cases drinking-fountains provided. With the assistance of School Committees, a fair amount of asphaltting (both new work and top-dressing) has been done. Unfortunately, at some schools necessary top-dressing has been neglected, with the result that the asphalt has been ruined, when a little expenditure at the proper time would have saved it.

*School-books.*—For some time now there has been a growing dissatisfaction over the matter of school-books. This is due to several causes, first of which, no doubt, is the present high cost of all school requisites as compared with the prices that obtained before the war. Many parents are urging that more consideration should be shown them, as they are finding the providing of the books required for the schooling of their children a severe tax on their slender resources. In this connection the Board is determined to give the overburdened parents all possible relief. When the Department many years ago authorized a certain list of books to be used in the primary schools of this Dominion it was never intended that such should be regarded as a permanent provision. The unsettled conditions that have prevailed for some time have, no doubt, made a revision almost impossible. The rapidly moving current of events of the past few years, however, makes it absolutely necessary that a new list should now be drawn up. This list should include special lessons on recent events, so that our young people may be kept well informed of the significance of the recent military operations as well as the altered geographical boundaries resulting therefrom. The Board is of the opinion that some assistance could be given by the Education Department if it inserted in the *School Journal* specially prepared articles, suitable for reading-lessons for the different classes, and so save the parents the expense of purchasing reading-books. Dissatisfaction has been expressed that publishers of certain books on the authorized list have, when one issue has been sold out, so altered subsequent issues as to make previous issues worthless for class use. The Board fully recognizes that if progress is to be made in education it must be prepared for changes, and is willing to include in its list books that are found to be superior to those at present in use. It appreciates the efforts of all who are trying to provide improved text-books, but is averse to the introduction of any book until it is recommended by experts