

when a teacher pleads that his finances will not permit of his attending. The saving effected by reducing the allowance cannot be very great in the aggregate, but the usefulness of the model school is reduced very materially. The Board strongly recommends the reinstatement of the regulation in its previous form.

Correspondence Classes.—Thirty-three applications for enrolment in the Department's correspondence classes were received during the year. The Board and the Inspectors have frequently recommended this form of instruction in preference to the establishment of household schools, but the difficulty in many cases is that parents are not able to give the time necessary for the proper supervision of the children's work. General satisfaction with the correspondence classes has been expressed by the majority of parents who have given the system a trial.

Instruction of Backward Children.—Creditable work was done in the special class for retardates, established at Victoria Avenue School in 1921.

Efficiency of Schools.—The report of the Inspectors shows that the general efficiency of only six schools was lower than satisfactory. Taking into consideration the fact that a large number of our schools are in charge of uncertificated teachers with limited experience, the condition of the schools generally may be regarded as very satisfactory.

Buildings and Sites.—Three new schools were erected during the year, and several buildings were remodelled or re-erected. A large amount of painting and general maintenance work was undertaken. The decision of the Department to reinstate the maintenance grant at its former rate is appreciated. The Board has continued the policy of carrying out its building operations with its own staff, and is satisfied that, so far as this district is concerned, the system has many advantages over the contract system.

Finance.—After taking liabilities and cash assets into consideration the net balance at the end of the year was Dr. £251 16s. 9d. The credit balance in the Alexander Bequest Account was £2,738 12s. 8d., and in the Rees Bequest Account £1,303 19s. 3d.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

W. A. COLLINS, Chairman.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Napier, 31st March, 1924.

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1914, the Education Board of the District of Hawke's Bay has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year 1923:—

The Board.—The personnel of the Board, which remained unchanged during the year, was as follows: Napier Urban Area—Messrs. J. Clark Thomson and G. W. Venables; Gisborne Urban Area—Messrs. G. T. Wildish and G. Crawshaw; Hastings Urban Area—Messrs. G. F. Roach and A. W. Hamilton; North Ward Rural Area—Messrs. W. Oates and J. R. Kirk; Middle Ward Rural Area—Messrs. G. McKay, M.P., and A. King; South Ward Rural Area—Messrs. R. P. Soundy and W. Cuthbertson. The Board's representatives on other educational bodies are as follows: Dannevirke High School Board—Messrs. R. P. Soundy, T. H. G. Lloyd, and Rev. G. B. Stephenson; Napier High School Board—Messrs. G. F. Roach and R. L. Paterson; Gisborne High School Board—Mr. L. T. Burnard; Napier Technical High School Board—Messrs. G. W. Venables and J. Clark Thomson; Waipawa Technical Classes Association—Mr. C. H. Critchley.

Finance.—The receipts for the year totalled £172,005 2s., and the payments £175,847 12s. 5d. The credit cash balance on all accounts on the 31st December, 1923, was £7,544 16s. 1d. The cost of general administration in 1923 was 4.28s. per pupil in yearly average attendance, compared with 4.43s. in 1922 and 5.18s. in 1921.

Attendance.—The number on the roll at the end of 1923 was 16,063, compared with 15,755 at the end of 1922, an increase of 308. The average attendance for the year 1923 was 14,293, compared with 14,160 in 1922, an increase of 133. The small increase in average attendance is due to the serious effect of the influenza epidemic on the attendance of the September quarter. A truer indication of the actual increase is ascertained by comparing December quarter, 1922 (14,522), with December quarter, 1923 (14,765), an increase of 243.

Number of Schools.—The number of schools in operation at the end of 1923 was 192, an increase of nine over the number at the end of the previous year. Twenty schools were opened during the year, while eleven were closed (three temporarily only). A side school for children in hospital was opened at the Napier Hospital, and a class for retardate children was formed in a special class-room at the Hastings Street School.

Proficiency Examination and Junior National Scholarships.—As in former years, a synchronous examination was arranged for the outlying schools, the pupils in other schools being examined either at convenient centres or at their own schools. For the synchronous examination, special papers were prepared by the Inspectors, and the Board arranged for responsible supervisors to be present. The results of the synchronous examination were considered in conjunction with the results obtained in all subjects by the Inspector at his annual visit to the school, while in the centralized schools the headmasters were consulted as to the merits of the various pupils. The Board considers that a high standard of results has been achieved, the percentage attained being slightly better than that of the previous year.

Teachers.—On the 31st December, 1923, there were in the Board's service 550 teachers (men 172, women 378), as compared with 510 (150 and 360) in 1922. Notwithstanding an increased number