

of teachers in its service, the Board is glad to note that, excluding relieving and household school-teachers, there is an appreciable decrease in the number of uncertificated teachers employed, the numbers for 1923 and 1922 being ninety-one and 118 respectively.

*Appointment of Teachers.*—Each year practically all ex-pupil-teachers and ex-probationers from this district are appointed to positions locally on completion of their training-college courses. In addition, a large number of ex-students who served their pupil-teacherships and probationerships under other Boards also secure appointments in this district. In spite of these accretions to the ranks of trained teachers, the supply is not yet sufficient to offset the wastage by resignations, &c., and to meet the demands for an increased number of teachers required for new schools and for increases in the attendances of existing schools. Last year an attempt was made to dispense with the services of a number of uncertificated teachers who were taking no steps to secure their certificates, but in the absence of certificated teachers it has been necessary to re-engage a number of them. Further, a number of special assistantships in schools requiring additional assistance to eliminate large classes were approved by the Department, but in several cases it was found impossible to secure satisfactory teachers to fill these positions. Fifty-four uncertificated teachers (excluding relieving teachers and teachers of Grade 0 schools) were employed on the 31st December last. In the opinion of the Board, further steps must be taken to secure an increased number of entrants to the teaching profession. The new salaries scheme for assistant teachers will, in the opinion of the Board, go a long way to eliminate the frequent changes in school staffs, particularly among the lower grades of assistants. Naturally, some anomalies have arisen, but it is impossible to avoid these in a change-over from a system of eight grades of salary to one with four grades of salary for men and three for women. The Board desires to congratulate the Department on the introduction of the scheme, and on the manner in which the various difficulties in this connection have, on the whole, been overcome.

*Organizing Teachers.*—A great deal of credit must be given to the organizing teachers for the efficient state of the smaller country schools. They have carried out their duties whole-heartedly and to the full satisfaction of the Inspectors. The Board is of opinion that the results obtained are well worth the expense involved in their employment. The Board frequently receives expressions of great appreciation from country residents respecting the services of the organizing teachers. The Inspectors have noted that both teachers and pupils of those small schools under the care of the organizing teachers have benefited greatly by their visits. Many applications for a visit from the organizing teacher have to be reluctantly declined by the Board, owing to the impossibility of the teachers covering the ground in the course of the year.

*Training of Teachers.*—Saturday classes for training pupil-teachers and probationers in elementary science, drawing, and handwork were held at Napier, Hastings, and Waipawa. Central classes for pupil-teachers and probationers were held at Gisborne and Woodville, and for uncertificated teachers at Hastings. A refresher course in science was also held at Hastings. The Board is convinced that concentrated instruction for a fortnight under the Board's most competent instructors in these subjects gives the students a more efficient training than the intermittent Saturday classes.

*Correspondence Instruction for Country Children.*—The correspondence instruction has proved a boon to many children in the backblocks. Many applications still continue to be received as the success of the scheme becomes more known. The Board does not, however, agree with the Department's policy to eliminate Grade 0 schools (up to eight in average attendance) and to substitute correspondence instruction. Our experience is that excellent work is done in these small schools, and that wherever and whenever possible they should be continued. There is no need to point out the benefit to be derived by the children from instruction given in a school environment and under school discipline.

*District High Schools.*—At the end of the year there were five district high schools in operation, the Te Karaka District High School having been opened during the year. As in previous years, the first- and second-year pupils of the secondary departments of district high schools took the rural course. The aim of the course is to provide a good general education in secondary subjects, and also to prepare pupils for the Public Service Entrance Examination. The science work has been continued for the third and fourth years, thus enabling pupils to take science for the Matriculation Examination, which they have done with considerable success.

*Manual and Technical Instruction.*—Classes in elementary handwork were conducted in all schools. Needlework was satisfactorily taught in all schools. Special classes were conducted in twenty-three schools in sole charge of male teachers, but in two schools no instruction was given, as it was impossible to arrange for competent teachers. In agriculture, dairy science, and elementary agriculture 178 classes (primary and secondary) were recognized for capitation purposes in 1923. The capitation grant made by the Department for equipment and material for science subjects has proved adequate for the purpose, and during the past year the Board has been able substantially to increase the equipment and material in each school. The full requirements of all schools have not yet been met, but it is expected that during the current year there should be no reason on this ground why the teachers should not be able to do satisfactory work. Woodwork, cookery, and dressmaking classes were conducted at centres to which pupils from the surrounding schools came for instruction. The number of classes was—Woodwork, 55; cookery, 57; dressmaking, 55.

*Physical Instruction.*—An instructress has been permanently located in the district during the past few years, and full attention has been given to this branch of the work.

*Medical and Dental Inspection.*—The work has proceeded steadily throughout the year. In past years the need for the establishment of dental clinics in this district has been stressed. One was established in Napier as from the beginning of last year, and excellent work has been performed by the dental nurses. The Board hopes that the establishment of clinics in other centres in this district will not be long delayed.

*Scholarships.*—Scholarships in tenure at the end of 1923 were as follows: Junior, 46; senior, 9; total, 55.