

Training College.—The creation of a Chair in Education at Victoria College marks a distinct advance in the standing of the teaching profession. The number of students at the Training College is now so greatly in excess of the numbers for which the building was designed that only excellent management could produce, secure, and maintain the present high standard of efficiency. The question of both increased accommodation and of increased staff must receive the most serious consideration. The following are the essential statistics for the year 1923: Total number of students, 294 (67 men and 227 women). First-year students, 142; second-year students, 152. Students classified: Division A, 213; B, 76; C, 5; D, 0.

Scholarships.—There were current at the end of 1923 forty senior and sixty-two junior scholarships. On the results of the 1923–24 examinations twenty-six senior and thirty-three junior scholarships were awarded.

Instruction of Teachers.—Week-end classes in drawing and in science, in preparation for the certificate, were held at Wellington (Training College), at Masterton, and, for the first time, at Levin. A very successful course in agricultural science and hygiene, in preparation for the certificate, was held at Masterton, under the Supervisor in Agriculture. It extended over a fortnight.

Manual and Technical.—Instruction in elementary handwork was given in all schools as prescribed by the syllabus. At twenty-three schools in sole charge of male teachers classes in needlework were carried on by special instructresses. Lessons in woodwork and cookery were given at thirteen centres, and approximately 4,400 scholars from ninety-eight primary and nine secondary classes received instruction. The report in agriculture and nature-study indicates much good work, with prospect of still better in the immediate future. The opinion continues to be widely held that with much advantage greater encouragement might be given to instruction in swimming and life-saving in our schools in this country.

Medical and Dental Services.—The public estimate of the value of the medical and dental schools service is indicated by the large number of requests received for extension of the latter, especially to more and more schools outside the metropolis.

School Libraries.—The youth of this district owe much to the wise policy of the Wellington City Council whereby literature of the best and most varied is provided in ample supply, and to the excellent management of the scheme by the Chief Librarian and his staff. On terms that are easy, outside schools may participate in the benefits. The schools served number thirty-three; the books issued 9,821, compared with 8,984 the previous year; and individual loans 157,777, compared with 119,521. The group scheme of Featherston and Wairarapa Counties and of Masterton are also under efficient management, and conferring a most valuable benefit on our youth.

Buildings and Sites.—Two new schools were erected, and in several others additions were made. Three residences were remodelled or added to. The acquirement of sites in districts of assured increase should be sanctioned in future more ahead of pressing requirements. The Board recognizes financial difficulty, but where a sufficient site is not in possession for a district it is not safe to delay, as the most suitable areas are early selected for general building purposes, sometimes to the exclusion of the school. In level open country such provision is, of course, less pressing, but in a district of such broken surface as the urban and suburban areas of Wellington it is quite an unsafe policy to delay, and no present saving is compensation for future deprivation of a suitable site.

General.—There is general agreement that in the interests of both the teacher and the child the number of staff changes must be materially reduced. The Board trusts that out of the earnest study of the existing difficulty conditions that are equitable and stable may be evolved. No less than seventy-nine Committees applied for subsidy on a total of £3,171 7s. 3d., as compared with seventy-four raising £2,396 16s. 5d. during the preceding year. This by no means measures voluntary effort; much labour and material are given without subsidy.

Finance.—At the 31st December, 1923, there was on deposit with the Post Office Savings-bank a sum of £2,000. On current account the debit was £1,065 12s. 11d., and unrepresented cheques totalled £1,060 16s. 2d. The debit balance, therefore, was £126 9s. 1d.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

T. FORSYTH, Chairman.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 31st March, 1924.

I have the honour to present the following report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of Nelson for the year ended 31st December, 1923:—

Board.—The personnel of the Board at the end of the year was as follows: Nelson Urban Area—Messrs. F. W. O. Smith (Chairman) and E. E. Boyes; North Ward—Messrs. S. B. Canavan and W. C. Baigent; East Ward—Messrs. E. J. Scantlebury and H. J. Hill; West Ward—the Hon. W. H. McIntyre, M.L.C. The Board's representatives on other educational bodies were as follows: Nelson Technical School Board—Messrs. F. W. O. Smith and E. J. Scantlebury; Board of Governors, Nelson Colleges—Mr. F. W. O. Smith; Council of Victoria University College—Mr. F. W. O. Smith. Ten ordinary meetings and four special meetings were held during the year.

Schools.—At the close of the year there were in operation 136 main schools, five side schools, and two half-time schools. Two new schools were opened, and five schools (Grade 0) were closed,