

*Correspondence Classes.*—The Board has received good reports of the work of the Department's correspondence classes, and it is generally agreed that where the parents are able to give the children some assistance with their lessons, instruction by correspondence is to be preferred to the establishment of household schools in charge of persons with poor qualifications.

*Efficiency of Schools.*—The report of the Inspectors shows that the general efficiency of only four schools was lower than satisfactory. As indicated earlier in my report, a considerable number of the country schools are in charge of uncertificated teachers, whose teaching experience in many cases is limited. In view of this, the Inspectors' reports reveal that the condition of the schools generally was found to be highly satisfactory.

*Finance.*—After taking liabilities and cash assets into consideration, the net balance at the end of the year was Dr. £348 1s. 9d.

*General.*—I again desire to thank School Committees for co-operating with the Board in the improvement of the schools and their surroundings, and for valuable services which have been so willingly given in the interests of the children. To the teachers the Board's thanks are due for loyal and efficient service during the year. The Inspectors have at all times given all their best, and to them, and more particularly to Mr. Stuckey, Senior Inspector, I tender the thanks of the Board. I have to thank the Secretary and office staff, the Architect and staff, and the manual instructors, for the efficient manner in which they have carried out their duties. In conclusion, I would like to convey to the Minister and officials of the Department my appreciation of the courteous attention given to the Board's requirements.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

W. A. COLLINS, Chairman.

#### HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

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 1924 :—

*The Board.*—The personnel of the Board at the end of the year was as follows : Napier Urban Area—Messrs. J. Clark Thomson and R. C. Wright ; Gisborne Urban Area—Messrs. G. Crawshaw and J. S. Wauchop ; Hastings Urban Area—Messrs. G. F. Roach and G. A. Maddison ; 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 J. Clark Thomson ; Gisborne High School Board—Mr. L. T. Burnard ; Napier Technical High School Board—Messrs. A. King and J. Clark Thomson ; Waipawa Technical Classes Association—Mr. C. H. Critchley.

*Finance.*—The receipts for the year totalled £190,316 5s. 6d., and the payments £193,307 13s. 2d. The credit cash balance on all accounts on 31st December, 1924, was £4,553 8s. 5d.

*Replacement of Long Desks.*—The Board learns with gratification of your decision to provide funds for the replacement of long desks, of which, unfortunately, we have so many in our schools. The replacement of these desks with dual desks of a modern type will effect an immediate improvement in the conditions of many schools—an improvement which will be effected at a much earlier date than could be hoped for under your policy of remodelling annually a certain number of the school buildings. In fact, in many instances this "remodelling" of the furniture is more important than the remodelling of the buildings.

*Salaries of Teachers.*—Two new scales came into operation in 1924, one on the 1st February and one on the 1st April. Considerable changes have been effected by these scales, the most important being differentiation in the salaries of men and women assistants. Other important changes are the reduction in the number of grades of salaries of assistants, and the introduction of special payments to sole teachers and assistants in the remoter schools.

The reduction in the number of grades has had the immediate effect of reducing the number of changes in school staffs. The provision of remote allowances has already greatly benefited many schools by inducing better-qualified teachers to take up these positions, although another factor operating in this direction has been the regulation providing a bar to increments in the lower grades until at least two years' country service has been completed.

Another important change last year was the amendment of the Education Act providing that except in special circumstances no teacher is eligible for appointment to another permanent appointment until the 31st December of the year following the year of appointment.

On the whole, it may be said that the changes made last year have secured the greatest advantages to the country schools, and the Board desires to congratulate the Department on its efforts to ensure that emoluments for these schools will attract a more efficient class of teacher.

Notwithstanding the improvements made, however, there are still many anomalies in the salaries scales and regulations, which have a consequential effect on the appointment of teachers. The Teachers' Institute put certain proposals before you last year which were found to be impracticable. The Board is of opinion, however, that an improvement on the present system should be adopted, and suggests that the whole question should be investigated and reported on by a committee representing the Department, the Boards, and the Teachers' Institute.