

The experiment was tried in Christchurch of appointing a supervising instructor in needlework to organize the teaching in the primary schools of the city and its environs. The experiment appears so far to be very successful, and will doubtless be repeated in other districts as opportunity arises. Experiments were also continued during the year in giving housecraft instruction at one or two centres under conditions more nearly like those of the average home. Here also, under competent instructresses, very useful and interesting work was done. It is hoped that in time the provision of a model flat or cottage in which such teaching may be satisfactorily conducted will be fairly general.

The purchase and, where necessary, the importation of hand work supplies for the primary and Native schools has now been placed on a more permanent basis by the Department. From the reports of Boards and schools it is clear that the materials provided are suitable in kind, of good quality, and in sufficient quantity to satisfy average conditions. In the last two years some attempt has been made to help the infant classes by supplying special material of various kinds. The ranges and rates of supplies are, however, probably still considerably below the standards of English and American school practice, especially in regard to material for infant classes.

The Department's total payments for the year 1925-26 for salaries, materials, and incidentals in connection with manual-training classes, including instruction in handwork, amounted to £75,234, of which £42,986 was for salaries (excluding salaries of manual-training teachers at junior high schools), £21,635 for materials and incidentals, and £10,613 for handwork materials.

STAFFS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

The number of adult teachers employed in the primary departments of public schools at the end of 1925 was 6,002 (men, 2008; women, 3,994), an increase of 180 over the previous year. There were, in addition, 360 pupil-teachers and 641 probationers, compared with 513 and 805 respectively at the end of the previous year. The following table shows the number of teachers in the schools of the various grades :—

NUMBER OF ADULT TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN PRIMARY DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
DECEMBER, 1925.

Grade of School.			Sole Teachers.		Head Teachers.		Assistant Teachers.		Total Adult Teachers.		
			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	Total.
Grade 0	(1-8)	..	13	163	..	..	..	..	13	163	176
"	I (9-20)	..	262	487	..	..	..	..	262	487	749
"	II (21-35)	..	206	278	9	10	..	15	215	303	518
"	IIIa (36-50)	..	6	10	214	85	..	297	220	392	612
"	IIIb (51-80)	..	..	..	202	46	3	257	205	303	508
"	IIIc (81-120)	..	..	..	130	6	5	260	135	266	401
"	IV (121-240)	..	..	..	120	2	55	321	175	323	498
"	V (241-360)	..	..	..	71	2	104	358	175	360	535
"	VI (361-480)	..	..	..	48	..	106	315	154	315	469
"	VII (over 480)	..	..	..	106	1	348	1,081	454	1,082	1,536
All grades			487	938	900	152	621	2,904	2,008	3,994	6,002

Many complaints are received regarding the numerous changes of the teaching staffs of schools and the frequent employment of relieving teachers. Such changes affect the efficiency of the schools and the progress of the children. As indicated in last year's report, steps have been taken with the view of improving the position by requiring teachers to remain at least a year in one position before becoming eligible for appointment to another and by reducing the number of grades of assistants. The position is, however, still unsatisfactory, and too frequently relieving teachers are employed for periods between the resignation of one teacher and the appoint-