

The Unemployment Scheme No. 5 has been availed of by the Board and many Committees in the effecting of improvements to school properties. Under the scheme very extensive works have been carried out on the grounds of the Auckland Training College.

*General.*—The Board recognizes the valuable services rendered by School Committees and teachers, who have taken the greatest interest in the schools under their jurisdiction and who have co-operated with the Board in every possible way for the welfare of the children.

The Board is indebted to the Senior Inspector and his colleagues for their co-operation and advice on educational matters in this district.

#### TARANAKI.

(Chairman, Mr. S. G. SMITH.)

During the year the Board was given limited discretionary powers in the appointment of married women teachers. This brought under consideration the positions of ten head teachers, nine sole teachers, and nineteen assistant mistresses. Careful inquiries are being made into the financial responsibilities of the teachers concerned, and their positions will be kept steadily in view with the object of carrying out the requirements of the Act.

My Board realizes the difficulties with which your Department is placed in regard to finances, but emphasizes the necessity of the reduction of large classes as the first measure when the present financial difficulties become easier.

*Probationers.*—The Board greatly regrets that owing to circumstances over which it had no control it was not possible to find positions as probationers for all those who were qualified. Of the fifty-six applications at the beginning of the year from young persons desiring to become teachers at least thirty were fully qualified, but only twenty-four appointments could be made. The reports on these twenty-four young people were highly satisfactory, and it caused the Board some concern when it was learned that five of these had to be eliminated.

As a result of the disastrous earthquake which caused such devastation in the Hawke's Bay District, the building of the Central School, New Plymouth, was held up pending reports and recommendations from experts upon earthquake-proof buildings.

*Efficiency of Schools.*—For some years headmasters have set their own examinations in most of the subjects for proficiency, and awarded marks on their own estimate of the efficiency of the pupils, rather than upon a written test. If the percentage of passes unwarrantably increases, a continuance of this system, without an occasional check, lays teachers open to the embarrassing charge that the standard required for a primary school is being lowered.

*School Committees.*—There is again evidence of hearty co-operation between Committees and teachers, and many fine efforts have been made towards further improvements to the schools and surroundings. Many of the reports give a record of the social and athletic side of school life which my Board is glad to encourage.

Committees, referring to the Education Commission, 1930, have asked that, before any steps are taken to centralize education in Wellington, they be given an opportunity to express their views on any pending proposals.

#### WANGANUI.

(Acting-Chairman, Mr. E. F. HEMMINGWAY.)

*Efficiency of the Schools.*—The annual report of the Inspectors shows that the estimated efficiency of the schools visited was as follows: Excellent, 1; very good, 19; good, 61; very fair, 83; fair, 30; weak, 4. A comparison of the foregoing figures with those for the previous year will show that the standard of efficiency of the schools has been well maintained. It is gratifying to note that the number of schools described as "very good" is now 19, as compared with 13 so classified at the end of 1930.

*Unemployed Teachers.*—At the end of the year the Department brought forward a scheme for the rationing of work amongst unemployed teachers. The scheme was adopted by the Board, and as a result 53 of the 114 teachers unemployed at the beginning of the current year were placed in temporary positions for the duration of the first term. These will be replaced at the beginning of the second term by other teachers from the unemployed list, and by the end of the year all teachers without permanent positions will have had their share of the temporary work available. The Board feels that the Department is to be congratulated upon the formulation of a scheme, the adoption of which has enabled many young teachers who would otherwise have suffered the discouragement of continued unemployment, to keep definitely in touch with teaching, and to make some progress in their profession.

*Health Camp.*—In the Chairman's report for the year 1930 it was indicated that a site for a permanent health camp had been donated to the Board. This site, which comprises 20 acres, is situated at Castlecliff, and is within five miles of the City Post-office. The donor is Dr. A. H. E. Wall, of Wanganui, and to him the Board extends its hearty gratitude for his generous gift.

*Earthquake Refugee Children.*—As a result of the earthquake disaster which visited the Hawke's Bay District in February, it was necessary to provide school accommodation for the children belonging to refugee families who had assembled in Palmerston North. Temporary schools were established at the Awapuni Racecourse and Show-ground Refugee Camps, where the services of teachers from the Hawke's Bay District were utilized. The Board was also able to accommodate a number of the children at the schools in Palmerston North.

#### HAWKE'S BAY.

(Chairman, Mr. G. A. MADDISON.)

*The Earthquake.*—The disastrous earthquake which affected a large area of the Hawke's Bay District on the 3rd of February, 1931, did serious damage to many school buildings. Fortunately, most of the children were at play, and the loss of life was therefore small. One child was killed by a falling chimney at Mahora (Hastings) School, and three children were killed in the collapse of the brick infant school at Greenmeadows. Considering the extensive damage done to many schools, it is a matter of thankfulness that the loss of life was not greater.