

The Wellington Libraries' Department has again been responsible for the distribution of the books; and many Supplementary Readers and also general books have been rebound. Old books have been withdrawn and replaced by more up-to-date issues, and the stock has been enlarged, the cost being borne throughout by the Wellington Libraries' Department, assisted by the Education Board, and with the support of the Wellington School Committees' and Educational Federation. This scheme provides a wonderful amount of reading for the pupils of the city and suburban schools, far in excess of that obtainable from an individual school library, and should be availed of to the fullest possible extent.

The Board's thanks are due to the Wellington Libraries' Staff for the manner in which they have at all times assisted our schools, and for the help which they have given to the teachers.

School Committees Voluntary Contributions.—As far as possible the Board continued to subsidize the efforts of School Committees in connection with improvements to the school premises and the enlargement of school libraries. Owing to the effect of legislation passed during last session, however, very little assistance will be available in future, unless the Government accedes to the Board's request for the restoration of the subsidies scheme which was in force prior to the depression.

NELSON.

(Chairman, Hon. W. H. McINTYRE, M.L.C.)

School Age of Admission.—The Board is disappointed that the school age of admission has not yet been lowered to five years. Those parents who can afford to do so are sending their five-year-olds to private schools, but the less fortunate child still finds the door of the State school closed to him until the beginning of the term in which he reaches the age of six. Once again the Board most earnestly asks that during the coming year the age of admission will be again reduced to five years.

Rationing Scheme.—The altered conditions governing the rationing scheme provided employment for every certificated teacher who was without a permanent position. Although there may have been some criticism of the rates of salary and allowances prescribed, there can be no doubt that the new scheme was a decided success. Every young teacher was found a position and occupied a definite place in the education system of the Dominion. Practically all the rationed teachers, while hoping for better conditions ahead, were well satisfied with the arrangements made, and many expressions of appreciation were heard. It is very gratifying to know that for 1935 the salaries prescribed for rationed teachers will be still further increased.

School-grounds.—The high standard of environment at practically all schools was maintained, and at the end of the year the Board found it necessary to issue a further 12 environment certificates. The total number of certificates issued and endorsed at the end of the year was 39, and a further 25 schools received letters of commendation. Special mention must be made of the excellent swimming-bath erected, at very small cost, by the Committee, teacher, and pupils of Central Takaka.

CANTERBURY.

(Chairman, Mr. C. S. THOMPSON.)

Elementary Handwork in Primary Schools.—No handwork or infant-room material was supplied by the Department for 1934 classes due to the existing economic conditions. The Board's stock of material being completely exhausted, it was found necessary to incur a certain expenditure in this connection on necessitous cases; but owing to the limited funds available it was not found possible to cope adequately with the situation. No needlework capitation was made available by the Department in respect of schools staffed only by male teachers. In a few cases ladies of the district carried on the instruction in a voluntary capacity, and the Board's thanks are due to those who assisted in this direction.

Manual Training.—Manual instruction was continued in the Canterbury District on the same lines as in previous years. No extension of the work was possible, due to the Government's policy not to expand this branch of education until financial conditions were easier. It was anticipated, however, that this restriction would be relaxed to some extent in the new year.

There were nineteen centres in operation under fourteen Woodwork and thirteen Cookery Instructors. Pupils from 118 public and 23 private schools received instruction in woodwork and cookery, the respective numbers being approximately 3,739 boys and 3,514 girls.

Agricultural Instruction.—Through the closing of the Christchurch Training College for the year the services of Mr. L. W. McCaskill, Lecturer in Nature Study and Agriculture, were made available to the extent of two-thirds of the school-days in each term to augment the work of the regular staff of three Instructors. With few exceptions it was thus possible for an Instructor's visit to be made to each school in each term, and also to extend the visits to the larger schools to whole-day visits, enabling more attention to be given to nature-study programmes in the lower classes than had hitherto been possible.

The usual agricultural competitions were carried on, and a good measure of success obtained in all branches.

School Hygiene.—The School Medical Officers have carried out the programme of inspection in their usual efficient manner. Zeal and enthusiasm have been marked features of their work, and parents have every reason to feel grateful for the establishment and maintenance of a service which must have a beneficial effect on the future of young New Zealand.