

REPORT.

I. INTRODUCTORY AND GENERAL.

THE year 1936 has been marked by the restoration of educational facilities that were reduced or withdrawn during previous years, and also by the extension or introduction of other additional educational facilities.

The policy placed before the country by the Government and reaffirmed on its assuming office at the end of 1935 was summed up as follows :—

The readmission of the five-year-olds to public schools and the extension of kindergarten training.

The extension of teacher-training facilities to provide the necessary staff for smaller classes.

The rebuilding and reconditioning of old and unhygienic buildings.

More liberal supplies of equipment, including adequate library facilities.

The extension of dental treatment to all school-children.

Standard rates of pay for all teachers now serving under the rationing-scheme.

Right of appeal against non-appointment.

Improvement of the standard of teachers' residences.

As stated in my report for the year ended 31st December, 1935, on assuming control of the portfolio of Education I found that the most pressing educational question before the Government was that of the readmission to the public and Native schools of children of five years of age. During the depression the lower limit of school age had been raised to six years. The first step towards realizing the Government's educational policy was, therefore, a decision to readmit the excluded children. This decision, which was most widely appreciated and acclaimed, became effective upon the reopening of the schools in the year 1936.

The influx of these children into the schools taxed accommodation in the infant-rooms and presented in a few cases temporary staffing difficulties, but, due to the praiseworthy co-operation of the Education Boards and teachers, these difficulties were, in general, satisfactorily overcome.

It was also decided to reopen the Wellington and Dunedin Training Colleges, which had been closed as from the beginning of the year 1933. As stated in my previous report referred to, the rapid absorption during 1935 of teachers who had been employed as supernumeraries under the rationing scheme made it evident that a shortage would be experienced towards the end of the year 1936, due partly to the normal losses from the service and partly to the readmission of children of five years of age. The reopening in February, 1936, of the Wellington and Dunedin Training Colleges was accompanied, therefore, by a considerable increase in the numbers admitted to training in the four colleges. The allowances payable to training-college students were also increased, the new rates being £70 per annum (as compared with £20 and £30 per annum previously), and a boarding-allowance, where necessary, of £30 per annum (in place of the boarding-allowance loan of £40 per annum).

During the year the training-college regulations were amended to provide for a Selection Committee to assist Education Boards in selecting students for training. In addition, a regulation was made giving students rejected as not medically fit for the Education service an opportunity of appealing to the Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department.

As an experiment in co-ordinating the work of the training college with that of the University, a Board of Studies was set up for the Wellington Training College to determine, in particular, the course of study best suited to the individual needs and capacities of the students.

The scheme for rationing work among teachers not in permanent positions was discontinued in the year 1936. Instead, all such teachers who were certificated were employed as relieving-teachers. It was recognized that many teachers who had served under the rationing-scheme were older and more experienced than the teachers normally selected as probationary assistants, and the position was accordingly