

SOUTHLAND.

(Chairman, Mr. S. RICE.)

District High Schools.—It is pleasing to record the establishment of two additional district high schools in the Southland District. After the establishment of Forms III at Nightcaps and Queenstown as temporary measures, the district high schools commenced operations on the 1st February and 14th June respectively. The establishment of these two schools will be of great advantage to two isolated districts. Secondary education for children from the Nightcaps district was only available by attending the Riverton or Invercargill schools, necessitating long train journeys or boarding. No facilities for secondary education were available for the Queenstown children. Both these districts are growing, and it is anticipated that the roll numbers of the secondary departments will increase during the current year.

Special Schools.—Great difficulty has been experienced during the last year to maintain the maximum roll number at the special school. On her annual visit the Supervisor of Special Classes recommended thirteen children for the class as vacancies occurred. This number was exhausted half-way through the year, the reason being that the majority of parents objected to their children attending the special school. It is to be regretted that parents are short-sighted in this matter and do not appreciate the excellent work that is being done.

Technical Instruction.—The Board has again to place on record its appreciation of the work being done by the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union in organizing adult classes in dressmaking. During the year there were seventy-eight classes in operation, fifty-seven being day and twenty-one evening classes. Eight hundred and ninety-three students were under instruction, and the two instructresses were employed full time throughout the year.

Agriculture, Science, and Nature Study.—The appointment of an additional Agricultural Instructor to the district was mentioned in the Board's report for 1936. The past year has shown the benefits that are to be derived by the employment of two instructors. Besides the advantage of instructors being able to visit each school more than once per annum, the opportunity has been given to foster the work of the boys' and girls' clubs.

School and Class Libraries.—Increased grants have been made available for the purchase of library books. Acting on the recommendation of the Senior Inspector, the Board has given teachers the opportunity to select fiction, historical, geographical, or other reference works according to the needs of each particular school library. In schools of Grade IV and upwards it was insisted upon that a portion of the grant be allocated to the infant department.

Radio in Schools.—During the year nine schools took advantage of the Department's special grant towards the cost of installing radio sets. In country districts where finances have not allowed the purchase of sets a number of teachers have fitted up the school and used their private machines. It is anticipated that in the near future there will be very few schools without radio sets.

Intermediate Schools.—Preliminary steps have been taken towards the establishment of two intermediate schools in Invercargill. During the year the Department's Chief Inspector visited Invercargill and addressed the Board on the advantages of intermediate education. It is anticipated that the erection of the buildings will take place during the current year.