

On the other hand, it will not release the schools from the domination of the University Entrance Examination, as curricula and courses will still have to conform to Entrance requirements. It does not satisfy the demand for a more suitable type of general examination to meet the requirements of business houses, the Public Service, and the professions. This is really the crux of the question. University Entrance is far too narrow in its scope for the general purposes for which it has, unfortunately, come to be used. What is needed is an examination which covers the work of technical as well as secondary schools and opens up a career for all types of talents and not for some only. The School Certificate Examination was instituted in 1934 with that end in view, and I am firmly of the opinion that the only means of securing freedom in our secondary schools' curricula is to abolish the University Entrance Examination at its present standard and to substitute for it another demanding a standard of attainment that would be reached in one year of advanced study after passing the School Certificate Examination. Accrediting could and should be resorted to at the higher stage with advantage, but I doubt whether there will be much benefit to secondary education in this country in the Senate's present scheme.

UNIVERSITY BURSARIES.

The conditions governing the award of all classes of University national bursaries have been revised, and a comprehensive new set of regulations was approved by the Hon. the Minister during the year and is now in operation. The chief improvements have been in the direction of making the tenure and the emoluments of the "special" bursaries (*i.e.*, those in agriculture, architecture, engineering, fine arts, and home science) uniform throughout, in extending the tenure of all types of bursaries to four years (five years in the case of medical students) without the necessity of a special application for the extension to the fourth year, and in liberalizing the pre-requisite qualifications for candidates for engineering and agricultural bursaries. An innovation has been the imposition of a common maximum age limit of twenty-five years for candidates for any of the special bursaries.

Expenditure on University bursaries has continued to increase rapidly; the amount spent on all types in 1940 was £34,917, as against £31,232 in 1939 and £27,644 in 1938. There will probably be a further increase during 1941, but afterwards the expenditure should remain stabilized at about £35,000 per annum. The total number of bursars rose from 1,465 in 1939 to 1,623 in 1940. The great majority of these held ordinary bursaries (1,360), entitling them to University fees up to £20 per annum. One hundred and sixty-seven (as against 136) held the more valuable boarding bursaries, and 96 held special bursaries. Competition for these last continues to be keen, especially for those in agriculture and in home science. For the eighteen home-science bursaries awarded at the close of the year there were seventy fully-qualified candidates, and the task of selection was by no means an easy one.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SCHOOLS.

During the past year more than the usual number of changes have taken place in the headships of our secondary schools. Christchurch has been particularly affected by these, as all four of the secondary schools in that centre will commence the present year with a new Principal. The retirement of Mr. G. F. Lancaster from the Christchurch Boys' High School, of Miss P. M. Clark from the Christchurch Girls' High School, and of Miss A. Eastwood from the Southland Girls' High School is recorded with regret and with appreciation of their years of fine service. Experimentation with regard to curricula and courses is still in evidence in many of the schools, but its progress has been hindered of late by the difficulty in securing qualified teachers. In this connection attention may be drawn to the increasing popularity of general biology as a school subject. Last year no fewer than 2,323 pupils in secondary and combined schools were studying it, as against only 755 in 1937. The recent admission of biology as a subject in the Public Service Entrance Examination will serve to strengthen its position on the curricula of the schools.

Owing largely to the enthusiasm and the patient labour of a special committee of teachers of French in the Wellington area, and through the willing co-operation of the Director of Broadcasting, Professor Boyd-Wilson, and the French Consul in Wellington, a long-cherished scheme of providing a regular series of broadcasts in French by a Native of France has been satisfactorily arranged for 1941. The talks will be given once a week at an hour chosen by the schools to suit the convenience of the majority, and are to commence in March, 1941. The committee is to be heartily commended on its success in inaugurating the scheme. It will undoubtedly be warmly welcomed in those schools that have facilities for receiving broadcasts.

The position with regard to school libraries remains the same. The grant of £1,000 for post-primary schools, referred to in my last report, was repeated in 1940 and, though small, was much appreciated by the schools.

The question of vocational guidance in post-primary schools has again been brought to notice by the publication by the Council for Educational Research of Mr. McQueen's survey entitled "Vocational Guidance in New Zealand." The advantages and the disadvantages associated with the present system of employment of vocational guidance officers and careers teachers in the schools have been fully investigated by Mr. McQueen, and his conclusions are worthy of attention. At the present time there is only one vocational guidance officer in a secondary school, but there are about eighteen careers teachers. Secondary teachers are not altogether satisfied with the situation regarding these latter, inasmuch as in many cases part of the normal teaching duties of the careers teacher must be taken over by his colleagues, whilst he continues to receive his full salary, together with a considerable additional emolument. The position is a somewhat difficult one.

During the year there has been considerable building activity in connection with secondary schools. The new technical block at the Gore High School was completed and is now ready for occupation; additional class-rooms were built for the Hamilton High School, as also two new laboratories at the Timaru Boys' High School and a new woodwork room at the Napier Boys' High School. The rebuilding of Marlborough College was also completed. The new hostel at the Napier Girls' High School, to replace the one destroyed by the earthquake, was completed before the end of the year, and additions were made to the New Plymouth Boys' High School hostel. A new Principal's residence was erected at Nelson College. Further class-room accommodation was in process of erection at Palmerston North Girls' and New Plymouth Boys' High Schools. At Whangarei a new hostel for the girls is going up, and a beginning has been made with the new girls' school. The rebuilding of Nelson College has also been proceeding steadily.