

It has been arranged that the Correspondence School will give assistance to teachers in small country schools who find themselves unable to offer full courses to older pupils kept at school by the raising of the school leaving age. The school has worked very closely with the Army Education and Welfare Service in providing correspondence courses for servicemen. The work of the Correspondence School Parents' Association has been greatly appreciated.

The Teaching Profession.—The effect of the war upon the stalling of schools is becoming greater each year, for practically no men are available to replace natural losses. Women are replacing men to a large extent in the primary schools and to a smaller extent in the secondary, but, good though their work is, there has been an inevitable loss in efficiency, for many are relatively inexperienced, and there is a serious scarcity of teachers of science, mathematics, and technical subjects. The schools, I am convinced, cannot make more sacrifices of staff without the interests of the children suffering.

The interests of soldier-teachers, as I stated in my last report, are being watched with scrupulous care, and those who are returning are being given every opportunity to freshen up their professional skills by attending training college or spending periods as observers in schools on full pay.

A joint committee of teachers and departmental officers brought down in 1939 a suggested new salary scale for secondary teachers. This scale was held over owing to the war, but the teachers in 1943 again pressed for a revision of salaries. In the meantime the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942 had been gazetted, but the Stabilization Commission finally agreed to the draft 1939 scale being adopted, on the grounds that it was under consideration before the coming into force of the regulations. The Government adopted the 1939 draft scale, which gives an average rise in salary of about 9 per cent., at an additional cost of roughly £50,000 a year. Secondary teachers have expressed some dissatisfaction with the new scale, but, in spite of no small sympathy with their case, I cannot see that more could have been done in view of the policy of stabilization. I have, however, offered to set up, if they so desire, a consultative committee on the recruitment, salaries, and conditions of work of secondary teachers, as is recommended in the report on the Post-Primary Curriculum.

A very significant change was made in the classification of technical-school teachers: differentiation between Division I (professional) teachers and Division II (trade) teachers was abolished. This classification was based on the assumption that the trade teacher with the highest possible qualifications in his craft was on a lower plane than a teacher with a degree or similar qualification. This had been a cause of dissatisfaction for years, and the Technical School Teachers' Association had asked for the removal of the anomaly. I was glad to be able so to give a proper status to highly-qualified teachers of practical subjects.

Training of Teachers.—A fruitful conference of training college Principals was held this year, and several new facilities were given to the colleges as a result of it. Among other things, it was decided to transfer all graduate students to Auckland in 1944 and to build up in the college there a strong secondary training department. The lack of adequate training for secondary teaching has long been felt. Schemes were also considered to assist teachers in service to secure special training towards the specialist qualifications that are being increasingly demanded in the modern primary school. These schemes will be discussed with the New Zealand Educational Institute before any further steps are taken.

Native Schools. An encouraging feature of the Native Schools Service has been the growing number of Maoris who are qualifying as teachers in these schools. The numbers of Maoris now in the Service are: Certificated head teachers, 4; certificated assistants, 16; uncertificated teachers, 14; probationary assistants, 13; junior assistants, 97; training college students, 34.

University Education.—The temporary suspension of building activities and the increase in the numbers of students in certain faculties due to war conditions have led to serious accommodation problems in the University colleges. A new pathology building at the Medical School and major additions to the chemistry building were begun at Otago University, and I am hopeful that building will be able to proceed in the other colleges before long.

The Government established fifteen bursaries in science of a maximum annual value of £70 each, one purpose being to increase the number of graduates capable of teaching science and mathematics in the secondary schools.

Adult Education. Immediately after the entry of Japan into the war there was naturally a slump in the demand for adult education, but within recent months there has been a very marked revival right throughout New Zealand. "Community Weeks" and "Education Weeks" have become quite a common feature in the smaller towns. Interest has concentrated on community centres, and the one at Feilding, started with the help of the Department in 1938, has received much favourable attention. I believe that the community centre provides the answers to many of the outstanding problems of adult education, but before any universal system is decided upon I should like to see four or five experimental centres started in widely-varying conditions. I am hopeful that the Education Conference will mark the beginning of a new era for adult education in New Zealand.

The Department and the organizations associated with it have continued to play an important part in connection with the Army Education and Welfare Service.

Rural Education.—With the increasing demand for primary production in New Zealand, it is only natural to expect a growing interest in problems of rural education. There has been, in particular, a quite spontaneous burst of interest in agricultural high schools, and demands for new ones have come in from many quarters. I should like to see a limited number of agricultural high schools established but there is no type of school so liable to failure, and I am having the whole situation most carefully investigated before any step is taken.

Shortages of petrol, vehicles, and tires have prevented any great expansion in school conveyance services, and have postponed many consolidation schemes. Cuts which were made in some services in 1942 were largely restored before the onset of winter in 1943.

Relatively few district high schools were included by the University in the list of schools approved for accrediting. The University made it clear, however, that this was in no sense a reflection on their efficiency, but was due only to their small numbers of candidates making a consistent judgment of standards difficult. Realizing that some country children might be placed at a disadvantage by many district high schools not being able to accredit, the Government instituted a new type of bursary to help such children to do Sixth Form work at a school on the accrediting list. Any child who does not live within reach of an accrediting school and who has gained the School Certificate will be awarded a bursary of £10 a year for one or two years to enable him to work towards accrediting, a boarding bursary,