

1944
NEW ZEALAND

EDUCATION:
PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

[In continuation of E. 2 of 1943]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency

NOTE.—Some of the tables have been omitted because the information or part of it can be obtained elsewhere. These tables are as follows, and the tables to which reference can be made are also given: Table A 5—see Table E 2 in E.-1 for median ages; Table A 9—see Table O 1 in E.-1; Table A 14—Table E 5 in E.-1; Table B 2—see Table E 6 in E.-1; Table D 2—see Table E 3 in E.-1; Table D 4—see Table N in E.-1; Table E 2—see Table D in E.-1; Table J 2—see Table E 5 in E.-1.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS (MR. G. E. OVERTON) FOR
THE YEAR 1943

SIR,—

I have the honour to present the following report on the primary schools in New Zealand for the year ending 31st December, 1943 :—

Biennial Plan of Inspection.—Although this has been introduced under difficult conditions, especially restriction of transport, Inspectors agree that the greater elasticity has enabled them to broaden the scope of their work. A more comprehensive view of the working of the schools is obtained, more time is available for practical assistance and demonstration where most needed, and there is greater opportunity for encouraging the introduction of worth-while innovations in school organization and practice. In some instances the routine of ordinary inspection has been varied. One Inspector has visited a larger type of school alone and has been better able to see the working of the school as a unit, and to give advice to obtain appropriate co-ordination of the work from class to class. One Inspector has, in other cases, carried out a survey of some particular phase of the instruction right throughout the school. Perhaps one of the best features of the plan is that there is more time for full discussion with head teachers and members of the staff on their work and also on modern methods of education.

Wider contacts have been made by Inspectors. Primary-school Inspectors have joined with their post-primary colleagues in visits to secondary and technical schools, and have attended combined meetings of post-primary and primary head teachers to discuss means of obtaining a better linking up of the work of the schools. In addition, every opportunity has been taken to meet groups of teachers, branches of the New Zealand Educational Institute, members of School Committees, home and school associations, and other bodies interested in education. In passing, it is gratifying to note an increase in the number of parent-teacher associations. It is important that parents should be kept informed of developments in the education of their children, especially when new methods or courses of work are introduced. Much misunderstanding can, in this way, be removed.

War Conditions.—Right from the beginning of the war the teaching service has given up to the Armed Forces practically all the young men teachers as they have completed their training, and in many cases before they have done so. Some schools, especially those in remote sawmilling and farming districts, which, owing to difficulties of accommodation often involving “baching,” can be staffed only by single men teachers have had to be closed, or have been kept open only by temporary expedients. It will be impossible to keep all these schools adequately staffed unless a number of teachers, unfit for service overseas, are released from the Forces.

It would be idle to say that there has been no loss of efficiency in the schools as a result of war conditions through depletion and changes of trained staffs, and it speaks well for the fine work accomplished by the great body of teachers that the decline has been less than expected. Many staff changes have been brought about by the calling-up of men teachers. The system of temporary war appointments has operated successfully, the permanent positions of teachers in the Forces being kept open for them on their return.

The interests of soldier teachers have been well safeguarded by various other means. They may lodge general applications for promotion to higher positions, and be appointed to these in their absence. Their marks for efficiency are automatically increased at each grading, superannuation payments are made for them, and military service counts as teaching service for computation of salary increments. During the year, further amendments to regulations were made to cover the cases of training-college students whose studies have been interrupted by military service. On resuming their training they are paid the salary or allowances they would have been entitled to had military service not intervened. As in the case of soldier teachers, their rights as teachers have been preserved and concessions made in the length of the period of training service, and, where warranted, in examination requirements for certificates.