

The Committee worked extremely hard, and, whilst it found it impossible, because of varying conditions, to produce a scale common to all the services, it did manage to work out a primary scale and post-primary scale which had a common basic scale and which keyed into each other at certain points. After the proposals had been submitted to the Stabilization Commission, the Government found itself unable, because of stabilization policy, to accept the Committee's scales in full, but it agreed to modified scales which give substantial increases to all branches of the Service. The new scales are, in general, simpler than the old ones, but I must admit that they are still more complicated than I would wish. They will be embodied in regulations in 1947, but payments at the new rates began as from 1st April, 1946. I should like to express my gratitude to the Chairman and members of the Committee for the excellent work they did.

The report of the Committee on Grading which was presented during the year, has since been published, and teachers have been invited to comment on it. If the scheme proposed by the Committee is found to be a real improvement on the existing one, I hope to be able to act in the matter in 1947.

The policy of giving financial assistance to teachers' refresher courses, which was begun in 1945, was extended in 1946. A sum of £2,000 was put at the disposal of the teachers' organizations, who used it to conduct two major refresher courses in general science for secondary, technical, and district high school teachers, as well as to assist other smaller courses. The courses were most successful, and £3,000 was put on the estimates for 1946-47 to allow of an expansion of the scheme in January, 1947.

I have described in earlier reports the steps taken to safeguard the rights of teachers entering the Armed Services during the war. Whilst expressing great satisfaction with the general provisions made, the New Zealand Educational Institute thought that certain of the younger and more efficient soldier-teachers had probably lost grading marks owing to the automatic method of awarding them that had of necessity been adopted. I agreed, therefore, to set up a special grading Adjustment Board to consider appeals by soldier-teachers. It is expected to complete its sittings early in 1947.

Post-primary Schools

It is in the field of post-primary education that perhaps the greatest advances were made during the year. The post-primary schools are still adapting themselves to the changed conditions resulting from the introduction in 1944 of accrediting for University Entrance and from the consequent alterations in the post-primary curriculum. Indeed, it was only during 1946 that the School Certificate Examination was set for the first time under the new prescriptions.

Every effort is being made to help the post-primary schools to meet the new demands made upon them by the fact that they now cater for almost the whole population instead of for a selected group. In 1916, for instance, only 37 per cent. of the children leaving primary schools went to some form of post-primary education; in 1946 the percentage, including children leaving intermediate schools and departments, was 85. Since the 37 per cent. who went beyond Standard 6 in 1916 were, on the whole, selected for their ability, it follows that the average level of intelligence of Form III to-day cannot be as high as it was thirty years ago, and that the range of ability within the form must be greater than ever before. This means that we must have far more varied courses in each school and far more opportunities for practical activities. It also means, incidentally, that, however good the teaching, the average level of academic ability in Form III cannot well reach the level it did a generation ago. This is a factor which is generally overlooked by those who criticize the standard of work in the schools. The task of the post-primary-school teacher is obviously very different from what it was thirty years ago, and he needs all the help that can be given him to adapt his teaching to the new situation. Developments in this field during 1946 include the following:—

(1) A new staffing schedule gave about fifty additional teachers in secondary schools and about seventy in technical schools.