

Early in the year a revised syllabus in oral expression was issued stressing the importance of speech work in its broadest sense, and suggesting methods of getting the best results in this phase of school work. In October a new syllabus in history and geography was presented to teachers. This syllabus is noteworthy, as it outlines a combined course in history and geography and is arranged as a series of topics, units, or "centres of interest" for each class around which, to quote the *Education Gazette*, "the teacher is free to organize pupil activity in the manner that best suits his own interests and the resources of the local district." Both the syllabuses in oral expression and in history and geography were based on reports of Revision Committees plus the comments of teachers to whom the reports had been circulated. The Nature Study and General Science Revision Committee reported in November, and its comprehensive suggestions for the approach to nature work have been circulated through the teachers' organ, *National Education*.

TEXT-BOOKS

The arithmetic text-books and answers are now complete and, for the most part, are being well used. Where comprehensive planning of arithmetic occurs, a certain amount of the book work has to be supplemented by additional exercises prepared by the teacher. In some classes the pupils are left too much to themselves with the text-book, and this results in a rather disturbing amount of incoherent figuring, particularly in the case of simple problems. The printing of text-books in English, all of which have been prepared by the Department, is being continued. During the year, the Standard 2 and Standard 3 English books were distributed. In order that the new syllabus in history and geography may be carried out adequately, the supply of reference books will be supplemented by the preparation of material on New Zealand topics which will be published in the *School Journal*. A useful reference book, "Native Trees and Shrubs," was printed and supplied to each school.

EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

There are fifty special classes for the education of backward children in operation throughout New Zealand. Besides these, the Correspondence School caters for over two hundred primary pupils in this category. For pupils who cannot benefit from the work in special classes, three occupation centres are in existence where these pupils are being developed in habits of personal hygiene and the simpler homecrafts. To allow country children to take advantage of these special provisions, a hostel has been established at one centre. Nineteen classes are provided in hospitals so that convalescent children may be given some individual educational work prior to their return to ordinary school life.

To give remedial work for speech-defective cases, twenty clinics have been approved and some of these employ two or three therapists catering for the needs of these children over an extended area, both in city and country centres. Increased staffs were provided this year for the two schools for the deaf, partly to cope with pupil increase, but more particularly to allow more individual teaching of these children.

The visiting-teacher system introduced some years ago continues to develop and has proved a worthwhile link between the school and the home. In most cases the mal-adjusted child is treated early, and the follow-up work of the visiting teachers does much to counteract any tendency to relapse.

GRADING OF TEACHERS

Consideration was given to the report of the Consultative Committee on Grading, and thanks are due to this Committee for the very comprehensive report which it submitted. After very full discussion with the New Zealand Educational Institute, a somewhat amended scheme was finally approved and will be put into operation in 1948. It is hoped that the new system will bring about greater stability of the teaching staff and remove some of the present grading disabilities.