

those in small districts who found their opportunities for promotion very much restricted. Every appointment for which more than one applicant has to be considered necessitates grading of some kind, and teachers prefer that this grading should be done with due deliberation by people who know them, and not in a hurry, appointment by appointment, by people who cannot possibly know all the applicants. Hence, of necessity, the onus of grading was thrown on the Inspectorate.

Grading, in common with other systems and policies, has had consequences that were not all foreseen. It has secured the advantages which prompted its adoption, and, in addition, it has made teachers fully conscious of the fact that only by good work can promotion be secured. Similarly, through the right of appeal against grading, it has kept in check any tendency on the part of Inspectors to discharge their duties perfunctorily.

Few systems, however, are wholly advantageous where human beings are concerned. Thus the necessity of grading annually all teachers, experienced and inexperienced, in first-rate or third-rate schools, has tended to make Inspectors devote too much of their limited time to observing teachers, and too little to discussing and demonstrating better methods. The issue of a graded list has also, by making teachers aware of what positions their grading could secure them, tended to make teachers move from position to position as soon as the opportunity arose. This tendency is manifested much more among the single teachers than among the married, whom family circumstances render much more immobile. But it would be unfair to place the whole blame for this on the grading-system; the remedy lies very probably in a salary scale which would make it possible for a teacher to receive several annual salary promotions in the one position.

Minor criticism to the effect that grading leads to "window-dressing" on the part of teachers to deceive the Inspectors can arise only from lack of intimate knowledge of our schools. Our teachers are seen in due course by many Inspectors, and it can be said with the utmost confidence that the teachers occupying the more responsible positions have not attained them by dishonourable methods. There is a little to be said for the contention that some nervous teachers do not acquit themselves with advantage in the presence of the Inspector, but this is a disability which usually disappears with experience; further, the Inspectors have many other ways of assessing a teacher's ability—*e.g.*, consultation with the head teacher, inspection of the pupil's work-books, discussions with the pupils. In any case, how could an appointing Board have a better opportunity of assessing such a teacher?

There is probably some ground for believing that the grading-system makes a small proportion of teachers reluctant to depart from well-tried methods lest the possible failure of new methods would retard their promotion on the graded list. Inspectors, however, encourage experiment, and our most rapidly advancing teachers are those with the most open minds. Whatever the system of promotion the same teachers will be reluctant, for a similar reason, to depart from the security of traditional methods.

Finally, it must be said that Inspectors make no claim whatever to strict accuracy in their grading: they do their best. Fortunately, all teachers are seen in their time by a number of Inspectors, each of whom is an independent judge. The inspectors did not seek this task; it was thrust upon them. Their work would be pleasanter without it. Apparently, however, no other system on which promotions can be based has yet met with the approval of the teaching profession, in whose interest the system is maintained.

CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOLS.

The demand for consolidation of small country schools continues, and several amalgamations have been made in convenient centres. The demand is particularly strong in the Auckland Education District, but manifests itself also in all the other districts. At present over 10,000 pupils are conveyed daily to school. This has enabled over 100 small schools to be closed, and also made unnecessary the establishment of at least an equal number of small rural schools. Now that the matter has the recommendation of the New Zealand Farmers' Union we may expect a continually increasing support for this method of securing for our rural population educational facilities more nearly approaching those provided in the cities. The need for consolidation is obvious when we bear in mind that of a total of nearly 2,500 primary schools no fewer than half have only one teacher, who, as a rule, is generally young and consequently relatively inexperienced. If we are to provide for our rural population the most suitable type of education, we must avoid dissipating our resources among a host of small schools, whose teachers generally regard them as stepping-stones to promotion. We shall secure stability of staffing-conditions in rural schools chiefly by making service therein more attractive. Now that our road- and rail-transport systems have recently undergone such a revolutionary change, it is reasonable to assume that our rural education system will, in common with all other rural services, take advantage thereof.

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS.

The number of Intermediate Schools shows no increase over that of last year. A number of applications for the establishment of such schools are, however, under consideration. The reports received on the schools are very encouraging, and indicate that where a sufficient number of pupils between that ages of eleven and fourteen are available to allow of a high degree of specialization of staff, and of the whole time attention of a headmaster whose special concern is the problems of this age-group, the pupils are enabled to lead a fuller life physically, mentally, and socially than as merely the senior division of the traditional primary school.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

Our eighty-four district high schools, located far from large centres of population, provide a reasonably good post-primary education. But they are, in general, seriously handicapped by inadequate staffing. This, of course, is due to the small roll number of the secondary department.