

These changes, taken in conjunction with the more generous provision of University national bursaries and boarding and travelling allowances of various kinds, bring the ideal of free education from the kindergarten to the University very appreciably nearer.

EXAMINATIONS.

With the elimination of the distinction between junior and senior free places, the necessity for an examination of intermediate standard at the end of the pupil's second year no longer exists, and the Intermediate Examination will, in consequence, not be held after 1937. The "syllabus" of this examination served a useful purpose in giving teachers some idea of the standard which their pupils might reasonably be expected to reach at the end of their second post-primary year, and this syllabus will still be necessary for the purposes of the Public Service Entrance Examination, discontinued in 1932 and reintroduced by the Public Service Commissioners in 1937. For this examination 1,123 candidates entered, 662 of whom were successful. The standard of the Public Service Entrance Examination is substantially the same as was that of the Intermediate Examination, except in English, arithmetic, Latin, French, mathematics, and history. In these subjects separate papers of a slightly higher standard are set.

THE NEW EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE.

One of the most outstanding events of the year was the visit of the New Education Fellowship lecturers, who spent some time in New Zealand on their way to Australia. Organized by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, the conferences of the four main centres were notable for the keen enthusiasm and animated discussion which they aroused. The numbers attending the conferences were sufficient evidence of the keenness of teachers to keep abreast with modern educational developments. The system of grading and inspection in vogue in New Zealand was severely criticized, emphasis being laid on the idea that the inspectorial function should be to supervise and assist rather than to grade and criticize. However, when one looks back on the chaotic state of affairs as regards salary and grading from which the present system rescued us, one is naturally chary about throwing that system overboard without a careful scrutiny of what is to take its place. Examinations also came under fire, but the general opinion was not in favour of abolition, but of a variety of tests in examination plus an accumulation of information derived in all sorts of ways. Possibly, however, the greatest value of the visit was the renewal of the interest of the public in educational problems, the eradication of any spirit of satisfaction with the *status quo* which is so inimical to progress, and the stimulating breadth of the Fellowship's concept of education.

SCHOOLS OVERSEAS.

A report on her impressions has been furnished by Miss Hetherington on her return from her year's leave abroad. Miss Hetherington visited about fifty schools and colleges and was also present at several educational congresses. She reports a marked change in the spirit of the schools in England since her last visit, but not such marked changes in methods of teaching as she had anticipated. Considerable expansion in the upper sections of the primary schools and in the lower forms of central and secondary schools will be necessitated by the raising of the school age, and she found preparations to meet this problem in progress. Great impetus has also recently been imparted to the movement for physical training amongst both school pupils and adults. Generally speaking, she considered the chief advantages of the "orthodox" type of post-primary school to lie in better accommodation and better staffing, the opportunities for more specialization for the teachers, the existence of better libraries, and better equipment in the "subject" class-rooms such as those for history and geography. In many of the departments of school life she thought the standard attained here came remarkably close to that of English schools. She was also much impressed by the opportunities and advantages of some of the schools—private ones—imbued with the principles of the New Education Fellowship. She considered that the moral and spiritual values fostered in them by the absence of irritating restrictions, the framing of curriculum and instruction in accordance with the pupil's individual interests, the belief in the cultivation of initiative and in tranquil mental growth, and many other good features might be aimed at and attained under progressively improved material conditions here.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

It must be admitted that, when compared with the library equipment provided in other countries, that obtaining in our own secondary schools is strikingly and disappointingly meagre. With two or three notable exceptions our school libraries are quite inadequate, both in range and in numbers of books, and are in many cases very poorly housed. But a library is as essential for work in such subjects as English, history, and geography as are the laboratories for work in any of the sciences. It is merely a platitude to say that the situation regarding libraries needs serious attention.

At present the only source of income to meet the necessary expenditure on libraries is the incidentals grant, but Boards of Governors, though in nearly all cases sympathetic towards the claims of libraries, find the other demands upon this fund so urgent that there is usually extremely little money left for the purchase of books. This is especially the case with the smaller- and middle-sized schools, where the incidentals grant is only just sufficient to meet current administrative expenses. It would appear that one solution of the present difficulty would be to create an additional capitation grant, somewhat similar to the existing grant for science and manual classes, payable to Boards for the sole purpose of establishing and maintaining suitable school libraries. Principals and teachers of literary subjects would undoubtedly welcome and appreciate such assistance.