

who has taken a modicum of agriculture in his school course, often to the exclusion of more deserving candidates who are much better equipped to take a degree course in science. It is to be borne in mind that one, if not the chief, reason for the Education Department's assistance to the holders of special bursaries is to ensure a sufficient supply of well-qualified specialist teachers, particularly in home-science, agriculture, and fine arts, and to a less extent, perhaps, in engineering. It is obvious, therefore, that the selections should be so devised as not to exclude the most promising candidates, and it is hoped during the coming year to effect some improvement on the lines broadly suggested above. For the agricultural bursary, for example, the completion of a rural or agricultural course at school might well be made an alternative qualification and not a compulsory one.

ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENTS.

During the year the capitation grants for material used in manual and science classes were raised considerably and are now on a very satisfactory basis. The rates for woodwork and metalwork have been raised from 2s. per annum per pupil for each hour per week to 4s. per annum, those for chemistry, cookery, and home-science from 2s. to 3s., and those for other approved subjects from 1s. to 1s. 6d. The increases will be particularly welcomed in those secondary schools in which both woodwork and metalwork are taught; under the old rates the classes in these subjects were being starved and their development hindered.

The allowances for heads of departments and for first women assistants, which had been denied to all new appointees to these positions since 1932, were also restored during the year.

The secondary schools have been brought into closer contact with the development of vocational guidance by the appointment of Careers Teachers in each of the secondary schools in the four main centres, some sixteen in all. These teachers are expected to devote at least a part of their school time to making direct contact with the pupils and generally to assist the Vocational Guidance Officers in the work at the "Youth Centres." On the whole, the appointments have been productive of much useful help to young people seeking suitable employment, though in a few cases it has been found very difficult to release the teachers from their class-room duties for more than a few hours per week. Should the duties of Careers Officers become more varied or more onerous, it would appear necessary to amend the staffing scales for schools where they are employed.

EVENING CLASSES.

The past year has seen a further development in the extension of facilities for tuition in evening classes conducted at purely secondary schools. Evening classes were held at nine schools, the latest centre to be organized being the one at the Hastings High School in July last. Here nineteen classes were in operation during the third term, and instruction was being given in such varied subjects as accountancy, cabinetmaking, French, arts and crafts, typewriting, mechanical engineering, Latin, &c. Gisborne High School had as many as twenty-seven classes in operation. The total number of evening students in classes conducted by the high schools on 1st July rose from 414 in 1937 to 782 in 1938. At the close of the year two additional schools were in a position to organize classes for the coming year, and a large increase, both in classes and students, may accordingly be expected in 1939.

COURSES IN SCIENCE.

The science courses in secondary schools continue to broaden, there being an increasing tendency to supplement the normal science course of the school with biology (in both boys' and girls' schools) or with a course in general science inclusive of biology (in boys' schools). It is interesting to note that the number of pupils studying biology in secondary and combined schools rose from 755 in 1937 to 1,683 in 1938. In this movement New Zealand secondary schools are in step with tendencies in science-teaching in other countries, and the development has the encouragement and full support of the Inspectors. The only real obstacle is one of time, at least three hours a week being necessary for science instruction if full justice is to be done to the science course as thus supplemented. No difficulty has been experienced in boys' schools in obtaining this amount, but occasional difficulty is found in girls' schools owing to the time required for housecraft during the earlier years of the pupil's course.

Some most interesting general-science courses, embracing almost every branch of science, have been submitted to the Inspectors during their visits to the schools. The dullest pupil could not fail to be stimulated by the various topics dealt with during the course of the year.

The Inspectors would strongly recommend, however, that any general-science course should supplement and should not replace chemistry, which, in practically all boys' schools, is rightly made the basic science. It is only by the continuous study of some such science that the pupil is trained to reason about things which he has observed for himself and that his powers of weighing and interpreting evidence are developed. The supplementary general science will make him acquainted with the broad outlines of great scientific principles and with the manner in which these are applied to the service of man.

A report by the Science Masters' Association of Great Britain and published by John Murray in 1936 stresses the necessity for continuity in the instruction, and favours the presentation of the various topics by means of three parallel courses, chemistry, biology, and general physics (each given for two periods of forty-five minutes each a week). Most schools would find it difficult under present conditions to devote to science the four and a half hours weekly which this scheme would require, and the method recommended above seems more in keeping with the possibilities of the time-table.