

The following summary of the official attitude to standards of work appears in "Education Today and Tomorrow":—

"May I make my own and the Department's attitude clear on what is a matter of some public interest. I believe (a) that standards are fundamental to education, no less in the newer subjects than in the old tool subjects; (b) that the tool subjects must be stripped of unessentials and then taught with complete thoroughness; (c) that hard work cannot and should not be eliminated from true education, but it should be on tasks that have a meaning for the child; and (d) that there is nothing incompatible between good standards in the tool subjects and the full acceptance of the modern tendencies noted in this Section. Hundreds of good schools in New Zealand have proved this in the past ten years."

The Teaching Profession.—Three things are necessary if the schools are to carry out satisfactorily the increasingly complex functions that we are demanding of them: smaller classes, better buildings and equipment, and better training of teachers. It is hoped during 1945 to bring down a more generous staffing schedule which will substantially reduce the size of classes in the larger schools; equipment is dealt with later in this report: I am here concerned with training. The staffing of the training colleges has been strengthened, but we cannot afford to wait for a new generation of teachers. It is necessary to provide additional training for teachers now in service. As one step towards this I had a sum of £1,000 put on the estimates for 1944-45 for teachers' refresher courses. I set up a committee, representative of all the teachers' organizations and of the training colleges, to advise on the best use of this sum. They recommended that it be, in effect, handed over to the New Zealand Educational Institute, the Secondary Schools' Association, and the Technical School Teachers' Association to conduct two refresher courses in the social studies in the post-primary schools. (These courses were held in January, 1945, which is, strictly speaking, outside the period of this report. They were an outstanding success, and I know of no £1,000 spent to better effect. I should like to see the scheme expanded in future years.)

A secondary training department was opened in 1944 in the Auckland Training College. The concentration in one college of all Division "C" students should increase the efficiency of the training for post-primary teaching. There is need for more adequate training of teachers of practical subjects in technical schools and manual-training centres, and a scheme is now being devised for giving it. Especially is it hoped to attract into the technical service demobilized servicemen who have had a full trade training and who have discovered in the Forces that they have a flair for teaching.

A new salary scale for post-primary teachers, based on the report produced by a Salaries Committee in 1939, came into operation as from 1st February, 1944. Quite apart from the increases of salary involved, this represented a new advance, in that for the first time secondary and technical teachers were brought under a common scale. I can only hope that this will assist towards the full amalgamation of two services whose spheres are coming closer together every year.

I set up a committee representative of the Department, the Education Boards, and the New Zealand Educational Institute to investigate certain problems that have arisen in the working of the primary teachers' grading system. Owing to various factors there is heavy congestion on certain grading numbers, and, though the benefits of the grading scheme are fully recognized, there is a strong body of opinion that it is failing to some extent in its original purpose of placing teachers in their correct order of efficiency.

The interests of soldier teachers have continued to be protected to the fullest possible extent. It has been ruled that those returning from the Services who are doubtful whether they will continue in teaching may, instead of resigning outright, obtain leave without pay for up to one year to try out some other occupation. Those who feel the need of some kind of refresher course may enter a training college for a term at their full rate of pay, or may spend the time as observers in schools of their own choice.

Equipment for Schools.—The School Library Service is becoming increasingly popular, and its expansion is limited only by the difficulty of securing books. It now has some 115,000 volumes and caters for almost 47,000 children in 762 schools. This year it was decided that the service should become free to every school when it has for two years contributed at the annual rate of 1s. per child.

Special grants for science and physical-education equipment were made to all post-primary schools.

The Department had infant-room toys and equipment manufactured in large quantities and distributed free to schools. A manual for infant-teachers, "Number Work in the Infant Room," was also prepared and distributed. There is need for still more equipment for infant rooms and the lower standards, and it will be supplied as rapidly as the supply of labour and materials will permit.

The libraries of films and film strips are being rapidly expanded and are proving increasingly valuable as teachers learn to use them wisely.

Rural Education.—The rate of boarding-allowance was increased from 7s. 6d. to 10s. a week, and the conveyance allowance from 6d. to 9d. per day and 8d. to 1s. per day according to distance. Boarding-allowances were approved for children attending private schools who were compelled to live away from home. The total expenditure on school conveyance (other than by rail) was £292,451, as against £256,734 in 1943.

The Department's Correspondence School has continued to show remarkable growth. At the end of the year there were 1,920 pupils on the primary roll, 672 on the secondary, and 1,362 taking part-time courses. The school has proved extremely useful in helping to meet the problems resulting from the raising of the school age, and has also given great assistance to the Army Education and Welfare Service.

Special Subjects.—Under the new curriculum, physical education will play a bigger part in the post-primary schools than it has in the past, and already these schools are making increasing demands on the Department's physical-education specialists. It will be imperative in the near future