

training in physical education, art and craft, music, speech therapy, and education of the deaf. Good training in principles and method is given to the students, and all the schools within convenient reach are used for teaching practice. It would be better if a selective plan to enable students to observe and practise in the best classes could be adopted, but on account of the larger numbers of students this cannot be done. It would appear that the time is approaching when a fifth college will be needed. Training of teachers is a highly important part of the education system, and, in addition, teachers regard the training colleges as a source of inspiration and leadership in education. The third year of ordinary training is undertaken by the students as probationary assistants in the schools, and in this year they are the special care of the head teachers. Reports from the various districts state that the probationary assistants, in general, are proving themselves well suited for teaching. There is one small exception, as in one district a few were found to show only mediocre ability, probably the result of the local selection committee's desire to fill the district quota of entrants from its own district. There is no need for this, as each year there is a surplus of good candidates in some districts.

During the year, in some quarters, the opinion was expressed that entrants to the profession should be tried out in the schools for one year as probationers before being admitted to training college. This would mean a reversion to the system in operation over twenty years ago. The weight of educational opinion in this country and abroad is in favour of the existing system, where most entrants come straight from the post-primary schools.

For teachers in service, refresher courses were held in various centres, the work including physical education, art and craft, infant-room practice, and the new approach in subjects in which the prescriptions have been revised, especially arithmetic. Teachers from the secondary departments of district high schools took part in a course in social studies for post-primary teachers. When staffing conditions in the schools become normal, it is hoped to extend all these courses.

#### REDUCTION IN THE SIZE OF CLASSES

One of the legacies of the war has been the inability to introduce this desirable reform. During the war years the training colleges were kept full, but the young men, either before or as soon as their training was completed, were drafted into the Forces. The schools commendably were kept open mainly by women teachers. The more liberal staffing that has been introduced cannot be fully implemented, as hundreds of returned men teachers are taking full-time-study courses under the rehabilitation scheme, and more women teachers than anticipated have resigned. The raising of the school age has also required more teachers. It is probable that 1946 will be the most difficult year for staffing.

Another difficulty is accommodation. Some schools have spare rooms for the additional teachers, in some places rented accommodation can be obtained; but, owing to the heavy demands made on available labour and materials, it will be a considerable time before new class-rooms in sufficient numbers can be erected. The general position, however, is improving, and the latest organization schedules show a progressive reduction in the number of large classes.

#### STANDARDS OF WORK

All reports of Senior Inspectors state that special attention has been given with some success to the standards of work in the fundamental skills of English and arithmetic. The written English of the children is more natural, freer, and more closely associated with other subjects of the curriculum. The new prescriptions in this subject stress the simple accurate English of communication, especially the giving of information, and the simpler forms of letter-writing. Special investigation is being made into the