

In January, 1900, 148 teachers not previously certificated passed the D or the E examination; so that the total number of teachers in service and qualified by examination is now  $2,345 + 17 + 148 = 2,510$ .

#### THE NEW REGULATIONS FOR THE INSPECTION AND EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS.

For some years the question of the revision of the regulations for the inspection of public schools has been much discussed by prominent educationists throughout the colony, particularly in regard to the desirability of giving head-teachers a greater amount of freedom in the classification of their pupils, of abolishing the individual standard pass, and of transferring the work of the detailed examination of the pupils of the schools from the Inspectors to the head-teachers. There appeared to be a very pronounced opinion on the part of Education Boards, School Committees, Inspectors of Schools, teachers, and others in favour of a modification of the regulations, generally, although not quite unanimously, in the direction of the changes indicated. This feeling undoubtedly received considerable stimulus from the success that had attended similar reforms in Great Britain.

The question of the revision of the standard regulations was the principal subject of discussion at the Education Conference held in Wellington in July, 1899, when there were represented nine out of thirteen Education Boards, the Inspectors of Schools under the same Boards, and the various branches of the New Zealand Educational Institute. The resolutions carried at that Conference, although not altogether consistent with one another, afforded, with the discussions that took place upon them, a fairly good idea of the opinions of those with whom rests the actual work of carrying out the Education Act.

Draft copies of the new regulations were sent to Education Boards, School Committees, Inspectors of Schools, and Educational Institutes, and suggestions were invited. After due consideration of these suggestions, and the introduction of slight modifications in accordance therewith, the regulations were gazetted on the 16th December, 1899, and came into force on the 1st January, 1900. It may be as well to sum up here the chief points in respect of which the new regulations differ from the old.

(1.) The principal teacher of a school has "Full discretion to arrange his pupils in different classes for different subjects according to their ability and proficiency with respect to the several subjects," . . . "Provided that any pupil must be placed in the same class for all the English pass-subjects—namely, reading, spelling and dictation, writing and composition." The condition that practically prevented this from being acted upon before—namely, that a pupil must be presented in a standard higher than that already passed—is now removed, and every pupil examined by the Inspector is to be examined in the class in which he has been taught. Teachers have, therefore, now, to a very large extent, freedom in regard to the classification of their pupils. It will hardly be questioned that the teacher who has taught a child throughout the year, who has watched his progress, and knows his strong points and his weak points, is the proper person to determine the classes in which he shall be placed. Fear has, indeed, been expressed that teachers may, in acquiring this liberty, be exposed to fresh anxieties by reason of pressure on the part of parents or other interested persons for the promotion of children who have not shown that they deserve it; but it may surely be hoped that a wise firmness on the part of teachers, aided by the support, if necessary, of Inspectors and School Committees, and especially by a healthy public opinion, will be sufficient to keep this danger within narrow limits. One important fact that appears to have been overlooked by some is that the teacher may be guided in his classification by all that he knows of the children's ability and proficiency, and not merely by the results of one examination in the year. Children who make more than average progress may be moved up more quickly, and those who are slower may spend a longer time in the several classes than the average child is expected to spend. The removal of the supposed necessity for hurrying all pupils through the same compulsory amount of work in the same time should give considerable relief to the