

defects in the system that it should not be permitted to continue and matters be allowed to drift on as they have been doing. From observations made there is abundant evidence that school buildings are not being maintained in a proper state of repair, and the Department has been under the necessity of condemning schools which, with proper attention, could have been made use of for an extended period. The whole question of the maintenance and rebuilding of schools has received close investigation, and the information compiled leads to the conclusion that the present system must be condemned as unsatisfactory and unworkable not only from the point of view of local administration, but in its departmental aspect also. A better system is clearly essential, and proposals in this direction have been submitted to the Government for consideration.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS.

Reference to the tables headed "Number of Public Schools" shows that 1,363 out of 2,355 schools are under a teacher in sole charge, and that in these schools there are 23,057 children. It seems clear that if settlement in the country is to be encouraged some better provision should be made for the education of country children. It is true that at present the cost per head for the education of children in small schools is above the average cost; but improvement should be made by a change of policy rather than by a mere increase of expenditure.

As soon as the war is over the policy of consolidating groups of small schools into central schools should be taken in hand. To carry out this policy much better means of conveyance than are available at present will have to be obtained, together with an adequate staff of drivers. Such a policy would result in far better instruction for country children, would serve some who are almost unprovided-for at present, would bring secondary education more easily within the reach of country children, would reduce the number of untrained teachers employed, would enable teachers to obtain proper boarding accommodation, would enable School Inspectors and Medical Inspectors to visit the schools more frequently and to pay longer visits, and would go far towards making a proper system of promotion of teachers more practicable.

UNCERTIFICATED TEACHERS.

Though the people of the Dominion are indebted to the large number of uncertificated and often untrained teachers who, under very unattractive conditions, supply the deficiency of properly trained teachers, it is deplorable that, apart altogether from the position created by war conditions, such a large number of uncertificated teachers has to be employed. Of the 4,400 adult teachers in the public schools of New Zealand when the war started about one-fourth were uncertificated, and even in the schools of over twenty children in average attendance about one-fifth of the teachers were uncertificated. As shown above most of those teachers are employed in the smaller schools in districts where, on account of the general lack of educative influence, some of the very best teachers should be placed.

In addition to the remedy already referred to through the consolidation of small schools, much could be done by a better distribution of the teachers at present employed; but there seems to be no doubt that, in view of the long period of study required and of the important nature of the work to be done in our schools, better inducements will need to be given in order that young people may be attracted to the teaching profession by the offer of at least as good terms in the way of salary as are offered in other professions.

GRADING OF TEACHERS.

In connection with the above questions relating to the deficiency of the teaching staff and to its better distribution it is gratifying to report that the first grading of all the certificated public-school teachers in the Dominion was successfully carried out during the year. This classification of teachers is bound to have an important bearing on the appointment and promotion of teachers. Though it is not proposed at present to make the graded