

The value of the services rendered by Inspectors of Schools in connection with the examination of papers and supervision of the annual examinations is estimated at upwards of £2,000. The cost of conducting the examinations was as follows:—

Total expenses, including cost of additional clerical services temporarily employed, but omitting other salaries	£	5,947
Less recoveries—	£	
Fees paid by candidates for teachers' certificates and others ..	2 300	
Paid by Public Service Commissioner for expense of conducting Public Service Examinations, the fees for which, amounting to £1,336, were credited to him—		
Public Service Entrance	892	
Public Service Senior	799	
		3,991
Net expenditure	£1,956	

CONFERENCE *re* EXAMINATIONS.

The whole question of public examinations has come under review during the past year, and a conference of representatives of the University Senate, the University Board of Studies, the primary and secondary schools, with the Public Service Commissioner, the Assistant General Manager of Railways, and the Director of Education was held in Wellington on the 17th and 18th November last, with the view especially of effecting some co-ordination of the arrangements and incidentally of avoiding unnecessary duplication and expense. It has long been evident that there has been a great deal too much examination in connection with our education system, and that steps should be taken, with due safeguards with respect to efficiency, to find some other means of selection (apart from examination) of candidates for appointment to public positions, for admission to our secondary schools and universities, and for the award of certificates and degrees.

At the conference referred to above the chief discussion took place on the questions as to whether there should be one examination authority and whether that authority should be the University Senate or the Education Department. On these matters opinion was strongly divided, but the majority favoured the Education Department as more suitable as an examining authority for primary and secondary schools.

The conference also made recommendations in favour of abolishing some examinations and of reducing the number of candidates in others, and something has already been done in these directions. The special examination for junior free places in secondary schools has been abolished, the scholarship examination being utilized to some extent for the purpose; and the question of utilizing more extensively the accrediting principle—*i.e.*, the award of certificates on the recommendation of the head teachers of our schools—is being considered. This is the principle on which at the present time there are awarded senior free places in secondary schools, secondary-school certificates, teachers' training-college certificates; and so long as due precautions are taken that the certificates are not awarded to undeserving candidates and that all doubtful applicants are required to sit for examination, there is no reason why the accrediting principle should not be applied at least to all non-competitive examinations.

The whole question of examinations is at present under the consideration of the Council of Education, and when that body reports it is hoped that practical steps will be taken to reduce still further the amount of examination-work.