

facilities that can now be offered them the colleges will prove equal to the task. In 1935 there were 428 students in training; at the end of last year there were 1,526 students at the training colleges, of whom 57 were Division C (graduate) students and 62 were spending a third year at college specializing in some subject of the school curriculum. Next year it is intended to admit to the training colleges as many students as space will permit and to approve of seventy students remaining on for a further year of specialist training. With the broadening and enriching of the curriculum that is taking place on all sides it is essential that well-trained specialists should be available in the schools, particularly in the newer and less academic fields of work.

CONFERENCE OF INSPECTORS.

In any movement for educational reform one key position is held by the persons who select and train the teachers of the future; another position, no less important, is held by the Inspectors of Schools who assess the work of the teachers, and who should be the leaders of the movement and the prime agents for exchange of ideas. It was decided, therefore, to call a conference of Inspectors of Schools, which met in Wellington during the May vacation. (The previous conference of Inspectors was held in 1932.) Among the topics discussed were the new freedom and inspection, the curriculum, the training of teachers, modernization of school buildings and equipment of schools, staffing of schools, rural education, grading of teachers, and physical education and health.

WOMEN ADVISERS AND INSPECTORS.

A full year's work has now been completed by the three women advisers to infant departments and kindergartens and also by the Woman Inspector of Home Science and the Woman Supervisor of Domestic Subjects. Since no provision had been made for many years for the type of work they are doing it is expected that marked advances will be seen as a result of the stimulation and guidance they have been able to give.

THE NEW FREEDOM.

It is too early as yet to estimate in any general and systematic way the extent to which teachers have availed themselves of the new freedom offered to them by the present Administration, but heartening reports are coming in of teachers throughout the country who are taking advantage of the absence of external pressure and external examinations to break new ground and experiment in methods and curricula. Educational progress seldom takes place along a solid front; if scouting parties can be encouraged to explore new ground the main body can be trusted to follow as soon as the trails are blazed. Teachers and parents have been particularly appreciative of the freedom that was given the schools this year to modify the time-tables during February. Teachers were advised to take advantage of this freedom by encouraging swimming and other outdoor activities making for physical and emotional welfare. I have promised that the privilege of modifying time-tables during February will be given again in future years.

TEACHING AIDS.

TEXT-BOOKS.

There is no line of action capable of producing such immediate results in the schools as the revision and reform of text-books, which are, and will for a long time continue to be, the main tool of the teacher. As I stated in my last report, a committee consisting of representatives of the Department and of the New Zealand Educational Institute has been considering the provision of new text-books for the primary schools. As a result of the Committee's recommendations the sum of £1,000 was appropriated for work on text-books in 1938-39, and additional staff was appointed to test and carry out the scheme put forward.