

GENERAL.

In a review of the progress of the Education system in the Dominion during the year 1914 the dominant event claiming a position of most importance is the passing of the Education Act, 1914. The Act of 1908 had become so overloaded with amendments that the time was considered ripe for a consolidating Act, and at the same time occasion was taken to institute many reforms, the need of which had for some time been pressing. The following short summary indicates the changes introduced by the Act, which are now being gradually carried into operation :—

REORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT.

The Inspector-General of Schools becomes Director of Education, and the Assistant Inspector-General of Schools becomes the Assistant Director of Education. The Inspectors of primary schools, hitherto officers of the various Education Boards, are transferred to the Department.

ADVANTAGES OF CENTRALIZATION OF INSPECTORS.

It is considered that the advantages of this change will be important and far-reaching. For the first time a general system of grading the teachers of the Dominion according to efficiency is made possible; and there will now also be attainable a closer approximation to uniformity in the interpretation of regulations by Inspectors, and in the standard of attainment required by them for the award of certificates of proficiency and competency to primary-school scholars. A considerable variation of the standards set in the several education districts has hitherto been unavoidable. Further, Inspectors will now have a more general knowledge of conditions in all parts of the country and of the policy of the Government, and, as officers responsible to the Department, will be in a better position to give candid and impartial reports to the Minister upon all proposals for special expenditure. Again, a common control of Inspectors provides the only means of establishing a really efficient and economic organization of our educational system, and of making sound progress in co-ordination between all the parts. It may fairly be expected also that, through the constant and close communication among those to whom the teachers mainly look for advice and guidance, and the unification of all efforts in accordance with a common national idea, much more can be done than has hitherto been possible to promote a well-ordered advance along approved lines of progress.

REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF EDUCATION DISTRICTS.

The number of education districts is to be reduced, and the districts made more uniform in size. A Commission has been appointed to determine the precise number of districts and the boundaries thereof, and its report will shortly be laid before Parliament for final consideration.

GENERAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION.

The Act provides for the establishment of a General Council of Education, comprised of members some of whom are appointed by the Minister of Education and the rest by the various classes of teachers and by educational authorities. The functions of the Council will be to report to the Minister upon methods of education or developments therein deemed worthy of introduction into the Dominion, and generally upon matters that concern the provision of further facilities for education of a general or local character, or that, in connection with education, may be referred to it by the Minister.

TEACHERS' SALARIES AND STAFFS OF SCHOOLS.

Great improvements have been introduced in the salaries of teachers. Grades of schools and grades of salary have been reduced in number, with the result that the range of salaries within the grades is materially increased, and the number of