

WANGANUI.

INSPECTION.

The exchange of districts entailed much extra travelling, and the Inspectors were compelled to modify considerably their usual itineraries. Of the twenty-six Grade 0 schools, eleven were visited at least once. Of schools above Grade 0, thirty-six received only one visit; the remaining schools were visited twice, while nine schools received three visits. Two schools in exchanged territory received only one visit, being closed at the time of the Inspector's round. Including private schools and "exchanged" schools, 401 visits of inspection and examination were made. For one week Mr. Buckle, an English Inspector, was associated with the Inspectors of the district. His criticisms and suggestions were found very helpful and inspiring.

GENERAL EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOLS.

From a scrutiny of the year's reports, including those of the four groups of Inspectors from other districts who worked this year in the Wanganui District, we estimate the general efficiency of the schools of Grade I and upwards as follows: Good to excellent, 51; satisfactory, 124; lower than satisfactory, 4; total, 179. Of the eleven Grade 0 schools visited, four are classified as good, the remainder satisfactory.

PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION.

The whole of the examinations were conducted by the Inspectors personally, and as far as possible at the schools attended by the pupils. To enable this to be done in outlying parts of the district the Inspectors' itinerary was drawn up to make the second visit of the Inspector sufficiently late in the year for schools so placed. The Proficiency Examination then formed part of the inspection visit. In the larger centres central examinations were conducted by the Inspectors. A special visit was made for this purpose, the Standard VI pupils of adjoining schools being collected at a convenient centre. In addition to the above, the head teacher's estimates and standard of marking were reviewed, and in some cases accredited certificates were awarded. No synchronous examinations were held.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION.

In general we have been satisfied with the organization of the schools, the distribution of the staff, and the arrangement of the work. By the adoption of composite classes and whatever other plans may have appeared suitable the attempt has been made to keep classes as far as possible at a maximum roll of sixty. Owing to the quickly growing school population in some centres, the migratory habits of the people, and the limitations imposed by the sizes of rooms, it has often been found impossible to keep classes at the desired maximum even when suitable organization has been adopted. The Department's approval of the appointment of additional assistants has been of the greatest service in reducing the size of the classes. A very pleasing feature of the organization has been the subdivision of large classes into three groups each fairly homogeneous with respect to ability. By this means the teacher has been able to make closer contact with those members of the class who require special teaching, while opportunities for auto-education have been afforded to the more intelligent pupils. This plan has enabled the teachers to some extent to overcome the inherent weaknesses of the class-teaching system and to give opportunities of rapid promotion to brilliant pupils.

ORGANIZING TEACHERS.

We are pleased to be able again to commend the work of the organizing teachers. The work done by these officers in the backblock schools and with untrained and inexperienced teachers can hardly be too highly praised.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

During the year secondary classes were conducted at the following schools: Marton, Taihape, Bull's, Hunterville, Ohakune, and Patea. The first year's work consists mainly of a generalized course, including English, mathematics (chiefly of a practical nature), science, manual work, history, geography, and generally French. In almost every case students who remain for more than one year desire to sit for one or other of the public examinations. The courses for the second, third, and fourth years, therefore, are based on the requirements of the Public Service Entrance and Matriculation Examinations. The efficiency of the work done has been in direct proportion to the Board's success in securing adequate staffing. As in previous years, great difficulty has been experienced in obtaining suitable and permanent teachers for all the district high schools but one. It would appear that district-high-school work does not make a strong appeal to teachers who possess the necessary academical equipment for secondary teaching.

INSTRUCTION OF PUPIL-TEACHERS AND PROBATIONERS.

While we were not in every case satisfied with the instruction of these trainees as revealed at our visits to the schools, we are of opinion that the attention given to this important work is decidedly improving. The criticisms and instructions given to head teachers should result in quite satisfactory work in this respect in the ensuing year.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS.

Every opportunity is given to suitable teachers to conduct experiments in educational method, the results of which, after careful investigation and evaluation, are communicated, through the *Leaflet* or otherwise, to the teachers of the district. In general it has been our practice to conduct annually at least one experiment or investigation on a fairly large scale. This year, however, owing to the exchange of Inspectors, nothing of this kind has been taken up.