

## REPORT.

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### INTRODUCTORY AND GENERAL.

THE principal educational event of the year was the publication of a report by the parliamentary Select Committee on Education. The Committee, which commenced its sittings towards the end of 1929, completed its work early the following year, and presented its report to Parliament in July. The report dealt with all phases of education, and was on the whole well received. Although the prevailing financial depression has made it exceedingly difficult to give effect to a number of the recommendations made by the Committee, the report has roused deep interest on the part of all sections of the community interested in education, and has already borne fruit in the increasing attention that is being given, to mention only two things, to methods of decreasing administrative costs and to the broadening of the curriculum of secondary schools.

The time is now past for the community to be satisfied with the narrow academic type of secondary education which for many years was the only type available in this country for pupils entering secondary schools. In a previous report attention was directed to the marked tendency of the modern secondary school to draw nearer to the technical high school. The two types of school can never be the same, except through complete amalgamation, as it would clearly be impossible to equip every secondary school in the expensive manner necessary for the successful organization of vocational instruction. Where amalgamation does not take place it will still be desirable for those pupils desiring to prepare for industrial pursuits to enrol at a technical school and for those who desire secondary education of a broad and general type with or without a definite bias towards University training to enter the ordinary secondary schools. In an amalgamated post-primary school—that is, a school providing both technical and academic courses—there will be much less danger of pupils embarking on the wrong course than there is when there are separate technical and secondary schools. It may be anticipated, therefore, that the type of amalgamation inaugurated when the New Plymouth Boys' High School and the Technical School were converted into one school is likely to find increasing support in this country.

An effort was made to reduce the size of classes in primary schools by appointing a large number of additional assistant teachers. Unfortunately, however, this much-needed reform was hindered by lack of money, and the staffs had to revert to the former standard. As soon as the financial depression passes, further progress in this direction will be possible. There are more than sufficient teachers available for the purpose, as the Department, in determining the number of entrants to the training colleges, took into account the need for more liberal school staffing. It is much to be regretted that so many young teachers must necessarily remain unemployed until the financial position becomes easier; but Education Boards are doing their best to afford relief by rationing temporary work. The situation cannot be met by admitting fewer teachers for training, as the number of student teachers accepted in any one year must depend on the staff needs five years afterwards, since the period of training occupies four years. While it is impossible to forecast the financial position with absolute accuracy so many years ahead, there appears every prospect that the situation will soon become more normal, and that material educational progress will again become possible.