

There were 13,528 Maori children attending 875 public schools at the end of 1943.

In addition to the 156 Native schools mentioned above, there are 10 Native mission schools and convents, and the Department also administers 4 schools in the Chatham Islands. Schools in Fiji, Cook Islands, and Samoa are inspected, but owing to travel difficulties no Pacific island territories were visited during 1943.

Staffing was again a very difficult matter during 1943, but the Department managed to keep all schools open. Shortages of staff due to sickness or removal were often made good by sacrifice on the part of larger schools, and I have to express my thanks to those head teachers who willingly lent members of their staffs to assist other schools in times of need. Again I have to acknowledge with thanks the co-operation of some of the superannuated teachers and married women teachers who assisted by returning to positions in the schools.

As I pointed out in my report last year, the growth of the school rolls has made it necessary to provide more assistants, and in quite a large number of localities it has been difficult to find suitable boarding accommodation. While building operations have been so restricted, it has not been possible to provide suitable cottages, but the Department's policy of encouraging young Maori men and women to qualify as certificated teachers has enabled the Department to staff some of the schools with fully qualified Maori assistants where board for European assistants would be unprocurable.

At the end of 1943, 480 teachers were employed in Native schools, as indicated in the table below :—

	Males.	Females.
Certificated teachers	130	172
Uncertificated teachers	9	45
Probationary assistants	1	11
Junior assistants	5	107
	145	335

All junior assistants are expected to undertake a course of study that will enable them to advance in the teaching profession. Where junior assistants have a reasonable chance of reaching the School Certificate standard, a suitable course of study is provided by the Department's Correspondence School, while for the others a general cultural course is provided. This has ensured a regular supply of Maori students to training colleges.

In 1940, 4 students were admitted to training college ; in 1941, 9 ; in 1942, 18 ; and in 1943, 16.

2. PRIMARY EDUCATION

The system of primary education in Native schools is designed to give the Maori child a chance of competing on equal terms with the pakeha child, while still retaining pride in his Maori ancestry. Stress is laid on the teaching of English, for any Maori child living in an English-speaking country must be under a definite handicap if he attains manhood without a good command of the English language. For several years now the oral side of language-teaching has been emphasized, and in most of the schools this has reached a good standard. Fluency in speech is essential, but there is still the task of teaching the child how to speak and read well, so that he reads or recites his story or poem in an appropriate manner and is thus able to make it appeal to his audience. Where this is attained, the children derive an immense amount of pleasure from their work, and their confidence in their own ability to do things well is correspondingly increased.

In written English there is still too much stress on formal composition. While this cannot be entirely neglected, it must be realized that in later life it takes a much less important place than letter-writing, business correspondence, telegrams, filling in forms correctly, &c. These can and should be taught in the primary school, for at present the opportunities of the Maori children for secondary education are limited, and the proportion receiving higher education is small. We have frequently found, in tests for scholarship candidates, that, whereas they write quite well on topics with which they will not be concerned in later life, they fail badly in simple business correspondence or in expressing themselves lucidly on simple matters. Where schools have encouraged the growth of club work, and where the children are taught to attend to such matters, there is a very considerable increase in efficiency.

Child activity is the keynote of success, and it is pleasing to be able to record that this method of instruction is being extended in Native schools. Teachers have been encouraged to use their initiative in developing their schools so that they will render maximum service to the children and to the communities they serve. The result is that there is a pleasing variety of method of instruction in the Native Schools' Service and schools are not modelled on one pattern. The interchange of visits of teachers from one school to another has been encouraged. These interchanges have not been confined solely to those teachers who have found difficulty in implementing the new methods, but extends also to those who have been successful. The interchange of ideas is just as beneficial to the successful as to the less-successful teachers.

Perhaps the most interesting experiment instituted last year was a citrus project at the Waiomio Native School, near Kawakawa. A large number of sweet-orange pips from the Cook Islands was imported and planted. First reports have been very encouraging, for nearly 100 per cent. of the pips "struck," with the result that there is now a large number of young stocks to be budded and grafted. It is anticipated that there will be ample young trees in the near future to supply not only the Waiomio community, but also many other Native schools. I have to acknowledge with thanks the practical help and advice given by the Auckland officials of the Citricultural Branch of the Agriculture Department