

I have dealt at some length with this problem of the changing distribution of the school population, because I believe that a thorough understanding of its implications is essential to any one administering the education system over the next ten years. The introduction of free compulsory primary education towards the end of last century was recognized as a major social change, because it meant building up a system where little or nothing existed before. We are only slowly beginning to realize that the giving of free post-primary education to all, or nearly all, the population may be a social event of hardly less significance. The reforms of recent years in the post-primary school system have been intended to enable it to carry out its new responsibilities. With my predecessor in Office, I feel that the main task for the next few years is to consolidate the ground that has been gained, and to give to the schools the material conditions and the skilled teachers that will help them to cater for the whole population with its widely varying needs, abilities, and desires.

Buildings

The expenditure for the year from the Public Works Account for the erection and improvement of educational buildings was £1,065,870, compared with the sum of £992,275 for the year 1945–6.

Major building works completed during the year include—

Primary Schools : Taita No. 1, Taita North, Linehills.

Post-primary Schools : Auckland Girls' Grammar School (additions and alterations), Hastings High School (domestic-science block and additions to workshops), Christchurch Technical School (remodelling workshops), Avondale College (engineering workshop), Tauranga College (workshop block).

University : Canterbury University College (accommodation for geography), Massey College (dormitory department accommodation).

Child Welfare Branch : Girls' Home, Burwood (new hostel).

In view of the shortages in the building industry this amount of work may be regarded as very satisfactory. We must, however, face the fact that an even better effort must be made if we are to meet the growing demands of the next three or four years. In particular, methods must be devised of speeding up the preparation of plans for educational buildings.

Islands Education

Considerable progress has been made in the revision of curricula and in the provision of teaching material suitable for Islands schools. In the third term of 1947 the first two numbers of *Tusitala Mo A'oga Samoa (Samoan School Journal)* were published, and it is intended that further issues shall follow at three-monthly intervals. Five graded Infant Readers and a series of Number-work Books have been prepared. In the Cook Islands progress was made in the teaching of the Maori language, which was reintroduced as a school subject in 1946. A special committee has been set up to investigate the possibility of producing an acceptable grammar of the Maori language and suitable reading-material.

Committees of teachers were set up in Apia and Rarotonga to undertake the revision of curricula. Reports of these committees were used as the basis of tentative syllabuses for the primary schools, and suggestions from the committees were incorporated in the text-books.