

In addition to the 160 Maori schools, there are 10 Maori mission schools and convents with a total enrolment of 784 pupils, as compared with 761 in 1946. In the Chatham Islands there are 4 schools, catering for 105 scholars. One school in the Chatham Islands was closed last year, owing to the inability to get a teacher.

At the end of 1947 there were 16,804 Maori children on the rolls of the public schools throughout the Dominion, as compared with 15,929 at the end of 1946.

The staffing of the schools presented many difficulties, owing to the shortage of teachers, especially assistants. Indeed, except for one or two favoured localities, it was almost a waste of time advertising B positions, for they met with no response whatever. Under such circumstances we had no option but to make use of our more experienced junior assistants. These young women, having had two or three years' teaching experience, have been of great assistance, and have given ample evidence of their ability to profit by their training as juniors.

Again I have to record an increase in the number of young Maori students qualifying for training college. In 1946 the number increased from 16 (in 1945) to 29. Last year the number was 31, and this year there is an even greater increase. Thus, in the eight years 1940-47 inclusive, 142 Maori students have entered training college, and the annual intake has risen steadily from 4 in 1940 to 31 in 1947.

Of the 378 teachers employed in Maori schools (excluding 18 probationary assistants and 91 junior assistants), 314 hold a Teacher's Certificate.

2. PRIMARY EDUCATION

As this will be my last report as Senior Inspector of Maori schools, I should like to review some of the progress I have noted in the sixteen and a half years during which it has been my privilege to be associated with the education of our Maori children.

In my opinion the most important change has been the transformation of the school into a Maori institution. When I first visited Maori schools in 1931 I was impressed by the fact that there was practically nothing Maori in the schools except the Maori children. No Maori song was ever sung, there was no sign of Maori crafts, nor any interest in Maori history as part of the school curriculum. The values in their own culture were ignored, and instruction was on pakeha lines. Under the discerning eye of Mr. Ball, who was then Senior Inspector, this attitude was quickly changed, and from year to year we have tried to cultivate an interest in the old Maori arts and crafts, in their songs and dances, in their games, and in their history and mythology, with the object of developing a pride of race. In recent years difficulties in procuring tools for carving and materials for taniko have retarded the development of Maori crafts to their fullest extent, but nevertheless in certain schools where the keenness of the teachers triumphed over all difficulties some very fine work has been done.

But it is not only by the introduction of Maori culture that the schools have benefited. Equal importance has been attached to the improvement of the academic subjects and of relating them closely to the needs of the Maori. Apart from advocating and demonstrating better methods of teaching on our routine inspection visits and in our addresses at teachers' meetings, the first large-scale effort to inculcate the new philosophy was in 1936, when three large sectional refresher courses for Maori-school teachers were organized in Kaikohe, Rotorua, and Ruatoria respectively. This was the first time that special courses for teachers of Maori schools had been organized. Most of the addresses were given by the Inspectors and other specialist professional officers. Then in 1939 a comprehensive refresher course for the whole service was held in Rotorua. By this time the new ideas had made such progress that the great majority of the speakers were drawn from the ranks of the Maori-school teachers. They were specially selected for the success they had attained in their own particular subjects.