

Exchange of Teachers

I am pleased that the scheme for the exchange of teachers, though restricted in its scope by the numbers of passages available, has been resumed. In the first instance ten New Zealand teachers exchanged positions with ten in the United Kingdom, and one teacher in Victoria exchanged his position with a New Zealand teacher. The exchanges arranged were mainly between teachers holding positions in primary schools, and the majority of the teachers concerned were women. I am sure that there is much to be gained both by our visitors and also by our own teachers under this scheme, and I hope that it will be possible for the scheme of interchange of teachers to be continued, and in due course, when conditions are favourable, considerably extended.

Teachers' Superannuation

The Superannuation Act, 1947, which enabled teachers to participate in the more generous superannuation allowances provided for other public servants and to join the Fund although they may have failed to take an earlier opportunity to do so, was amended in 1948 to allow of the service of kindergarten teachers being recognized for superannuation purposes. I feel that the legislation as it affects teachers goes a long way towards meeting their objections to the former legislation.

Island Education

Development of education in the Islands has been confined largely to the reconstruction of curriculum. In the Cook Islands a feature of the new syllabus is the gradual shifting of the stress on English to more practical subjects such as material culture, woodwork, and domestic science. Hygiene plays a far more important part in the school time-table, and emphasis is laid on mothercraft. There is greater co-operation between education and medical and dental services. Committees formed to study the Maori language have almost completed their work, with the result that publications will now be possible in the vernacular. Experiments are being conducted in a few schools to discover the relative effectiveness of teaching through this medium rather than through English in the lower classes.

In Samoa an Education Committee on which there is a strong representation of chiefs has rendered valuable assistance to the Superintendent of Schools and has made rapid strides towards developing the type of initiative which Government aims to foster among Island peoples. Furthering this policy of assisting trusteeships in taking a larger measure of responsibility in the management of their own affairs, the scholarship scheme, inaugurated in 1945, has to date permitted a total of fifty-six Island students to attend boarding schools throughout New Zealand. Two completed the University Entrance Examination and six the School Certificate Examination. Arrangements were made for six students who had completed their schooling to be employed in Government Departments and workshops for vocational training preparatory to being returned to Samoa. This is a remarkable achievement when it is considered that in four years bilingual children, with a limited background, have been able to compete with pupils in New Zealand schools.

The number of teacher-trainees in all Island groups has been considerably increased and their terms of appointment improved. In Samoa the training college has extended its course to three years, and has increased staffing and training facilities. In Cook Islands, pending the building of the Tereora Training School on the site already acquired, increased time has been devoted by New Zealand teachers to training both senior and junior staff.

Quantities of library books and infant apparatus have been sent to the Islands, and the equipment of schools generally has been appreciably improved. A sub-editor for Island Publications was appointed to accelerate the production of texts and reading