

In May a new syllabus of instruction was issued in the following subjects: health, oral expression, written expression, spelling, arithmetic, history and geography, and needlework. Later in the year followed a new syllabus in nature-study. At about the same time the Maori-school members of the New Zealand Educational Institute set up a Committee which would form a link between the Department and the teachers. Advantage was taken of the establishment of this Committee to discuss, amongst other matters, the introduction of the new syllabuses into the Maori schools. Meetings for this purpose were also arranged with groups of teachers, and for the particular discussion of the Nature Study Syllabus a conference was held between the Maori-school Inspectors and the Auckland Board Agriculture Instructors. One direct result of the latter conference was the realization of the value of the calf-club movement in Maori schools, and the need for financial support of this club work. A proposal to assist financially was approved by the Department and a grant of £200 for the year was made available to the sixty-seven calf clubs in Maori schools. In the discussion with teachers, the main objective was to determine how the new syllabuses could best be integrated with other aspects of school work. It was realized that one of the chief purposes of the Maori school is to provide an environment in which every Maori child is able to develop fully his innate talents and skills, but it was also realized that there are peculiar problems sometimes to be met, due to a conflict between his Maori environment on the one hand and the new pakeha culture on the other. It is one of the functions of the Maori school to harmonize such conflicting elements, and to make available to the Maori child the best in both cultures, thereby creating in him a deeper pride in his own race and at the same time enabling him with greater confidence to participate actively in the life around him, whether it be Maori or European.

For many years teachers in Maori schools have taken a deep interest in certain aspects of Maori culture—arts, crafts, action songs, history, mythology, &c.—but in some schools there has been, perhaps, a tendency to concentrate on the more material culture, and to neglect the less tangible but more vital spiritual values of that culture. Thus Maori carving has been taught as a craft, but more could have been done to lead pupils to a better understanding of the symbolism and significance of authentic Maori carvings. In the discussions already held these matters were dealt with. It is proposed to continue the study of these aspects of our work at subsequent meetings of teachers and parents.

For the successful pursuit of the aims as outlined briefly above liberal supplies of materials and equipment are essential. During 1948 availability was again the main factor governing supply of requisitions and equipment. Due to war conditions, the schools were forced to manage without much essential teaching equipment, and we shall be faced with a heavy task for the next few years in bringing equipment up to the proper standard. During the year a start was made in surveying equipment already in schools and with the procurement and distribution of some of the most essential lines. Lack of storage facilities in Auckland at first handicapped the work, but a new store was at last obtained, and there are now satisfactory facilities to proceed with a full scheme of supply. The prospects for next year appear to be good.

Towards the end of the year the Education Department gave approval to establish a craft centre at the Whakarewarewa Maori School. The centre will have the full-time services of a Wood and Metal Work Instructor and a Homecraft Instructress, and will serve the senior pupils of the Whakarewarewa Maori School and the neighbouring Horohoro, Whangamarino, and Rotokawa Maori Schools.

4. POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

In 1948 there was a slight increase in the number of Maori pupils going on to post-primary education. In the seven Maori district high schools there were 281 post-primary pupils, compared with 233 the previous year. The number of Government scholarship holders at public and private secondary schools was 300 (see Table H 4A).