

Maori Schools

The attendance at Maori schools showed a slight increase in 1949, there being 13,288 children on the rolls in December, 1949, as compared with 13,254 in December, 1948.

A new district high school was established at Tokomaru Bay, and the Maori people continue to show an increasing interest in the higher education of their children. Last year a survey was made of all Maori children leaving school at the end of 1948, and it was found that, over the whole Dominion, 44 per cent. had attended a post-primary school. It was also very evident that with higher educational qualifications, the young Maori people were encountering less difficulty in finding suitable employment. Of those who had only a primary school education, 12·4 per cent. were finding difficulty in securing employment, whereas the figure for those with post-primary education was 7·6 per cent.

There was a new record entry of Maori scholars into the teaching profession, 44 being admitted into training college at the beginning of 1949. Nine students also held Maori University scholarships.

Correspondence School

The Correspondence School continues to fulfil its essential function of serving the isolated, sick, or otherwise handicapped student (child or adult) throughout the country. Enrolments continue to increase, the peak for 1949 being well over 5,000. The standard of work remains at a high level, and examination successes for 1949 compare very favourably with those of other schools. During the year, teams of visiting teachers (four to six in each term) have visited most districts, making personal contacts, helping pupils and advising parents, including the conduct of special work among the physically handicapped pupils.

During February and March a party of 37 Form I and II boys from remote districts were brought to a residential school at the Wellington City Mission's Camp at Otaki for four weeks; while in November 60 post-primary boys, ranging from Form III to Form V and drawn from all parts of New Zealand, were in residence for four weeks at Massey Agricultural College at Palmerston North. Those who were concerned with these experiments and who saw the beneficial effects on the pupils, believe that they were very well worth while, and should be extended to include girls as well as boys.

Higher Education

Enrolments in the University colleges have shown no marked fall during 1949, and it seems likely that they will remain stable at about the present level for the next three or four years. After that, however, there will almost certainly be a steady increase.

In his report last year, my predecessor expressed the hope that during 1949 the University College Councils would reach decisions about the future development of the colleges. These hopes have in part been realized. At the request of the Canterbury University College Council, the Government agreed to the purchase of an extensive site at Riccarton which should allow adequate space for all future expansion of the college. A very similar problem faces the Government with regard to the proposal to transfer Auckland University College from its central site in the City to a new site at Tamaki. Legislation has also been passed empowering the Wellington City Council to transfer to Victoria University College a portion of the town belt adjoining the present site. Substantial progress has been made with the first of the permanent buildings at Canterbury Agricultural College and the planning of other major buildings is in hand.

The Consultative Committee on the Education, Training, and Supply of Professional Engineers completed its investigations during 1949. The extensive recommendations of this Committee have been under discussion for some time by the University and other interested bodies.