

the islands of the Lower Group, excepting Aitutaki, and after thoroughly studying our conditions and problems has submitted a very comprehensive and most valuable report full of sound, practical, and helpful advice.

Taking into consideration the social state of the Natives, their environment, traditions, aims, the outlook for the future, and the other many and complex problems surrounding the development of a scheme of education suitable to their present needs, ability, and future prospects, the Administration is hopeful that at last a scheme which will give sound and satisfactory results of practical use to the community has been evolved.

The thanks of the Administration are due to the Superintendent of Schools and to all European headmasters and teachers for the energy and zeal they are showing in the cause of education, and for the self-sacrifice inseparable from any official position in these Islands.

School attendance is increasing, the number of pupils on the rolls of the Southern Group schools being now 1,507, whilst there are about 380 pupils in the subsidized mission schools in the Northern Group.

The following are extracts from the annual report of the Superintendent of Schools :—

*“Introduction.”*—In the report for the year ending the 31st March, 1926, a fairly complete survey of the whole field was made, and as a result a number of defects was revealed. This made it possible to plan out a programme so that the most important and urgent requirements could be attended to first. It is very gratifying, therefore, to be able to record some marked developments.

“The following statement sets out briefly the most important work undertaken during the year past :—

- “(1) Construction of new courses of study.
- “(2) New scale of salaries for Native teachers drawn up.
- “(3) Requirements for teachers' certificates outlined.
- “(4) Classes for instruction of Native teachers established.
- “(5) Training college and normal school established at Avarua.
- “(6) Hostel for women teachers provided at Avarua.

“In addition to the above major projects, a number of minor improvements have been effected, most of which are referred to in the following report.

“School buildings being improved to protect from cold winds : At Avarua two very large classrooms were divided by 8 ft. walls, thus giving four separate rooms, and so avoiding the difficulties involved in having two teachers at work in the same room. In order to shut out the cold, wet winds, which have such a serious effect on the health of the children and teachers, the walls on the eastern sides of two buildings have been raised to a height of 7 ft. and those on the northern and southern sides to 5 ft. The results will be closely watched so that any disadvantages may be remedied and other schools receive the benefits.

“*Equipment.*—Free-arm blackboards being provided for infants : Each school is now fully equipped with blackboards for the use of teachers. For the use of the smaller children, who receive great educational benefits from the use of blackboards, suitable boards are being provided.

“Suitable text-books adapted to language ability not procurable : In all tropical educational systems the greatest difficulty has been experienced in writing suitable text-books for reading, composition, arithmetic, health, agriculture, and other subjects. Although books of various kinds have been obtained from a great variety of sources during the last year, no books appropriate to the needs and abilities of Cook Islands pupils have been discovered. It is therefore necessary to provide substitute material until sufficient information, experience, and knowledge of the interests of Maori pupils have been obtained to justify our attempting to produce our own books. The difficulties in the way are far greater than appear at first sight, for the material used must deal with local conditions, the reading must be written in a manner interesting to Maori children, and the vocabulary of each book must be within the capacities of the class of children who are to use it. For example, the Philippine readers, which were in use here for some years, not only deal with matters of no interest to our pupils, but recent investigations show that the vocabulary used is quite beyond the abilities of Filipino children, who have a comparatively advanced system of education. New Zealand arithmetics have been used here in the past, but they are quite useless in Cook Islands, for they deal with problems and experiences unknown to local conditions, while the work for each class does not correspond to that of any class in our schools.

“Schools are now provided with a minimum supply of woodwork tools : Each school has now been provided with a small outfit of tools so that some experience in the manual arts may be obtained by the senior pupils. This has had to be confined largely to the construction of school equipment so far, but with the provision of an adequate supply of tools very valuable training in a course of farm and home handicraft can be given.

“Native arts hindered by destruction of pandanus : Owing to the ravages of the mealy bug, the growth of the rau ara (pandanus) in the Southern Group has almost ceased, with the result that the plaiting and basketry has been carried on with the greatest difficulties. It may be possible to cultivate supplies at the schools with the assistance of the agricultural officers, a step which would provide an interesting experiment.

“*Teaching Staff.*—European staff increased and concentrated to train Native teachers : An important change in policy has resulted in the addition of two European women teachers to the staff of the Avarua School, which has now become a normal school. At the same time an additional assistant has made it possible to entirely separate the European school. This was necessary because of the differences in the curricula of the Cook Islands and New Zealand, making it impossible to do justice