

to the central University for authoritative recommendations regarding the development of University work in each of the four centres, as there is an ever-present danger of local ambition leading to wasteful duplication of University activities.

The activities of the Child Welfare Branch of the Education Department were considerably extended during the year in consequence of the operations of the amended provisions of the Child Welfare Act. The Children's Courts are in general functioning successfully, and every effort is being made by the Department's officers to secure control or supervision of wayward children before they actually commence a career of delinquency. The retention of wards of the State in society, instead of placing them in institutions, continues to be the policy of the Department. The education and care of feeble-minded children has been further systematized with the help of the Mental Hospitals Department, and the policy of establishing special classes for mentally deficient children has been followed in all the principal centres of population. Last year there were in operation twenty-five such classes, providing a type of education suited to the capacity of the pupils, and calculated to prepare them as far as might be for profitable employment after they had left school. Such children have been found not only to mark time in the ordinary school classes, but to suffer through the lack of specialized training. This section of the Department's activities must be regarded as of high social importance, and further extension of the work will be made as circumstances permit.

The Native schools, of which there were 134 in operation during the year, continue to provide full opportunity for Maori children to compete on favourable terms with the pakeha. Post-primary education is available for the Natives in all the higher State schools and in the University colleges, and a considerable number attend State-aided schools where practical courses of instruction are given. Consideration is being given at the present time to a further extension of facilities whereby Maori boys and girls may have the advantage of practical training after they complete their course in the Native primary schools. It is interesting to note that last year 54 per cent. of the Native children receiving primary instruction attended the ordinary State primary schools, and were educated side by side with the children of the pakeha.

COST OF EDUCATION.

The appendix to this report shows in detail, under various headings, the expenditure on education during the financial year ended 31st March, 1929. The total expenditure, including endowment revenue, amounted to £3,962,979, as against £3,847,545 in the previous year, an increase of £115,434. If from the total sum of £3,962,979 expended on education in 1928-29 is deducted the sum of £375,282 spent on buildings, the net amount remaining is £3,587,697, which is equivalent to £2 9s. 3d. per head of the mean population of New Zealand (1,455,734) for the year 1928. The cost per head in the previous year, excluding cost of buildings, was £2 8s. 4d. The expenditure per head of mean population on the main branches of education in 1928 was (exclusive of expenditure on new buildings) as follows: Primary, £1 11s. 10d.; secondary, 5s. 9d.; technical, 2s. 9d.; higher education, 2s. 1d.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND SITES.

The policy of the Department has been to give precedence to applications for new schools where none at present exist, and to additions to schools where the existing accommodation is insufficient for the requirements of the district. As in the past, a very much larger sum has on this account been spent in the newly settled districts of the North Island than has been expended in the older-established districts of the South Island. The amount required for these necessary works has absorbed a considerable proportion of the funds allotted to the Department for the financial year.

Model schools have been established in connection with the Auckland Training College; a new infant department at Meadowbank, Auckland; a new school at Awapuni, Gisborne; and separate secondary departments at Te Karaka and Wairoa, Hawke's Bay, and at Fairlie, Canterbury. Additions have been provided at