

The school picnic and the school concert are now regular annual events in very many of the Maori settlements, and they are keenly looked forward to by pupils and parents alike. The concerts particularly arouse much enthusiasm and interest amongst the pupils in the schools, and they are attended by people from far and near. The funds raised—quite considerable amounts in many of the schools—are devoted to general school purposes, such as school-ground improvements, provision of cocoa-supplies for the winter, and equipment for school games. When portion of the proceeds is devoted to purchasing books for the library, providing sewing-machines, gramophones, or pianos, the Department makes a supplementary grant.

The number of certificated teachers in the service shows a very considerable increase compared with the number, say, five years ago; in fact, the number has practically doubled. It is satisfactory to note that during the past year a few more teachers succeeded in improving their status. The success of these teachers should prove an incentive to uncertificated teachers in the service, many of whom should really have little or no difficulty in securing a teacher's certificate. Apart from the pecuniary benefit involved, the possession of a certificate becomes an important qualification upon which advancement in the service may depend. For advertised positions in the service comparatively little difficulty is experienced in securing the services of certificated teachers.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Language-teaching (Oral and Written English).—The English language is the medium of instruction in Native schools, and necessarily the Maori pupils must be taught to speak English, read English and comprehend what they have read, and express themselves in oral and written form in the acquired language. When it is borne in mind that fully 85 per cent. of the Maori children attending Native schools speak Maori as their mother-tongue it will be recognized by those who understand the situation that the pupils are faced with a difficult task—the problem of acquiring a second language. The new language (English) is therefore not only the most important subject that a Native-school teacher has to teach, but he actually finds it the most difficult subject to deal with successfully. For the benefit of the newer teachers in the service the following remarks from a previous report are repeated: “There are many difficulties confronting the teacher in teaching this subject, the principal one being that the mother-tongue of the pupil is so fundamentally different from English that, to say nothing of the hereditary aptitudes, the Maori child from the time that he begins to speak and think has his vocal organs and his thinking-faculties moulded in such a way that he could hardly be rendered more unfitted for speaking English and using it as an instrument of thought if his vernacular had been specially devised for the purpose. A serious difficulty is that the teaching of English to the pupils is hampered by their use of *Maori* being continued with their training in *English*. The difficulties connected with the teaching of the subject must be met by the employment of intelligent methods. The paramount importance and value of oral work—meaning thereby practice by the pupils in speaking, and not practice by the teachers—must be clearly realized, and to ensure success teachers must bring to bear all their skill, imagination, and resource upon the preparation of their scheme of work and upon their actual methods of teaching. It is not sufficient that the pupils hear English spoken by the teachers: they must have abundant practice. Teachers must not be deceived into thinking that because the pupils understand a great deal of English that they therefore can use that English in oral speech. Then, again, they must not be deluded into thinking that all is well with the spoken English because their pupils have learned to read. Pronunciation, expression, and accentuation must receive careful attention in order that the monotony of utterance, with which too many teachers are satisfied, both in oral English and in reading may be avoided. In coping with this defect recitation, repetition of stories, and dialogues will be found useful . . . Every effort must be made to secure an enlargement of the pupil's vocabulary and the attainment of fluency in speech; and for this reason the pupil's efforts at continuous narration should be interrupted as little as possible by correction of his language. Teachers are warned against collective answering and collective repetition, as frequent recourse to this method is an obstacle to the development of genuine thought and free expression, and children accustomed to its use rapidly lose any desire or ability to act or speak for themselves. Every lesson should afford opportunity for free expression and for developing the power of connected and continuous speech. The written composition should be as much as possible the outcome of the course in oral English, and should be as much as possible a free expression of the thoughts of the pupils on the subject given.” In a few schools the work is very good, in a fair number it is good, in a large number it may be described as satisfactory, while in a very considerable number of the schools it is more or less inferior.

Reading and Recitation.—In a very large number of the schools the pupils read clearly, fluently, and generally intelligently, and where they have become fairly proficient in the use of the language they are in the process of acquiring they are able to express very satisfactorily the meaning of what they have read. The pupils' ability to use the new language, however, depends almost entirely upon the effectiveness and success of the language-teaching, and although inability to use the new language satisfactorily in expressing the meaning of what they have read is not conclusive evidence that their comprehension is at fault, nevertheless this inability should be regarded by teachers as serious reflection upon the success of their efforts in teaching the language. If the pupils are able to translate into Maori what they read, there can be little doubt about their comprehension. Translation, however, is recognized as so serious a hindrance to the acquisition of a new language that it must be checked at all costs. When suitable methods of teaching are employed the mechanical difficulties of learning to read are soon overcome by the Maori pupils, but the difficulty of expressing in English the meaning of what they have read is a serious one. Teachers are therefore expected to do their utmost to secure the comprehension of the reading lessons, and to use every effort to cultivate the