

The syllabus was revised in 1886, the standards being made more definite and closer attention being given to English. Experiments were also made in apprenticing Maori boys to suitable trades. In 1889, the schools were, however, in a parlous condition, and their transfer to the Boards was mooted. The visit paid by the Minister of Education (Hon. W. P. Reeves) in 1891 quickened the work of the schools in many respects, of which one was the pronunciation of English through practice in phonics.

No radical amendments were made in the syllabus for some considerable time, except that health, singing, drawing, and drill were added to the curriculum. Pupils above the Fourth Standard were required to take the work prescribed in the public-schools syllabus for Standards V and VI. The standard of exemption was, however, Standard IV, and from this, and from the fact that no special syllabus had been arranged for the higher standards, arose the impression that obtained for many years, that in the Native schools children do not go beyond the Fourth Standard.

A new syllabus was arranged in 1909 which approximated very closely to the new public-schools syllabus of 1904. The schools were, indeed, in a position to meet it, as they had long surpassed the existing regulation requirements. The promotion of pupils was placed more largely in the hands of the teachers, and a scheme of teaching English by the direct method was provided. Payment by results was also abolished, a scale of salaries approximating to that of the public-school scale being introduced at an additional cost of about £6,000.

By this time the number of schools had increased to one hundred, the total cost of Native schools being £33,000, and the average attendance for the year being 4,121. From this time the Native-schools syllabus has kept step with that of the public schools, and with the advent of the new public-schools syllabus of 1928 the revision of the regulations becomes necessary. It is now considered unnecessary to provide a separate syllabus for Native schools, and the public-schools syllabus will be adopted, as will also the regulations for organization, inspection, and examination, both being modified in some degree to suit the special case.

CONCLUSION.

The school has a larger responsibility for the elevation of the people than any other institution. In many instances it is almost the only influence for Native welfare. Errors or omissions in policy and method in school education are therefore correspondingly more serious.

In this, the fiftieth year of Native-schools administration by the Education Department, full credit should be given for the wise provision of those responsible for the original guiding principles upon which the present system functions, and has always functioned.

The three fundamental principles are as follow :—

- (1) To give the great mass of the Maori population an elementary but thorough instruction in English and in arithmetic sufficient for simple business transactions.
- (2) To demonstrate to the Maori community, by the unconscious example of the teacher's home and home-life, the English mode of living and standards of dress, cleanliness, food, &c.
- (3) To secure secondary and higher instruction for those who are to assume leadership in thought and action.

That these aims were sufficiently comprehensive and resulted in very definite gains for the Maori race is confirmed by the following statement made by the Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata, Minister for Native Affairs :—

“The need for adjusting themselves daily to the economic and other conditions of life in New Zealand demands that the Maoris of New Zealand should have the best educational equipment the country can give them, and in that category a mastery of the English language, especially of the language of business, is the most important.”

The above review of the operations of the Native schools during 1930 would be incomplete without an appreciation of the willing and conscientious service given by the teachers. With few exceptions, their work has been characterized by devotion to duty and whole-hearted attention to the interests of the Maori people within their little communities.

In connection with the work of inspecting and examining the schools during the year I have to acknowledge the assistance given by Messrs. G. M. Henderson, M.A., and D. G. Ball, B.A., LL.B., Inspectors of Native Schools.

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The Director of Education.

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