

It has been estimated that the supply of teachers to fill permanent and relieving positions in the schools will be exhausted at the end of 1936. It was therefore necessary to consider the training of teachers in readiness for 1937, and, as the course extends over two years, it was decided to reopen the Auckland and Christchurch Training Colleges in February, 1935, and to admit 400 Division A and 30 Division C (graduate) students.

For some years training-college entrants have had experience as probationers before entering the college, but, on reconsideration of the position in the light of experience in the Dominion and in Great Britain, it was decided to discontinue the practice. Similar steps have been taken in Great Britain as a result of a report presented by a special committee set up in 1925. In future, young people of a suitable standard of education will be admitted direct to the training colleges, will spend two years therein learning the principles and practice of their profession, and will then serve in the larger schools under the guidance of experienced head teachers for one year prior to their becoming certificated.

During the year the staffs of the Auckland and Christchurch Training Colleges were employed according to their special qualifications in various branches of education throughout the Dominion. The Principals and Vice-Principals were appointed Acting-Inspectors of Schools, and were in this way given the opportunity of seeing large numbers of their former students at work and of estimating to what extent the training given in the colleges was enabling the students to meet the problems and requirements of every-day school life. The lecturers in art, music, handwork and kindergarten work, science and nature study, and physical instruction became itinerant instructors and visited schools throughout the Dominion. They taught in the schools, and through refresher classes and in other ways guided and directed the teachers in regard to the most modern methods of teaching the subjects in which they themselves had specialized. Several of the lecturers were attached to the University Colleges as assistants to members of the professorial staff. This association was helpful to the University Colleges and especially so to the training-college lecturers, who had an opportunity of renewing their acquaintance with University standards of learning.

Reports that have been received show that the allocation of the training-college staffs to specialist work in the schools, both primary and post-primary, was welcomed by the schools and has proved of very great benefit to education generally. Teachers have received inspiration and help and have communicated to their pupils the enthusiasm aroused in themselves. The training-college lecturers have seen what is being done in the schools, what can be done, and what should be done. I therefore look forward with confidence to the training colleges performing more successfully than ever their duty in the training of teachers.

The Correspondence School has functioned very efficiently as a unit in the Department's system of rural education, and has also served the needs of a number of children who, because of physical disability, have been unable to attend the schools near their homes. It provides full courses of primary and secondary instruction from the primer stage to the Higher Leaving Certificate.

The Child Welfare Branch of the Department dealt with about the same number of cases as in the previous year. A notable feature is the preventive work by which children are socially readjusted in their own homes as soon as there is any sign of trouble, and by prompt action saved from appearance in a Children's Court. Parents as a general rule welcome the services of Child Welfare Officers in this respect.

The number of honorary Child Welfare Officers was increased, and the local interest in individual cases and the system generally was thereby considerably enlarged.

There is no doubt that the preventive work of the Department combined with the assistance given by honorary officers and social-service organizations has tended to diminish the numbers of children appearing before the Courts for serious offences against the law.

In the Native Schools the departure from the conventional teaching practice and the endeavour to foster the self-development of the child through self-expression, and to relate the activities of the school more closely to the actual needs of the Maori were continued. In health instruction, woodwork, domestic work, and increased social service the results are proving beneficial and stimulating.