

9. HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

On 9th and 10th May, 1934, a conference on Maori Hygiene, attended by the Director of Education and the Inspector of Native Schools, was arranged by the Health Department. On 11th May a sub-committee met to give further consideration to health-teaching in Native schools. It was agreed that the present syllabus and the time allocated to health education were suitable. The conference recommended the formation of infant-welfare classes for older girls, and agreed that the Junior Red Cross Organization was valuable as a vehicle for Maori education in health matters. Both these recommendations have been adopted by many head teachers with most pleasing and beneficial results. I wish to express my appreciation of the assistance and valuable co-operation thus rendered to Native education by the Health Department.

Free medicinal stores continue to be supplied to schools. Time after time this service has been justified by the saving of life and the alleviation of pain. The district nurses continue to co-operate with the teachers both in and out of school.

Insistence upon personal cleanliness was maintained, and in most schools the result was most creditable to teachers, parents, and the children themselves. It was a pleasure to be present at many of the morning inspections. Individual towels are now more common, and the teachers are to be commended upon the general and effective use of handkerchiefs by the children. The Native Schools Service is justly proud of its scrupulously clean buildings and out offices, and in 1934 this traditionally high standard was maintained.

Refresher courses in physical drill, conducted by Mr. Reid, proved to have a very stimulating effect. In many schools this subject seems to require an occasional stimulus of this nature. Organized sport in some districts was successful and organized games during intervals were strongly recommended by your Inspectors. Failing provision of such games, the Maori child shows little inclination to play.

10. HANDWORK AND ELEMENTARY HANDWORK TRAINING.

The supply of woodwork tools was continued, 35 per cent. of Native schools now being equipped in this respect. In order to assist the teachers in a more systematic attack upon this subject a woodwork scheme was prepared and issued by the Department. In a few schools the importance of proper care and storage of tools was not sufficiently realized. Particularly in a Native school, training in habits of tidiness and right appreciation of property are most essential. Woodwork appeals to the Maori boy, and in many schools a number of articles of practical utility were completed. Comment has already been made upon the attempt to introduce Maori arts and crafts. Only in a few schools was this innovation successful. In addition to the above the usual school handwork activities were provided. An excellent scheme in sewing, prepared by Miss Lynn, should prove a great incentive to more systematic work in this subject. It must be acknowledged, however, that the inability of many Maori girls to provide suitable material seriously handicaps the teachers. Nevertheless the quality of the needlework in some of the schools is outstanding. In 1934 housecraft, home-management, and cookery were taught in an increasing number of Native schools. Instruction in these subjects varies considerably, depending to a great extent upon the amount of the child's initiative and reliance called forth by the task in hand.

11. DRAWING.

In devising the curriculum adapted to the needs and interests of the Maori child, prominence was given to the subject of drawing. It was felt that this particular subject was not being given the thought and care it deserves, providing, as it does, such a useful training for any craft in which work with both hand and eye play a part. In too many cases drawing was regarded too much in the light of an occupational subject, in which a general supervision was merely required.

Too little attention was also given to the wider aspects of the subject. Lessons were based mainly on the drawing of objects and sprays. The weaknesses were—firstly, that much of the work was ungraded, difficult and simple objects being given at random; and, secondly, that general representations were the result rather than a true drawing of the object as seen by the pupil. In sprays, too, there is a danger of looseness both in observation and in drawing.

Stress is now being placed on the teaching of drawing in as many phases as possible and on a properly graded scheme. The children are expected to think well beforehand about what they wish to do and how best they can do it. Every line, in its position, direction, strength, and thickness should be an expression of thought. In their schemes teachers are asked to give a prominent place to design, and in this respect the old Maori arts lend very valuable aid, not only in the teaching of design and its logical development, but also in linking the Maori child to the traditions and arts of his own race. In this respect it is pleasing to note that very fine work is being done in a number of our schools.

During last year Native-school teachers were, so far as was possible, given the opportunity of participating in refresher courses conducted by Mr. Donn, and his lectures on the subjects of drawing, art, and handwork were greatly enjoyed by the teachers. As a result of these lectures and demonstrations the work is now being carried on in a much more systematic manner.

12. AGRICULTURE.

During the last few years a greater advance has been made in agricultural instruction and in nature study than in any other subject. Their importance to the Native child cannot be over-emphasized, but unless the instruction aims at the development of strong interests in and an appreciation of nature, and awakens in the child an abiding love of living things, these subjects will be of