

14. PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION.

The total number of Proficiency candidates for 1935 was 270 (244 in 1934), of whom 195 were Maori children and 75 European children. The average age of the candidates, at the time of the examination, was fourteen years three months. Two hundred and nine candidates were awarded Proficiency Certificates and thirty-one Competency Certificates.

15. MAORI MISSION SCHOOLS.

Eleven mission schools for Native children, controlled and administered by denominational authorities, were all visited by your Inspectors. The reports indicated that, in each case, the conditions necessary for registration were satisfied. Five hundred and seventy children were enrolled at these mission schools, the average attendance being 490.56.

16. SECONDARY EDUCATION.

The Maori child has the same right to a free secondary education as a European: as a free-place pupil he can attend any secondary school, technical school, or district high school. This right is of value only to Maoris who are living in the vicinity of such institutions, and thus it provides no real facility for secondary education for the Maori children living in the backblocks. For the latter, by means of a system of Government scholarships, secondary education for two years is provided at selected private schools, controlled by the authorities of various religious denominations. Table H 3 gives a list of these boarding-schools and the roll numbers thereat.

For some years the curriculum of many of these schools, especially those for boys, has been narrowed into almost purely academic channels. This partial, and, in one case, almost complete abandonment of practical, technical, and agricultural training, has been a matter of serious concern. Such a limitation of curriculum is contrary to modern educational theory, even when applied to secondary schools for Europeans. For the majority of these Maori boys it can provide, at most, a very artificial training, almost completely unrelated to their needs in later life. There has been little evidence of the organization of such extra-curricula activities as school clubs and societies of a similar nature, which are becoming of increasing importance in most secondary schools, and in which the seeds of cultural interests and leisure time occupations are first sown. This descent into formality is due to a number of causes, not the least of which is financial stringency, which has resulted in inadequate staffing, both in the number and in the efficiency of teachers. On the other hand, factors which should have encouraged a very practical curriculum were the withdrawal of Continuation Scholarships and the limitation of the Junior Scholarships to two years. Both of these conditions seriously decrease the opportunities for service which these schools might render the Maori community but, just as long as they remain determining factors, they invite, even demand, special short courses planned, not to meet examination requirements, but to be of benefit both to the boys themselves and to their community. In some of the private secondary schools for Maori girls this criticism applies to a less extent, but there also the curriculum is in need of thoughtful revision.

In view of the above criticisms the approval of the Hon. Minister of Education was given for the convening of a conference to examine the present provisions for the secondary education of the Maori and to make any necessary recommendations. It is proposed to hold this conference in 1936. Early in the year the St. Stephen's Board of Governors invited the Director of Education and the Inspector of Native Schools to attend one of its meetings to discuss the problems outlined above. In December a similar invitation was extended to the Inspector of Native Schools by the Te Aute Trust Board.

In all the private secondary schools the tone and discipline were of a high standard, and the instruction given to Government Scholarship pupils complied with section 114 of the regulations relating to Native schools except that, in most of the schools, inadequate provision has been made for the teaching of the Maori language.

17. SCHOLARSHIPS.

In 1935, 131 Junior Scholarships were held by pupils attending boarding-schools. There were also held four Agricultural Scholarships, one Nursing Scholarship, and two University Scholarships. The Junior Te Makarini Scholarship was won by George Matthews and the Senior Te Makarini Scholarship by Mark Newton. This year no Buller Scholarship was awarded.

18. PACIFIC ISLAND INSPECTIONS.

The Chatham Island Schools were inspected by Mr. A. H. Denne in February, 1935. These are public schools administered and inspected by the Native Schools Branch of the Education Department. In July and August, 1935, I visited Fiji and Western Samoa for the purposes of inspection and grading of teachers.

19. CONCLUSION.

The inspection and examination of Native schools have been conducted in the usual manner. I am indebted to my colleagues, Mr. A. H. Denne and Mr. T. A. Fletcher, the latter of whom assisted for the greater part of the year, for their untiring efforts and willing co-operation. Acknowledgment must also be made of the efficiency and helpfulness of the Native Schools Branch of the Education Department.

D. G. BALL,
Inspector of Native Schools.

The Director of Education, Wellington.