

In the meantime, the old Prime Minister's residence in Tinakori Road has been pressed into service.

The milk-in-schools scheme is operating smoothly and efficiently. The reports of the Inspectors of Schools in every education district speak of the very efficient arrangements made for receiving the milk, the marked expedition with which it is distributed, and the high degree of cleanliness attending its consumption. Pupils, teachers, and parents are very enthusiastic concerning this established benefit. The evidence submitted to the Social Security Committee of the House of Representatives by a representative of the New Zealand Educational Institute contained the following paragraph :—

“ Although I have not been in the schools since the milk scheme was introduced, I have moved among the teachers a lot, and the unanimous opinion, as far as I can gather, is that the giving of milk has had a very remarkable effect. In most cases the response from the children in the class-rooms has astonished the teachers. There is much more mental activity than was anticipated, and a renewed interest in the work.”

Suggestions for improvement of the service refer chiefly to the possibility of warming the milk during the winter months in cold localities, and to the advisability of the School Medical Service giving advice as to the best time of the day for the drinking of the milk. Some Inspectors of Schools speak of the increased physical and mental vitality of the pupils towards the close of the morning school, and some teachers of the more restrained behaviour of nervous children. Though it is too early yet to speak with exactness of the physical and mental effects claimed for the scheme by teachers, who are, of course, in a position to express an informed opinion, there can be no doubt of the thoroughness with which it has been organized and of the immediate popularity it has achieved.

The milk-in-schools scheme for the free issue of a $\frac{1}{2}$ pint daily ration of milk to children commenced on the 1st March, 1937. The consumption of the milk by the scholars is entirely voluntary, and it is found over all schools that about 85 per cent. of children accept. The total school population of the Dominion, including State primary schools, post-primary schools, technical high schools, Native schools, together with private and denominational schools, free kindergartens, &c., is approximately 282,000. At the present time over 137,000 pupils are being supplied daily. New schemes and extensions of existing schemes have been arranged to include a further 14,600 children, the date of the commencement depending upon up-to-date treating-plant and the milk being available—the building-up of winter milking-herds being a problem. When these schemes are functioning the total number of pupils receiving milk will be in the vicinity of 151,000, or approximately 53 per cent. of the total school population. Allowing for the 15 per cent. who do not partake of the daily issue of milk, this means the milk is actually available to 177,000, or over 61 per cent., of the school-child population. It will not, however, be practicable to extend a pasteurized supply to every district owing to areas of isolation and scattered population presenting practically insuperable difficulties. To meet the needs of schools in these areas alternative schemes are to be made available :—

- (1) Free issue of milk for cocoa-making purposes.
- (2) Free issue of whole-milk or malted-milk powder.

It is estimated that some 8,000 Maori children will receive the benefits of the malted-milk scheme in the near future. This means that within fourteen months of the inception of the scheme the milk will be available to approximately 185,000 or over 65 per cent. of the school-child population.

In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation of the services and assistance rendered by the Director of Education, Mr. N. T. Lambourne, the Superintendent of Technical Education, the Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools, the Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, the Secretary of the Department, the Superintendent of the Child Welfare Branch, and by all the other officers of the Department. In particular, I wish to thank Mr. W. S. La Trobe, Mr. J. Beck, and Mr. C. E. Crawford for the very fine service they have given to the Department over a long period of years.