

Maoris are at present holding University scholarships in medicine, dentistry, engineering, law, arts, and science. The three Native district high schools recently opened on the East Coast are passing out of the first stage of experimentation and are finding their place in the communities they serve.

Correspondence School.—The work of the Department's Correspondence School grows in scope and value every year. This year there were 1,800 primary and 679 post-primary children on the roll in addition to 640 part-time pupils, many of them adults. No less than 303 of the pupils were sick or crippled children. Recently courses for young farmers were instituted in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture. The school is giving valuable assistance in the preparation of courses for the Army Education and Welfare Service and in the provision of educational facilities for returned ex-servicemen. It is probable that still greater demands will be made on it along these lines next year.

Training of Teachers.—Two of the training colleges had their work badly disrupted during the year, one because its buildings were taken for defence purposes, and the other because of severe earthquake damage. Yet the work went on, thanks to the tenacity of the staffs and to the generosity of the University colleges in offering accommodation. The number of students admitted to the training colleges in 1942 was 750.

In 1943 a new scheme will be started to help to remedy the shortage of domestic-science teachers. Selected students will have six months in a training college, followed by eighteen months in the home science departments of technical schools and a year as probationary assistants in selected manual-training centres. This course will lead to a Housecraft Teacher's Certificate.

Handicapped Children.—Additional provision made for handicapped children during the year included the opening of new special classes for backward children, the appointment of another specialist to examine entrants to these classes, and a considerable increase in the number of speech clinics. The Summer School for the Deaf had to give up its buildings, and the school was broken into two parts, one remaining in Christchurch and the other going to Auckland.

Child Welfare.—From much that has been publicly said and written of late it might be imagined that a wave of juvenile delinquency is sweeping New Zealand. Whilst strongly deprecating such alarmist statements, I had myself feared that there might be a sharp rise in the figures for juvenile offences similar to the marked increases there have been in Britain as a result of war conditions. I am happy to say that these fears have not up to the present been realized. The figures for juvenile offences in the Children's Courts, including offences against by-laws, show only a very slight rise for last year, and this is the first rise that has occurred since the outbreak of war.

There is, however, no ground for complacency. All the conditions exist that would make for increased delinquency among children—broken homes, with the consequent inadequate control of children, unusual industrial and social conditions, and the general air of unrest and excitement and the weakening of inhibitions in the adult community that always occur in time of war. There would appear to be an increased restlessness and sense of adventure in a small proportion of children that call for all the help the adult community can give if some children are not to slip from mere childish mischief or naughtiness into delinquency. There is no simple solution to the problem, and this is not the place for me to assess the relative responsibilities of home, school, church, and the general community, but I wish to report on the steps the Government is taking through its education system to meet the position.

The raising of the school age to fifteen in 1944 will be the most important single step that can be taken in this direction. Above all, it is essential that every young adolescent in times like these should be responsible to some authoritative and reliable person. This duty is primarily one for the home, but in so far as some homes cannot carry it, the school must needs take it over. Most teachers are aware of this and are giving an increasing amount of attention to the personal lives of those children whose homes appear to exercise inadequate control. I have given approval for the appointment in certain areas in 1943 of "visiting teachers." These teachers will be attached to schools or groups of schools, without responsibility for class-teaching, but with the special function, under the headmaster, of maintaining contact between the school and the home. They will be, in effect, school social workers responsible for the study and treatment of individual children who find difficulty in adjusting, for one reason or another, to normal school life. I anticipate that their appointment will be the best reply to the complaints recently received that truancy is on the increase. If the work of these first visiting teachers is successful, the system will be extended and special arrangements made for training teachers in this difficult branch of work.

The staff of Child Welfare Officers has been increased to meet the new demands arising from the war, and especially to handle the growing bulk of the preventive work on which the branch is concentrating. Four new Child Welfare offices will be opened in 1943, and a new institution to handle younger delinquent girls is in course of construction at Christchurch. Caversham Boys' Home, Dunedin, has been rebuilt.

The first conference of Child Welfare Officers was held in 1941, since when regional conferences have been held in Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin to consider methods of dealing with present problems. Special sessions have been held at each conference, to which representatives of teachers, churches, social workers, and allied Government Departments have been invited, to plan closer co-operation of all agencies concerned with child welfare. As one direct result of these conferences new regulations dealing with a wide variety of child-welfare topics will shortly be brought down. I would stress, however, that, necessary though they may be, the final solution to the problem of juvenile delinquency will be found not in regulations or in purely restrictive measures, but in the provision by schools, churches, social organizations, and the homes of activities that will absorb the energies and capture the faith of the young people of to-day.

Army Education.—The Education Department played a leading part in the inauguration of the system of Army education, and the Director of the Army Education and Welfare Service, Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. Ball, was seconded to the Army from his position of Senior Inspector in the Department. The Department, moreover, has the responsibility for organizing the twenty-two Regional Committees whose work it is to mobilize all civilian educational facilities for the use of the Army Education and Welfare Service. A particularly prominent part in Army education is being played by the Department's Correspondence School and by many of the technical schools, which are