

Daily health inspections are carried out in all schools, and, where necessary, simple ailments are treated on the spot. Regular treatment given by the Dental Officer is effecting a general improvement in dental health. During the year a scheme for the provision of free milk in schools came into full operation in Rarotonga, and the children are deriving the expected nutritional benefit. The scheme is being extended to the outer islands as soon as materials are available.

Steady progress has been made on the project for the establishment of a Teachers' Training and Secondary School at Tereora, Rarotonga, to which will be admitted pupils from all islands of the Group. The site and building plans have now been decided on, and construction work is expected to proceed in the coming year.

Pending the establishment of the Tereora College, plans are in hand for early commencement of domestic-science training with Arorangi School as the centre and of woodwork training centred in Avarua.

Considerable progress has been made with the compilation of a Maori grammar and Maori vocabulary which will be the basis for Maori language text-books and readers. In addition, a new approach has been made to the teaching of English, and excellent results have been observed.

In furtherance of the scholarship scheme, three pupils went forward to New Zealand early in March, 1948, bringing the total number of Cook Islands scholarship pupils now at school in New Zealand to eleven. At the same time two Native teachers went forward under the scheme for short-term training in New Zealand schools.

Increased attention has been given to teacher training, and regular classes have been held in Rarotonga. At the final examination, seven teachers obtained a full pass and fifteen a partial pass in the Cook Islands Teacher's Certificate Examination, and eighteen teachers passed the student teacher's examination.

The Officer for Islands Education visited the Group in May, but owing to the outbreak of whooping-cough was able to inspect schools only at Mangaia, Atiu, and Mauke. The Education Officer visited both the Lower and Northern Group islands during the year.

19. CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

No newspapers are published in the Group, the news being distributed by means of press sheets circulated by the Administration. Consideration is being given to the institution of a broadcasting service for the dissemination of news, official reports, and addresses of a cultural nature. A Museum Society has been formed for the preservation of ancient Native relics and the maintenance of Native art, culture, handicrafts, and legends.

Youth organizations include the Boys' Brigade and Girl Guides, both of which are popularly supported.

PART IV.—ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

20. NATURAL RESOURCES

The Cook Islands economy is centred on the natural products of the soil, which serve to sustain the inhabitants and to provide an exportable surplus adequate to meet their simple needs of clothing, European foods, and amenities. The fertile islands in the Southern Group produce quantities of oranges, tomatoes, and arrowroot for the New Zealand market, while copra is a staple product of all the islands. The export of pearl-shell from the Northern Group and the usual South Seas Native handicrafts of grassware (hats, baskets, and mats) and shell and coral curios give the Natives of the less-fertile islands the means to raise their natural living standards.