

SCHOLARSHIPS.

In addition to the free places available at the various boarding-schools, one nursing scholarship, one apprenticeship, and five agricultural scholarships were held during 1930. Three students, studying respectively law (Auckland), arts (Auckland), and medical (Dunedin), also held University Scholarships.

The usual examinations for the Te Makarini and Buller Scholarships were held in December. The Junior Te Makarini was won by Hirini Rangipuawhe (open junior) and Matarehua Wikiriwhi (reserve junior), and the senior by John Pile. The Buller Scholarship was awarded to Manu Pene Ngougou.

The Department is of the opinion that the time has come for a revision of the standard of attainment and of the syllabus defined for the above scholarships.

HISTORY OF NATIVE-SCHOOLS SYSTEMS.

It is now fifty years since the Native schools passed under the control of the Department, and it is perhaps fitting that a brief *résumé* of their history, with a review of their present position, should be stated.

The initial steps in the education of the Maori were taken by the various missionary bodies, beginning with Marsden, through mission schools in which were assembled pupils of all ages who were housed, clothed, and fed, and instructed in their own language. This system, which proved to be expensive and unsatisfactory, was superseded in 1858, when the Native Schools Act was passed. By this a system of grants-in-aid was provided to schools established for the education of the Maori, on condition that instruction in the English language and in the ordinary subjects of English education and industrial training formed a necessary part of the curriculum. The Maori wars of the "sixties" prevented the effectual operation of this system, and it was not till 1871 that a fresh effort could be made. The new amendment Act of 1871 provided for the establishment by the Native Department of village schools, instruction in the English language, and the appointment of Maori School Committees. The Maoris were expected to contribute part of the cost of the buildings and of the teacher's salary, while all schools receiving Government aid were to be regularly inspected and supervised.

There were no fixed standards of instruction, every master teaching what he thought best. English, arithmetic, spelling, writing, and geography were the subjects most frequently taken. The buildings were for the most part unsatisfactory, the equipment poor and unsuitable, the attendance very irregular, and the teachers for the most part incompetent. Notwithstanding all these shortcomings, the schools marked the beginning of a system and exercised considerable influence in the localities in which they were placed, if only from the fact that they constituted a European outpost in the remote Maori district. This ideal, which still obtains, was in operation when the schools were placed under the Education Department at the end of the year 1879, for the central idea was "to bring an untutored, intelligent, and high-spirited people into line with our civilization by placing in Maori settlements European school-buildings and European families to serve as teachers, and especially as examples of a more desirable mode of life."

Under the new Act Native education awoke into life and soon exhibited vigorous growth. Applications for schools were spread from the far north to the far south, and several of our present schools came into being. In 1874 there were sixty-six Native schools in operation, with an average attendance of 1,487 and a total expenditure of £9,534.

To secure a more satisfactory degree of efficiency and success in the administration of the Native schools an organizing Inspector (Mr. J. H. Pope) was appointed in January, 1880. His efforts were to be directed especially to the village schools, leaving the higher education to be effected by the establishment of the system of scholarships from the village school to the secondary school, which remains in practice to-day. The syllabus of instruction comprised reading, spelling, writing, English, arithmetic, composition, geography, sewing, singing, and drawing.

The salary scheme was exceedingly complex, the payments varying with roll, certificate, service, and results. Thus a master of a school with thirty-five children holding a third-class certificate and passing his school in Standards I and II would be entitled to a salary of £150 per annum, his wife, acting as assistant, getting £35 per annum.

Schools were not established within fifteen miles of another school, and children near whose home there was no school went to live with relatives in order to attend school, without consideration of board or conveyance.

Though there was no compulsion, the attendance was good so long as the children had confidence in and respect for their teacher. Without these, the school could not go on, as the pupils ceased to attend.

With payment on results as part of the salary scheme, the examinations were conducted with considerable strictness in some subjects, no mistake being tolerated, but care was exercised to see that the failure was due to ignorance, and not to misconception or want of readiness.

Many of the Committees rendered valuable assistance, and, especially where the chiefs were far-seeing enough to appreciate the value of education to their people, they readily gave sites and material for the school. But the schools had many difficulties to contend with: Epidemics, failure of crops, successions of Land Courts, and in some cases incompetent teachers combined to defeat the efforts of the Department. Experience had shown, however, that the habits of a race could not be changed at once without imminent risk of their extermination, and that a considerable period of time would be required in which to complete this.