

Recitation shows a decided improvement in the lower and middle classes, due largely to a wiser selection of poems. In the upper classes, however, there is a lack of appreciation and comprehension, mainly because the type of poem chosen was too abstract and philosophical. One aspect of the value of recitation which should always be kept in mind is its power to arouse the finer emotions. These need development in the Native child, and appreciation of beauty in all its various forms should be a conspicuous feature of Native education.

Fair progress was made in reading, but the scarcity of supplementary readers suitable for Maori children in the upper classes handicaps the teachers in their efforts to foster a love of reading. In spite of this there has been an improvement in the pupil's ability to reproduce the substance of the matter read.

Spelling varied considerably in quality. The choice of spelling words received careful consideration by most teachers. This subject should be intimately associated with oral and written speech and reading in order that the words learnt in the spelling-lesson may be used in the latter.

Arithmetic showed a satisfactory improvement in mechanical accuracy. Figuring was generally neat and the setting-out of the work methodical. In problem arithmetic the results were not so satisfactory, due chiefly to the fact that the pupils had not been trained to visualize a problem before attempting to solve it, with the result that they relied too much upon memorized methods of solution. The language in which the problems were clothed was also at fault. In the selection of problems too much weight has been attached to those of a commercial nature, and agricultural and domestic problems have been overlooked.

In geography and history much of the foreign geography has been excluded and local geography and history substituted. There is still a tendency to make geographical knowledge merely a verbal one rather than real, but care in the framing of the Proficiency Test papers has begun to impress teachers with the futility of treating these subjects as if they were catechisms.

The effort to improve the instruction in Maori and New Zealand history has not been very productive, owing to the fact that many of the teachers themselves have an inadequate knowledge of these subjects. This naturally results in a very superficial treatment, with little power of appeal to the Maori child.

The value of training in civics was emphasized, but in this also little progress has yet been effected.

In many Native schools singing is very well taught, and the results are most pleasing.

A word of praise is due to the very good progress made, throughout the year, in the primer division. The new Infant Reading-books were welcomed by the teachers and introduced with intelligence and enthusiasm.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the general level of attainment reached in these subjects is a satisfactory one.

14. PROFICIENCY.

The total number of Proficiency candidates for 1934 was 244 (244 in 1933) of whom 176 were Maori children and 68 European children. The average age of the candidates at the time of the examination was 14 years 2·4 months. One hundred and seventeen candidates were awarded Proficiency Certificates and 42 Competency Certificates.

15. MAORI MISSION SCHOOLS.

The 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 thirty-five children were enrolled at these mission schools, the average attendance being 473·1.

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 generous system of Government Scholarships, secondary education for two years is provided at selected private schools controlled by the authorities of various religious denominations. Reference to Table H. 3 will give a list of these boarding-schools and of the roll numbers thereat.

During 1934 most of these schools were seriously handicapped by depleted roll numbers, due to the Maori parents' financial inability to assist their children and to other factors attributable to the general financial stringency. At Te Aute and St. Stephens, teaching staffs were reduced, thus making it extremely difficult to provide the broad, practical agricultural training so essential to the majority of the Maori boys. At Te Aute singing has now been included, a revival thoroughly appreciated by many of the boys. The teaching of Maori, a requirement for all scholarship pupils, is proving difficult at some of the private schools. With reference to the instruction given in the girls' schools, I must repeat my remarks in last year's report:—

“Instruction in the domestic arts, cookery, laundrywork, first-aid, and home nursing was provided in all these schools, but the value of such instruction would have been enhanced had the respective schemes been better planned, simpler in nature, and more closely adapted to the special needs of the pupils. In addition, the girls should have been given the mental discipline of planning and management wherein responsibility determines careful thought and calls forth the full powers of the child.”

The tone and discipline of the private secondary schools were of a high standard, and were well devised to afford training both in leadership and in obedience to authority.