

Higher Education and Free Places.

The Government has not instituted any schools especially for the secondary education of Maoris, but a number of such schools having been established and being maintained by the various denominational bodies, the Government secures free continued education for qualified Maori children by providing at these schools a number of scholarships or free places. The value of the free places is £30 per annum, and they are tenable for two years. The roll number of these schools (ten in number) at the end of 1923 was 493, of which number fifty-four boys and seventy girls held the free places referred to. The great majority of the scholars were ex-pupils of Native schools. The syllabus of work to be followed by free-place holders as prescribed by the Department is designed to secure such industrial training as is considered desirable in the case of Maoris: the boys learn agriculture and woodwork, and the girls take a domestic course. A farm of 600 acres is being worked in conjunction with Te Aute College—one of the schools referred to. In some of the schools the more capable pupils are prepared for the Public Service Entrance and Matriculation Examinations, several candidates being successful in 1923. The Te Makarini and Buller Scholarships were founded out of private bequests, and are tenable by Maori scholars at Te Aute College. One senior and one junior Te Makarini Scholarships and one Buller Scholarship were awarded in 1923, there being keen competition for the senior Te Makarini and the Buller Scholarships. Disappointment is again expressed at the small number of candidates from Native village schools competing for the Government junior scholarships or free places, and the obligation is impressed upon teachers of encouraging suitable pupils to enter for the qualifying examination.

Senior free places are provided for boys in the form of industrial and agricultural scholarships, which enable the holders to be apprenticed to suitable trades, or to obtain agricultural training at Te Aute College. Three scholarships of the latter type were held in 1923. Senior free places for girls take the form of nursing scholarships. These scholarships have proved very satisfactory, a number of Maori girls having qualified as nurses and now being at work in the field. At the end of 1923 two scholarship-holders were in training.

University scholarships are awarded to promising Maori youths who have matriculated, and are intended to enable them to take up a profession which will eventually prove of service and benefit to the Maori race. Six such scholarships were current at the end of last year, the holders studying medicine, law, and engineering (four scholars) respectively.

Cost.

The total payments made by the Department for Native schools during the year ended the 31st March, 1924, amounted to £72,495, being £2,864 more than in the previous year. The chief items of expenditure were salaries and allowances, £54,924; new buildings and additions, £3,692; maintenance of buildings, repairs, &c., £3,476; secondary education, £4,484; conveyance and board of children, £2,368; books and school requisites, £1,581.

POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION.

GENERAL.

Reference has already been made to the modification necessarily involved in our education system to give effect to the junior-high-school plan, and it has been noted that the general question of the relationship between secondary and technical schools is under review.

In 1923 there were in operation thirty-seven secondary schools, including fourteen separate schools for boys, thirteen for girls, and ten for boys and girls. Two of the boys' schools, although endowed with public property, do not come directly under the control of the Government. The remaining secondary schools are managed by separate Boards in accordance with special Acts constituting them, and the provisions of the Education Act and regulations thereunder. There were sixty-eight secondary departments of district high schools, fourteen technical high schools, eleven Maori secondary schools, and twenty-seven registered private secondary schools, making a total of 157 schools providing secondary education.