

to either Maori or European children. The promotion of the head teacher at Mangaia to the dual position of head teacher and Resident Agent made it necessary to appoint a male assistant European teacher, who will take up his duties in April, at the Oneroa School.

“Native teachers greatly improved in academic status: Although there has been no change in the total number of Native teachers, there has been a considerable change in their educational standing. In 1926 there were eleven Native teachers in Rarotonga without any certificates. Of these, four are now entitled to Class 8 certificates, while the remainder have improved their qualifications considerably. At the same time, it must be remembered that such qualifications are considerably below the desirable minimum, if teachers are ever to learn modern methods of teaching. At the time of writing the results of the December examinations for Native teachers in the Outer Islands have not come to hand, and so can not be included in this report.

“*Training of Teachers.*—Training college and normal school established at Avarua: What is easily the most important step in education since the opening of schools was taken at the commencement of 1927, when a training college and normal school were established at Avarua. The importance of the new step lies in the fact that before undertaking any duties or responsibility as a class-teacher the young teacher will receive a three-years course in the college. Here he will extend his study of the subjects taught in the public schools, for, contrary to the generally accepted idea, a teacher needs to know a great deal more about each subject than he is required to actually teach. Instruction in the methods of teaching suitable to Maori pupils will be given as well as some insight into the characteristics of children. In the normal school the students will go through a graduated course of observation and practice in class-teaching, commencing with very small units, so that they may develop some skill in the mechanical aspects of class-control before they attempt to actually teach. The practice of allowing students to take charge of a class and then to sink or swim is most damaging to both children and students.

“Pupil-teachers are now receiving regular instruction and training: Up to the present no pupils have passed through the complete Cook Islands public-school course, so that, with the exception of those who had passed the Proficiency or Competency Examination in New Zealand, all pupil-teachers have in the past been appointed straight from the lower classes. The low standard of education among the pupil-teachers made any advance impossible, and so one hour per day was taken off the children’s school-time and devoted to the instruction of the teachers, throughout the Southern Group. From the academic point of view the results have been very encouraging. Prior to the commencement of the teachers’ classes in Rarotonga the teachers were tested by means of standardized tests with a view to obtaining an accurate estimate of their progress in certain subjects.

“Arithmetic improves 23 per cent.: In arithmetic reasoning, adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing an average gain of 23 per cent. was made, while in a very exhaustive test of the meaning of words a gain of 13 per cent. was effected.

“Unusual gain in intelligence: That the methods used by the head teachers have been of all-round value rather than of a narrow scholastic type is shown by the gain in intelligence. A test of general mental ability was given to all teachers in August, 1925, and the test repeated in November, 1926. In that time there would normally be a gain in intelligence of fifteen months, but as a result of the head teachers’ classes, the gain amounted to twenty-nine months. If such improvement can be maintained it will be possible soon to give pupil-teachers some definite instruction in methods of teaching. At present head teachers give as much of their time as is possible to helping the Native teachers prepare their lessons and improve their methods of instruction. On two afternoons a week all the pupil-teachers in Rarotonga assemble at the normal school, where they receive still further tuition and help in preparing materials for their class-teaching.

“*The Curriculum.*—Courses of study have been modernized: During the past year a considerable amount of their leisure time was given by Mr. Scherer and Miss Ormiston in assisting the Superintendent to draw up new courses of study in arithmetic, reading, spelling, English, and phonics. This entailed great sacrifices of time and intensive study of recent researches, modern books, and the curricula of up-to-date tropical systems of education. The time so spent has, however, been amply justified by the production of courses of study constructed on principles approved by the leading educational experts.

“A new course in health, based on the recommendations of the recent Educational Commissions in Fiji, British, French, and Belgian Africa, Philippine Islands, and Porto Rico has also been completed. New courses in oral English, geography, history, and nature-study will be worked out during the coming year at the normal school, while especial attention will be given to the question of the education of senior girls for their future responsibilities.

“Comparison with other tropical systems justifies local curriculum: During the past year the courses of study in use in a number of tropical countries were secured and examined with a view to benefiting from the experience of others. Very valuable suggestions have thus been obtained. In addition, it has been possible to check up the standards of difficulty in each year’s work, the amount to be covered, and the policy adopted in regard to the use of English as the medium of instruction. It has thus been found that, in general, our curriculum is in keeping with the most recent developments in tropical education.

“*Research.*—If our educational materials and methods are to be adapted to the abilities of the children, it is necessary for us to know exactly how far we are succeeding. This involves careful experiment and investigation, sometimes on a large scale. During the last year several investigations were carried out, involving some hundreds of children, and results obtained that will enable us to proceed with much greater certainty. For example, we now know what words are used in each of Classes 3, 5, and 7 in their compositions. Many of these words are wrongly used, many are wrongly spelled. Some words are being taught in Class 3 that should be delayed until Class 4, and