

Ninety-two Cook Islands lepers have been admitted to the Makogai Leper Station, and further cases are now awaiting removal thereto. Thirty-two have since been cured and returned to their island homes.

The story of the establishment of this service and of the part taken therein personally by the late Sir Maui Pomare, my lamented predecessor, in arresting the spread of leprosy by segregation of cases at Makogai, Fiji, and in organizing curative treatment which has resulted in the restoration to health of a large percentage of cases has yet to be told: it must be placed to the credit of Pomare's memory and renown, and, through him, to the justification of New Zealand's disinterested expenditure during a period when she could afford it. If the measures taken in the last six years prove successful this item may be regarded as a decreasing one, but cannot be suddenly curtailed 50 per cent. in accordance with the recommendation of the Commission.

Related to the problem of health in the islands is the provision of preventive measures, which fall into three classes—

- (a) The education of Natives at medical schools in New Zealand and Fiji;
- (b) Ground sanitation calculated to minimize the spread of diseases from soil-pollution, notably hookworm; and
- (c) The provision of adequate supplies of good water.

Items must therefore be maintained in the Budget for social services to cover these, supplementary to provision from the local Treasuries. The Rockefeller Foundation is assisting liberally with a scheme for ground sanitation, advantage of which has to be taken during even this period of depression.

EDUCATION.

Prior to 1915 Native education in the islands was almost entirely in the hands of the missionaries. It is true that the first Government school was established at Niue in 1911 under a European teacher. Rarotonga did not establish such a school until 1915. The cost to the New Zealand Treasury in 1915 was £373. In 1931–32, thirty Government and Mission schools had been established with a roll attendance of 2,887 pupils under fourteen European teachers and fifty-two Native Government teachers, and a number of Mission teachers.

The cost to the New Zealand Treasury for the financial year ended 31st March, 1932, was £9,732, or 12s. 9½d. per head of the population, or £3 7s. 5d. per head of the number receiving education. This may be compared with costs on the New Zealand mainland as follows:—

Cost of 8,133 pupils attending the Native schools (see Year-book)	1930–31	£99,101, or £12 3s. 8d. per head.
Cost of 227,165 pupils attending the primary schools (including Native schools)		£2,636,520, or £11 12s. 1d. per head.
Total cost of education		£4,101,933, or £2 15s. per head of population.

On these figures the New Zealand taxpayer cannot complain that the white man's burden in these islands is out of all proportion to what he bears in respect of the children of his own race or of that branch of the Polynesian race with which he has been more closely associated in New Zealand. Compared with 1911 or 1915, and taking percentages which are the gauges of investigating Committees, education costs have certainly appreciated in seventeen years. But if in 1911 there was only one Government school in Niue and in 1915 one at Rarotonga—that is, if New Zealand only then entered upon its self-imposed task of adapting the polity of isolated, backward Polynesian tribes to the discipline and standards of the most advanced Western culture—the addition of half a dozen such schools in later years might well have been characterized as an increase out of all proportion.

European teachers in the schools of the Group are paid scale salaries as in New Zealand schools, with the necessary addition of tropical allowances. They are assisted by Native teachers, and in respect of the salaries of the latter no charge of extravagance can possibly be made. The range of the salaries of these Native teachers is as follows:—

£	£	£
3 at 12 per annum	4 at 25 per annum	2 at 30 per annum
5 „ 35 „	5 „ 40 „	1 „ 45 „
3 „ 50 „	3 „ 55 „	5 „ 60 „
4 „ 65 „	2 „ 70 „	1 „ 80 „
2 „ 85 „	1 „ 90 „	1 „ 95 „
1 „ 100 „	2 „ 110 „	2 „ 120 „
1 „ 125 „	1 „ 135 „	2 „ 150 „

The average number of pupils per teacher in the Cook Islands schools is forty-four, which is considerably higher than the average number in New Zealand schools.

Striking examples may be found of the difficulties that are experienced in providing educational facilities for the increasing population, and the following extract from a report of a head teacher is quoted:—

“The present accommodation is also absolutely inadequate. Classes 3 and 4—103 children—are crammed into one Native class-room, one teacher teaching against the other. Classes 2A and 2B—96 children—are in a similar position. The increase in roll is by no means a temporary one. Between now and the end of 1932 there will be at least sixty children ready for school. The roll number next year will be in the vicinity of four hundred. There are at present about seventy children without desks. Some of the pupils are actually writing on the desk-tops.”

The school to which this refers is staffed with one European head-teacher (salary, £281), one European assistant (salary, £128), and seven Native teachers with salaries ranging from £30 to £90 per annum.