

Behind the tall trees is a spacious school-ground and a large new school whose class-rooms get all the sun. It needs to be a large school. It accommodates almost two hundred happy Maori scholars and six teachers. From one class-room some are diligently, if vigorously, proclaiming that C-O-N-C-E-R-T spells "concert," while in more advanced standard the headmaster is explaining the mysteries of a newspaper which his students imagined wrote itself.

Education here has its own peculiar problems. Every child must be taught English on arrival because little but Maori is talked in the home, and even the shopping at the store can be done in the native tongue.

The emphasis is on practical work with a cookery and woodwork department in daily use. All the children belong to one of three "houses," each with its own coloured flag. Each house has a weekly turn on duty doing the cleaning of the grounds and school. The girls make vegetable soup each day from vegetables grown in the "house" garden. Cakes and pies are also made and sold, the profits being used to pay off, amongst other things, an eighty guinea piano, lino for the cookhouse, two hundred enamel mugs, and a wringer for the laundry.

The boys make gates and pig-troughs for the local farmers, maintain the school fences, and do odd jobs about the place. There is instruction in personal hygiene, nutrition, first aid, and baby craft for the girls, and first aid and stretcher drill for the boys. The girls also make their own uniforms, smocks for cooking and sack aprons for cleaning.

But the event of the week is bath day. The school has a furnace and two bath-rooms, and every child is well lathered in

warm water and then given a cold shower. Quite a job when there are two hundred children to be given a school-girl complexion all over. It also means two hundred clean towels for the school laundry.

Physical education is popular, and choral work, poi dances, hakas, action songs, and stick games are all of a high standard with such natural talents for harmony and rhythm in the pupils.

A school to tax the ingenuity and patience of any teacher, but one rich in the compensations of humour, the enthusiasm of the pupils and the knowledge that the work is well worthwhile.

Movies play an important part in the leisure life of the community, and the Taneatua Theatre has many Ruatoki patrons. An instance of their effect on education was given when the teacher asked Wiri "What is an oblong?" "A man, Miss," replied Wiri. "A man, Wiri?" queried the astounded teacher. "Yes, Miss," Wiri cheerfully affirmed; "You know, Miss. 'Obalong Cassidy.'"

A dental nurse from Whakatane comes out twice a year to attend to the children's teeth. They are good, but would be much better, she says, if there was a better diet in the home. It would be hard, however, to better the stoic qualities of her patients.

Above the school on a hill overlooking the valley is the Anglican Mission Station staffed by a European woman and a Maori assistant. A big rambling house, it was used as a girl's dormitory in the days before daily access to the school was possible. Now the kiddies come from distant parts of the valley on the school bus. The Women's Church Guild meets here each week and there are Sunday School classes for the children. Farther up the valley is a small church the interior of which is decorated with carved panels. Nearby lives the Anglican clergyman, also a Maori, who has just returned from service overseas as padre to the Maori Battalion. Many of the Maoris are followers of the Ringatu religion started by Te Kooti, the prophet, last century.

