

Education for Citizenship

When any young woman leaves school she faces the exciting, often bewildering experience of her first job; if she changes from country to city living she faces even more baffling problems.

She may wonder where to live, how to make her pay cover board and clothes and where to go in the evenings.

The answers are not always easy for city girls with parents to help and are more difficult for girls from the country, as 100 young Maoris found during a three-day 'Education for Citizenship Course' held at Auckland.

The course grew from talks between Miss M. Mako, vocational guidance officer, Mr P. Harrison, welfare officer with Maori and Island Affairs and Mr T. Royal, assistant officer for Maori Education, Department of Education, Auckland. Other people and organizations quickly supported the idea either financially or by offering their services free, and included vocational guidance officers, teachers, and members of the Maori Women's Welfare League. In all, 300 people took part.

'We expected a marked increase in school leavers this year,' said Mr Harrison. 'Many will come to us for assistance. Some will come too late when they are already in trouble.'

Planning for the course started two months before. The girls were chosen from 220 applicants, to make attendance widely representative. They were all picked from forms 5 and 6 in the Auckland and South Auckland Education Department areas.

Most of the girls chosen were those who had not been outside their own area or who were sure they would be coming to Auckland for jobs or further education.

Te Unga Waka Marae provided accommodation, and ten hostesses cared for the girls, travelling with them daily to the course lectures. Seven organizations and one Auckland citizen provided funds for the hire of buses, food and incidentals.

'We couldn't do without the organiza-

tions,' said Mr Harrison. 'They have offered to help at future courses and others have offered too.'

Similar courses may be held next year, one for girls and one for boys.

The subjects for the course were selected by a hard-working team of ten and the organizers made certain the girls received instruction in Maori culture. An evening too, was arranged at Rev. Kingi Ihaka's youth club. The Rev. Ihaka makes a feature of Maori culture and his club draws 200-300 people in an evening.

'We feel it is important these young people are made to realize they should be proud they are Maoris,' said Mr Harrison. 'We get the reaction from some, "Oh but we are only Maoris". We feel this happens with people who don't know their identity or language.'

The girls took away a wealth of information and the organizers hoped they would pass this on to other girls at their schools.

They learned to use make-up, choose and budget for clothes, and spend their leisure hours. They listened to young Maori women who lived at Auckland, talk about their jobs, they met well-known Aucklanders including the Mayor of Auckland, Dr McElroy, and they visited offices and factories. They learned how to behave at an interview and they were urged to overcome shyness.

'Shyness is a sign of good manners, but shyness can be a handicap,' said Mr G. Innes, chief vocational guidance officer, Wellington.

The recruiting officer for the Navy, Lt F. Connew, pleaded too for Maoris to forget their shyness. 'It's important to pass your personality across the desk at an interview,' he said. 'Never hide the good things about yourself.'

The girls heard about the unpleasant side of city living from Detective Inspector E. J. Perry, Officer in Charge of the vice squad at Auckland, and Sergeant L. Cuthbert, Officer in Charge of Youth Aid, Auckland.

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Detective Inspector Perry described the growth of drug taking in New Zealand, the main types used and the appalling results. 'The major cause of drug-taking is the companions with whom you mix,' he said.

'Don't listen to the pop star who says LSD "brings me nearer to God". You are at an impressionable age. You must have better types to model yourselves on.'

'Drugs such as those used for the relief of pain by the medical profession had an important place in society,' he said. 'The people who misuse drugs are the people who never make it, the dropouts.'

Sergeant Cuthbert told the girls how to avoid the many unpleasant situations young women sometimes found themselves in—from unsupervised teen-age parties to "one-arm" drivers. He told them to choose their friends wisely and set their standards very high.

'The choice of companions can get a girl into trouble,' he said.

'Wrong companions can lead to bad marriages.'

Sergeant Cuthbert said the police would break off a relationship for a girl if she was too frightened to do it herself.

'Come to the police for advice,' he said. On the last day the girls discussed the

course and made suggestions for future courses. They suggested more panel discussions, more time to see the city, more visits to places of employment and also tours of hospitals and hostels. All were firm on one point, future courses should be for girls only and not mixed.

Judging by the keen young faces, the probing questions and the buzz of chatter after every session, the course was a success and ample reward for the hard-working organizers.

'It is essential to have this information before coming to the city,' said one girl.

'I feel each lecture is of definite benefit,' said another.

To show their gratitude, the girls each donated one dollar towards expenses for future courses.

For most of the girls this was the first time they had met people outside their own families and friends and it was a new and exciting experience. But Mr Royal warned that life in the city would not compare with life on the course. When they came to the city they would feel homesick and lonely. This was part of the change from country to city.

However, the girls had learned some idea of how best to meet this challenge

Dr R. G. McElroy, Mayor of Auckland, speaking to Moengara Rogers, Pukekohe High School, and Bessie Kingi, Te Kauwhata High School, in the committee room on the 15th floor of the Auckland City Council Administration Block

—'Auckland Star' photograph



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and emerge as stronger young people with a definite purpose in life.



And now, an account of the course from the girls' angle—a talk given to her school by one of the girls after returning from

ate the value of money. Finding a job is a big step in life. We must make sure we like it because it could be a lifetime job. People won't have much chance of changing their job if they don't like it, with so much unemployment.

What qualifications do they require for shorthand typists? You have to be able to type so many words per minute and also

by one of the girls after returning from Auckland.

This course, which I attended in Auckland, lasted for three most enjoyable days. We did and saw many things I'm sure would have taken six days, but the course was so well organised, it took half the time. This course was to help young Maoris adapt to city life; the problems they will have to face, what kind of job will suit them and the responsibilities involved. Most of all, the organisers tried to make us feel confident, as they have found out Maoris are very shy. We were never idle, except lounging over a cup of tea or a meal. The only thing wrong with our stay was that there was only one shower for 100 girls, so some early birds started getting up at 5 a.m. By the time we got up, the water was cold. We slept on the floor, like the Maoris do on a marae, which was a sight with blankets, clothes, bags and what not all over the place. Breakfast, which was between half-past seven and eight, was the only meal we had at the Unga Waka Marae. Each day we were given \$1.00 to choose our own meals at the University in the cafeteria, which seats about 650 students downstairs and 650 upstairs.

We had two buses which took us to and from the University where we spent most of our time. If we were unable to visit firms or places, people came and gave us lectures. They told us what qualifications they required, also what types of jobs are available and how to go about getting a job. Most of them wanted Maoris because they have found them very helpful and reliable, and they also have good personalities. Some lectures were given on how to be interviewed, to express your feelings so that they know if you are the one they want, and how to act.

Finding accommodation, when working in the city, is very important because sometimes young people mix with the wrong company. We must also learn to appreciate

type so many words per minute and also take shorthand. Jobs these days mostly require School Certificate, or three to four years' schooling.

The most interesting visit we went on together was meeting the Mayor of Auckland, Mr McElroy. The Town Hall, which is the highest building in Auckland, is 16 stories high and three stories underground. Mr McElroy told us about his young days. He was born on a dairy farm near Kawerau and milked 50 cows by hand. There were ten in the family and he came to work in Auckland at the age of 16. He encouraged the girls to get a good job, and one day they might find themselves in a position like his. After his speech we went to the top of the building and could see almost every part of the city. What I liked best there was the operation of the computer machines. They looked easy to operate but going about it was rather complicated. It pays to be skilled because machines seem to be ruling the world these days.

The most enjoyable part of the course was the industrial visits on Wednesday—going to different firms, meeting people and trying to find a job you would like to do. I found out from the workers that they each enjoyed their own specific job.

We had plenty of leisure time. During the lunch hour we always went down to Queen Street looking around. Every lift we walked into had an operator. There we were thinking we were going to have a good time, but not with those operators! So two of my girlfriends and I started playing on the escalators in the 2.4.6 building. They could easily tell we were new.

Every night when we got back to the Marae, something was happening. Tuesday night three different Maori Cultural Groups entertained us. Wednesday night the 'Town and Around' team came to interview some of the girls and two Maori Cultural Groups entertained us. Thursday night was the happiest, but saddest, night. Happy be-

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cause we travelled 10 miles to see Auckland's best Maori entertainers from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. and when we got back to the Marae a band was waiting to play for a dance for us which lasted until 3 a.m. on Friday morning. Sad because this was the last night, and we made it worthwhile.

It was sad on Friday morning because no-one wanted to leave their friends and mostly our hostesses. I found the hostesses

very co-operative in everything we wanted to know or do. Also the organisers made us feel very much at home.

From this course I learnt many things I hadn't known, so I hope that they have this 'Education for Citizenship Course' again so others may also have this great opportunity.

Ellen Tomuri,
Punaruku M.D.H.S.

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of diagrams on the blackboard, Cath Brown explained how to cut the flax from the bush, the aim being that each member should cut enough to last her the whole week; and it was hoped that while at Paekakariki, we would have time to each make our own working mat.

End of lecture meant time for early lunch, where we pooled our provisions for a communal meal and thus set the pattern for the week. Haere mai, tatou katoa—kia ako tahi, kin mahi tahi (Come, let us learn together, work together)—so ran the caption on the enrolment form; and with little bidding, we added . . . meal together.

Our bus came and we were all aboard and ready to go at the time appointed—12.15 p.m. We arrived to find Queen Elizabeth Park bathed in sunshine and consequently went into the harvest with great vigour. More than ample flax was cut; all mats were started and most completed before we returned to St. Mark's to store our supply. Then home we went, weary but fired with enthusiasm.

The enrolment form stated also: AIM: to acquire the basic skills. GOAL: Proficiency in weaving (a) tipare (b) kono (c) kete. We slowly fumbled our way from (a) to (b), much surprised to discover that these seemingly simple articles were not easy to make. Furthermore, we were to prove only too true the tutor's reiteration that in the easy manipulation of the flax strips in kono-making lies the knack of flax weaving.

Then followed the more complicated preparation for kit making, the stripping from the broad blade of half-inch wide strips with tufts of fibre at their base. A whale of a lot of practice is required for the success of this tricky operation, my word! Saturday, the last day, found us tussling

with grim determination to put our kits into reasonable shape and complete them. A few had only to join in the second handle and finish off the plaited edge at home; and so ended the last lesson.

And a hard week's weaving we had had indeed!

It says much for the worth of it all that 19 were there to the end. We sorted out the articles completed and smiled like Cheshire cats at our efforts. We left the school with a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement and sustained enthusiasm. For both tutor and organiser, there was encouragement and confidence to plan another school for 1969.

He aha te hua . . . ? What fruit . . . ?

The immediate and very heartening results was that two members announced they would be 'AT HOME to FLAX WEAVING CLASS'—every Wednesday at Mrs Hutchinson's, Khandallah, and every Thursday at Mrs Agar's, Stokes Valley. 'Bring your bundle of flax and we shall spend the afternoon revising our lessons, helping each other and getting in some much-needed practice.'

Six people turned up at Khandallah on 11 September and I have been shown one of the baskets that was completed at that session.

It seems appropriate to end by telling you that the 'first fruit' was a basket—kete tatahi, 36 inches in length (to fit the proportions of the Wellington Town Hall!)—that suited the requirements of the author and the producer so well that, four days after the school closed, there was our basket, filled with vegetables, on the verandah of Mr Paku's house in the opening scene of Bruce Mason's play, 'Awatea'.

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