

and harvest seasons the attendance generally diminishes somewhat; that a *tangihanga*, or a large meeting, presents almost irresistible attractions to Maori children; that the holding of a Land Court in the neighbourhood unsettles the children very much and renders them extremely anxious to go away from school and see the fun; that the whaling season acts injuriously upon the attendance in some of the Native school districts; that in the far North many children have to go to the gum fields to earn money to buy clothes with; that in the Lake Districts the well-meant but ill-judged liberality of tourists in getting up foot-races, diving-matches, &c., often tempts the school-children to forsake the school for days together. When all these things are considered, it is rather to be wondered at that the attendance is as good as it really is. The number of children belonging to the village schools at the end of the year was 2,010, while the working average was no less than 1,526. It must be remembered, too, that Maori parents, as a rule, exercise but little control over their children, and let them do pretty much as they like. If a Maori boy's experience leads him to conclude that going to school is not a rational employment for a lad of sense, and sets his face against having his mind improved, his parents would not think of opposing their wishes to his. In my opinion the fact that the working average is more than three-fourths of the number of the roll speaks well for the docility of Maori children on the one hand, and for the powers possessed by our teachers of rendering their schools and school-work attractive to the children on the other.

It is gratifying to find that, while there were only 1,623 children on the roll at the end of 1880, there were 2,010 at the end of 1881; and also that, while the average attendance for the last quarter of 1879 was 1,042, and 1,277 for the last quarter of 1880, the strict average for the corresponding quarter of 1881 was 1,454. The working average for the whole of 1881 was 1,562.25. The attendance at boarding-schools is not taken into account in these results. It may be here mentioned that, while the cost of educating the Maori children is still high, as might be expected, it is £1 4s. 4d. per head less than it was last year.

#### STATE OF BUILDINGS AS REGARDS TIDINESS AND CLEANLINESS.

There is now seldom any ground for complaint on this score. Our schools would compare favourably with European schools in this respect. Many of the buildings, however, present a very bare and barn-like appearance on the inside. It would greatly improve these buildings to line them up to the cross-beams, ceil them, and paint them white. Besides the improvement in neatness and cleanliness, the not inconsiderable advantages of greater strength in the buildings and freedom from draught and cold in winter would be secured.

#### STATE OF REPAIR OF BUILDINGS.

Nearly all school premises are in good order, or very soon will be. There is now, in but very few instances, good ground for thinking that any church-like building in the neighbourhood of a Maori *kainga* is probably a Native school, if it presents a peculiarly dingy and tumble-down appearance.

#### GARDENS, ETC.

Many teachers have good gardens with useful and ornamental trees, flowers, &c., in them. The effect on the Natives is good; in many cases they are induced by the example to strive to make their own cultivations neater and more like European farms; in some cases they even grow flowers, and, generally, make their plantations look more like permanent homesteads than places that they intend to desert as soon as they have gathered in their crops. Considerable progress has been made in the work of getting school sites fenced. Besides being of great use to the teacher, a good fence around a school property is very desirable on other grounds. It prevents disputes with the Natives, who, while they are well pleased to see the teacher getting all the good that he can out of the piece of land that they have given for a school site, very naturally object to his running horses and cows at large on their land, and so diminishing their own means of subsistence. It is nearly always desirable that the teacher should not have more stock than his own piece of land will carry. Many misunderstandings, disastrous to the interests of schools, have had their origin in school-teachers adding the business of graziers and stock-farmers to their proper occupation. Perhaps the department would not be stepping beyond its province if it insisted on teachers confining their operations in this direction within reasonable limits.

#### PLAYGROUNDS.

A majority of the schools have, in their immediate neighbourhood, ground suitable for such games as cricket and football. It would, I think, be a great boon to the Natives if simple and inexpensive gymnastic apparatus were supplied to the schools. Horizontal bars, parallels, and circular swings would not cost very much, and would afford constant amusement and a certain amount of much needed "physical education" to the Native children.

#### ORGANIZATION.

The organization of the schools is steadily improving. The standards have, of course, a natural tendency to improve the classification. In many schools there are workable time-tables, simple but not unskillfully drawn up; in many cases these are strictly adhered to. The principle defect in organization is the imperfect provision made for the instruction of the junior classes. This is certainly a very difficult matter to deal with. Probably the best way of getting over the difficulty is to follow the principle that in a small school all oral lessons should be given to as many children as may be expected to derive benefit from them, and to contrive that *special* standard-work shall be, as far as possible, silent work. As a rule, it will be found possible to work a school that is preparing for four standards in some such way as this: Suppose that the children working for Standard III. are drawing a map of New Zealand on their slates, and that the pupils for Standard IV. are writing out a piece of composition that they have previously gone over with the master, Standards II. and I. may simultaneously be getting a collective lesson from the teacher in English, spelling, and pronunciation. During the next half-hour the third and fourth classes may be reading *together* under the master, while the second