

day are among the more irregular attendants generally, and consequently more backward than the average of the class-marks would indicate—gives a far better idea of the efficiency of a school than do any of the methods ordinarily employed. Under this system all scholars qualified by attendance are “presented” for examination, and the master is entirely freed from liability to the imputation of having “weeded out” his worst scholars in order to obtain a high percentage. In fact the main advantage of the system is that the results of the examination of the school as it stands at examination-time cannot in any way be modified by the action of the master.

It should be borne in mind that, though this percentage gives an excellent idea of the amount of good that is being done at a *school*, it is no certain criterion of the capability or industry of its *teacher*. Only a good master can get a high percentage, but an excellent master may get a poor percentage through causes beyond his control, such as irregularity of attendance through an epidemic, famine, or continued rough weather. Perhaps it would be safe to say that the capabilities of a master as an instructor and educationist may best be judged by inspection, that the examination shows the absolute amount of work actually done, and that the percentage number affords the best available means of determining what amount of progress has been made during a year by a school as a whole.

The results obtained in the schools of the Bay of Islands District differ very widely amongst themselves—the difference between the feeble languishing affair at Waikare and the successful vigorous school at Kaikohe is immense. It is to be hoped that the Natives in the districts where the schools are so far below the mark will exert themselves more in the future, and so avoid the reproach, that will be sure to fall upon them before very long if they do not mend their ways, that they have been foolish enough to allow their own children to fall behind the Native children of other districts through laziness and neglect.

Hokianga.

Mr. S. Von Stürmer, R.M., District Superintendent. In this district there are now ten schools.

Pakia.—This is a subsidized school. Twenty-six children were present at inspection. The examination results were very moderate, but the school had only recently been reopened after being closed for a long period—most of the children, too, are very young. There should be manifest improvement at the next examination.

Whakarapa.—Thirty-three children were present at inspection. As the school had been opened only about four months, but small examination results could be expected. The master has had no previous experience in this kind of work, but he will speedily become a good class-teacher. Good results may be expected here in a short time. I was sorry to see that the new buildings here had suffered considerable wear and tear during the short time they had been occupied, the muddy state of the tracks leading to the school would account for this to some extent, but it should hardly make some of the rooms look shabbier than those of schools that have been occupied ten or twelve times as long. This school appears to have suffered greatly at the end of the year through famine, consequent upon a long-continued feast held to celebrate the opening of the new Native church.

Mangamuka.—Thirty-eight children at inspection. Good work was done by the First-Standard children, and also by those at the top of the school. The middle standards were almost unrepresented. The pupils at this school just now are old scholars from Rakau Para who are well advanced, and comparative beginners belonging to the Mangamuka district. The condition of this school was on the whole quite satisfactory.

Whirinaki.—Twenty-nine present at inspection. Whirinaki is now recovering its old form; judging from the inspection and the examination, I should say that this is going to be a fine school by-and-by. The master is energetic, and is gradually making good his footing amongst the Natives. This is a well-populated district. The Maoris did not elect a Committee last year. Irregularities of this kind are annoying, but they have to be put up with. The teacher should endeavour to prevent the recurrence of this omission.

Omanaia.—This school is doing excellent service. For what may perhaps be called all-round industry the master is hardly to be excelled, his work outside of the school is referred to below. The school work showed considerable improvement, which is likely to be progressive, both the percentage and the number of passes were much higher than they were last year. Thirty-six children were present at inspection.

Motukaraka.—Thirty-one present at inspection. Both the percentage and the number of passes were somewhat lower than they were the previous year, the results, however, were very respectable, seeing that the passes obtained for high standards were numerous. Owing to the nature of the ground, and the necessity of making the teacher fairly comfortable, this has been rather an expensive school. I think, however, that full value is received for money expended here.

Waitapu.—Waitapu was again well up to the mark in nearly every respect, although the district had suffered much from a fever epidemic that had been fatal in some cases. There seemed to be reason to fear that the Natives had become panic-stricken by this fever, and that they would entirely desert the districts around Waitapu. There has been some improvement, however, although the place is not yet healthy. Of course, if the attendance continued low, it would be necessary to remove the teacher to another school. This would be a matter for regret, seeing that master and school are well suited to each other, and that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get another teacher who would be likely to conduct the school successfully. Twenty-one children were present at inspection.

Upper Waihou.—Scarcity of food had compelled many of the Natives to leave the district temporarily, and take their children with them. There were, therefore, only twenty-six children at the inspection. The difficulty has been quite got over, and there is now a large attendance at the school. The examination was most satisfactory, and a very high percentage was obtained.