

CHANGES: NEW SCHOOLS OPENED AND SCHOOLS REOPENED OR CLOSED.

At Kenana, a Native settlement about fifteen miles from Mangonui, the people have for many years been anxious to have a Native school of their own. It had been thought unadvisable to comply with the numerous requests made for one, but the Native village of Peria, in the same district, having, through fatal epidemics and other causes, become too small to support a school, it was decided that Kenana should have an opportunity of showing whether it could maintain a satisfactory attendance or not. A small building was erected, and a satisfactory beginning was made. The school is still doing well. At Matihetihe on the coast to the north of the entrance to Hokianga Harbour there is a small Native community. These Maoris have always shown themselves anxious to get their children educated, and for a considerable time they had an arrangement with the Waitapu people which made it possible for the Matihetihe children to attend at Waitapu. At length the burden was found to be too heavy, and a request was made for a school. This request it would have been unreasonable to refuse. The school is worked half-time by the Waitapu staff, and is giving satisfaction. Otorohanga is in the King-country, on the Southern Trunk Railway and near the right bank of the Waipa River. A Native school was much needed there. Although the Maoris of the district are well-to-do and fairly on the road towards civilisation, yet their children are not sufficiently acquainted with English to profit by the ordinary public school instruction, and the Native school work will probably suit them better for some time to come. The school is doing well.

Of the seven schools closed during the year two were subsidised schools that were, through the falling-off of the attendance, no longer worth supporting. One of these was at Te Oreore, near Masterton, and the other at D'Urville Island, in Cook Strait. Of the others, the Peria school had in its time done excellent service; for some years it was in the front rank. Mangamaunu, Te Ngaere, and Te Awahou had always been rather weak schools, but not weak enough to be finally closed. Te Awahou may possibly be reopened if the Natives can guarantee a sufficient attendance, but the other two schools are probably done with. Hawaii had to be closed, mainly on account of tribal misunderstandings, the causes of which would hardly be intelligible to Europeans not familiar with Maori ways.

NEW SCHOOLS AND NEW BUILDINGS ASKED FOR OR IN PROGRESS, AND PROPOSALS FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN CLOSED.

Indispensable repairs to the Te Teko school buildings, which were greatly injured by the Tarawera eruption, are about to be commenced in order that the school may be reopened, the Natives showing much anxiety to get their children educated. The Poroporo site has at last been acquired, and the buildings will be put up immediately. No doubt there will be a good Native school here. The new buildings at Pukawa have not yet been utilised. Negotiations have been renewed or begun with regard to the providing of means of education for children residing at Kapowairua, North Cape; at Hukatere, near Patea; at Te Pupuke, near Whangaroa; at Whangaruru, near Cape Brett; at Opanaki, north of Dargaville; and at Tahoraite, on the Wellington and Napier line of railway. It is greatly to be desired that Native school work should be done in the Wanganui and the Taranaki Districts, but, from some unknown cause, applications from them do not come in; the Natives of these parts would appear to be—with the exception of the Urewera—the most conservative of all the Maoris.

SCHOOLS IN FULL WORK.

The basis on which the grouping of the Native schools depends is their geographical position. Much information with regard to the literary work of individual schools, and their general efficiency as educational institutions, has been tabulated and printed in the Appendix. Table No. 6 gives the results obtained by examination only. In Table No. 7 these results are combined with those obtained by inspection. Additional particulars relating to individual schools will be found in the following paragraphs:—

The Far North.—District Superintendent, Mr. H. W. Bishop, R.M.

Te Kao, Parengarenga Harbour.—Wherever the parents of the pupils gain their subsistence mainly by gum-digging there are special drawbacks and annoyances; but, notwithstanding these difficulties, there is abundant reason to be pleased with the work done at Te Kao, and it is to be hoped that a good understanding between the teachers and the Natives may be maintained in spite of some disagreements and troubles that have seemed likely to interfere with the welfare of the school.

Te Ngaere.—The attendance, although large at times, was so very irregular that it was found almost impossible to get good work done. The settlement at Te Ngaere itself is a small one, and as the people belonging to it became apathetic about the school they ceased to encourage the attendance of children from surrounding settlements. Under these circumstances it appeared to be advisable to close the school.

Pamapurua.—This school is hardly large enough for its present teachers, whose work is of a high class. It would be well if a more important sphere of labour could be found for them. A very useful device for making the pupils practise the speaking of English was seen here. At the end of morning and afternoon school each child, before leaving the room, has to say something to the master in English. The statements made by beginners are, as might be expected, exceedingly brief, but boys and girls in the higher standards generally give interesting scraps of information very well expressed.

Pukepoto.—The results obtained were very moderate, and the general aspect of the school gave the impression that it was symptomatic of the existence of a considerable amount of apathy with regard to its welfare. Good work was done here in former years, but it is evident that an educational revival is now much needed. The examination percentages for the last three years have been only 45·65, 48·86, and 44·21.