

The falling-off in the attendance of half-castes and Europeans last year was 10·1 per cent. In the case of Maori children the percentage is 1·1. A comparison of the standard passes for 1891 and 1892 respectively appears at the bottom of Table No. 6.

THE NEW CODE.

Too short a time has elapsed since the issue of the new Native Schools Code to allow any very definite ideas to be formed as to the remote effects that it will ultimately produce. There are, however, already indications of movement in the direction of securing the main objects aimed at in the new regulations. Perhaps a brief statement in explanation of these objects will not be out of place.

In the first place, then, it seemed necessary to make a change in the rules at once. Consideration of the disabilities of Native-school teachers, of their isolated positions, of the absolute impossibility of their obtaining any substantial promotion, and of the peculiar and disappointing difficulties connected with their work had made the Department most unwilling to apply the principle of retrenchment to the salaries of workers in Native schools, even though nearly all other officers in the Civil Service were being affected by this principle. But it had become plain that, through the operation of rules intended originally to induce educated men and women to qualify themselves specially for Native-school work, and to remain in the service after they had become so qualified, the salaries of teachers were gradually increasing, although the number of pupils was diminishing; the general effect being to raise progressively the cost *per head* of the education of Native-school pupils. It was made quite plain to the Department in many ways that an immediate and radical alteration must take place.

Then, it was necessary, of course, that what had become the cardinal fault of the system—viz., the absence of a controlling and well-defined relation between the average attendance and the remuneration of the teachers—should be remedied. This was brought about by making the whole of a head-teacher's salary, with an exception to be afterwards stated, depend either directly or indirectly on the average attendance. The direct payment is an allowance of £1 10s. per annum on the average attendance; the indirect is a bonus of 6s. 8d. for each mark gained by pupils at the annual examination. The exception referred to is a payment of £60 per annum to every principal teacher of a Native school. This is, of course, intended to prevent the head-teacher of any Native school from being dependent on contingency for even his mere subsistence; and, on the other hand, it is to act as a provision that the Department shall keep no schools going if the attendance is too small to justify payments of £70 or £75 per annum to the teachers of them.

The amounts given for assistance depend similarly on the average attendance. An allowance of 6s. 3d. per quarter is made for every unit of average attendance above ten, whether the assistance is afforded by the teacher's wife (as is usually the case), by his daughter, or by some one from outside the teacher's family.

There are many other alterations in the new code: for instance, most of the privileges originally accorded to Native schools with the view of making them attractive to the Maoris have been withdrawn, as now no longer necessary; many improvements in the way of closer definition have been introduced into the standards; and further provision is made for the education of European children having no educational institution except a Native school within their reach. But the new rules affecting the salaries of teachers involve by far the most important changes made. It is confidently believed that the basis of the present code is much more equitable than that of the late code; and it is hoped that when the natural irritation produced by the inevitable loss of emolument has somewhat subsided the teachers will acknowledge that it is so. To those whose business makes them regard Native schools mainly from the financial point of view it ought to be satisfactory to know that the cost per head of children attending Native schools can never again rise above that of the pupils at public schools of similar size and character.

“THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE MAORI.”

Towards the close of last year an essay was read before the Dialectic Society in Christchurch by Mr. Apirana T. N. Ngata, a promising student of Canterbury College. Mr. Ngata was at first a pupil of Wai-o-matatini Native School. Then he was removed to Te Aute College, where he was extremely successful, twice winning a Te Makarini scholarship. After leaving Te Aute he went to Canterbury College, where, it is understood, he has done very well indeed, and has reached his third university year without a break in the passing of his examinations. It appears on the whole, therefore, that Mr. Ngata, although quite a young man, has a right to give an opinion with regard to the value of Native schools. He has, as a Maori, a competent knowledge of his race, and, as one who has received very considerable university culture, he has clear knowledge as to what an educational system ought to do for those coming under its influence. Mr. Ngata has, further, very considerable literary ability, and expresses his thoughts with vigour and in a decidedly attractive manner. In his essay Mr. Ngata, while speaking appreciatively of the Native-school educational system (as, indeed, he ought to speak, seeing that he himself is to a very large extent an outcome of it), criticizes very unsparingly the Native-school teachers and their ways, in school and out of it. Feeling quite certain that Mr. Ngata had with not un pardonable youthful impetuosity fallen into the error of generalising from a few particular instances spread over a considerable time, and had then drawn a mental picture for which there was no corresponding reality, I wrote to Mr. Ngata and asked him to give the Department or, if he preferred it, the Hon. the Minister of Education a statement of the facts on which he based this portion of his essay. Mr. Ngata's answer, and the whole correspondence are enclosed. I may direct your attention to the closing letter of the correspondence, in which Mr. Ngata says, “I have fifty copies [of the essay] that I am sending to friends; to each copy I have added a note calling attention to the fact that the statements re Native teachers have been practically withdrawn.”

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The Inspector-General of Schools.

JAMES H. POPE.