

STATISTICS.

A statement of the expenditure incurred in connection with Native schools will be found in Tables Nos. 1 and 2 of the Appendix. Table No. 3 gives the ages of the children whose names were on the Native-school registers at the end of the December quarter. Table No. 4 contains statistics of the attendance during the year 1893. In Table No. 5 there is full information respecting the race of the children that attend Native schools. Table No. 6 shows the examination results for the year, and Table No. 7 gives the inspection results. When the two kinds of results for each school are taken together they form a basis for the computation of the gross percentage, on which depend the relative positions of individual schools for the year 1893. A few statistical results may here be given. The total expenditure for 1893 on Native schools was £12,488 11s. 9d., against £14,290 4s. for 1892, deducting £2,071 18s. 5d., the cost of boarding-schools, and of building, fencing, furniture, &c., we have a net expenditure of £10,416 13s. 4d. on the maintenance of Native village schools.

It may be noticed that Table No. 4 gives practically the same average weekly roll-number for 1892 and 1893, while the average attendance for 1893 is less by forty-nine than that for 1892. This falling-off is, no doubt, due to the severe epidemic of measles that visited our schools last year.

Table 5 shows that there is a slight tendency towards an increase in the number of Maori children as compared with that of European children attending Native schools. In 1892 the percentage of Maori children and between Maori and half-caste was 72·99, in 1893 it was 73·43.

Table 6 shows that four schools—Rangitukia, Te Araroa, Colac Bay, and Te Kaha—succeeded in getting more than 200 marks each for subject passes made by children that passed in standards. It should be stated that several of the schools with much smaller marks produced work of a quality similar to that shown at those four schools, although less in quantity.

Table 7 shows that twenty-seven of the schools made a “gross percentage” of over 70. Last year only fifteen succeeded in doing so well. This satisfactory increase may be to some extent due to the influence of the new code and the encouragement that it offers to teachers that can and will do first-class work.

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH.

In former reports frequent allusion has been made to the difficulties that stand in the way of teaching young Maoris to speak and write decent English. The publication of Monsieur F. Gouin's book, “The Art of teaching and studying Languages,” a short time ago, appears to have aroused a considerable amount of attention, both in the colonies and at Home. It has been subjected to vigorous criticism, friendly and hostile, on the one hand, it is said that Gouin's system will beneficially revolutionise linguistic training, while its foes maintain that a great part of the new system is as old as the hills, and that what is not old is useless. It would, perhaps, be rash, and it is certainly unnecessary, to add here to the number of criticisms on the system. It will be sufficient to state that the leading principles of the book have been carefully considered with a view to the utilisation of any hints that it might be possible to obtain from it. The result of the examination has been to make it seem tolerably plain that there are certain parts of the book, including some of those to which the author appears to attach great importance, that could be of little use to us, and that, speaking generally and according to our lights, the adoption in our Native schools of Gouin's system just as it stands would be a grave mistake. On the other hand, Gouin's book contains a considerable number of striking and valuable hints, not altogether new, certainly, but given in a systematic and coherent way, that makes them, so to speak, vouch for one another to a considerable extent. What follows is a compendious statement of the principles and practice that have, in the light of Gouin's work, and of the experience of the Inspectors, been lately recommended to our teachers for adoption in their language work, and have in many cases been practically and carefully tested and found to be trustworthy. It is hoped that the publication of this statement in the annual report will tend to increase any usefulness that it may possess, and, possibly, to bring it under the notice of persons engaged in teaching languages outside of Native schools.

ENGLISH LESSONS IN NATIVE SCHOOLS.

1. In all language lessons the bodily organs concerned, and requiring to be trained, should be used in the following order (1) the ear, (2) the tongue, (3) the eye, (4) the hand. Pupils should first listen to what is said, then repeat it, then read it, and then write it. In Native-school work transcription, dictation, reading, and composition, as well as “English,” may be considered language lessons.

2. In exemplification of the principle here laid down, let us show what use may be made of a transcription lesson: (1.) EAR—First a short story or fable is selected, and the pupils listen attentively while the teacher reads it over and over again, until they all thoroughly understand it. Of course, all necessary explanations will be given, and the teacher will keep constantly before his mind the fact that his business is to make every one of his pupils master the lesson thoroughly—both the sound of the words and the meaning of the sentences. (2.) TONGUE—Now the pupils will repeat the lesson after the teacher, sentence by sentence, until they can do it without mispronunciation or false emphasis. (3.) EYE—Next, the lesson is to be read by the class, who now, for the first time, open their books. The reading is to be done first by individuals and then by the whole class, or in the reverse order, until all reach the teacher's standard of proficiency, which should be a high one. (4.) HAND—Then all the class will transcribe the lessons with care, all errors will be pointed out by the teacher, and corrected by the pupils.

3. In the preceding paragraph a suite of lessons has been described; in the case of senior classes the number of separate steps may be increased. Plainly, what has been already done may be treated as preparation for a dictation lesson, especially if the pupils have been told to learn how to spell the harder words. Also, they may next be asked to reproduce the lesson. And finally, but occasionally, they may learn the lesson by heart.