

The sum of £40,482 11s. 10d. is shown as paid by the Commissioners towards the cost of primary education. The money paid by the Treasury to the Education Boards as statutory capitation (at £3 15s.) was, of course, less by £40,482 11s. 10d. than it would have been if this contribution had not been made by the Commissioners. The income from the primary-education reserves thus becomes in effect colonial revenue. The relief afforded to the Treasury within the year by this means was £34,877 13s., the remainder—£5,604 18s.—having been applied in the accounts of the preceding year. The Otago School Commissioners explain the unusually large amount of arrears of rent by reference to the exceptionally severe weather of last winter.

NATIVE SCHOOLS.

The number of children attending the Native village schools increases rapidly. The average weekly roll-number in 1893 was 2,220; in 1894 it was 2,424; in 1895 it was 2,655. The strict average attendance for these three years has been as follows: 1,585 in 1893; 1,775 in 1894; and 2,084 in 1895. The average attendance in 1895 amounted to 78½ per cent. of the average roll-number. The preponderance of Maori children among the pupils is on the increase. In 1894 they constituted 73½ per cent.; but in 1895 they were 76 per cent., the remaining 24 per cent. being made up of half-caste children (9 per cent.) and European or inclining to European (15 per cent.). 46 per cent. of the pupils are over the age of ten years.

Besides the children here enumerated, there were in December, 1895, as many as 1,894 Maori and half-caste children (807 Maori, 103 half-castes living as Maori, and 984 half-castes living among Europeans) attending the ordinary public schools; and there were 75 Government scholars and 143 others at the four denominational boarding-schools for Natives. There were also 12 Maori boys apprenticed to trades (4 with blacksmiths, 3 with saddlers, 2 with printers, 2 with carpenters, and 1 with a farmer), instead of holding scholarships at boarding-schools. The Department paid half the tuition and boarding fees at a high school for one Maori girl; and one young man held from the Department a scholarship of £40 a year at Auckland University College.

The increase in the attendance at the Maori village schools is partly due to an increase in the number of schools. There were 65 village schools at the end of 1894. In 1895 four of these were closed, and one transferred to the care of the Auckland Education Board; but three old schools were reopened and six new ones established during the year, so that the number of schools at the end of the year was 69. The school at Pouto Point (at Kaipara Heads) was closed on account of the decline of the local population. Akuaku (at Open Bay) was practically absorbed by the new and larger inland school at Hiruharama. Maungatapu, near Tauranga, failed for want of attendance; Karikari, a school opened in 1894, is within seven or eight miles of it. Rawhia, a side-school dependent on the Rangiahua School at Hokianga, was transferred to the Board of Education because the residents were all European. Wharekahika School (at Hicks Bay) was closed on account of the poor attendance. It has been reopened this year with a fair prospect of revival.

The old schools reopened are at Ahipara (on the west coast of Mangonui County), Kopua (on the northern edge of the King-country), and Mangamuka (on the upper waters of the Hokianga). The average attendance (working average) at Kopua is 38, and at each of the others 37.

At Pukawa (on the south-west shore of Lake Taupo) a school was built several years ago, but owing to very peculiar circumstances it was not opened till last December: it has an average attendance of 43. Hiruharama has an attendance of 48, and bids fair to become an important school. The new schools at Kawhia and at Taiharuru (near Whangarei Heads) may be said to owe their origin to the energy of their teachers, whose pioneer work the Department has recognised by giving them regular appointments: the attendance at these schools is 40 and 33 respectively. Mawhitiwhiti is noteworthy as being the only Native school yet established by the Department in the whole stretch of country lying between Wellington and Cape Egmont. The influence by which the extension of Native-school work to this district has been hindered is well known. The attendance at Mawhitiwhiti is only 18 at present. Arowhenua is