

£3,077 10s. 10d., cost of buildings, fencing, furniture, &c. (including £432 9s. 8d. from Civil List, Native purposes), we have a net expenditure of £12,889 1s. 3d. on Native village schools, as against £11,754 11s. 4d. for the previous year.

With regard to the average age of children in attendance, it may suffice to remark that only twenty-four children (all Maoris) out of a total of 2,675 were under five years of age. The previous year there were forty-eight.

The average attendance for 1895 was 2,084, which was greater by 309 than the average for 1894, and greater by 499.25 than the average for 1893. Thus the average for 1893 was less than three-fourths of the average for 1895. But in 1893 the cost of village-school work was not far below five-sixths of the cost in 1895. To put it in another way, the cost per head on the average attendance in 1893 was about £6 11s. 5d., and in 1895 it was about £6 3s. 8d.

Table V. shows that there has been a satisfactory increase in the percentage of children in whom Maori blood predominates. In 1894 the percentage was 73.57, in 1895 it was 76.41. This, of course, shows that the Native schools are becoming more Maori. The percentage of half-castes for 1895 is 8.97; for the previous year it was 9.97.

The number of passes secured in 1895 is greater than that of the previous year. In Standards I., IV., and V. the increase was considerable; in Standards II., III., and VI. there was a slight decrease. The total number of passes for 1895 is 942, against 842 for 1894.

Twenty-nine schools succeeded in making a gross percentage of over 70. Twenty-nine was the number last year also.

The percentage of children in the preparatory classes was 29.9 in December, 1895, and 26.9 in December, 1894. This tendency to increase will require watching. Table No. IX. will be interesting in a few years' time, but no useful result could be obtained from a comparison of only two years' statistics respecting the age at which children pass our standards.

At the end of 1894 there were sixty-seven Government pupils at boarding-schools, and seventy-seven at the end of 1895. There were six apprentices in 1894, and twelve in 1895. Of the twelve, four were learning to be blacksmiths, two to be carpenters, two to be printers, three to be saddlers, and one was to be a farmer.

#### MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS.

This report should perhaps include the usual collection of unconnected short paragraphs relating to matters that are, or have been during the course of the year, in some way connected with Native schools and their work.

#### *The School Attendance Act.*

There is some difficulty in working this Act, principally because it makes no provision for costs of Court. The Act would have been more beneficial if there had been a clause in it allowing Chairmen of Committees to take proceedings without cost. This difficulty has, however, been partially overcome. Also, the provisions of the Act are hardly adequate for dealing with cases in which the distance from the Court is very great; of course, in such cases the question of travelling-expenses emerges. Still, the Act is workable, and decisions enforcing attendance have been secured. In one instance, at a school in the North, a parent refused to do his duty; the Chairman summoned him under the Act and gained the case. The fine was paid, and the school attendance in that district has been quite satisfactory ever since.

#### *The Use of the Magic-Lantern.*

The scheme inaugurated by the Hon. W. P. Reeves is now in full working order. There are five lanterns at work; these are, with the assistance of the Committees, transmitted from school to school. The course of the lanterns is so arranged as to cause every slide to be shown at every Native school in the colony. So far as we can yet learn, the plan is working very well, and the lanterns will prove to be very useful as educational appliances. The Maoris everywhere seem to take great interest in the exhibitions. The magic-lantern is a great boon to our schools, and, when once a start has been made, not very expensive.

#### *Attention.*

An attempt may here be made to correct an inadequate view, held with considerable tenacity by teachers here and there, respecting what may, from the point of view of the school-teacher as such, be called the *highest good*. Assuming that the children are honest and well-behaved, what characteristic feature in a school ought at once to convince a visitor that it is of high excellence? It is evidently believed by some teachers that if a school is perfectly quiet and orderly there cannot possibly be much amiss with it. Now, this view is very misleading, and involves confusion between satisfactory work and the *conditions* under which the best kind of work is alone possible. The *highest good* for a school is not perfect order, but perfect *attention* on the part of the children. If this is secured everything else is; where there is perfect *attention* the order and tone must be good to render this perfection possible, and the methods of the teacher and the matter of his lessons must be of great excellence to maintain it. "Attention!" then, is an admirable watch-word for a Native or any other school.

#### *Method of Teaching Reading.*

The opportunity is here taken of making a few remarks on the subject of teaching reading by the methods approved of by Mr. Kirk and myself. They are in reply to a criticism made by a gentleman whose opinion on educational matters generally is worthy of great respect. In teaching the younger classes in our schools to read, we take the greatest care to secure adequate preparation of the lesson by the children before they try to read a word of it. The criticism referred to is to the effect that what we call preparation of the lesson might advantageously be done simul-