

The Te Makarini Scholarships Examination, 1899.—Twenty-one candidates presented themselves at the six examination centres—at Auckland; Raorao, on Aotea Harbour; Tokaanu, near Lake Taupo; Waioweka, near Opotiki; Tikitiki, near East Cape; and at Te Aute College. The examination for the senior scholarship was held on the 5th and 6th December; that for the junior scholarship on the 18th and 19th of the same month. Auckland was a centre for both of the examinations. There were eleven candidates for the senior scholarship; this was won by Watene Puketoki, of Te Aute College, formerly a pupil of Te Kaha Village School, and lately of St. Stephen's, Parnell, where he gained a junior Te Makarini scholarship two years ago. On the present occasion he made 72 per cent. of the marks. He was followed by Walton Davis, of St. Stephen's, with 66·7 per cent. Two other St. Stephen's boys were a good third and fourth respectively. The open junior scholarship was gained by Keiha Hone Nutana, of Mangere Bridge Public School, Auckland, with 78·9 per cent. William P. Turei, of Rangitukia, gained the Native Village School Scholarship, with 66·8 per cent. He was followed by Henry Edwards, of Omarumutu, with 62·2 per cent., and Pau Mariu, of Tokaanu, with 59·7 per cent. There were ten candidates in all for the junior scholarships examination. The junior work this year was decidedly above the average, although three of the candidates were much below the mark. The senior candidates were remarkably good; only one failed to gain over 50 per cent. I learn that the Trustees are pleased at finding that so many candidates came forward for examination; they believe that the effect of this examination must be beneficial to Native education.

STATISTICS.

A statement of expenditure incurred in connection with Native schools may be found in Tables Nos. I. and II. of the Appendix, Table No. II. being a classified summary of Table No. I., which gives full details. Table No. III. states the ages of the children whose names were on the Native-school registers at the end of the December quarter. Table No. IV. contains statistics of the attendance during the year 1899. In Table No. V. there is given as full information as the department could obtain respecting the race of the children attending Native schools. Table No. VI. specifies the results obtained at the standard examinations during the year. In Table No. VII. the examination results are combined with those of a valuation depending on estimates made from inspection. These kinds of results taken together form a basis for the computation of what is called the "gross percentage," and on this percentage the relative positions of the individual schools for the year 1899 are made to depend. Table No. VIII. gives the classification of pupils on the school-rolls in December, 1899. Table No. IX. shows the average age of pupils at the time of their passing the standard examinations in 1899. Table No. X. gives the number of pupils attending Native boarding-schools, of scholars holding University or Nursing Hospital Scholarships, and of ex-pupils of Native schools serving apprenticeship at the close of the year.

A few statistical facts and inferences follow; they are based on the tables above referred to: The total expenditure on Native schools for the year 1899 was £23,031 0s. 6d. Deducting £110 15s. 8d. paid from Native reserves funds, £1,751 16s. 9d. cost of boarding-schools, University Scholarships (including from Civil List, Native purposes, £53 10s.), Nursing Hospital Scholarships, and apprentices; £57 9s. 7d. travelling-expenses of scholars sent to boarding-schools; £5,457 13s. 6d. cost of buildings, fencing, furniture, &c., we have a net expenditure of £15,764 0s. 8d. on Native village schools, as against £15,183 19s. for the previous year. Dividing this by the (strict) average attendance, 2,435, we obtain £6 9s. 5d. as the cost per head per annum of average attendance.

With regard to Table III. it is sufficient to remark that 7·44 per cent. of the children in attendance are above or below the age-limits (5–15) for public-school scholars. This is owing to the fact that there is no stated limit for Maori pupils.

Table IV. gives us a strict average attendance of 2,435 for the year 1899; for 1898 it was 2,341. Thus an increase of ninety-four is shown, in spite of the severe epidemic sickness that has been characteristic of the past year. The table gives percentages of weekly roll-number, showing the relative regularity of attendance at the different schools. The names of the nine schools at the head of the list in order of merit are—Waiotapu, Matihetihe, Omaio, Croiselles, Torere, Poroporo, Te Kaha, Omarumutu, and Pamoana. The highest percentage, that of Waiotapu, is 95·24. The average for the year is 74·80, against 76·60 for 1898.

The final result given in Table V. shows that the percentage of children, predominantly Maori, attending Native schools in 1899 is 79·97, against 80·65 for 1898. The percentage of half-castes is practically the same as it was last year. The percentage of children predominantly European has increased from 9·42 to 10·18 per cent.

Table VI. shows that the total number of standard passes for 1899 was 1,185, against 1,267 in 1898. The decrease of eighty-two was largely due to the fact that really satisfactory passes in Standard I.—that is, passes satisfying the code requirements—were insisted on; 403 children passed Standard I. in 1899, against 518 in 1898. In the other standards improvement was almost general.

Table VII. has been sufficiently dealt with above.

With regard to Tables VIII. and IX. it is sufficient to remark that the high age at which pupils begin to pass standards is an indication of the fact that many Maoris begin their education when they are already well advanced in boyhood or girlhood. In the case of new schools many begin still later on.

Table X. explains itself. It may suffice to remark that it is not improbable that regulations with regard to apprentices to trades will probably be materially modified, or perhaps superseded, by regulations affecting technical instruction in connection with Native schools.