

has come in most cases at an age later than that at which the public-school boy receives education. Indeed, there have been several instances of adults attending newly established schools, and passing the various standards. The admission of children below the age of five is, perhaps, a matter for future consideration.

Table No. 4 shows that the working average attendance for 1903 was 3,012, as against 3,005 in 1902; while the regularity-of-attendance percentage of weekly roll number is 79.15, as against 82.33 for the preceding year. An explanation of the decrease here is given elsewhere.

Table No. 5 is a very interesting table, showing the race of the children attending Native schools. The percentages show a very slight decrease of 0.39 per cent. in the number of Maori children, and 0.61 per cent. in the number of half-caste children, and an increase of 1 per cent. in the number of European children.

Table No. 6 shows the number of passes gained in the course of the year. The total number was 1,538, a very satisfactory increase on last year's number, 1,349. The greatest difference is in Standard I., where there is an increase of 101 passes.

Table No. 7 set forth the result of inspection, and shows the general conditions of a school, so far, at least, as that can be represented by numbers. But there must naturally be many features of school work that cannot be reduced to figures, and which therefore do not find a place here. A pleasing feature in connection with this table is that the methods of teaching have gradually been considered deserving of higher marks.

Tables Nos. 8 and 9 show that, as compared with last year, the number of children in preparatory classes is less by about 119. Standard II., on the other hand, has gained nearly 100. The total number on the school roll at the end of December shows also a decrease, there being now 3,693, against 3,742 in 1902. The fact that several schools were temporarily closed accounts for this.

Table No. 10 shows that the number of children of Maori or mixed race attending public schools increased by 340 over that for 1902. The number of those of pure Maori race increased by 285. Of those of mixed race the number living as Maoris who attended decreased by 67, and those living as Europeans increased by 122.

Table No. 11 shows what the Government does for the Maori children as regards higher education, industrial scholarships, and hospital-nursing scholarships. It is probable in the case of the last-named that an extension of the system is desirable. The success of one of the University-scholarship holders, Dr. P. H. Buck, is referred to elsewhere. A scholarship in law has recently been granted, and is being held at Auckland College.

RETIREMENT OF MR. J. H. POPE, LATE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF NATIVE SCHOOLS.

Early in 1903 Mr. H. B. Kirk, M.A., left the service to take up the duties of professor of biology at Victoria College, Wellington. His loss, the severity of which is known really only to those who had the advantage of working with and under him, has been followed by the retirement, in December, of Mr. James H. Pope, who for over a quarter of a century has been the Chief Inspector of Native Schools. It is exceedingly difficult to express adequately the loss that the service now sustains. The whole fabric of Native-school work as it is to-day has been during the many years of Mr. Pope's tenure of office built by his energies. His fatherly care of the teachers has made him an honoured visitor and welcome guest at all times. More than that, perhaps, he was regarded by them as a true friend to whom they could apply for advice on their own private matters in times of difficulty, as well as obtain from him the valuable directions on school management and school affairs upon which his wide knowledge and his long experience and skill as a teacher himself made him an undoubted authority.

The Maori people too, hold him in veneration as one of their own rangatiras, and the generic term for inspector has been coined out of his very name—an inspector, of whatever brand, being designated in most parts "Te Popi," the distinction in the assistants' case being marked by an adjective diminutive in meaning. One could write at great length in putting on record instances of the apparently tireless energy which characterized the devotion to his duty and to the work he had so much at heart. The text-books in use in our Maori schools to-day (and even in far-off Rarotonga) bear witness to the deep interest Mr. Pope took in the welfare of the schools. They are—(1) "The Native School Primer," a wonderful little book, introducing for the youngest children all the difficulties of pronunciation that Maori children are apt to stumble over; (2) "The Native School Reader," which seeks to present pakeha ideas in such a manner as will be most readily acquired by Maori children; and (3) "Health for the Maori," which has proved a deep source of information on the general laws of health as far as they affect Maori ways of life, not only to the children in the schools, but to the elders in the kaainga.

Of Mr. Pope's work among the schools since the date of his appointment one might well remark, "Si monumentum quæris circumspecte." During the twenty-five years of his régime the number of Native schools has been doubled. This does not take account of schools that have met the ultimate fate of all Native schools—to become Board schools—nor does it include such as have, through circumstances more or less unfortunate, died a natural death. But, however satisfactory the doubling in numbers of the schools may be, the fact that their present state of efficiency is such as to render impossible any comparison with that which existed prior to Mr. Pope's taking control must be far more so. Indeed, it is probable that moving along with a tide of his own creation, he has not fully realised its effect. Gradually there has been an uplifting of the standard, so that where before there was an aimless kind of easy-going work there is to-day a group of nearly a hundred schools, all of them properly ordered and regulated, and not a few of them qualified in every respect to compare with the very best European country school. The consciousness of the happy result of so many years' toil must afford considerable gratification to Mr. Pope on his retirement. He leaves behind him a monument more