

The children are on very good terms with their teacher, whom the parents appreciate very much indeed. Sickness had wrought great havoc in the school, and the children were just beginning to pick up again. The teacher works hard, and gives his lessons in a conscientious manner. He is ably assisted by his wife, who comes from one of the Department's teaching families, and whose knowledge of the art of nursing makes her a valuable addition to a Native-school staff. The Chairman, Piri Raiti, who has for years done much for the school, was absent from the inspection through severe illness.

*Rangiawhia* (examined 13th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—The good results referred to last year were again manifested this year. The order and tone were very good indeed. The interest in the school is well maintained, and the people are proud of their school. The master, a member of the Maori race and an old St. Stephen's scholar, teaches English well, though one or two little defects—a want of attention to plural forms, for instance—were noticeable here and there. The assistant, an ex-Hukarere girl, teaches well the preparatory classes, and her lesson on the sounds of the letters was very satisfactory. What is more, the children showed that this was no unusual effort of the teacher's. Of the extra subjects, singing was especially commendable.

*Kenana* (examined 9th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—The Maoris of Kenana have always done their part towards assisting the school. The small number of children in the kainga is the chief drawback. The tone of the school is very satisfactory; the children try to please their teachers, the people are contented, and the influence of the school on the Natives is considerable. The children should be trained to speak out well and to answer in complete English sentences. The preparatory class needed thorough drilling in the sounds of the letters. The results of the examination were satisfactory, slate-work being well done. Extra subjects, including kindergarten and handwork, have progressed satisfactorily.

*Te Pupuke* (examined 6th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—The attendance at this school has dwindled away till there were present at examination only seven children, a fact which had a depressing influence on the day's work. The work done was fair. Children were not accustomed as they should be to answer in complete sentences, and the preparatories should have received more drill in sound, as was suggested in last year's report. The high price of gum and the reputed wealth of a distant field have produced an exodus of the people. The Chairman had endeavoured to stem the current, but failed. His remark to the Inspector on the point was very expressive, "Kua pau toku kaha." He agreed that the school should be closed. It is proposed to remove the buildings to Rangiawhia, a place where they are more in demand.

*Touwai* (examined 7th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—An epidemic of fever has wrought havoc in this school since last examination; the interest in the school is still, however, well maintained. The place is kept exceedingly clean, the garden being very pretty. The results were, on the whole, disappointing. This arises from two causes—want of due attention to the requirements in English, and the epidemic of sickness above referred to. More than this, the master, one of our most faithful workers, has been, through illness, unable to respond to the demands that the school made upon him. His wife has for some time been from the same cause unable to render her husband much assistance. Hence the weakness apparent since last examination. Mr. Hill has seen more than thirty years' service in the Native schools. His work has always been performed with a thoroughness and earnestness that have won for him the heartiest appreciation by the Department.

*Whakarara* (examined 5th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—The interior of this school, an exceedingly isolated one, was very pleasing indeed. Order and discipline were satisfactory. The timetable should make fuller provision for reading. The work done during the day showed that good progress has been made since last year's examination. There is still room for attention to the pronunciation of the more difficult consonants. The proper place to begin this is at the preparatory stage; once the sounds are thoroughly taught there no further trouble arises. Some of the work was very good indeed, and many passes were secured. Extra subjects need strengthening. The master has since the examination been seriously ill, and a change of scene and climate is imperative for him. Both he and his wife have certainly done much for the school, and the Department hopes that his health will soon be restored.

*Hokianga District.—Mr. T. L. Millar, Local Visitor.*

Mr. T. L. Millar acts as local visitor to the schools in this district, and the thanks of this Department are due to him for the valuable assistance he has rendered at various times during the year, and for the kindly interest he has, as before, taken in the work.

*Whangape* (examined 24th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—It is very pleasing indeed to find that this most important school is, after about twenty years' rather precarious existence, now doing admirable work. This is due entirely to the efforts of the new teachers. The attendance at examination, held somewhat unexpectedly, was sixty-two. Thirty-six were presented for standards; thirty-five passed. The methods of teaching are good, the teaching being thorough. The attention to the preparatory classes and the excellent preparation they are getting under the mistress deserve the highest praise. The extra subjects received special attention, and the fife-and-drum band established by the master had attained a high state of proficiency. The Maoris of Whangape realise the benefit of the school; they turned out in full strength—old and young—men, women, babies, and dogs. Their one request was that the master should not be transferred from their school.

*Matihetihe*.—This little school was at work during the first months of the year. Then, owing to the teacher's resignation on account of her approaching marriage, the school was closed. A new teacher was selected for it to begin work early in the new year.

*Whakarapa* (examined 28th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—There had been an epidemic of measles and whooping-cough in this district that seriously affected the school work. The children do not attend either regularly or punctually, and the teacher's work is hampered accordingly.