

The record of the apprenticeships held thus far has not been quite so encouraging as the Department could wish. The young Maori is not sufficiently stable in his character to be always relied upon. He may set his heart on being a carpenter to-day, and prefer to go maize picking to-morrow, and to bind such a one to a master for four or five years is not an easy matter. The best results appear to have been achieved in those cases where boys have been apprenticed to masters living at considerable distances from the Maori village. There are, within my knowledge, seven ex-apprentices who are now doing very well indeed; and this I think is a fairly good result.

There are, on the other hand, cases within my knowledge where only failure can be recorded; even for them a kind of excuse may be offered.

One of the most successful of our apprentices served his time as a saddler. Upon his completing his indentures, he got together some stock and returned to set up for himself in business in the kainga. The Maoris of the place, however, could not believe that he would charge a Maori for work done; they simply carried out their communistic ideas to their full extent, and the result was that the saddler soon found that his stock was exhausted, while he had not received any payment. To-day, I regret to say, he is practising as "apostle" to a faith-healing tohunga.

NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS.

During the year the Department has endeavoured to extend the scheme for the training of Maori girls as nurses, by seeking the co-operation of the various hospital authorities in the matter. The Napier, Wellington, and Gisborne Hospital Trustees were communicated with in order to ascertain whether they would be willing to take Maori girls as probationers on the nursing staff. The Napier Hospital Trustees have always been most ready to assist in this direction. For some years past they have taken two girls as day-pupils for a term of two years. The idea underlying this scheme was that the girls should get some insight into proper methods of nursing and caring for the sick, so that they might be of service to their people on their return. But it was found that this scheme did not go far enough, and hence arose the new proposal. The Napier Hospital authorities agreed to take one Maori girl as probationer on the regular staff, and also to continue the arrangement as to the admission of day-pupils, which gives the girls an opportunity of ascertaining whether they wish to pursue the whole course. There are thus three places available at Napier for Maori girls to receive training.

The Wellington Hospital authorities also agreed to take a probationer, and a girl who had already served two years in Napier under the day-pupil arrangement is now on their staff, and is, I understand, giving complete satisfaction.

The Gisborne Hospital Trustees replied that there was no vacancy in that institution to which a Maori girl could be appointed. The opinion was expressed that Maori girls, at the completion of their training, would prefer to work among the white people. In this connection I may state that the Department has learned that the first Maori nurse to receive a certificate (Miss Ema Mitchell) was appointed to Waipukurau Hospital, and held her position there for two years. She is now married to a Maori and is living at Pakipaki pa, where she is doing a great deal of good for her people.

The logical outcome of the new scheme is the establishment of nursing homes or cottage hospitals in various Maori centres remote from civilisation, and I think that when our probationers are approaching the end of their period of training it would be a good thing if the authorities would take this matter in hand. The Maoris of the district would, I believe, assist in the erection of a building. The Justice Department already supplies medicine for the use of Maoris to the teachers of Native schools, and where a Maori nursing home was established the supply could easily be put under the nurse's care. A trained Maori nurse, paid a small salary of, say, £40 or £50 per annum, in charge of an establishment of this kind would certainly do a great deal of good.

While I am dealing with this subject it is but right that a few words should be added in recognition of the praiseworthy efforts made by our teachers and their wives to assist the sick Maoris, both children and adults, in the various villages. Their services, given gratuitously are in almost daily demand, and the good they do in an unobtrusive way is very considerable. They find, however, several obstacles in the way of greater success: amongst others are (1) the natural impatience of the Maori, who, if not cured instantly, loses faith in pakeha treatment; (2) the want of proper diet and clothing; and (3) the tohunga, who is now exercising even greater influence with the people, by virtue of his certificate from the authorities. At the same time, I am pleased to state that the Maoris in many instances learn to rely upon the teacher for whom one or two good cases soon gain a reputation. One of the most serious requests made to me by a School Committee last year was that I should order their teacher not to serve out medicines to Natives from other parts lest the supply in his charge should be all "eaten" up.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

In only one instance—Te Matai—have the Native School Committees availed themselves of the provisions of the regulations under the School Attendance Act of 1901, respecting school attendance of Native children to form a School Attendance Commission for considering cases of irregular attendance laid before them. Although at the time of their application there was need for rigorous measures, so far this particular Committee has taken none; probably the hint was sufficient. (Since this was written four convictions were obtained against parents who were negligent in sending their children.) In several places the Committee themselves have instituted a system of fines: in one case the Committee obtained from this source a considerable amount of money, which was devoted to school needs; in another the Chairman is alleged to have applied the money to procuring his own comforts. Be that as it may, the attendance at both schools was well kept up. But the people are now beginning to understand that these "laws" made by the Committee have no "mana," and hence comes the need for the authorities to support the Committee and teachers, in endeavouring to compel the attendance of the children. If one or two of the most flagrant cases were dealt with I think that we should have little difficulty thereafter.