

1905.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION :
NATIVE SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.-2, 1904.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

EXTRACT FROM THE TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

The number of Maori village schools in operation at the end of 1904 was 100. The number of children on the rolls of these schools at the 31st December, 1904, was 3,754, as against 3,693 at the end of the preceding year. There is thus in the number of children a slight increase, which would have been considerably greater had all the schools been working. The average attendance was 3,084, as against 3,012 in 1904, the regularity of the attendance being 81 per cent., which may be considered as satisfactory. In addition to the village schools there are the four mission schools that are usually examined and inspected by the Department at the request of their controlling authorities.

There are also five boarding-schools, established by the authorities of various churches in New Zealand, which furnish at present the only means available of affording higher education specially for Maori boys and girls. The total number of Native schools is thus 110.

It may not be altogether out of place here to correct a common impression that the work of the Native schools does not extend further than the Third or Fourth Standard. Reference to the Native schools code will show that the children may be taught up to the Sixth Standard of public schools, the requirements being practically the same, and from the tables attached to the Inspector's report it will be seen that during the past year 36 passed Standard VI. and 83 passed Standard V.

It is quite possible that the passing of a standard of education higher than the Fourth may not be of much material benefit to the average Maori boy, but he may avail himself of the opportunity if he wishes to do so, and European children attending Native schools are under no disability. The advance in degree of efficiency of Native schools generally has rendered it imperative that, wherever possible, only persons having experience as teachers, or certificated teachers, shall be selected to fill vacancies. The difficulty of getting teachers so qualified led to the temporary closing of some of the Native schools, Whakarara and Whareponga being unfortunately closed for the whole year. These have now (1905) been reopened. Te Pupuke School, closed owing to the exodus of the parents and children to the gumfields, has also since been reopened at the request of the people, who have now returned to the kainga, and at the time of writing there are no vacant schools in the service.

The school formerly erected at Tapuaeharuru, near Rotoiti, was removed to a more convenient site, and reopened at Wai-iti, by which name it is now known. The Te Rawhiti School at Kaingahoa, Bay of Islands, was opened in September quarter, and Oruanui, Taupo, was to begin its operations with the New Year.