

No. 2.

REPORT OF INSPECTORS.

The INSPECTORS OF NATIVE SCHOOLS to the INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

19th February, 1913.

We have the honour to place before you our report on the general condition of the Native schools and the work done by them during the year 1912.

NEW SCHOOLS, ETC.

At the end of the year 1911 there were 104 Native-village schools in operation. During the year new schools were opened at *Whakaki* and *Waihua* (near Wairoa, Hawke's Bay), *Horoera* (near the East Cape), *Rangitahi* (near Galatea, Hot Lakes District); while the school at *Te Kopua* (Waikato) was reopened. One school—viz., *Te Kerepeehi*, in Piako County—was handed over to the Auckland Board of Education. The number of village schools open at the 31st December, 1912, was thus 108—the highest number yet reached.

Tenders have been accepted for the erection of schools at *Pukehina*, *Maungatapu*, and *Mata-pihi*, in the Bay of Plenty district, and these schools should be opened before the end of autumn.

The buildings at *Mangatuna* (East Coast), *Kirioko* and *Waiomio* (Bay of Islands), and *Te Karae* (Hokianga) are to be put in hand as soon as possible.

The buildings at *Waiorongomai* (East Coast) were completed by the end of the year, and the school opened at the beginning of the current year.

New buildings have also been provided during the year at *Taemaro* (Mangonui district) and *Tikitiki* (East Coast); and it is intended to replace the present buildings at *Ohaeawai* (Bay of Islands), which were erected in 1874, and which are practically worn out, by structures of modern type. As far as our experience goes there has never been so great a demand for the erection of schools, and, despite the Department's efforts to expedite the work, we regret that unavoidable delay has occurred in several cases.

With regard to proposals now before the Department, the most promising appear to be *Parikino* (Wanganui River), *Te Reinga* (near Wairoa, Hawke's Bay), and *Ruatahuna* and *Waiohau* (Tuhoe country). Investigations have been made into the claims of *Korohe* (Lake Taupo) and *Wairahi* (near Whananaki); in the former case without prospect of success, and in the latter with the result of awakening the local authorities to a sense of their responsibility with regard to the fairly large number of Maori children concerned. Further inquiries have yet to be made in the case of the following: *Awaroa* (Kawhia County), *Taungatara* (Coromandel County), *Waimaha* (Tuhoe country), and *Taheke* (Rotorua).

It has to be borne in mind that the Department requires in general a prospective average attendance of twenty-five children of school age before a proposal for the establishment of a school can be agreed to. We are, however, aware that there are scattered over the north many kaingas with a smaller number of Maori children for whose education no provision has yet been made. It is true that in their desire that their children should receive some instruction the parents arrange to board them with relatives in settlements possessing a school, and we have found many instances where this is being done. But it does not always prove satisfactory, imposing on the relatives the necessity of maintaining the children and upon the parents a strain on their affections, while the children themselves suffer in no small degree from home-sickness. We have therefore recommended that an experiment be made in establishing household schools in these small kaingas, in charge of Maori girls who have had experience as junior assistants in other Native schools, and have done satisfactory work there. This will also afford the opportunity of finding employment in the service for a greater number of Maori girls who have completed their course at the various secondary Native schools. Though success cannot be guaranteed in all cases, we think that the experiment is worth a trial, offering as it does the means of some education to a large number of Maori children who otherwise must remain untaught.

ATTENDANCE, ETC.

The number of children on the rolls of the village schools at the 31st December, 1912, was—Maoris, 4,174; Europeans, 520: total, 4,694. The average number of Maori children in each school was 38·6, and that of European children 4·8. This shows that the Native school still maintains its character as providing more especially for Maoris. The average weekly roll of the schools for the year was 4,702, and the average attendance 4,090, the average percentage of regularity of attendance being 86·9. In forty-two schools an average of over 90 per cent. of the possible attendance for the year was attained, the schools reaching the highest mark being *Motiti Island* and *Manaia*, with 98·9 and 98·6 per cent. respectively. Fifty-four schools are classed as having attained from 80 to 90 per cent., while the attendance in the remaining twelve, ranging downwards from 78·3 to 69·8 per cent. of the possible, cannot be regarded as being satisfactory. In justice to some of these particular schools it must be stated, however, that the difficulties experienced by many of the pupils in getting to school are exceptional—long distances and bad roads prevent a high record; in others, however, we are satisfied that great improvement could be made, and we urge the teachers to take steps to raise the standard of regularity during the coming year.

For the assistance and guidance of teachers the Department has issued a summary of the provisions of the Education Act, 1908, and the Education Amendment Act, 1910, relating to school attendance so far as they affect a Native school and the children in its vicinity. The Department has also had the ready co-operation of the Police Department in taking action in