

The standard of efficiency has been well maintained during the year, and much excellent work is done. The stock of English which the pupils bring with them from the primary schools is undoubtedly increased very largely; indeed, the progress made in this subject is deserving of high praise. We were very much struck, for example, with the work presented by the senior girls at Victoria Girls' School, which showed a remarkable appreciation not only of the language, but also of English literature. The success of the boys' schools may be further gauged by the results in the public examinations, which we venture to say compare very favourably with those of many of the district high schools in the Dominion. It must be remembered, however, that the Maori secondary schools do not profess to give what is understood by a college education, as the standard of the Public Service Entrance Examination represents the limit of the curriculum of the schools. So far as the Department is concerned, there is no encouragement given to boys who wish to enter the learned professions. The aim is to turn, if possible, their attention to the branches of industry for which the Maori seems best fitted. Even those boys who have entered the Public Service do not remain long; those of them who can do so go back to the land, and are to be found among the young farmers. Hence it appears to be most desirable that the industrial side of their education should receive the most careful attention. St. Stephen's Boys' School has given much assistance in equipping boys for various trades, while Te Aute College has entered upon a sphere of usefulness in agricultural work, which promises to be of great help to the Maori. Otaki College is hampered by the fact that a considerable number of the pupils on the roll are young children in infant and lower standard classes, so that provision has to be made for both primary and secondary instruction, the former of which might easily be afforded by the local public school. Due provision is, however, made for industrial training, the boys taking woodwork and agriculture, and the girls cookery, the results being very satisfactory.

The syllabus at Waerenga-a-hika has been materially altered since last year, and we cannot say that we regard the alteration as an improvement; indeed, it is quite opposed to our views as to the form of education most suited to the particular requirements, and we cannot therefore recommend the continuance of the free places hitherto granted at the institution.

At Hikurangi College work of a useful nature is being done, and the industrial side of the boys' education is receiving attention.

The girls' colleges afford training of a very useful character in domestic duties, and exert much influence in shaping the future destiny of the girls. Cookery, dressmaking, and housewifery generally, including instruction in first aid and nursing, form an important part of the curriculum. We find, however, that greater provision is made for these subjects in some of the schools than in others; and we should like to see even more time devoted to these important branches, especially in the case of girls who have already obtained certificates of proficiency or competency, beyond which there is, in our opinion, no need for them to go.

A word of recognition is due to the splendid efforts the girls have made in providing comforts for our soldiers. We feel sure that the contributions from other sources showed nothing better made than those presented by the Maori girls from the various colleges, nor, we may add, have there been more loyal and loving workers.

SCHOLARSHIPS.

At the end of the year there were current 112 free places awarded to Maori boys and girls who have qualified under the regulations. In some of the secondary schools the number of free places available has not been entirely filled. This arises principally from the fact that there are fewer candidates for the year in the higher standards of the village schools. In other years it happens that there are more applications than can be accepted. In connection with this matter, the impression has been apparently formed at one institution that we are not doing our duty in sending girls forward. There is no foundation whatever for such a suggestion. We are not concerned in any way in regard to the school to which a girl wishes to go, and lose no opportunity in filling vacant places in whatever institution they may occur. If there is a falling-off therefore, or reluctance on the part of pupils to come forward, the authorities must look elsewhere for the cause. Further, in cases where the full number of free places provided is not filled by candidates from village schools, the Department accepts as free-place holders suitably qualified private scholars who have been nominated by the authorities controlling the institutions. This privilege appears to have been overlooked in some instances, and as a result places have been left vacant that otherwise might have been filled.

Senior free places for boys take the form of industrial scholarships, enabling the holders to be apprenticed to suitable trades—carpentry, blacksmithing, engineering, or farming. The payment made under the scheme enables the lads to support themselves in the first years of their apprenticeship. The results obtained under this scheme have been very satisfactory, the only obstacle to an extension of the scheme being the difficulty of finding positions for many deserving candidates. At the end of the year there were six industrial scholarships current—three of the holders being apprenticed to carpentry, one to blacksmithing, one to bootmaking, and one to engineering.

The senior free places offered to girls take the form of nursing-scholarships. To qualify for these, candidates must hold a certificate of proficiency, must be not less than seventeen years of age, and must be of predominantly Maori blood. It is not always easy to find candidates who satisfy all these conditions, and the choice is therefore somewhat limited. At present there are three junior nursing scholars or pupil nurses, while four, having completed the primary course, are on the hospital staff as probationers. Of last year's two senior candidates, Nurse Ngapori Naera passed the examination qualifying her for registration; the other was prevented by illness from sitting for the examination. Three of our old scholarship-holders, now fully qualified nurses, were at work under the Health Department among Maoris during the year. The results of the scheme are not large, but the Department has done all it can to carry it to a successful issue, and has received, as formerly, the heartiest support from the Health Department.