

A small falling-off in the figures in 1916 of both roll and average attendance, as compared with 1915, is noticeable. Expressed as a percentage of the average weekly roll the average attendance in the public schools for the past year was 88·6 per cent., and compared with this figure the percentage of 86·8 in Native schools, in view of the special conditions applicable to them and the somewhat adverse circumstances common to both classes of schools during the year, is sufficiently good. Of the 119 schools, thirty-six gained over 90 per cent. in regularity of attendance, while nineteen failed to reach 80 per cent.

The number of pupils on the rolls of the Native mission schools at the end of 1916 was 120, and on the rolls of Native boarding-schools 457. The total number of children on the roll, at the end of the year, of Native village, mission, and boarding-schools visited and inspected by the Inspectors of this Department was therefore 5,709. The following are the figures for the years 1915 and 1916 in respect of the three classes of Native schools mentioned:—

	1915.	1916.
Combined rolls of Native schools .. .. .	5,753	5,709
Combined average weekly roll number .. .. .	5,773	5,789
Combined average yearly attendance .. .. .	5,119	5,054
Percentage of regularity of attendance .. .. .	88·7	87·3

The increase in the development of the Native village schools since the year 1881, when they were transferred to the control of this Department, is shown in the following table:—

NATIVE VILLAGE SCHOOLS.—NUMBER, ATTENDANCE, AND TEACHERS.

Year.	Number of Schools at End of Year.	Mean of Average Weekly Roll.	Average Attendance: Whole Year.	Average Attendance as Percentage of Weekly Roll.	Number of Teachers.				
					Teachers in Charge.		Assistant Teachers.		Sewing-mistresses.
					Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	
1881 .. .. .	60	..	1,406	..	54	6	..	4	48
1886 .. .. .	69	2,343	2,020	86·2	60	9	..	26	30
1891 .. .. .	66	2,395	1,837	76·7	59	8	1	26	37
1896 .. .. .	74	2,874	2,220	77·3	64	11	..	61	16
1902 .. .. .	98	3,650	3,005	82·3	77	20	..	83	11
1907 .. .. .	99	4,321	3,561	82·4	82	18	2	105	3
1912 .. .. .	108	4,644	4,042	87	86	22	4	122	2
1914 .. .. .	115	5,053	4,385	86·7	87	27	4	122	3
1915 .. .. .	117	5,232	4,604	88·0	81	33	7	123	..
1916 .. .. .	118	5,190	4,504	86·8	79	37	8	123	2

No account is taken in the above table of a number of schools that have from time to time been transferred to the various Education Boards. Table H2 supplies the information for each school in regard to roll number and average attendance.

In addition to the Maori children in attendance at the schools specially instituted for Natives, there were 4,628 Natives attending 501 public schools in December, 1916. This number has been decreasing during the last two years. In 1914 there were 4,905 Maoris at 566 public schools, and in 1915 there were 4,731 at 551 public schools. There appears to be some cause to fear that a certain number of Native children are escaping attendance at public schools, and that their presence is not only not always insisted upon, but is sometimes not desired. If anything of this nature does exist it is earnestly to be hoped that those responsible for so undesirable an attitude will speedily recognize the grave injustice to members of the Native race that may thus arise. Details as to examination, age, and classification of Native children attending public schools are given in Tables H5 and H5A.

The total number of children of Maori or of mixed race on the rolls of primary Native schools, public schools, Native mission schools, and secondary