

Community Interest.

Probably in no other class of school is so much community interest displayed as in the Native village school. This is largely due to the efforts of the teachers, the majority of whom far exceed their duties in merely teaching their pupils the subjects of the syllabus. The personal cleanliness and health of the children are regarded as a concern of the teacher, and the co-operation of the parents having been secured, invaluable work in improving the clothing and feeding of the children and in raising the standard of living generally among the Natives has been accomplished. The entertainments and functions held in connection with the school are also a great source of interest and pleasure to the parents, and help materially in improving and brightening the social life of the district. The more or less missionary work undertaken by Native-school teachers is most praiseworthy, and it is highly satisfactory to the Department to observe that the great bulk of the teachers are keenly alive to this aspect of their work.

Natives attending Public Schools.

As has been frequently remarked before, Maori children make better progress in schools specially instituted for their particular need than they do in the ordinary public schools. The public schools they attend are generally small sole-teacher schools in which it is impossible for the Maori pupils to receive the special attention in language-training they require, and thus they become seriously handicapped in almost every branch of school-work. Maoris at public schools also display a lack of interest and an irregularity of attendance not at all apparent when they are attending their own schools, with the result, remarked upon above, that they are found principally in the lower classes, and are generally more backward than European pupils. The number of S6 proficiency and competency certificates awarded was sixty-five, as compared with 126 in Native schools, although the number of pupils in the latter schools only slightly exceeds the number of Maoris in public schools.

Staffs of Native Village Schools.

The staffs of Native village schools in December, 1921, included seventy-two male and forty-nine female head or sole teachers and 142 assistants, of whom eleven were males, making a total of 263 teachers, the same number as in 1920.

Although the scale of salaries was not again raised in 1921, the automatic increases have resulted in higher average salaries being paid than in the previous year. The following figures indicate the improvement in salaries that has taken place since 1914 :—

	1914.	1918.	1920.	1921.
	£	£	£	£
Male head or sole teachers	180	212	310	319
Female head or sole teachers	144	164	236	259
All head or sole teachers	172	194	281	295
Male assistants	} 66	82	124	139
Female assistants		90	139	145

In the majority of Native schools husband and wife both teach, drawing separate salaries and, in addition, house allowance if no residence is provided. It must be admitted, therefore, that whatever hardships may be involved in the work the remuneration is adequate. The total expenditure on salaries and allowances for the year ended 31st March, 1922, was £56,338, as compared with £53,712 in 1920-21 and £29,148 in 1914. The staff is reported to be showing increased efficiency; the proportion of certificated teachers is gradually increasing, and those still uncertificated, although they may be excellent teachers, are urged by the Inspectors to attempt to improve their status by passing the necessary examinations. Included in the staff there are now no less than thirty-eight young Maori women.

Secondary Education and Free Places.

The Government has not instituted any schools especially for the secondary education of Maoris, but a number of such schools having been established and being maintained by the various denominational bodies, the Government secures free