

## RETIREMENT OF THE SENIOR INSPECTOR OF NATIVE SCHOOLS.

Towards the end of the year Mr. John Porteous, M.A., who had held the position of Senior Inspector of Native Schools since 1920, retired from the service. Mr. Porteous joined the Department in 1905, and had thus completed twenty-five years in Native-school work. Himself an excellent teacher and organizer, he was able to give much assistance to the teachers in the schools, while his integrity and devotion to duty made him also a valued officer of the Department. The Maori people had in him a doughty champion, and his visits were looked forward to by both children and parents with great satisfaction. His tenure of office was accordingly marked with sound progress. He will be long remembered by those who were associated with him in the work and by the Maori people in whose cause he laboured for so many years.

## VISIT OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

In the early part of the year, the Director of Education and the Chief Inspector of Primary Schools visited Native schools in the East Coast and Bay of Plenty districts.

Extracts from the Director's comments were as follow :—

“ I was very much impressed by the devotion of the teaching staff to their duties and by the excellence of the social work the teachers are doing among the Maoris.

“ A very high standard of cleanliness has been set and maintained in the Native schools. There is no doubt at all that this standard of cleanliness must in itself be a good training for the Native children.

“ I found that, as a general rule, the more mechanical parts of the subjects of instruction were well done. Very little bad writing was seen ; mechanical arithmetic was good. Naturally, the pupils, particularly in the more remote schools, found difficulty with the English subjects, but in this direction a great improvement could be effected if the practice of allowing simultaneous answering by the children were discontinued. In their reading, it is of paramount importance that they should endeavour to express the meaning of what they read. There is no doubt at all that greater attention should be paid to the systematic study of English.

“ Arithmetic should be taught in a thoroughly practical manner.

“ Nearly all the schools are equipped by the Health Department with some of the simpler remedial requisites and the teachers co-operate freely with the district nurses in attending to ailments among the Maoris.

“ There is no doubt that the missionary spirit is strongly developed among most of the Native-school teachers, and they do a great deal of social work among the Maoris that no one hears about.

“ A number of schools are equipped with manual-training rooms, but several have fallen into disuse. This should not be allowed, and I propose that greater interest should be taken in manual training for Maori children ”

## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Looking back to the time when I entered upon Native-school work in 1901, and considering the present condition of the Maori people as revealed during two recent visits, I am struck by their great progress and development. From time to time the system has been criticized as being too little given to what is called the practical side of education. The Maori himself, however, knows what he wants. The present position is that the young Maori, whether from the Government primary school or from the private college turns his face to work. Dairying and sheep-farming now engage him and it is only where land is too poor in quality, too limited in area, or not available at all, that progress is not so marked. I feel satisfied that of this progress the Native schools have laid the foundation. Further, I am convinced that for the special needs of a Maori settlement, no other kind of school meets the requirements so well. Nor can there be shown anywhere a keener desire for, and interest in, education than amongst the Maoris. The responsibility of the teachers is, therefore, greater and the Department should be gratified at the manner in which they respond to the demands thus made upon them.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM W. BIRD,

Chief Inspector of Primary Schools.

The Director of Education.