

The Board school at Pouto Point, Kaipara Heads, has been handed over to the department, the scholars at the school being nearly all Natives. This also is to be treated as a subsidised school.

The school at Fort Galatea, between Lake Taupo and the Bay of Plenty, after having been closed for several years, has been reopened, and, so far, its prospects are encouraging. The old military buildings at the Fort are being utilised as a schoolhouse and teacher's residence. The same sort of thing will shortly be done at Te Teko, a Maori settlement on the Rangitaiki, where a school is very urgently needed. The Fort Galatea experiment is a very important one. The Fort is near the borders of the Urewera country, and it is hoped that the establishment of a school near their territory may lead the Ureweras to ask for a school in their own district.

A most important school is just being opened at Whangape Harbour, which lies between Hokianga and Ahipara. There is a very large Native population in this secluded district; the average attendance should be at least fifty.

The Church of England authorities have given the department the use of the church at Maungatapu, near Tauranga. This is about to be opened as a Native school under the care of a gentleman that has had great experience with the Natives, and has already been a Native school teacher.

The Natives at Pakowhai, in Hawke's Bay, having expressed a desire to have their school reopened, an experienced master has been sent to take charge of the school there.

New schools are required at Mangamuka, in the Hokianga district; at Kirikiri, in the Thames Valley; and at Ruataniwha and Ramoto, near Wairoa, Hawke's Bay. Should the necessary funds be granted by the General Assembly, I think schools should be built at these places at once. They are all centres of Maori population, and in all of them the Natives are very anxious to be provided with the means of educating their children.

Applications for new schools have been sent in from three other districts. I am to visit these places and report upon them as soon as possible. I had hoped before this to be able to visit and inspect a school at Te Waotu, in the Patetere District, but the inevitable delays that precede the acquisition of a title to even the smallest piece of Maori land have not in this case yet come to an end. The obtaining of a site and the establishment of a school in this district are still in the future.

The tables in the Appendix give statistics of the attendance at each of the village schools; of the passes obtained in standards; of the salaries of the teachers; and of the efficiency of the schools, as judged by the attainments of the children, taken in connection with the average time of their attendance at school. In Table No. 3, the numbers in the column headed "Efficiency of School" range from I. to V., those marked I. being the most, and those marked V. the least efficient. It should be remembered that the "Efficiency Numbers" are intended to give some idea of the relative value of the different schools as educational institutions, and show which schools are actually doing the most and the best work. A low number assigned to a school does not necessarily mean that the master of that school is not up to his work. In some instances the lowness of the number obtained is owing to causes that are, to a large extent, beyond the master's control. Such causes are: apathy of parents, and consequent extreme irregularity in the attendance of the children; difficulty of access to the school in bad weather; the frequent occurrence of tangis and Native feasts; numerous visits of tourists to the district in which a school is situated, and consequent withdrawal of the attention of the children from their school-work; scarcity of food; &c., &c. Any one of these causes may seriously impair the efficiency of a school, and materially lower the number of passes obtained by the children at the annual examinations.

SCHOOL-BUILDINGS.

The Native school-buildings are now in very fair order. Many of them, however, are not well suited for school purposes. Some of them seem to have been built on the principle that any kind of structure that would keep out the rain and give partial shelter from the wind and sun would do for a Native school. It seems to me that if it is at all worth while to erect a Native school in any district it is worth while to erect a good one. The greatest care should be, and now is, taken to build no school where the attendance is unlikely to be permanent and tolerably large, or where it is not possible for a considerable number of Natives to find the means of subsistence in the neighbourhood of the school all the year round. But, when once the establishment of a Native school has been determined upon, it is very important that every means should be used to make the schoolhouse and the residence thoroughly convenient and comfortable for the children and the teacher, and sufficiently substantial to cause the Natives to take a pride in their school. It is a great mistake to put up school-buildings of such a character that the Natives can see at a glance that they are far inferior to those intended for European children.

Owing to their family relationships and their ideas of the duties that these relationships involve, it is ordinarily by no means difficult for Maoris to make arrangements for boarding their children at settlements in the neighbourhood of schools that are ten or fifteen miles distant from their own homes. Hence it is not necessary to erect a school in every small settlement, in order to afford school accommodation for all the children of a district; and what is a very serious difficulty in a district that has in it, here and there, small aggregations of European population,