

1884.
NEW ZEALAND

EDUCATION: NATIVE SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of E.—2, 1883.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The ORGANIZING INSPECTOR to the INSPECTOR-GENERAL of SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 31st March, 1884.

In accordance with the terms of your general instructions, I have the honour to send in my report on the Native schools of New Zealand for the year 1883–84.

Seventy-two schools have been in operation during the year—viz., fifty-six village, two half-time, eight subsidized, and six boarding schools. The boarding schools are not under the direct control of the department; they are connected with religious denominations, and are in receipt of capitation grants from the Government. The teachers of subsidized schools are employed by the Natives, the Government granting a subsidy of limited amount practically, the teachers receive only this Government subsidy. The schools are, generally, either experimental schools, undergoing a probation before being raised to the rank of village schools, or they are village schools at which the attendance has fallen below the limit fixed by the Native Schools Code.

STATE OF MATTERS GENERALLY

At the close of the year sixty-nine schools were in full working order: of these, forty deserve to be called good, twenty-four are fairly efficient, and five are languishing and generally unsatisfactory.

Of the nineteen village schools established since the Education Department took charge, sixteen are in a flourishing condition. Of the other three, one has been suffering from the effects of a very bad fever epidemic, which carried off no less than twelve of the school children. I suppose there is no European school in the colony that would not be temporarily emptied by such a calamity. The school is now recovering, and bids fair to do well. The attendance at the second school was brought very low by a total failure of the crops in the district. The children have now returned to the district, and the school began the year well. In the third case a misunderstanding between the Natives and the teacher caused a temporary collapse. The difficulty has been got over by the appointment of a new master. It remains to be seen whether the change will be permanently beneficial.

In spite of the constant drawbacks to Native education, such as Native ignorance and neglect of sanitary laws, and the consequent frequency of epidemic fevers of a bad type—Native improvidence, and consequent remittent starvation in certain districts—Native proneness to believe the statements of persons, either Maoris or pakehas, who, through self-interest or mere wantonness, endeavour to persuade them to put no trust in the good faith of the efforts made by the Government to benefit them—Native want of home control or parental discipline—in spite of the frequent succession of Land Courts, attended as they unfortunately are by abuses that appear to be incapable of being removed, although they seem to be in process of being mitigated to some extent—in spite of publichouses and bush grog-shops, at which Maoris are encouraged, or are at any rate allowed, to get as drunk as may be, and to continue so as long as they have any money and which so often make the Natives willing captives and spoil them utterly—in spite of the facility with which Natives are allowed to become hopelessly indebted to the utmost extent that their land claims are likely to satisfy at some time or another, and so are made to lose heart and hope for themselves and their children—in spite of all these drawbacks and difficulties, fairly satisfactory results are being obtained, and I think that it may be said that, on the whole, the efforts of the Resident Magistrates, of Native school teachers, of clergymen, and of philanthropic Europeans generally are in many districts overcoming, to some small extent at all events, the bad influences that tend to keep the Maoris down and to lead to their extermination. In those districts, though, where there are few or none of these counteracting beneficial influences the Maoris are slowly but very surely dying out.

SCHOOLS OPENED, REOPENED, OR CLOSED.

During the year new schools have been opened at Huria, near Tauranga, at Te Wairoa, in the same district, and at Waioeka, near Opotiki: these schools have all begun work under favourable circumstances, and are likely to succeed. The legal difficulties in the way of securing a site at Waimamaku, near the South Head of Hokianga Harbour, have not yet been surmounted. Neither