

(g.) It is desirable that the site should be between the *kaainga* to which it belongs and the next largest settlement in the district.

(h.) In remote districts the Natives should be prepared to give four or five acres of land; it would not necessarily be all good, but two acres, at least, must answer the description given in (c).

SCHOOLS IN FULL OPERATION

The schools are dealt with in groups, geographical position being taken as the basis of classification.

Māngonui.

District Superintendent, Mr. H. W. Bishop, R.M. In this district there are now only seven schools, Te Ngaere having been closed.

Te Kao, Parengarenga Harbour.—This school is not very far from the North Cape, and is farther north than any other school in the colony. The Natives here have always shown a proper desire to have their children educated: when, for a time, they were unable to get Government assistance they took the matter in hand themselves. Now that they have suitable buildings and a good teacher their interest continues unabated. The results obtained so far are satisfactory. At the inspection forty-three children were present: they made a very fine appearance; they were all remarkably clean and neatly dressed, and their answering was good.

Ahipara.—This school did better at the last examination than it had ever done before. Thirty-five children were present at inspection, and the results were fairly satisfactory. It seemed as if the troubles from which Ahipara had suffered were over, and that it was going to do its work in peace; but it was not to be so. A bad fever epidemic broke out, on account of which the school had to be closed for a considerable period at the end of the year, and now it appears that difficulties have sprung up similar in character to those that formerly hindered the success of the school. On the whole, it would seem that the state of matters here is very unsatisfactory, and that no good will be done in the district until, on the one hand, the bad sanitary conditions that appear to make Ahipara a hotbed for the production and propagation of fever-germs, have been ascertained and remedied, and, on the other, until some of the European residents have ceased to make teacher-baiting their standard amusement, or have removed to some other district. In connection with the matter of sickness amongst the Maoris, it may be mentioned that difficulty is often experienced in Native school districts with regard to the dispensing of medicines that the Native Department is always willing to supply liberally when they seem to be required. It often happens that no professional aid is procurable in cases of sickness amongst the Natives, without very great delay, and expense that they really cannot afford to incur. In such cases few will be prepared to deny that a teacher might relieve much suffering, and sometimes prevent death, if he would undertake to give out to the Natives, as they appeared to need them, doses of castor-oil, a few drops of chlorodyne, a little sulphur-ointment, or a few grains of quinine. Very little medical knowledge would be required in order to qualify a teacher to give these things in safe doses and at the right time. Generally Native school teachers are very willing to do their best in this matter, and many of them have thereby acquired the affection and esteem of the Natives, who, like other people, readily discern and appreciate earnest efforts to help them and do them good. In some cases, however, the teachers are so evidently unwilling to be troubled, out of school hours, with the Natives and their concerns, that the Natives in turn become indifferent about the school and its concerns, and withdraw such help as they might otherwise give to the master. This matter of dispensing medicines is one about which the Natives are most sensitive, and, if they see no outward and visible sign of the master's caring whether they live or die, so long as he is not troubled with their ailments, it is hardly to be wondered at if they get to care nothing at all about the welfare of the school in which the master does take an interest. I think the instruction given to me to report particularly, for the Minister's information, on all cases in which teachers show unwillingness, or plead incapacity, to undertake this duty, has not been given too soon. It ought to be stated, however, that the duty is not always a very pleasant one. The Natives do give great trouble at times about this matter, and it is conceivable that they might consider a teacher responsible for any accident that might occur through their own neglect in administering medicines given them for their children. At the same time there is no difficulty in the matter that could not easily be overcome with ordinary prudence and common-sense.

Pukepoto.—This is generally one of our largest schools. There were, however, only twenty-four present at inspection, a detachment of seventeen children had gone off to the North Cape gum-digging some five weeks before. The children examined did well on the whole. The master of this school may be considered as one of the first and most energetic promoters of Native education by means of village schools; he has done as much, perhaps, as any teacher in the colony to prove the utility and to insure the success of such schools.

Kaitia.—The school at Kaitia has been languishing for several years, mainly through the unsuitability of its position. The children that can attend regularly always do remarkably well, and show that much care and pains have been taken with them; but the attendance has always been small. The school is now being removed to Pamapuria—a much better location. Three settlements should now contribute their quota to the school, and it will probably be the largest in the district. Fifteen children were present at inspection.

Awamui.—This school had hardly recovered from the disorganization resulting from a change of teachers, and it was not yet in a very satisfactory condition. Mr. Broughton, the former master, had been very popular with the Natives, and, consequently, his successor would require time to make good his position. There had been a considerable falling-off in the attendance, and only eighteen were present at inspection. This falling-off, however, had been caused by the failure of the kumara crop through two floods that had come down the Victoria Valley since the beginning of the year; there was little food in the district, and the children had been compelled to go gum-digging in order to live. The master is an experienced teacher, and no doubt a few months will set matters right here.