

Waiomatatini.—This is one of our most satisfactory schools. It would be difficult to over-estimate the amount of good it does. It is not very easy to find what the Maoris think of the matter, but to a European the difference between this district and one where there is no good Native school seems very great indeed. The state of the case appears to be that, when a less civilized race is coming into contact with a more civilized one, some kind of *buffer* so to speak, is required to make the shock less violent and more easy to be borne by the weaker people. A good Native school is just that buffer, and it acts in this way. It fulfils the office of interpreter of European ideas to the Maoris. These of course are presented to the children in a very simple and easily intelligible form, the parents, through their children, gradually become acquainted with these ideas, and at last, when illustrations of them occur in a concrete form, the Maoris have been made so familiar with the idea that the illustration is received as a matter of course, and with little or no harmful effect upon them. It would not be quite fair, however, to give all the credit for the comparatively satisfactory state of matters at Waiomatatini to the school, there are several enlightened and far-seeing Maoris in the district, whose influence has a most beneficial effect on the other Natives. Thirty-nine children were present at inspection, and the examination results were good.

Akuaku.—Thirty-three children were present at inspection. The condition of the school had improved considerably since the previous examination, but there was much room for further improvement. This school is a remarkable instance of those cases in which the Natives are thoroughly indifferent about their children's education. The parents seem to be quite apathetic if their children like to go to school, it is well, if they like to stay away, it is also well. The boys here find amusement in the bush and in wandering about the beach, they like this better than they like going to school. The girls, on the other hand, find the time hang heavily, to make it pass less tediously, they go to school. The consequence is that this is now virtually a girls' school, but few of the boys attend with anything like regularity, or make even fair progress.

Tokomaru.—Sixteen children were present at inspection. The master had been suffering from long-continued illness, and the attendance had been extremely irregular. The results obtained were very small—two passes for two years. As has been already explained, the school is now closed.

Tolago Bay.—Twenty-nine children were present at inspection, and the examination results were very fair, but, as already explained under the heading, "Schools closed," it was found advisable to dispense with the teacher's services, and to close the school until satisfactory arrangements could be made for securing a suitable teacher.

The great drawback to the success of the village schools on this coast has been the superior inducement offered by the boarding schools at Napier. There, parents get their children boarded, lodged, and taught for nothing, and, though, of course, this can be done for but comparatively few of the children, yet all parents seem to think that at some time or another they will be able to send their children to a boarding school. This tends to make them neglectful of the advantages offered by the village schools. The authorities of the boarding schools, however, are now paying some attention to this matter, and are trying as far as possible to prevent the injurious competition.

Wairarapa.

There are two schools in this district. The business done elsewhere by District Superintendents is here managed by the central office.

Te Oreore.—Sixteen children were present at inspection. Great improvement in every respect had taken place at this school. The master had had little or no previous experience when he took charge, but he has made good progress in mastering the details of his work, and is likely to become a very good teacher. It is hoped that before next inspection the school will be more suitably housed.

Papawai.—Nineteen children were present at inspection. This school had lost its master, Mr. C. D. Satchell, who was a very promising teacher, and much liked and respected by the Maoris, young and old. His place had been taken by a female teacher, who had been but a short time at the school when I visited it last. It is hoped that Papawai, too, will be placed on a better footing as regards a building before very long, but the negotiations for the securing of a site seem to hang fire dreadfully.

South Island and Stewart Island.

There are thirteen village schools and one subsidized school in this district, which has no Superintendent.

Waikawa.—Fourteen children were present at inspection. This school is suffering from a temporary depression. A homicide, committed in the neighbourhood some two years ago, affected the school injuriously. The sufferer was one of the chief supporters of the school, he always maintained some of the children who attended. His death caused one or two other Natives to leave the settlement with their children, thus the number of children at Waikawa has been seriously reduced. There is, however, reason to hope for improvement; there are about a dozen young children in the village who will soon be ready for school, and it may be fairly expected that the elder Natives will return to their home when time has somewhat softened down the feeling produced by the homicide referred to. The children examined did very well indeed.

Wairau.—Only eight children were present at inspection, it was harvest-time, and the services of the children could not be dispensed with. This little school does good work. There is, however, small reason to hope for any great increase in the Maori attendance. A stray European child joins the school now and again, and helps to swell the number on the roll for a while. As a rule, however, Europeans that attend a Native school, when there is a public school at hand, generally prove to be of the nature of a "thorn in the flesh" to the master. It is not unfrequently the case that such children have tried every school in the neighbourhood, and have ignominiously failed to do any good.