

NATIVE SCHOOLS.

Eight new schools were opened during the year: at Taita, in Hobson County; at Te Matai, near Te Puke; at Raukokore, in the Bay of Plenty; at Wharekahika or Hick's Bay, and Kawakawa, near East Cape; and at Rangitukia, Tikitiki, and Tuparoa, near the Waiapu River. The school at Fort Galatea, on the confines of the Urewera country—closed for a time on account of the destruction wrought by the volcanic outbreak at Tarawera—has been reopened. The school at Tokomaru, Open Bay, which was abandoned in 1884, has been revived, with good prospects of success; and the school at Te Ngaere, near Whangaroa, closed for three years, is undergoing a new probation. The Upper Waihou school has been closed, owing to the adverse influence of Hauhaism; and the school at Oruawharo, subsidiary to Otamatea, has been given up on account of the small number attending. The school at Uawa, Tolaga Bay, has been handed over to the Hawke's Bay Board of Education. The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was 79, not including four boarding-schools, to which a considerable number of the more advanced pupils are sent by arrangement with the Trustees. Of the 79 schools 67 were ordinary village schools, and 12 were either subsidised or subsidiary schools. The report of Mr. Pope, the Inspector of Native Schools (E.—2), furnishes very full information respecting the condition and progress of all these schools.

The Government pupils at boarding-schools were 74 in number, 15 of whom were at S. Joseph's Roman Catholic School, Napier, and 59 at Church of England schools. The 59 are, for the most part, pupils who have passed the Fourth (the highest) Standard at the ordinary Native schools, and the 15 are children selected from districts where there is no local school. With the 59 Government scholars at Church of England boarding-schools (29 boys at S. Stephen's, Parnell; 10 boys at Te Aute, Hawke's Bay; and 20 girls at Hukarere, Napier), 82 other pupils (19, 43, and 20 at the several schools in the order in which they have been named) are maintained at the sole cost of the Trustees of the schools. The number on the books of the ordinary Native schools in December was 2,631, as against 2,346 a year ago. Of the 2,631 pupils 1,973 were Maoris, or more Maori than European; 242 were half-castes; and 416 European, or more European than Maori (many of these being the children of the teachers). With respect to age, 72 were under 5 years, 1,384 ranged from 5 to 10 years, 1,032 from 10 to 15, and 143 were above 15. The working average for the year was 2,247, and for the fourth quarter, 2,095—1,189 boys and 906 girls—the strict average for the year being 2,138, and for the fourth quarter, 1,977. The increase in the working average for the year (as compared with 1886) was 227, and for the last quarter (as compared with the last quarter of 1886), 249. The mean of the four quarterly average roll numbers is 2,674; so that the working average for the year shows an average daily attendance of 84 per cent., and the strict average for the year shows an average daily attendance of 80 per cent. This indicates a regularity of attendance superior to that of the pupils of the public schools, except those of Otago, where the average daily attendance is 84·5 per cent., to be compared with 84 per cent. in Maori schools.

At the examinations held during the year passes in standards were recorded as follows: I., 407; II., 217; III., 148; IV., 68: total, 840.

The number of teachers employed at the end of the year was as follows: 67 masters, with salaries from £245 to £60; 11 mistresses, £160 to £75; 26 assistant mistresses, £40 to £10; and 39 sewing-mistresses at £20.

The expenditure on Native school buildings for the year was £5,657 9s. 2d., including £762 12s. 7d. granted to Education Boards for building schools in districts in which Maoris are largely intermingled with Europeans. The outlay on school buildings for 1886 and 1887 has been unusually large, owing to the fact that during that period many sites were obtained with respect to which negotiations had been in progress for several years, and had been greatly delayed by legal difficulties. It is not at all likely that such accumulations of arrears will occur again.

The other expenditure amounts to £16,147 19s. 5d., made up as follows: Teachers' salaries and allowances, £11,774 12s. 4d.; removal of teachers, £334 0s. 5d.; books and school requisites, £480 5s. 7d.; prizes, £222 12s. 8d.;