

The appearance of the children was not very pleasing; there was an air of untidiness about them. At examination there were present thirty. The work was not very satisfactory. Greater attention is necessary to the cardinal subject—English—and the teacher should apply all her energies in that direction.

In connection with Whakarapa the side school at *Lower Waihou* should be mentioned. It is designed to meet the difficulty found in the case of a number of small children who are unable to travel to the main school on account of the distance and the bad road. The experiment has so far not been a success, as the building provided by the Maoris was altogether unsuitable for the purpose without considerable improvement. The school was therefore closed temporarily. It will get a better chance next year.

*Motukaraka* (examined 27th April, 1903: Mr. Bird).—Here, too, disease had played havoc with the school. Enteric fever was raging for some months and many deaths occurred. This led to the closing of the school for a considerable period. At examination there were present only seventeen, and the attendance at the school had for some time been very unsatisfactory. In view of the epidemic it was decided to defer the question of closing the school to allow it time to recover. The teaching of English is not so satisfactory here as it should be, and the children should be taught to speak out. The other subjects were also very poor, while the pronunciation needs careful attention. The extra subjects, as one might expect, lacked vigour, and gave one the impression that the children were out of heart. Plasticine modelling and handwork were good.

*Mangamuka* (examined 28th April, 1903: Mr. Bird).—There were present at examination thirty-one children, and these, with one or two exceptions, had a respectable appearance. The time-table was, in view of recent developments, wholly unsuitable and out of date. The English lesson given by the master was similar in all respects to a reading lesson. Viewed in the latter aspect it was very satisfactory, but it failed completely as an English lesson. The assistant, however, gave a very satisfactory lesson on modern lines in this subject to the youngest classes. The examination results were very disappointing, the weakest subjects being English and arithmetic. The Department had established a workshop here, but up to the time of my visit the pupils had received no regular instruction. It is to be hoped that renewed energy in all directions will be shown next year. Mr. Minchin was in the service for twenty-one years. His health during the year had been very poor, and towards the end of it he became very ill. It was therefore decided that he should be retired, and this has accordingly been done. A new master will have charge of the school on its reopening.

*Maraeroa* (examined 2nd May, 1903: Mr. Bird).—This school made a very pleasing appearance at examination. There were present thirty-seven out of a roll number of forty. The school-room is clean, and the walls bright with pictures. The time-table showed that last year's recommendations with regard to English had been attended to. The order, discipline, and tone were very satisfactory, and the children were exceedingly neat and clean. The examination was very successful and the passes were of good quality. It seems probable that even more success would have been achieved had English been treated on more modern lines. Kindergarten work is well taught, and the extra subjects are also fairly good. Altogether the school appeared to be in a flourishing condition.

*Whirinaki* (examined 18th April, 1903: Mr. Bird).—The new master had been at work only a few weeks before the examination took place. Owing to various causes it was not to be expected that very satisfactory results would be obtained. The children had suffered from want of regular instruction, and the examination was more of the nature of a reclassification. The attendance has during the year increased considerably, and the Maoris appreciate thoroughly the efforts of the new master and his staff. The workshop at the school is in great demand, and is a real live institution. Useful articles are made by the boys, and disposed of at cost-price to such persons as want them. Instruction is thorough and regular. Unfortunately, just as the school was booming in prosperity an epidemic of scarlatina visited the place, and the school had to be closed for some time. The master himself suffered the sad loss of two of his daughters, and had altogether a most unfortunate time of it. The Department has to express its deepest sympathy with Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton in their loss. The Maoris, too, have suffered, and several of the school-children died. It is to be hoped that the coming year may bring health and prosperity once more to this important school.

*Waimamaku* (examined 27th October, 1903: Mr. Bird).—This school has made a praiseworthy increase in numbers since last examination, and every child on the roll was present on the arrival of the Inspector, who came unexpectedly two days before he was due. One or two of the records were not up to date, but all the others were correctly kept. The grounds and gardens, including children's gardens, are well kept. The rule is kind and gentle; so much so that one or two of the more buoyant spirits wanted quietly repressing. There is, however, a first-rate tone; parents appear to be interested anew in the school, and children are attached to their teachers. The teaching is satisfactory, but would be of far more effect were absolute attention secured first. The school suffered through being closed pending change of teachers. Granted good health, next year there will be a good record. The teachers have already shown themselves to be valuable and welcome acquisitions to the staff of our schools.

*Omanaia* (examined 23rd April, 1903: Mr. Bird).—The examination of this school was also affected considerably by change of teachers. Mr. A. H. Cotton, who had done well here, had been promoted to Omarumutu School, Bay of Plenty, and Mr. A. Muir, late of Waimamaku, had, at the time of the Inspector's visit, been in charge about three weeks. The children were just a little inclined to take advantage of the teacher's mild rule. They made a very presentable appearance, and are apparently attached to their teachers. The gumfields form a great source of distraction for this school, and the people being somewhat poor in circumstances the children are not so regular in attendance as one could wish. The exhibits in plasticine-work done during the previous master's