

STATISTICS.

A statement of expenditure in connection with Native schools will be found in Tables 1 and 2 of the Appendix, the former table giving details that are summarised in the latter. The expenditure for 1906 has exceeded that of 1905 by £5,641. This increase is due in a large measure to the expenses in connection with the erection of new schools and providing additional accommodation at existing schools and to an increase in the amount of salaries paid to teachers due to the fact that there are more schools this year, and the results obtained under the pass-mark system have reached a higher stage than in former years.

Table No. 3 gives the ages and race of the children attending Native schools in December, 1906. There is an increase of nearly 150 in the number of children under ten years and an increase of about the same in the next group, while there is also a small increase in the number of those of fifteen years and over. In the Native School Code there is no definition of school age, and one finds occasionally adult pupils attending school. This is most common in new schools, where the opportunities of education have come late in life and the school is a novelty. This has, of course, some effect in the direction of raising the average age, but the Department has never seen fit to object to the presence of such scholars.

Table No. 4 shows that the working average for 1906 was 3,607 as against 3,428 in 1905, while the regularity of attendance (percentage of weekly roll) is 85·2, an increase of 1·6 per cent. upon that of last year—83·6. The average attendance for the year has thus increased by 179, while there are 311 more pupils on the roll. Thirty-two schools reached over 90 per cent.—a splendid average, and one which speaks well for the efforts of the teachers and the interest of the parents.

Table No. 5 sets forth the race of the children attending Native schools. There is an increase in the number of children mostly Maori, and an increase in the number of European children. With regard to the half-caste children and those of mixed race, the classification for Native school purposes must be based upon consideration of the language spoken. Thus, for the purposes of this table a child of European parents brought up entirely by Maoris and speaking Maori as his mother-tongue in the home would properly be classified as a Maori. Reference to the summary of the table will show that 9 per cent. of the children attending Native schools are Europeans—an increase of a little over 1 per cent. since last year.

Table No. 6 sets forth the results of inspection during the year. It was found possible this year to pay unannounced visits of inspection to a large number, at any rate, of the schools. The judgment formed in these cases, as indicated by the marks awarded, shows that the teachers are as a whole making gratifying progress in methods, while the organization of the schools, which includes cleanliness, is very satisfactory indeed.

Table No. 7 shows the results of the examination of the schools as distinct from inspection, with which it was formerly combined. The individual pass system is still in vogue in Native schools, but provision will be made in the new code for a modified form of freedom of classification, which will place in the hands of the teacher the classification of the children in the lower standards. In view of the fact that it is often stated that the Native-school syllabus makes no provision for standards higher than the Fourth, it is noteworthy that seventy-five children passed Standard V and fifty-three passed Standards VI and VII during the year.

Table No. 8 shows the classification of the pupils on the roll as regards race and the standards in which they were placed at December, 1906. This table is somewhat different in form from that given in last year's report, the information being set forth in greater detail. The summary attached shows that there is a large increase in the preparatory classes, which is due probably to the opening of the new schools.

Table No. 9 shows the classification as regards ages and standards, besides giving the number of certificates of competency and proficiency issued during the year. This table gives similar information to that supplied in last year's table, but the ages are brought up to the end of the year instead of being taken as at the examination of the school.

Table No. 10 shows the standards passed by European children attending Native schools during 1906.

Table No. 11 shows the number of children of Maori and mixed race attending public schools. It will be seen that, although in several districts there are many Maori children attending, evidently very few of them pass the highest standards of the public schools. It would be interesting to have a return showing the complete standard classification of all Maori children attending the public schools in all the education districts.

Table No. 12 shows what has been done during the year in the way of providing higher education for Maoris, and gives information as to the scholarships held at secondary schools, university scholarships, industrial scholarships, and nursing scholarships. There are 290 children receiving instruction in secondary schools, four Maori students attending university classes, five Maori boys apprenticed to various trades, and five girls being trained as nurses, three of them being on the regular staff of the hospital.

GENERAL.

The following paragraphs contain some remarks on the general efficiency of the various subjects taught in the schools, which may prove useful to teachers. Information is also given on various other matters connected with Native schools, which may give some light on their working.

Reading.—A very satisfactory advance has been made in reading during the year, and in almost every school the children have been accustomed to use two books, which moreover are of a higher grade than those formerly submitted. There is still, however, much room for improvement, and this in at least three directions. First, the children should be taught to phrase correctly, in order to avoid the habit of saying one word at a time, which, after all, is not "reading" but only