

TE MAKARINI SCHOLARSHIPS.

One of the earliest friends of Maori education was the late Sir Donald McLean, some time Native Minister. He was known to the Maoris as Te Makarini, and the Te Makarini Scholarships are provided by his son, R. D. D. McLean, Esq., in accordance with the views and wishes of his father and in remembrance of him. There are three scholarships—one senior and two junior. For the senior scholarship candidates must be Maori boys under the age of sixteen; for the junior under fifteen. The scholarships are of the value of £35 per annum, and are tenable for two years at Te Aute College.

The examinations were held on the 9th and 10th December, 1907, at the following centres: viz., *Wai-iti*, *Waima*, *Waikouaiti*, *Reporua*, *Rangitukia*, *Pipiriki*, and *Tauranga* Native Schools, and at *Te Aute College*. There were sixteen candidates for the junior scholarship and three for the senior.

The percentage of marks obtained by the candidates in the senior scholarship examination is this year below the standard of former years, so much so, indeed, that it seems to me that a minimum percentage should be required from candidates in order to qualify for a scholarship. The candidates for the junior scholarship were somewhat better, and the percentage obtained by the best candidates compares favourably with that obtained last year. The senior scholarship was awarded to Gussie Hadfield, of Te Aute College (44.1 per cent.), and the junior scholarships to Taare Korimete, of Rangitukia Native School (61.2 per cent.), and Herewini Katete, Waima Native School (58.8 per cent.). As a third scholarship became vacant it was awarded to Peri Te Mete, of Paeroa Native School, who had obtained 58.1 per cent.

The work in English was not very good. In the translation from Maori into English many candidates failed to write good English, while in the translation from English into Maori pakeha-Maori words were frequently met with in place of pure Maori. One candidate from the South Island failed completely in English, as he was unable to do the Maori translation. Mr. R. D. D. McLean, to whom the candidates' written answers were submitted, expressed himself as being pleased with the quality of the work. From my knowledge of the case, I feel that the papers did not do our schools justice in point of neatness of arrangement and display of knowledge. I hope that teachers will regard the Makarini Scholarships as an honour to obtain which their best pupils can strive, and that the work of the candidates will be in every sense worthy of the schools.

At a meeting of the trustees held in Napier in February, 1908, the proposed new regulations for these scholarships were submitted for approval. The effect of the alterations suggested is to bring the subjects of examination into line with the syllabus of work in Native schools. The old form of examination in English will be discarded, and in its stead candidates will be set questions in English composition as prescribed for the Fourth and Fifth Standards in the Native schools. A separate paper will be set in Maori, the questions being based upon the language used in those parts of the Maori translation of the Bible that in the opinion of competent judges afford the best specimens of classical Maori.

It is hoped, too, that in a year or so the standard in English and arithmetic may be raised so that Maori boys who have won Makarini Scholarships may pass by easy gradation to the Civil Service Junior Examination, and thus qualify for admission to the public service. Should this be achieved, I feel that the object of the scholarships will be more worthily maintained.

GENERAL.

In the following paragraphs information is given in a general manner on the various subjects of the school course, and remarks follow on various topics connected with Native schools.

Reading.—The schools are now beginning to show the effect of the better foundation laid in the preparatory classes, and the children in the lower classes are reading books of a much higher grade. Faulty pronunciation is still found in a few schools where the alphabetic method has formed the groundwork, and the bad habits are so deeply rooted that it is a very difficult matter indeed to eradicate them. It is astonishing under these circumstances to find that a few teachers still cling to an old method now practically obsolete, and accept the newer method with a very bad grace. Whatever method of teaching reading or any other subject the teacher may adopt, he will find that, unless he is whole-hearted in his use of it, progress is very slow; he cannot serve two masters. It is a striking testimony to the success of the method recommended that in the two schools where the teachers are of the Maori race—*Matihetihe* and *Rangiawhia*—no other method has ever been employed, and the results are of a high degree of excellence.

Two books are read in nearly all classes, the *School Journal*, which supplies the place of a second reader, being looked forward to with much interest by the pupils. The fact that they are allowed to take the *Journal* home proves a further advantage and aids their reading generally.

Some advance has been made in the direction of securing expressive reading, but it must be borne in mind that expression can come naturally only with comprehension, and further improvement in the former can be achieved only by first securing the latter.

I think that in many schools teachers are satisfied if the children are able to *say* the words of the lesson fluently. This, of course, does not constitute reading, the essence of which is intelligent comprehension. The absence of such comprehension leads to the mechanical tone that strikes one so forcibly in the schools referred to. This result is probably brought about by the desire of the teacher to cover a larger amount of ground; in short, the aim is at *quantity* instead of *quality*. No reading lesson should be considered finally dealt with until the children have mastered not the *words*, but the *ideas* contained in it. When this has been achieved the children will in the revision work and in answering questions on the subject-matter make use of the language of the lessons as part of their own vocabulary, and the result will be intelligent reading and additional strength in English.