

Classification of Pupils.

Tables H 6A and H 6B in the Appendix give full information as to the races and classification of pupils on the rolls of the Native schools. As will be seen, 87·8 per cent. were Maoris speaking Maori in their homes, 1·7 per cent. were Maoris speaking English in their homes, and 10·5 per cent. were Europeans.

A reference to Table H 8 in the Appendix will show the classification of pupils, grouped according to ages, standards, and races. The following is a summary :—

	Maoris.	Europeans.	Totals.	Per Cent. of Roll.
Class P	2,146	182	2,328	44·8
Standard I	660	68	728	14·0
Standard II	600	69	669	12·9
Standard III	516	69	585	11·3
Standard IV	366	52	418	8·1
Standard V	237	56	293	5·7
Standard VI	96	45	141	2·7
Standard VII	22	7	29	0·5
	4,643	548	5,191	100·0

Efficiency of the Schools.

Revised regulations and a new syllabus of instruction came into force during the year, both conforming in most respects with those of public schools. On the whole the requirements of the syllabus are being satisfactorily carried out, and in this connection the enormous handicap of having to teach children in a foreign language must be borne in mind. As is mentioned above nearly 90 per cent. of the pupils of Native schools speak Maori in the home. English is taught by the “ natural method ” adopted by all educational authorities with similar problems to meet, the object being to teach the pupil to think in English rather than to translate his thoughts from Maori to English. English and arithmetic are on the whole very well taught in the schools, and it is proficiency in subjects such as these that will help to place the Maori on an equal footing with the European with whom he will afterwards have to deal. According to the reports of the Inspectors of Native Schools, the classification of the schools in point of efficiency was as follows :—

	Number of Schools.
Very good to excellent	35
Satisfactory to good	71
Inferior to weak	10

One school was temporarily closed at the time of the Inspectors’ visit to the district and was not inspected.

Natives attending Public Schools.

From reports of Inspectors of public schools it appears that in the junior classes the Maoris attending public schools generally make equal progress with their European class-mates. The fact that a much smaller percentage of these children speak Maori in their homes than in the case of Native-school pupils greatly lessens the difficulties to be overcome in educating them. In districts where the number of Maoris attending public schools is appreciable, the consensus of opinion, however, with respect to the higher classes is that the Maori pupil falls behind, the English subjects and arithmetic especially being too difficult for him. Very few Maoris remain to obtain proficiency certificates at the end of the Standard VI course. Irregularity of attendance and want of proper care in the home are given as causes contributing to the backwardness of the Native. There is no such irregularity in the attendance of the Maori at his own village school; on the contrary, his attendance is remarkably good. Nor does there appear to be any similar indication of a falling-off in the higher standards. The difference is probably to be accounted for in part by the natural pride that the Maori takes in his own school, influencing favourably both attendance and interest, and in part by the special attention given in the Native schools to the teaching of English on lines best suited to Maori requirements. The Maoris’ work in such subjects as drawing, writing, handwork, and needlework is reported as being of a very high standard.