

In the lower classes (preparatory, S1 and S2) progress is in general satisfactory when the initial difficulties of understanding sufficient English to enable the teaching to be followed are overcome. This want of knowledge of the language in which the work of the school is carried on is always a more or less serious bar to progress, and when pupils first come to school generally prevents their making any appreciable headway for some months. Greater difficulty appears to be found in mastering the work of S3 and S4, especially that included in the English subjects. The work of S6 presents such difficulties that only a very small number are able to attempt it, and of these but a minute fraction succeed in winning through and securing certificates.

Amongst the subjects of instruction English presents the greatest difficulty, especially the branches reading, spelling, and composition. It is not unusual to find pupils who read quite fluently being unable to interpret the thought-content of the passage read. Spelling is a source of greater embarrassment as the child rises through the classes, whilst ability to write composition even comparatively free from grammatical errors and mistakes in English is, as a rule, quite beyond the normal pupil. Arithmetic generally reaches pleasing developments in the lower classes and a satisfactory level in the more advanced standards; but here again incomplete knowledge of English acts as a severe handicap. Writing and drawing are usually well done, so too are handwork subjects of all kinds; whilst in singing and drill the Maori pupil appears able to compete on more equal terms with the European.

The most serious obstacle to progress is irregular attendance, mainly due to the nomadic habits of the Maori, who in some districts is constantly moving from place to place. We feel strongly that no substantial and enduring advance in the education of Maori children can be hoped for until this matter of irregular attendance is successfully dealt with.

The order and behaviour of Maori pupils leave little to be desired: they are in almost all cases readily amenable to school restraint, and almost invariably display a genuine desire to obey instructions and comply with such regulations as are deemed necessary in the interests of the school community. Throughout all classes they are painstaking and attentive and apply themselves with diligence.

In all schools attended by Maori children handwork in the upper classes should be made a strong feature, and provision should be made for courses of woodwork and other subjects of manual training for boys and for cookery and housewifery for girls.

In view of the many disadvantages under which the great majority of Maori children are obliged to work, we are of opinion that their progress may be described as generally satisfactory.

TARANAKI.

In the Taranaki Education District there are no Maori schools, the Native children attending the ordinary State schools and receiving the same instruction as the Europeans. On account of their irregularity of attendance and the disadvantages they labour under due to their home-surroundings, the children, especially in the lower classes, make somewhat slow progress. In the upper classes, however, in all subjects except English their progress is quite equal to that of the whites. Indeed, in writing and in drawing they are well above the average.

There seems to be no need in this district for special provision to be made for their instruction.

WANGANUI.

In the Wanganui District there are sixteen schools, in each of which there are more than ten Native children, and three—viz., Kakariki, Kakatahi, and Tokorangi—in which the majority of the pupils are Maoris.

In the schools in which the "white" element predominates—that is, in districts closely settled by white people—little difference is noticeable between the progress of the Maori and that of the white child: the former is almost completely anglicized. Where, however, there are State schools in the neighbourhood of pas the position is different, and the difficulty of educating the Native child alongside his white brother is increased. When the former enters the school he is usually unable to speak a word of English, although no doubt he has a more or less hazy understanding of a few English words and expressions. As English is the medium of instruction, little progress can be made until it is mastered, at all events to the extent necessary in the preparatory classes. This difficulty, however, is not a very serious one, for the average Maori child is quick and takes an eager interest in his lessons. He soon learns to associate the few simple movements and tasks required of him with the spoken word, and in the playground his vocabulary grows rapidly.

In teaching reading to the P class Maoris we have found our "phonic-cum Look-and-Say" method of very great service. The Maori makes rapid progress in English until S3 is reached, when the modes of expression increase appreciably in difficulty. The pa Maori is then out of his depth, and his progress thereafter is slow. The teacher gives him much practice in oral composition, and by means of sentence-answers endeavours to give him some command of the English idiom, but the Maori environment is too strong, and throughout his subsequent school life he does not, except in a few instances, seem to be able to outgrow the "pidgin-English" stage.

We have frequently remarked on the extraordinary facility the Maori child has in drawing and writing: he excels in the imitative arts. In one of our schools a lithographed "Roll of Honour" sheet was discarded in favour of one beautifully executed by one of the Maori pupils. In arithmetic, if there are no obscurities of expression, the Maori, as far as we have observed, can keep pace with the English boy; in geography he lags behind a little; and in history he finds great difficulty in understanding any but the simpler events where the primal passions spring into action. Battles, sieges, and deeds of prowess he takes the greatest delight in. The Maori lad's progress in handwork occupations is remarkable, and we have frequently had