

EDUCATION.

During the year there has been an advance under this heading, for last July a new village school was opened at Hakupu, a village eight miles from headquarters. The grounds and the necessary school-buildings were presented to the Administration free of charge by the villagers, who themselves erected the building. The school is 40 ft. long and 30 ft. wide, with a veranda 8 ft. wide running right round. The whole of the timber, with the exception of that for the two doors, was obtained in the bush close to the village. The walls are made of native lime overlying interlaced laths of native timber. Below the top plate there is an open space 3 ft. high all round the room, by means of which difficulties of ventilation are reduced to a minimum. The twelve windows, each about 6 ft. high, are made of louvres of native timber. The sill of every window is 5 ft. above the floor, which, while it does away with direct glare, also prevents the idle pupil from having his attention attracted by outside objects. The roof is made of a thatch of sugar-cane leaves, which helps considerably in keeping the room cool. Owing to the lack of desks and forms, the pupils while at work squat on large Native mats.

When the school was opened it was found necessary that the headmaster at Tufukia School, who controlled both schools, should reside in Hakupu, where he taught for four days every week—Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. To enable the full school time of twenty-five hours a week to be covered it was necessary to actually teach for over six and a half hours on each of those days. On Tuesday and Thursday of each week he spent the whole of each day at Tufukia School, where, in addition to taking his share of active school-work, he had to instruct the staff for three hours a day. It was, of course, necessary for him to have assistance at Hakupu, and Miss Evison was appointed assistant teacher there.

In addition to the junior school, an adult school of over thirty men and women was established and successfully carried on. Wednesday and Friday afternoons were given up to this latter work, when at least five hours a week were occupied in teaching eager pupils.

The following table shows the position regarding attendance at both schools during the year 1920 :—

	Tufukia.			Hakupu.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Roll number at beginning of year ..	139	81	220	56	50	106
Roll number at end of year ..	128	93	221	56	49	105
Average attendance for whole year ..	127.40	86.44	213.84	51.59	45.32	96.91

During the year the people of Mutalau (the second-largest village on the island) and Tuapa gave a piece of land for school purposes in each village. A school in the first-named village would cater for the children of it and of Lakepa, an adjacent village. One at Tuapa would be sufficient and convenient for all the children of the villages of Tuapa, Makefu, and Hikutavake. The people of Mutalau and Lakepa have already cut the necessary timber for their proposed school, and I hope soon to be able to have the pleasure of informing you that the erection of the building is well on the way. There is, unfortunately, a hitch in connection with the offer made by Tuapa, but I am hoping that the matter will in a very short time be satisfactorily adjusted.

MEDICAL.

Without doubt this is the most important side of the work of the Administration, for without a healthy people you cannot expect anything to be brought to a successful issue—it is useless to do anything else without a surety of health and a steady increase in population. But the work is greatly handicapped here by reason of the limited means placed at our disposal to enable the most efficient work possible to be done. Too much praise, however, cannot be bestowed upon the present Medical Officer for his willing, unselfish, and efficient service. But it is impossible for one medical man to spread himself over eleven villages and expect to do absolutely successful work. The most that can be expected of him is the best he can do under existing circumstances, and that best he does at all times of the day and night.

A very valuable assistant is Nurse Copland, who took up her duties in Niue last May. She came here ostensibly to act as a Plunket nurse, but the conditions have been such since her arrival that she has really been a district nurse. The great number of villages, and these all great distances apart; the uncertainty of the means of travel; the utter inability of these people to do anything at all for their babies, except under close and regular supervision—all make it most difficult for one nurse to do in its entirety the work of a Plunket nurse, be she ever so willing and efficient. Nurse Copland deserves all the encomiums bestowed upon her, for she is most untiring in her work, displays a very great interest in it and her patients, has a great amount of ability, and uses that tact so necessary in dealing with people who are naturally lacking in confidence in a medical service placed under the control of white people.