

EDUCATION OF NATIVE CHILDREN.

(See also E.—3.)

Number of Schools.

The primary education of Maori children living in districts principally settled by Natives is provided by means of Native village schools specially instituted by the Government and under the direct control of the Education Department. All of these schools (numbering 123 at the end of 1921) excepting two are situated in the North Island. The schools were graded as follows:—

Grade	I (average attendance 9-20)	..	..	..	..	17
„	II i (average attendance 21-25)	..	..	..	..	16
„	II ii (average attendance 26-35)	..	..	..	..	22
„	IIIA i (average attendance 36-50)	..	..	..	..	33
„	IIIA ii (average attendance 51-80)	..	..	..	..	27
„	IIIB (average attendance 81-120)	..	..	..	..	7
„	IVA (average attendance 121-160)	..	..	..	..	1
Total						123

In addition to the Government schools there are in operation for the benefit of Maori children six primary mission schools and ten boarding-schools, the latter affording a rather more advanced educational programme. These schools have been established by private enterprise, but they are inspected by the Department's officers, and the Government provides a number of free places for Maori children at the boarding-schools. Maori children living in districts more or less settled by Europeans attend the ordinary public schools, 620 of these schools having some Maoris in attendance in 1921; thus the total number of schools under inspection at which Native children were receiving instruction in 1921 was—

Native village schools	..	..	..	..	..	123
Native mission schools subject to inspection by the Education Department	..	..	..	..	..	6
Public schools at which Maori scholars were in attendance	..	..	..	..	..	620
Total number of primary schools						749
Native boarding-schools affording secondary education to Maoris	..	..	..	..	..	10
Total						759

Roll Number and Attendance.

The number of pupils on the rolls of Native village schools at the end of 1921 was 5,822, including 5,043 Maoris and 779 Europeans, the latter representing 13 per cent. of the roll. The roll exceeds that of the previous year by 314, 252 of this number being Maoris. The fact that in the last two years the number of Maori pupils in these schools has increased by 500, and that the number of Natives attending public schools shows a corresponding increase, goes to support the evidence of the recent census as to the arrest in the decline in numbers of the Native race. The following figures refer to attendance at Native schools:—

	1920.	1921.
Number on rolls at end of year	5,508	5,822
Average weekly roll number	5,416	5,738
Average yearly attendance	4,639	4,988
Percentage of regularity of attendance	85.7	86.9

The figures in each case continue to show an increase, and the regularity of attendance was better than in the previous year, comparing not unfavourably, considering the circumstances, with that of public schools. One-third of the schools achieved a regularity of attendance of 90 per cent. or over, and 87 per cent. reached a percentage regularity of 80 or over.

The number of pupils on the rolls of the Native mission schools at the end of 1921 was 237, and on the rolls of the Native boarding-schools 488. The total number of children on the roll, at the end of the year, of Native village, mission, and boarding-schools visited and inspected by the Inspectors of this Department was therefore 6,547. The following are the figures for the years 1920 and 1921 in respect of the three classes of Native schools mentioned:—

	1920.	1921.
Combined rolls of Native schools	6,249	6,547
Combined average weekly roll number	6,134	6,464
Combined average yearly attendance	5,277	5,653