

gradual decline in the population so noticeable for many years has been arrested, and that an increase on the previous census is shown. This evidence is supported by the number of Maori children in attendance at the schools, both Native and public, which shows a very substantial increase on the number attending, say, five years ago. Probably never in the history of Native schools has the Department had so many requests for increased accommodation in Native schools. Moreover, inquiries in the various settlements show that there are large numbers of children under school age. Hitherto the serious mortality of infants and young children has been a strong contributing factor in the decline of the population; the improvement in this respect, although still far from satisfactory, no doubt accounts largely for the results of the census. The gradual improvement in the living-conditions of the people, the activity of the Health Department, the work of the nurses, and the efforts of the Native-school teachers have contributed largely to the reduced mortality of the children. The work of the great majority of the teachers in their endeavours to promote the welfare and advancement of the people is deserving of all praise, and they are urged to continue their campaign among the people for better housing-conditions, better sanitary conditions, better attention on the part of the parents to the proper feeding and clothing of their children. It is to be regretted that one of the most demoralizing influences at work is the amount of drunkenness that is rife in many settlements. The Maoris appear to be able to obtain with comparative ease supplies of liquor for their tangis and for other meetings. In this demoralizing work pakehas assist, usually for the profit attached to their nefarious business. The education of the people in all these matters largely devolves upon the teachers, and should they go about their work in a half-hearted way, not only the children, but the parents and the settlements as a whole, will show a lack of ambition. The work of a teacher in a Maori settlement provides a wide field for community service, and it is most satisfactory to know that the great bulk of the teachers are keenly alive to this aspect of their work. The Maori race, notwithstanding the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, has a place in the economic scheme of things. "The people are entitled to their place in the sun, and it is the bounden duty of the dominant race to lead them to it, gently if possible, firmly if necessary, but at all times patiently."

I have again to acknowledge the services of Mr. G. Henderson in connection with the work of examining and inspecting the schools.

I have, &c.,

JNO. PORTEOUS,

Senior Inspector of Native Schools.

The Director of Education, Wellington.