

The valuable services of the gentlemen who have acted as District Superintendents of the Native schools have again to be acknowledged.

The Organizing Inspector in his report refers to the success that has attended the efforts that have been made by the Education Department, in conjunction with the Crown Lands Department and the Auckland Domain Board, to introduce the cultivation of the mulberry and other trees in the Native districts where they are likely to succeed. Mulberry-plants were supplied last year to a number of the Native school teachers, who have in most cases taken satisfactory interest in them, the result being that young mulberry-trees are flourishing at nearly every Native school to which they were sent. The Organizing Inspector has had interviews with Mr Federli and with Mr Percy Smith, Chairman of the Auckland Domain Board, and has received from them much valuable and encouraging information, which he will diffuse to the utmost possible extent among the Native school teachers, the Native chiefs, and others in the course of his travels throughout the northern parts of the colony. A communication has been recently received from the Crown Lands Department to the effect that the Auckland Domain Board will be able to supply shortly about 300 olive-plants and 200 arrowroot plants for distribution among the Native schools. The Organizing Inspector has been instructed to take all necessary measures for the disposal of the plants in such manner as is likely to secure the most satisfactory results. In the words of the Organizing Inspector, "The expense of this sort of thing is comparatively trifling, and it seems that this is the very best way of gradually introducing useful plants into Native districts. It may be that in time many industries may thus be brought under the notice of the Maoris, and that they will take to some of them. It would be a good plan to introduce a new plant each year. Perhaps the black-wattle of Australia would be a suitable tree to take next. This is of rapid growth. It might be planted very easily. The bark fetches a good price, and the gathering of it would not involve much trouble. All these circumstances point to the black-wattle as a tree that should be introduced with a view to its being planted on the waste Maori lands."

The influence of a Native school teacher and his wife over the members of the Native community amongst whom they live is, in the nature of the case, of a more powerful character than that exerted by an ordinary public school teacher over the members of a European community. While all of them are performing with more or less fidelity and success their ordinary duties as school teachers, many of them may be regarded as missionaries of civilization to those amongst whom they labour, and are, by their personal example and their suitable counsels, exercising much influence for good not only over their youthful scholars, but also over the elder members of the Native community.

#### DEAF-AND-DUMB INSTITUTION.

The institution at Sumner for the education and training of deaf-mutes has now been in successful operation for upwards of four years. A year ago there were 31 pupils. Since then one girl died, another girl was removed for family reasons, and two youths left after having attained a fair degree of proficiency. Five fresh pupils (three boys and two girls) were received during the year, making the number of inmates at present 32. Sixteen of these are boys and sixteen are girls. The following are the provincial districts from which the pupils have been sent: Auckland, 7; Taranaki, 1; Hawke's Bay, 1; Wellington, 1; Canterbury, 10; and Otago, 11. The thirty-second pupil is a deaf-mute girl who has been sent from Adelaide, South Australia. During the past year the Director has had the aid of an assistant master and a mistress.

The method of instruction is that which is known as "the articulation method," by which deaf-mutes are trained to the use of the organs of speech, and learn both to speak, in the ordinary sense of the word, and to understand (from the motion of the lips) the speech of others. The use of finger-signs, or other means employed as substitutes for speech, is strictly excluded. The course of instruction includes reading and writing in the first instance, followed by English composition, arithmetic, geography, history, drawing, elementary science, &c. The girls are also instructed in sewing, knitting, and other useful domestic accomplishments.