

There seems to be a slight but well-defined tendency for the attendance at Native schools to become more European. This should be carefully obviated as far as possible, by the Department handing over Native schools to the Boards as soon as they cease to be really Native schools. Some progress is being made in this direction, but there is a great difficulty in the way of giving effect to this policy. It is found that Maori parents who have had some experience of both Native schools and Board schools invariably object to change of management. They prefer schools at which special attention can be paid to the peculiar difficulties that their children have to encounter while receiving an English education. In districts like Hawke's Bay, where there has never been a properly-equipped Native village school, and Wanganui and Taranaki, where there has hardly been a Native school at all, and where, consequently, no doubt, the Natives who do not live near considerable towns are less civilised than the Maoris of any other part of the colony, this kind of difficulty is not felt. It is easy to find a criterion by which to determine whether a Native school or a Board school will do the better kind of work in a Native district. As long as the children need special assistance to enable them to learn to read and write English, so long must a system which makes the giving of this special assistance its principal aim produce better results than can be obtained by a system which assumes that children bring to school with them a practical acquaintance with the language. On the other hand, it is plain that when Maori children can speak English nearly as well as if it were their mother-tongue, they can have no need of special instruction to enable them to do so. There are some other points that are not altogether unworthy of consideration, but these are all connected in one way or another with prejudices and antagonisms caused by difference of race and by difference of habits thereon depending. As, however, it seems to be the policy of every New Zealand Government to get distinctions depending on race obliterated as soon as possible, it is not likely that any Government will pay much heed to difficulties of the kind referred to. The following table, extracted from the Education Report, shows in a very satisfactory manner that Maori parents in the more settled districts are rapidly getting into the way of making use of the public schools for the benefit of their children, and encourages the hope that before very many years have passed by the necessity for special Native schools will have ceased to exist:—

TABLE C.—MAORIS AND CHILDREN OF MIXED RACE AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN DECEMBER, 1886.

Education Districts.	Pure Maoris.			Half-castes living as Maoris.			Half-castes living among Europeans.			Total.			No. of Schools in which there were Native Children.
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	
Auckland	61	53	114	10	11	21	179	153	332	250	217	467	84
Taranaki	3	..	3	..	..	..	11	9	20	14	9	23	7
Wanganui	21	11	32	6	2	8	10	6	16	37	19	56	14
Wellington	18	5	23	1	..	1	13	7	20	32	12	44	13
Hawke's Bay	84	63	147	22	11	33	39	28	67	145	102	247	20
Marlborough .. ..	..	..	..	2	..	2	10	8	18	12	8	20	3
Nelson	3	2	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	2	5	2
Grey .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	2	5	3	2	5	1
Westland	11	13	24	2	1	3	..	..	..	13	14	27	3
North Canterbury	4	5	9	3	2	5	11	5	16	18	12	30	7
South Canterbury	3	..	3	..	..	..	4	5	9	7	5	12	4
Otago	5	3	8	8	5	13	34	20	54	47	28	75	15
Southland .. ..	..	..	..	12	9	21	29	33	62	41	42	83	12
Totals for 1886	213	155	368	66	41	107	343	276	619	622	472	1,094	185
Totals for 1885	187	141	328	..	..	..	..	..	..	506	426	932	157
Difference	26	14	40	..	..	..	..	..	..	116	46	162	28

It is very gratifying to notice that the number of children of the Native race attending public schools is steadily growing. Since 1880 it has risen from 435 to 1,094. A specially satisfactory feature of the table is that it shows that no less than 475 of the children enumerated are either pure Maoris or half-castes living as Maoris.

Tables No. 6 and No. 7 show the examination and inspection results respectively for the year. There is a satisfactory proportionate increase of passes obtained during the present year as compared with those of 1885. The numbers for Standards III. and IV. (112 and 64) are higher than they have ever been before. The inspection results show that, while last year only twelve schools made a gross percentage of over 70, this year seventeen schools obtained the distinction.

Useful Plants sent to Native Schools.—Attempts have been made from time to time to use the Native schools as an agency for effecting the acclimatisation of certain useful and ornamental plants: in many cases a considerable amount of good has been done; in some the experiment has been very successful. Statistics showing what has actually been accomplished are being issued by the Crown Lands Department. The following plants have been distributed so far: Mulberry, olive, arrowroot, carob, date, white-ash, furcraea, ramia (these two are fibre-plants), Oriental plane, maple (*Acer nigunda*); also seeds of the black and golden wattle. The master of Te Kao last year forwarded an excellent specimen of arrowroot made from plants grown on the school grounds. This year the master of Maketu School has forwarded a good sample of silk. This year cinchona plants are to be forwarded to favourable localities.

During the year two books have been produced—one entirely, the other partly, for the use of the Maoris. The former is a reading-book, containing (1) easy reading-lessons on matters of local interest, (2) adaptations of *Æsop's Fables*, and (3) short and interesting stories of a humorous character. It is hoped that this book will be both entertaining and useful to Maoris of all ages. A