

attendance for the year 1889. The causes of the falling off have been three in number: (1.) Although the Native population is decreasing in some places, it is increasing in others. The general effect is that the population is stationary as far as numbers are concerned. If, therefore, all other circumstances remained unchanged, the number of schools would have to remain unchanged in order to keep the average attendance at the same level. But the number of schools is decreasing; the decrease in 1890 was four, and in 1889 it was three. (2.) The health of the Natives during the year was not so good as usual. Epidemics of influenza visited a considerable number of the schools, and in many cases the disease and its *sequelæ* caused temporary but serious falling off in the attendance. (3.) The effect foretold in my report on the operations of the year 1888, has been produced—the Natives have been seriously discouraged in many places through the prevalence of the belief that Native schools are soon to disappear. They recognise in an obscure kind of way that Maori children are likely to be handed over to a body that will be unable if not unwilling to take proper account of the difficulties incidental to the education of children of one race by alien and, unless they have had special training, unsympathetic teachers. This discouragement has been increased by the contraction of expenditure, which has prevented the keeping of school-buildings, &c., in their former condition, and has stopped, or has threatened to stop, the granting of certain small concessions to which the Natives have been used, and which have been of great service in keeping them interested in their schools. These, I believe, are the causes of the falling off in the attendance; which, however, is not very serious after all, except in so far as it tends to increase the cost per head of Native-school expenditure.

In conclusion, I should like, for the information of those who take an interest in the Maoris, and who believe that strenuous efforts should be made to educate them, to state my opinion that in most cases the handing of the schools over to the Boards would soon prove fatal to the schools. Few outsiders, it seems to me, have better opportunities than I have for knowing that as a whole the work done by the Boards is well done; but then this work is the management and regulation of the education of pupils whose parents know what they themselves desire, who, to some extent at all events, understand what their children need, and who can formulate their complaints if they do not get what is wanted. In the case of Native schools, on the contrary, the very desire for education, in our sense of the word, has, in most cases, to be implanted and there is absolutely no knowledge on the part of the parents as to the nature of what is to satisfy this desire. How can it be expected then that these two cases, so dissimilar in every respect, could be dealt with under an Act and with an organization designed to meet the needs of only one of them?

The Inspector-General of Schools.

I have, &c.,

JAMES H. POPE.