

NATIVE SCHOOLS.

During 1892 two Native schools—Onuku (Akaroa), and Port Molyneux (Clutha)—were taken over by the Education Boards of North Canterbury and Otago respectively. The school at Te Kao (Northern Peninsula) was closed at the end of the year on account of the infrequent attendance of pupils; it is not unlikely that a renewed interest may be shown before long, if the necessity of working on the gumfields becomes somewhat less urgent than it has been. The Mangamuka School (Hokianga) also was closed: it is possible that if the building had been a mile or two nearer the principal settlements an attendance such as to justify the continuance of the school might have been kept up. The Rotoiti School stands in a district now abandoned, and is consequently disused; but land near Te Ngae has been given and is about to be surveyed as a site for a school that will accommodate the children of several districts on the east of Lake Rotorua. The school at Taita (Kaihu Valley) has been closed, there being no sufficient population at hand; but a new school is to be opened at once at the flourishing settlement of Opanaki, about six miles away, where the Maori people have provided a building for school use.

Two schools that had been closed for some time—Whakarapa (Hokianga), and Te Awahou (Rotorua)—were reopened during the year; and an experimental school at Waiomio (Bay of Islands), which has since failed, was subsidised. The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was 67, including a part-time school at Matihetihe and the subsidised school at Waiomio, but not including the four boarding-schools. Three of the 67 being discontinued at the end of 1892, the new year began with 64 schools.

Since the year ended, the schools at Ahipara (Mangonui) and Otamatea (Kaipara) have been discontinued, in consequence of diminished attendance; and the schools at Matakoho (Kaipara) and Tangiteroria (Northern Wairoa), having become European rather than Maori schools, are to be closed at the end of June, that the Education Board may be free to act.

One new school has just been opened at Otamauru (Whakatane) with every prospect of success, the Native people having shown their zeal and earnestness by erecting temporary buildings for school and residence. Difficulties with respect to titles have hitherto stood in the way of progress in the cases of the proposed schools at Parapara (Mangonui) and Te Ngaere (Whangaroa).

For some time past the attendance at Native schools has been declining, while the efficiency of the teachers has been increasing. The payments to the teachers under the Native School Code of 1886 were made to depend much more on efficiency than on average attendance, with the result that the capitation cost came at last to be unjustifiably high. A new code has therefore been issued, which took effect at the beginning of April, 1893, and which establishes a close relation between attendance and cost. It is computed that under the new code the total of the salaries of Native-school teachers will be reduced by more than £2,000.

The teachers receiving salary in the December quarter were—58 masters with salaries ranging between £205 and £51; 9 mistresses (£175 to £52 10s.); 21 assistants (£55 to £10); and 36 sewing-mistresses (at £20).

The number of children on the rolls of the 67 schools in December was 2,113, the average roll-number for the year being 2,218. The average attendance for the December quarter was 1,623, and for the whole year 1,634. The average attendance for the year is 73·7 per cent. of the average roll-number for the year.

The Maori children were 73 per cent. of the number on the roll; the Europeans were 17 per cent.; and the children of mixed race, 10 per cent. The boys numbered 1,181, the girls 952. The children below the age of five years were 2 per cent. of the roll-number; 54 per cent. were between five and ten; 40 per cent. between ten and fifteen; 4 per cent. above fifteen.

The expenditure on Native schools (including £70 7s. 11d. received from Native reserves funds) was £14,290 4s., made up of the following items: Salaries and allowances to teachers, £10,929 9s. 3d.; school requisites, £335 9s. 10d.; repairs and small works, £461 19s. 8d.; inspection (including travelling), £637 3s. 8d.; grants to boarding-schools and travelling expenses of scholars,