

1904.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION : NATIVE SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.-2, 1903.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

EXTRACT FROM THE TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

THE number of Maori village schools in full operation at the end of 1903 was 101, two more than the number open at the end of 1902. The number of children on the rolls of these schools at the 31st December, 1903, was 3,693, as against 3,742 at the end of the preceding year. This falling-off is doubtless due in the main to epidemics of measles, whooping-cough, and scarlet fever that have occurred in various localities in the North. The average attendance, nevertheless, has been fully maintained, being 3,012, as against 3,005 in 1902. In addition to the village schools, there are the four mission schools and the five boarding or secondary schools that are examined and inspected by the Department at the request of their controlling authorities. These bring the total number of Native schools to 110.

The Inspector's report (E.-2) shows that on the whole the standard efficiency of the schools is satisfactory. This is encouraging, in view of the fact that of late years there has been a gradual increase in the standard requirements. Handwork is now fairly well established in most of the schools. Maoris take very readily to all forms of manual work, and their skill in carpentry and modelling is in many instances surprising. At several of the schools there are carpenter's shops in full operation. The boys are taught to make articles that are likely to prove useful to their parents, who may purchase such things as stools, tables, boxes, &c., at the cost-price of the material. The elder Maoris appreciate these workshops very highly, and in one case have voluntarily supplied the timber for the building.

Native schools being established only upon the application of the Maoris directly concerned, it is satisfactory to observe that this year marks an advance into Taranaki, a district in which these schools have hitherto had no place. The new school at Puniho, near Parihaka, has so far been successful, the people taking a praiseworthy interest in it. A side school at Lower Waihou, Hokianga, in connection with the Whakarapa School, was opened experimentally in a building lent by the Natives, but owing to unsatisfactory circumstances was closed again for the greater part of the year. Of the new schools proposed last year Kaingahoa, near Russell, and Oruanui and Waitahanui, in the Taupo district, are now approaching completion. The Inspector's report contains a list of the applications for new schools that are still under consideration.

At Kawhia, where European settlement has recently increased with great rapidity, the Department has had once more to consider the problem of providing for the education of both races in the same locality. The maintenance of