

Queen Victoria School for Maori Girls, Auckland.—In this school there has been marked improvement in the teaching of spoken and written English in the upper classes, and in arithmetic generally. Nature-study (including therein also physical geography, elementary agriculture, physiology, the laws of health, &c.), is beginning to be taught in a practical way—a good departure—as none of these subjects can be studied with any educational or practical benefit from books alone. There are still too many classes to allow the best opportunities for individual attention, a certain amount of which is absolutely necessary in teaching children a language which is not their mother-tongue. The work is, generally speaking, very neat, and the tone of the school appears to be excellent as far as an outsider can judge.

Te Aute College, Hawke's Bay.—In the programme the school had set itself, good work had on the whole been done. The spoken and written English was generally very good, but less emphasis might be laid on formal grammar. The arithmetic was very fair, the chief weakness being shown in the handling of questions that require thought but are otherwise very easy. Physiology is not taught practically, and cannot therefore be considered as of high value, even though the text-books appeared to have been carefully studied. It is to be regretted that the boys had no training in the elements of scientific method. If elementary agriculture were taken up practically and theoretically, it would afford the opportunity for what is needed in training the observation and reasoning powers, and would, moreover, be very useful to the great majority of the boys in after life. This subject and woodwork might very well replace Latin in the school programme. I confess I cannot see the advantage, either from an educational or from a utilitarian standpoint, of attempting to teach the elements of Latin grammar and a little Cæsar or Ovid at Te Aute, except possibly to a very small percentage of the boys who have already to deal comprehensively with one foreign language, namely, English. Again, geography and mathematics would lose nothing as a means of mental discipline if they were taught more practically, stress being laid on practical mensuration, which should include at least all that is implied in the syllabus of Standards V., VI., and VII. for public schools. The general style of the work, the tone and manners, were pleasing in the highest degree.

The Native Boys' Boarding-school, St. Stephen's, Parnell, Auckland.—The general organization of this school and the programme of work could not be considered satisfactory. In the upper classes the methods of instruction were poor, and the most important subject, English, was especially weak. No instruction in elementary science has been given, and the other subjects have not been treated in such a way as to develop the observation and reasoning powers of the boys. The head teacher had exercised to an unusual extent the power allowed him in regard to freedom of classification. Thus several intelligent boys who had previously passed the Fourth Standard in the Maori village schools were doing work very little above the work of that standard. The work of the lower classes had been carefully done; some of it was distinctly good; although the boys were younger, the spoken and written English was better than in the upper classes. The building of the new school by the boys themselves, under the sole direction of the carpentry instructor, is the very best evidence there could be of the value of their workshop training. In my opinion some training in elementary agriculture, with practical work in a school garden, should be added to the school programme.

Mission Schools.—There are four of these institutions which, at the request of their authorities, are usually examined and inspected by the officers of the Education Department. They are: The Maori Mission School, Otaki; the Mission School, Putiki, Whanganui; Matata Convent School; and Waerenga-a-hika Mission School. This year, owing to pressure of work, the inspection and examination of Otaki Mission School had to be omitted, while Putiki School was not examined till after Christmas.

The work of Waerenga-a-hika school seemed to me to be very satisfactory indeed, and the whole tone was exceedingly good. In some respects the standard aimed at here was somewhat higher than the Native village school standard, owing, no doubt, to the fact that the authorities are able to keep the pupils longer under their control. Thus, in the work of the highest classes, the reading was very pleasing, and the extra subjects also were of a high order of merit.

In Matata Convent School one can find little fault as regards discipline: the school tone is good, and the parents of the pupils are much interested in their work. The work on the whole was fair. English and kindred subjects were not so strong as one could wish. There is need for a more thorough preparation in the lowest classes in English and reading. This remark applies also to the work at Putiki Mission School, where, however, the teacher has more demands upon her time, and cannot devote to the infant-work as much time as is really necessary. I hope to find time to spend a day or so in each of these schools with the view of giving some assistance to the teachers by taking demonstration lessons.

TE MAKARINI SCHOLARSHIPS.

The examination for these scholarships, provided from a fund established by Mr. R. D. Douglas Maclean, Esq., Hawke's Bay, in accordance with the views and wishes of the late Sir Donald Maclean, and in remembrance of him, was held on the 12th and 13th December, 1903, at ten centres—viz., Peria, Russell, Helensville, Huntly, Omarumutu, Hiruharama, Gisborne, Waikouaiti, Half Moon Bay, and Te Aute College. For the senior scholarships there were eight candidates of whom, however, three did not sit for examination: for the junior scholarship there were sixteen candidates, all of whom, save one, presented themselves.

The following schools were represented: Mangamuka, Whangaruru, Rakaumanga, Waioweka, Tuparoa, Whangara, Waerenga-a-hika Mission School, Woodhill Public School, Waikouaiti, The Neck, and Te Aute College. The competition was thus fairly spread over the whole of our Native schools.

The scholarships were awarded as follows: The senior scholarship to Tahi Iwikau, of Te Aute College, with 76.1 per cent.; next to him came Tita Tau Wetere, Te Aute, 74.1. Of the junior scholarships the one devoted to Native village schools was awarded to John Tamati, Whangara Native School,