

a school having a roll-number of twenty-four, fourteen first-class and seven second-class certificates were awarded on account of good attendance recorded during the year. When it is remembered that, as in this case, Maori children travel considerable distances, sometimes under much difficulty, to reach school, it will be admitted that such a record is deserving of high commendation. In terms of the Education Act Amendment Act of 1907, Native schools are for the purposes of compulsory attendance deemed to be public schools, and the attendance regulations respecting children in Native schools have during the year been brought into line with the compulsory clauses of the Act.

Our experience has been, however, that the most potent factor in securing regularity of attendance consists in the personal influence of the teacher on both the children and the parents, and we are certain that the rapid increase that has recently taken place in the number of children attending several schools is due to no other cause. In such cases the need for enforcing attendance by law never arises; the teacher's devotion to duty and to the interests of the people commands their whole-hearted support, and so strong is the bond of sympathy and affection between them that it would be difficult to prevent the children from attending school. We have in mind a case where a father rode ninety miles to be present at the examination at which his two children, who were only in the preparatory class, were presented. Instances of the determination of children to get to school in spite of bad roads and long distances are well known; in a Far North school many of the children had during the week of the Inspector's visit completed a distance of one hundred and twenty miles.

EUROPEAN CHILDREN IN NATIVE SCHOOLS.

During the year 1908, 410 children of European parents were in attendance at various Native schools. On account of the spread of settlement there are very few schools in which European children are not found, and even where there are no other Europeans, the children of the teacher form the white element.

At the end of the year 1908 the standard classification of the European children in Native schools was—Standards VII and VI, 34; Standard V, 42; Standard IV, 44; Standard III, 53; Standard II, 51; Standard I, 47; and Class P. 139.

Two certificates of proficiency and seven of competency were gained by Europeans in Native schools during the year, and these children are thus under no disability in regard to education.

Demands for the establishment of separate schools are occasionally met with in various parts of the North Island, and an agitation of this kind arose during the year in the case of Taumarunui. This was met by the transfer of the *Hauaroa* Native School to the Auckland Education Board. In such cases as this the fact that there is no authority under the law for refusing admission to a child on account of his race or colour is generally overlooked, and the steps that would be taken to maintain the schools as separate are not very evident.

In the only two places where to our knowledge separate schools exist, children of both races may be found in each, European children attending the Native school and Maori children attending the European one.

The policy of the Department is that, when the preponderating majority of the children in attendance at a Native school consists of Europeans, the school shall be handed over to the control of the Board of Education for the district. It would be very unwise therefore to build separate schools in places where the community consists of Maoris and Europeans. It would involve a considerable waste of public money, would not secure the desired segregation, and would kindle feelings of discord amongst the people. "One king, one flag, two schools!" exclaimed an old Maori in an East Coast township, where separate schools exist.

During the year five Native schools were transferred to Boards of Education—viz., *Hauaroa*, referred to above, and *Puniho*, in the North Island; and *Kaiapoi*, *Rapaki*, and *Little River*, in the South Island. There seemed no reason why the three last-named schools should not take their place with the public schools of the district, seeing that while the children attending were Maori in descent they were European in habit and speech. In short, these schools had done their work, and their separate existence could be justified no longer.

The visit paid to the Native schools by the Hon. the Minister of Education and his expression of satisfaction with their general condition has done much to remove the misconceptions that have existed in some places, and has given a firmer standing to the schools in others.

MAORI CONGRESS.

A congress of representative Maoris and others interested in and connected with Maori work generally was held in Wellington in July, 1908. It was attended by leading men from all parts of New Zealand, from the North Cape to the Bluff. Various resolutions affecting the education of Maoris were passed, amongst them the following: "That this congress, recognising that education is one of the greatest factors in the uplifting of the Maori race, wishes to express to the Native Schools Department, and through it to the Native-school teachers and Inspectors, its high appreciation of and confidence in the work instituted and being carried out by the Department."

From all who are engaged in Native-school work an amount of self-sacrifice not apparent to the casual observer is demanded, and it should be a source of considerable gratification to all the teachers to know that their efforts meet with the cordial approval of those who are in the best position to judge, and whose interest are most closely concerned.

In conclusion, we desire to place on record our appreciation of the keen interest shown by the teachers in their work, and their loyal and whole-hearted devotion to duty.

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