

leaving a total of ninety-seven schools in operation at the end of 1908. The number of children on the rolls of these schools at the 31st December, 1908, was 4,217, as against 4,183 at the close of the preceding year. The average attendance for the year was 3,781, the percentage of regularity being 84.4, an increase of about 2 per cent. on that of the previous year. The average weekly roll-number for the year was 4,479, which was the highest yet reached.

There were at the 31st December 215 children on the rolls of the various Native mission-schools and 303 others on the rolls of the secondary Native schools, all of which are inspected by officers of the Education Department. This shows that there were at the end of 1908 4,735 children attending Native schools of one kind or another, the gross average weekly roll being 4,986 and the gross average attendance being 4,249.

The new schools opened during the year—viz., Waiuku, Manukau Harbour; Wharekawa and Mataora Bay, Thames County; Kakanui, in Kaipara district; Ngongotaha, near Rotorua; Motiti Island, Bay of Plenty; and Taemaro, near Mangonui—have made a very promising beginning, though some are being conducted in temporary buildings at present.

The steady increase in the attendance, and the frequent applications received for the establishment of new schools, point to the appreciation by the Maori people of the advantages offered to them, and an increasing desire on their part for education. Information will be found in the Inspector's report with regard to the applications that are now under consideration.

Reference to the Inspector's report will show that the standard of efficiency of the schools is satisfactory; in many cases it is very high indeed. It must be remembered in this connection that there has been a very considerable increase during the past five years in the standard requirements, which are now practically on a level with those of the ordinary country school.

The new syllabus provides for some form of manual training in every school. In many schools elementary practical agriculture is taken up, and useful experimental work is being done. There were fifteen workshops in operation during the year, and much useful work continues to be done by them.

At the six boarding-schools—St. Stephen's and Te Aute for boys; Queen Victoria, Hukarere, St. Joseph's, and Turakina, for girls—the Government provides a number of free places tenable for two years to Maori children qualified under the regulations. One hundred and three free places were held at the end of 1908.

One University Scholarship was being held at the end of the year by a Maori youth studying medicine at Otago University, and there were five boys apprenticed to suitable trades.

There were during 1908 three nurses holding day-pupil scholarships, and four probationers on the staffs of various hospitals. Of these latter, two have passed the examination qualifying them for registration as nurses, and they have since attended for further training at St. Helens Maternity Hospital, where one has gained a certificate in midwifery.

The total expenditure on Native schools during the year, including £52 6s. 10d. paid from Native school reserves, was £33,307 2s. 4d. Deducting recoveries, £72 3s. 3d., the result is a net expenditure of £33,234 19s. 1d., as against £31,492 4s. 4d. in 1907. Included in this amount is the sum of £4,773 18s. 5d. expended on new buildings and additions; £2,583 14s. 8d. on secondary education including fees for holders of free places in secondary schools, industrial or technical scholarships for boys, nursing scholarships for girls, and University Scholarships.

Head teachers of Native schools now receive salary at the same rate as do head teachers of public schools, and the payments are subject to similar conditions. Prior to the revision of the salary scheme the amount paid in salaries for 1906 was £17,519, for 1908 it was £20,292, and under the revised scale coming into force this year a further increase is effected. The average salary paid to head teachers of Native schools for the year 1908 was £158 11s. 7d.

The staffs of the village schools included seventy-six masters and nineteen mistresses in charge, one hundred and six assistants, and five sewing-teachers.