

shown that they can turn their knowledge to practical advantage. The boys at Te Aute, for instance, have replaced their old desks by new ones, which they have constructed according to modern designs in an admirable manner.

SCHOLARSHIPS.

The Government provides for Maori children 150 free places, each of the value of £20 per annum, and tenable at one or other of the boarding-schools above referred to. Of these, 128 were current at the end of 1911, 122 being held by pupils from Native village schools and six by scholars from public schools.

Senior free places in Native schools take the form of industrial scholarships, by which a boy may receive a sum not exceeding £40 in the course of the first three years, during which he is learning a suitable trade. As a result of the prominence now given to industrial training in the schools, there has been a material increase in the number of industrial scholarships. Thirteen boys are now apprenticed to various trades—saddlery, blacksmithing, engineering, building, and farming—and all appear to be giving every satisfaction.

Nursing Scholarships.—During the year four girls were in training as probationers on the staff of various hospitals. One finished her course earlier in the year, and three day-pupils took up nursing scholarships immediately upon the close of the year, so that at the present time there are seven in training. Nurse Mataira qualified for registration during the year, and is now working among the Maoris under the direction of the Health Department. The frequent occurrence of typhoid fever and other epidemic diseases during the past year has shown the need for increasing the number of Maori nurses as soon as possible.

Te Makarini and Buller Scholarships.—The Department is not directly concerned in the establishment of these scholarships, which have been founded out of private bequests. The regulations, however, and the syllabus of work prescribed for the examinations have been arranged by the Department, which also conducts the examination.

The examination for the Te Makarini Scholarships was held on the 4th and 5th December, 1911. There were six candidates for the senior and five for the junior scholarship. The work submitted by the candidates was very creditable, and showed a steady advance in quality. As the result of the senior examination, two boys appeared to be so nearly equal in merit that the trustees accepted our recommendation to grant scholarships to both. John Williams, of Te Aute College, and Reuben Hihī, of St. Stephen's School, were therefore awarded senior scholarships. Waiaatua Corbett, of Te Aute College, deserves honourable mention for his work; and a word of praise is due also to the candidates from Karetu Native School. The Junior Scholarship was awarded to Ohaki Potae, of Rangitukia Native School, who was much the best. One candidate came from a South Island school, and though he did very well in most of the subjects, his want of knowledge of Maori caused him to lose ground.

For the Buller Scholarship there was only one candidate who satisfied the conditions of the regulations as to race. It is expressly stipulated in the terms of the trust that the candidates shall be predominantly Maori—half-castes are excluded. Though the work of the candidate in the other subjects was fairly satisfactory, he did not satisfy the requirements in arithmetic, and therefore failed to gain a scholarship. It is important that the headmasters of the schools and colleges which present candidates for this examination should see that the conditions as to race are fulfilled before the entries are made. In order to leave no room for uncertainty, some amendment of the regulations will be made during the current year.

ATTENDANCE, ETC.

The attendance at the village schools has been considerably affected this year through the prevalence of epidemic diseases, owing to which some of the largest schools and several smaller ones were closed for some time.

Only a very small increase of 0·5 per cent. has been made this year in the percentage of regularity, which is now 86·3. In thirty-four schools an average of over 90 per cent. was reached, 121 certificates of the first class and 120 of the second being gained during the year. In Te Kao School, out of a roll-number of fifty-one, twenty-nine first-class and five second-class certificates were obtained, and, in spite of the fact that the pupils walk many miles to reach the school, it still maintains the premier position for attendance, with an average of 98·5 per cent.

The number of children on the rolls of the schools at the end of the year was 4,557, as against 4,280 in 1910. The average weekly roll-number was 4,621, and the average yearly attendance 3,990, an increase of 276 on that of the previous year.

The total number of children at the 31st December, 1911, in Native schools of one kind or other inspected by us was 5,174, the average weekly roll-number being 5,245, and the average attendance 4,563.

Information as to expenditure on the schools, classification of the children as to race, standards, and ages, the results of inspection, &c., is given in the tables attached to this report.

CONCLUSION.

In reviewing the year's work, we feel that the schools have made steady advance in general efficiency. We find that the teachers are imbued with a strong desire to make their schools successful, and welcome any suggestions and assistance tending in that direction. Placed as the majority of them are in some of the most remote and isolated parts of the Dominion, they carry out their duties with an enthusiasm and devotion that entitle them to every credit and consideration. We desire, therefore, to express again our hearty appreciation of the services rendered by them.

We have, &c.,

WILLIAM W. BIRD, } Inspectors.
JOHN PORTEOUS, }