

General Efficiency of the Schools.

Native village schools were inspected as usual by the two departmental officers appointed to the work, and their report is to the effect that the methods of teaching followed are distinctly good in the majority of schools, the splendid progress made by the pupils being evidence of the high quality of the instruction given. The small number of less satisfactory schools are keenly criticized, and it is evident that as high a standard of merit is expected in Native schools as is reached in public schools. In a comparison between the efficiency of an average Native school and of a public school of similar size it is probable that the former would not appear at any disadvantage.

From the point of view of efficiency the schools were classified as follows: Very good to excellent, 40; very satisfactory to good, 50; fair to satisfactory, 23; weak, 11.

The pupils of S6 (260 in number) were examined for the award of certificates of proficiency and competency, eighty-two of the former and forty-three of the latter class of certificate being awarded. The figures represent an improvement on the results of the previous year.

Staffs of Native Village Schools.

The staffs of Native village schools in December, 1923, included eighty-one male and forty-four female head or sole teachers and 152 assistants, of whom eleven were males, making a total of 277 teachers—seven more than in the previous year. The following figures indicate the average salaries paid in 1923 to Native-school teachers:—

						Males. £	Females. £
Head teachers	..	..	..	..	..	289	280
Sole teachers	..	..	..	..	..	215	179
Assistants	..	..	..	..	..	132	129

The total expenditure on salaries and allowances for the year ended 31st March, 1924, was £54,924.

Higher Education and Free Places.

The Government has not instituted any schools especially for the secondary education of Maoris, but a number of such schools having been established and being maintained by the various denominational bodies, the Government secures free continued education for qualified Maori children by providing at these schools a number of scholarships or free places. The value of the free places is £30 per annum, and they are tenable for two years. The roll number of these schools (ten in number) at the end of 1923 was 493, of which number fifty-four boys and seventy girls held the free places referred to. The great majority of the scholars were ex-pupils of Native schools. The syllabus of work to be followed by free-place holders as prescribed by the Department is designed to secure such industrial training as is considered desirable in the case of Maoris: the boys learn agriculture and woodwork, and the girls take a domestic course. A farm of 600 acres is being worked in conjunction with Te Aute College—one of the schools referred to. In some of the schools the more capable pupils are prepared for the Public Service Entrance and Matriculation Examinations, several candidates being successful in 1923. The Te Makarini and Buller Scholarships were founded out of private bequests, and are tenable by Maori scholars at Te Aute College. One senior and one junior Makarini Scholarships and one Buller Scholarship were awarded in 1923, there being keen competition for the senior Te Makarini and the Buller Scholarships. Disappointment is again expressed at the small number of candidates from Native village schools competing for the Government junior scholarships or free places, and the obligation is impressed upon teachers of encouraging suitable pupils to enter for the qualifying examination.

Senior free places are provided for boys in the form of industrial and agricultural scholarships, which enable the holders to be apprenticed to suitable trades, or to obtain agricultural training at Te Aute College. Three scholarships of the latter type were held in 1923. Senior free places for girls take the form of nursing