

## REPORT OF THE OTAKI INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, 1855.

---

It is now seven years since some assistance was given by the Government to the Otaki School. It was then a day school. Boys were subsequently taken in as boarders. Some land, about sixty-eight acres, was given by the Natives for the purpose of supporting the school. The system appearing to succeed, the Governor proposed that more lands should be obtained from the Natives. This was readily acceded to on their part; and a block of more than five hundred acres was added to the first one. For these Crown grants were issued by the Governor. He likewise agreed that an annual grant of money should be made by the Government, provided the children educated in the Institution should be taught the English language, should receive religious instruction, and should be brought up in habits of industry. Buildings were accordingly erected; land was fenced and cultivated; a good master was obtained; and in the beginning of the year 1854 the new boys' house was occupied by fifty-five boys and two well trained native monitors. The school proceeded very satisfactorily for some time, considerable progress having been made by the boys. But gradually the numbers began to decline. Some of the probable causes of this declension will be given below.

The boys are instructed in reading, spelling, and writing English and Maori, in arithmetic, in writing, in geography, and in singing; religious instruction is also given. Many boys have left the school with a very fair knowledge of most of these. Instruction is also given in the various branches of agriculture, such as the use of the plough, thrashing machine, &c., in draining land, in the management of horses, bullocks, cows, sheep, &c.

There are now sixteen boys in the Boarding-house, and there are six young men engaged as monitors and laborers. There are several other boys who have been lately taken away on account either of their own illness or of that of their parents, who, it is probable, will shortly return.

There are at present also ten girls, who form a branch of this institution, and are supported by it.

A few reasons why the number of boys has decreased are here added.

1. The difficulty of obtaining schoolmasters who are both competent to teach Maori children and ready to exercise the patience necessary to success is a serious impediment to progress. There have been at Otaki three schoolmasters during the last two years. The successive changes have tended to loosen the attachment of the boys to the school.
2. Sickness has impeded the progress of the school. In June, 1854, the measles visited it, and continued its violence during two months, till every one connected with the school had been attacked. This caused the death of two boys; and occasioned much disorganisation in the establishment; several boys left when discipline was again enforced. The prevalence of this disease also induced many of the parents and relations of the boys to send for them; some of them did not return.
3. The rise in prices generally has affected the school. The great inducement originally held out to parents, who were usually very averse to part with their children, merely for the purpose of their being educated, was, that they were fed and clothed without any expense to themselves. But since they have become much wealthier by the increased value of their produce, and are enabled by the present establishment of two good retail stores at Otaki to buy articles of clothing at very moderate prices, the inducement no longer prevails. In addition to this, another consequence of the high price of produce is, that parents desire to retain their children at home to assist them in work, especially in reference to their newly acquired property, such as horses and cattle, about which boys are found very useful. Another effect is that it has become more difficult to hire labour, and consequently rather heavier work occasionally falls to the lot of the schoolboys than they like, or which it would be advisable to impose on them if labour could be readily obtained.
4. The heavy work devolving on the boys in the early stages of an Institution of this kind, when it is necessary not only to raise sufficient crops for its support, but to be continually extending operations, clearing new land, and contending with the difficulties arising from insufficient fences, drains, and bridges—has rather a discouraging and disheartening effect on them. This obstacle, so far as Otaki is concerned, is rapidly disappearing.
5. The earthquake which happened early in the year occasioned much confusion. The boys were so alarmed by the fall of one of the large chimneys, that they could not be induced to sleep in the house for some weeks after it. The attempt to restore order by a master who had lately arrived from England proved to boys not accustomed to much discipline, and whose parents object to their being subjected to it, such an occasion of discontent as made several boys leave the school.