

tolerably; the rest indifferently. Not more than one or two showed any intelligent apprehension of the meaning of what they read. I was informed that the greater portion of the clothes worn by the pupils was made by the girls attending the school.

To teach English at all effectually to Maori children must, considering the circumstances by which they are surrounded, be very difficult. I shall elsewhere offer some suggestions on this point.

As regards this school, I would remark that the reading books in use—the old series of Irish National School Books—are too hard. Books of a much simpler kind, and illustrated, should be substituted. Picture reading cards should be supplied, and diagrams of various kinds. A map of the World is required. I would recommend that of the hemispheres, published by Nelson. A black-board and easel, and a ball-frame for teaching arithmetic, are also required.

NOTE.—I consider it very doubtful whether the teachers of this school know enough of English themselves to be able to teach the language to their pupils.

St. Stephen's Native School, Auckland, 3rd June, 1874.—On roll, 30 boys; present, 29. Maps, &c.: supply of maps sufficient. Desks, 40 feet. Two black-boards. No picture reading cards. Schoolroom, 42 feet x 15 feet—large enough to accommodate about 80 pupils. One master, Mr. Davis.

I am of opinion that this school is conducted in a very efficient manner on the whole. The writing of the pupils is good. Their knowledge of arithmetic, and of the maps, satisfactory. Many of them copy with great accuracy from books, and some write very fairly from dictation. Most of them read as well as can be expected; and some have a pretty fair apprehension of the meaning of what they read. Several attempt to write letters in English, and a few succeed tolerably well. Here, as elsewhere, the reading books in use are too hard. Simpler books, profusely illustrated, should replace them. The map of the world in the school is not suited for the pupils. The maps of the hemispheres published by Nelson would be much better. Picture reading cards, and diagrams of various kinds, are required. Suitable pictures should, I consider, be supplied liberally to all the Native Schools. They very much facilitate the acquisition of English words by the children. When the teacher does not know Maori, they act as interpreters between him and his pupils.

I am informed that it was at one time a rule here that the pupils should, after school hours, speak English only, and that this rule has been recently relaxed. I think it undesirable to enforce any rule likely to give Native children a distaste for English; but they should be encouraged to speak the language at all times, and it would be well if they could be got to look upon the speaking of it as a something to bring them credit and honour. It may not be inappropriate that I should here state my opinion that the teaching of English in Native Schools must be comparatively ineffectual, and its results transitory, unless means are taken to give the pupils a taste for reading. This will not be accomplished by endeavouring to force on them useful and instructive works, of which they will read little and understand less, but by inducing them to read books in which they are likely to take an interest, and which they can assimilate.

I am informed by those competent to give an opinion on the subject, that the Natives take great interest in stories of travel and adventure, such as "Robinson Crusoe," and others of a like nature. Beginning with such books as these, and gradually led on to those of a higher character, they may at length be made to feel how much they are gaining by giving up a language with no literature for one with a literature so rich and varied. I would suggest that a small sum be applied, with the consent of the managers, to the purpose of procuring a few books of the kind indicated for this school. I should be happy to assist in selecting the books.

I examined the dormitories, and I saw the pupils at dinner. I consider that all the arrangements are as good as could reasonably be expected.

It is due to the master that I should state that he seemed to me to be competent, painstaking, and zealous.

No. 6.

Mr. H. W. BRABANT, R.M., Opotiki, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Opotiki, 2nd February, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated Tauranga, November 24th last, requesting me to undertake the half-yearly inspection of the Native Schools in the Bay of Plenty and Lake Districts.

I conclude that the inspection should take place at the end of each half year, but owing to the press of other duty, I was unable to inspect the schools at a distance from Opotiki in December. I have however done so last month, and now take leave to transmit herewith my report, and to request you to lay the same before the Hon. the Native Minister.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

HERBERT W. BRABANT, R.M.