

No. 7.

Mr. E. W. PUCKEY, Thames, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Native Office, Thames, 1st July, 1875.

I have the honor to report as follows on the progress made by the Native boys attending the Parawai School, which I visited on the 22nd ult. :—

There were present nine boys—three in the third class, one in the second class, and five in the first class.

The boys (Native) in the third and second classes have been under tuition for some years, having attended at the Thames School when it was conducted by Mr. Robertson five years ago, and since then at the present school. They can read and write very fairly, and are remarkably quick at figures; those in the third class did some rather long compound multiplication sums with great readiness and accuracy.

The boys in the first class have attended school for about six months. I heard them read in words of one syllable, and was agreeably surprised at the progress they had made. It is true, their pronunciation had a rather foreign accent; but I have no doubt, with some extra care on the part of master, this defect will be toned down in time.

In order that you may not be surprised at the small attendance of Native children at the school, I should observe that since the measles the attendance of children of both races has only reached about half the average. Another reason is, that the parents of other children who otherwise would attend are preparing land for cultivation at Te Aroha, and, having no one left at their homes near Shortland to look after their children, have taken them with them. This will always prove a difficulty in the way of their regular attendance.

I very much fear that the number of Native children educated at this school will not exceed in any year an average of 15 or 20 at furthest, as, I think, few of them living at a greater distance than two or three miles (let their parents value the advantage of education ever so highly) will attend regularly for any length of time together. I am the more convinced of this, for, to my own knowledge, at a distance barely exceeding three miles from the school there are at least 25 to 30 children, none of whom have ever been to school at all. I have frequently urged upon their parents the importance of education, which they cannot now fail to see for themselves. The usual reply is, "What can we do? There is no one to take care of the children, so that they might live near the school. We cannot come and live there ourselves and neglect our cultivations."

Of the nine children I saw at the school, four are nearly related to Taipari's family; four are grandchildren or near relatives of Te Moananui, who has taken up his abode near town partly in order to have them educated; the other is a half-caste, who has relatives at Parawai.

I have, &c.,

E. W. PUCKEY,
Native Agent.

The Hon. the Native Minister.

No. 8.

Mr. W. HARSANT, R.M., Raglan, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Raglan, 15th May, 1875.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 23rd of April, requesting a report on the Native schools in this district.

I much regret that my account must be a very gloomy and unsatisfactory one concerning the Kawhia and Aotea schools. At Kawhia, under the guidance of the Rev. C. H. Schnackenberg, the Native teacher, Edward, resides and continues to teach according to his ability; and Raraniha endeavours to impart religious instruction, at the mission station. At Aotea some form of schooling has been kept up by Mihi Tena, also Tiripa, who resides at the mission station there, and by the chief Kewere to Haho.

Mr. Schnackenberg must have had a very vexatious and difficult time of it, seeing that it has not been safe for any European to go to the Kawhia station for years past; and that at Aotea, Waata Taki threatens to burn the station down if Mr. Schnackenberg again visits it.

It must be remembered that these mission stations are situated in the very heart, the very hot-bed of Kingism and Hauhauism, just where everything relating to the Pakeha would be most vehemently opposed, and this circumstance must be taken into account in the consideration of such a disheartening state of things.

It seems a difficult matter to decide what may be for the best. If the Government discontinued its aid, it would be abandoning the field to Kingism and heathenism, a measure which the warmest disciple of Joseph Hume could hardly advocate. On the other hand, however unsatisfactory the present state of things, its retention will secure, so to speak, an ember alight, an established nucleus which can be enlarged or amended for the educational, moral, and industrial improvement of the Native race, exactly where most wanted, and where it would be most advantageous when the Maori is again in his right mind.

In thinking the matter over and over again, I can suggest no better expedient than the one at present adopted, viz., to grant a small sum towards each of these two schools, for Mr. Schnackenberg to do the best he can with.

He knows the localities and these Maoris better, and can utilize the grants better than any one else.

As regards European schools, the Auckland Board of Education has passed a rule to grant £4 for each pupil attending regularly. This may act pretty well in populous districts, but must deprive many of those living widely apart, and where few in number, of scholastic advantages, e.g., in our Waitetuna district the schoolmaster was compelled to leave the school and take to day labour to