

1st Class.—Reading: Book, "Sequel to Step by Step." Number in class, 6. All read fairly and knew the meaning of the text, and could spell any of the words they read.

2nd Class.—Reading: "Step by Step" (easy words of one syllable). Number in class, 5. All read fairly, knew the meaning of the words, and could spell them.

Dictation: Six attempted to write an easy sentence, but from want of practice half failed.

Arithmetic: Five knew long division imperfectly; six, addition and subtraction.

Tables: Five knew the multiplication table and money table well, and answered questions readily; six knew them imperfectly.

Geography: All had a fair knowledge of New Zealand geography.

Writing: Four were beginning to write in copybooks; seven wrote fairly on slates.

Drill: As the children are only drilled occasionally, they were not very well up in their exercise.

The children in this school looked clean and intelligent, and their cheerful bearing showed that they and their master got on well together. Though their knowledge of English was not quite equal to that of Native children in districts where they mix more with Europeans, they were sufficiently familiar with the language to prove that Mr. Jennings had taken great pains with his pupils. The schoolroom, which is healthily situated, is large enough for the number of children in attendance. It is both light and well ventilated, and supplied with most of the school requisites. The part of the building occupied by the master was not so comfortable as might be desired, but I was given to understand that something was about to be done towards improving his quarters.

I am glad to report that some of the principal Natives were present at the examination, and appeared to take a real interest in the welfare of the school.

Wairau School, Province of Marlborough: Master, Mr. John Curling.—School opened, 4th March 1874. Inspected, May 27, 1875. Registers properly kept. No time-table. Highest number on books, 12; present at inspection, 7 boys, 5 girls. School hours, four generally—two in the morning and two in the afternoon. Schoolroom large, airy, and well lighted, and well supplied with school apparatus. Room clean, but rather untidy.

Reading: 1st Class.—Number in class, 6. Book read, Second Reading Book. Four read well; two fairly. Spelling of this class good. All knew the meaning of the text.

2nd Class.—Number in class, 3. Book, First Reading Book. All read words of one syllable well.

3rd Class.—Number in class, 3. Read lesson on card, "Section II." (easy words of one syllable).

I noticed that the pronunciation of English, both here and at Whakapuaka, was not so good as at some of the other schools in the Middle Island, owing probably to the Natives living on larger reserves, and consequently mixing less with Europeans.

Arithmetic: Five learning to form figures; three, addition; four, multiplication and division.

Writing: Six writing in copybooks; writing fair, and the books kept clean.

Drill: The children went through their exercise very creditably.

Mr. Curling seemed to think that he ought to confine himself to teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. The progress made in English by his pupils, though very satisfactory considering the short time they have been under instruction, would have been still greater had he added geography to the list of subjects taught. The mere knowledge of a string of names is of course of little use, but a good teacher can always make a geography lesson a means of developing the understandings of his pupils, and of exercising them in their knowledge of English.

The children were clean and intelligent, and were evidently carefully taught the few subjects selected by the master.

Arahura School, Province of Westland: Master, Mr. Samuel Fittall.—School opened 5th October, 1874. Inspected, January, 1875. Present at inspection, 8.

Reading: 1st Class.—Number in class, 3. Book, Second Reading Book; all read well.

2nd Class.—Number in class, 2. Book, First Reading Book; both read fairly. Some of these children had attended an English school at Greymouth.

3rd Class.—Number in class, 3. Could read easy words of one syllable.

Writing: Three writing in copybooks, rest on slates.

Arithmetic: Three, multiplication; five learning to form figures.

Geography: Three had a fair knowledge of New Zealand geography.

Being in the neighbourhood I took the opportunity of visiting this school, but as it had only recently been opened the inspection was merely a formal one. Several English children were attending this school, and it is greatly to be desired that in all Native schools, where practicable, English children should be admitted, as by intercourse with them the Maori children are improved in many ways, and learn our language more readily.

General Remarks.

At the close of my first inspection, I am glad to report that most of the teachers employed by the Government are not only competent to fill their posts, but take a real interest in their work. I noticed that the most successful teachers were those who knew nothing of Maori. Few of the schools have been open sufficiently long to be able to show permanent work. In nearly all of them the pupils are but beginners; still the promise for the future is good, and if the children progress in knowledge at the same rate as hitherto, we may hope to see many of them in a few years possessing a thorough knowledge of the English language. But, in order to secure progress, I think that a standard of attainments ought to be fixed, and the same class-books used in all the schools. At present there is no system, every master teaching what he thinks best. One great disadvantage of having no fixed standard is shown in the case of those pupils who have acquired fluency in reading English; they seldom advance beyond the mere mechanical process. Conscious of having overcome great difficulties, both teachers and taught are too apt to rest satisfied with a knowledge of the art of reading, and to neglect its use for practical purposes. In many instances I noticed that children who could read and spell English words were quite unable to write from dictation the simplest sentences.