

the District of Whangarei, undertaken at the special request of the Natives, whose application was at once acceded to by the Hon. Mr. Sheehan as Native Minister. The buildings are near completion, and the schools will open early in the ensuing spring. In nearly every case land sufficient for each establishment has been freely given by the Natives, and in some instances subscriptions have been raised in small amounts towards defraying expenses; but a serious drawback in almost all the schools has been the irregular attendance, which is perhaps more felt in the winter than in the summer months, and over which the parents or the masters apparently have but little control.

Course of Instruction.—The course pursued varies but little, and includes reading, writing, arithmetic, dictation, geography, the use of the globes, recitation, singing; and sometimes dancing and drawing are also taught. As a rule masters find the first stages of pronunciation and accentuation in teaching the English language very difficult and wearisome to accomplish. Some of the scholars never thoroughly acquire it, and this would apply more particularly to those who have entered the schools at riper years.

As to the average roll of attendance, the returns quarterly made and transmitted to head-quarters will supply so much of the details in this respect as will enable the Government to arrive at a fair comparison of the merits of the several schools, and of the benefits they are likely to confer on the pupils.

In addition to the foregoing remarks, one or two suggestions present themselves for consideration: an official inspection, at least once a year, of all the Government schools throughout the district by a competent person; the summer season would probably be the most convenient and suitable time for doing so, as affording a better opportunity in the country districts for meeting a fair average attendance of the scholars than would be found during the winter months.

Under all the circumstances, and notwithstanding many adverse and discouraging aspects, a well-grounded hope prevails that the efforts thus made by the Government for the improvement of the younger members of the Native race will eventually result in leading many of them to become useful citizens, by opening up wider fields of information, accessible chiefly through a knowledge of the English language, which is now being very generally imparted in the schools provided for them at the public expense.

I have, &c.,

H. T. KEMP,
Civil Commissioner.

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 8.

Mr. H. W. BRABANT, R.M., Tauranga, to the SECRETARY for NATIVE SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

Native Office, Tauranga, 9th June, 1879.

I have the honor to make, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, the following report on the Native schools in the Bay of Plenty and Lake Districts. There are at present nine schools in operation, and no change has taken place in the several teachers. The gross average attendance is 196, showing a decrease since last year, which is chiefly owing to two of the schools having been closed. Several of the schools have had additions or repairs made to the buildings during the past year, and I have made every endeavour to supply them with necessary books and appliances. Small prizes were distributed for attendance and progress last Christmas.

1. *Maketu School* was visited on 16th July and 12th December last; I also visited it on 9th June. At the last inspection there were 45 children on the books; but only 12 were in attendance, of whom 5 were Europeans. I examined the children, but from their paucity it was difficult to judge of progress made. The master complains that the children attend very irregularly. The discipline was good, and the children in schools neat and in good order.

2. *Matata School*: Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Creeke.—I was at this school on the 9th July last. This school has had, and continues to have, the best average in proportion to the gross numbers, and to be the best taught in the district. During the last year the schools had to be closed during one quarter, owing to the Native Land Court holding its sittings in the schoolroom.

3. *Te Awahou School*: Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson.—I visited this school on the 27th November, and inspected it on the 21st January last. There were then present 19 children out of 24 on the roll. This school had been then six months in charge of the present teachers, after having been shut when the former one resigned. Discipline was fair. The children, as I thought, had made as much progress as could be expected in the time. The house inhabited by the teacher has been enlarged to enable his large family to dwell in comfort.

4. *Te Wairoa School*—Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Haszard—was visited by me on 30th November and 23rd May last. On the first occasion no proper inspection could be made owing to the alterations which were going on in the building; but on the latter, I examined the 22 children who were present, in reading, spelling, writing from dictation, translating Maori, geography, and arithmetic. They showed considerable progress since my last inspection, and had evidently been carefully taught. Their pronunciation of English, I noted, was particularly good. The discipline was fair; but the children and school hardly as neat as they should have been. The school-building at this place has been enlarged, and the residence now provided for the teacher is spacious and comfortable.

5. *Rotoiti School*: Teacher, Major Wood.—There were 24 children on the roll of this school, but only seven were present on my last visit, on 22nd January. These few showed signs of careful teaching. The discipline was very good. This school, I regret to say, has been badly attended of late, solely owing to there being now but few children of school age in the vicinity.

6. *Whakatane School*: Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart.—I visited this school on 10th July, 1878, on 31st January, and 30th May last. There are 44 children on the roll; but on neither of my visits did I see any children who had made any progress except the teachers' own. The Resident Magistrate of the district informs me that his experience of the school is the same. I find also that only two Native boys had attended with any degree of regularity during the last quarter. I regret that I am obliged to