

connection with the Roman Catholic Mission, in Avarua, and with which the Government has nothing to do; (3) a free public school in Avarua, under the local Government of Rarotonga; (4) a free public school in Arorangi, also under the Rarotonga Government; (5) a free public school at Ngatangia, also under the Rarotonga Government. (Ngatangia is the central settlement of the Takitumu district, and the two names are often used for the district indiscriminately.)

The attendance at the several free public schools was very satisfactory for a short time. On the Avarua roll there were 112, with an average morning attendance of 92, up to the 30th June, 1896. At the Arorangi School the figures were about the same. The Ngatangia (Takitumu) School was opened with an equally good attendance. But all have since fallen off materially, as the reports for 1896-97 (to 30th June), appended hereto, will show. Suggestions for remedy by a meeting of the teachers, and the speech of the Arikis at the opening of the Council, in which suggestions from the British Resident are embodied, are also appended.

In the other islands of the Federation the schools are still entirely in the hands of the London Missionary Society, taught by the resident missionary where one is settled, and by the native teacher in other islands. No provision for separate teachers devoting their whole time and energy to the work is made. In Aitutaki a Schools Act was passed in 1896, but it has not been brought into operation.

FREDERICK J. MOSS, British Resident.

#### RAROTONGA COUNCIL.

Reports of the head-teachers sent to the Clerk of the Government in accordance with No. 10 of the regulations of the 8th November, 1895, under the Public Schools Act of that year. The Avarua and Arorangi Schools were opened in January, 1896. The Takitumu School has only been opened at intervals, as there was no permanent teacher, and for some months none at all.

##### No. 1.—Avarua School. (Report of Public School, Avarua, for Year ending 31st June, 1897.)

During the year I have had charge English has been taught altogether. Reading, writing, spelling, tables, arithmetic, geography, history, and object-lessons have been taught. I have also given them lessons in a simplified Gouin system, and I find the children enjoy them, action being always pleasing to the native children. Every question asked by the children has to be properly expressed in English, and I find the competition is keen in every way. With regard to reading, some read very well and understand it. A knowledge of their own language is a great help to them in their reading. Spelling is gaining favour, also dictation. Geography is a favourite subject, and we have a little every day, as well as regular lessons with the map twice a week. The younger children have lessons in their own language as well as in English. The children who come to school regular show a marked improvement, and it is becoming a pleasure to teach them; their behaviour is also better in every way. But my one cause of complaint is lack of interest on the part of parents with regard to sending their children regularly to school. No children care to find themselves far behind others, and Maori children especially are ashamed of it. The work of teaching in a foreign tongue is difficult enough any way, but it is far harder when there is such a want of interest. A compulsory clause with a fine attached for non-attendance would be a great boon to all concerned, then there might be some hope of these Maoris doing something to raise themselves. As it is, the whole thing is neither pleasant nor helpful to any one.

Attendance.—Daily averages for year from 13th July, 1896, to 17th July, 1897: Number of times roll was marked, 2,299; weekly average for year, 223; quarterly average for year, 55.

Inventory of School-fittings—120 desks; short forms for back row of desks; ink-wells; teacher's table, with drawers and locks; 2 chairs; 3 large blackboards, 1 small one; 3 large easels, 1 small one; 2 boxes chalk; 1 large cupboard, with lock, for keeping books, &c.; 1 ball frame; 1 map of World (Mercator's); 1 map-book; 1 small map of New Zealand; clock; clock-face; 14 reading-sheets; No. I. reading-books; No. II. reading-books; copy-books; blotting-paper; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 standard geographies (1 of each); arithmetic-books and answers to same; 1 bottle of red ink; 2 bottles black ink; 2 boxes steel pens; 1 packet holders for pens; slates; 6 boxes pencils for slates; 1 dozen lead-pencils; natural history picture-sheet; 2 tables' sheets; 6 historical pictures; 4 rolls for marking attendance; E. A. SIEVEWRIGHT, Head-teacher.

##### No. 2.—Arorangi School.

Number of scholars in attendance during the year, 123; number of scholars dismissed during the year, 36. (Died 1; left the district, 7; left to go to Tereora School, 11; over age, 17.) Number belonging to school, 30th June, 1896, 113; number belonging to school, 30th June, 1897, 87. Number who attended during the first quarter, 110; number who did not attend, 3—113; number who were dismissed, 17; membership at close of first quarter, 96. Number who attended during second quarter, 86; number who did not attend, 12—98; number who were dismissed, 7; membership at close of second quarter, 91. Number who attended during third quarter, 96; number who did not attend, 5—101; number dismissed, 14; membership at close of third quarter, 87. Number who attended during fourth quarter, 69; number who did not attend, 18—87; membership at close of year, 87.

1896.—July 13 to Oct. 2	..	55 days' school,	2,977 attendances of 4 hours; of 2 hours,	5,954
Oct. 9 to Dec. 18	..	52	"	5,046
1897.—Jan. 4 to April 2	..	59	"	6,180
April 5 to June 30	..	523	"	1,046

Totals .. .. 183 9,113 18,226

Average quarterly membership, 96½; average quarterly attendance, 90½; average daily attendance (4 hours), 49.8.

From an examination of the above report it will be seen that, while nearly all the children have been in attendance during each quarter, some have been absent an entire quarter or more at a time, and that on an average the children have come to school only about half the time. This is greatly to be deplored, as the children cannot make satisfactory advancement under such conditions. Those who have been reasonably regular in attendance have improved as much as could be expected. As we have but four hours a day (twenty hours a week) in the schoolroom, I believe it is a great mistake that there are not some regulations by which regularity in attendance may be required.

Sincerely believing that the public schools, properly maintained, will prove to be one of the greatest blessings that ever came to the Cook Islands, and trusting that they may continue to receive your earnest thought and unwavering support.

I remain, &c.,

J. D. RICE,

Head-teacher, Arorangi Public School.

MEMO.—An inventory of supplies on hand, and books, &c., sold during the year, is attached to Mr. Rice's report, and laid upon the table of the Council, but not printed.

##### No. 3.—Takitumu School.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, and in reply have great pleasure in enclosing herewith a report of the daily attendance at the public school here, and of which I have charge.

I may mention that the school has been open only for half-time from 26th June to 2nd August. Since the latter date it has been open for the full time. From 5th June to 31st July are Government holidays for the schools, but I took the liberty of keeping the school open during the months named.

MEMO.—In looking over Mr. Wilkie's book I find the attendance-roll is not complete, consequently I cannot send the return for his time as promised. No record at all of attendance during Mr. McClintock's time.

Ngatangia, 26th August, 1897.