

Enclosure in No. 3.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL, North Shore, Auckland.—Inspected 6th June, 1867.

MR. McILHONE is manager as well as teacher in the institution. Mrs. McIlhone acts as matron assisted by one European woman.

There are thirty-four European, five half-caste, and five Native boys; total, forty-four. One Native was absent, having recently left for Opotiki, but expected to return in a fortnight. The European children are maintained by the Provincial Government, the half-caste and Native by the General Government; each Government contributes £10 per annum for each child.

The proceeds of the school estate, which Mr. McIlhone puts down this year at £100, are not applied towards the support of the pupils, but are appropriated by His Lordship the Roman Catholic Bishop to reimburse himself in an advance made in 1863 or 1864 for improvements effected on the school estate. I have no authority for requesting any information from His Lordship on this point.

I can clearly see that the capitation grant, unsupplemented, is insufficient; in fact it does little more than keep the pupils a few degrees removed from starvation point. If the Government desires to see this institution really effective, it must be prepared at once either to increase its grant, or require the direct and immediate appropriation of the revenue of the school estate towards the object for which it was originally intended. The present capitation grant is but at the rate of 6½d. per day, a very limited sum wherewith to clothe, feed, and provide education for a child.

General Condition and Management.

I am fully justified in stating that the institution is better managed than formerly, and that a great improvement must have taken place since Mr. Rolleston inspected it, judging from the account he gave me of it at that time. But as yet it has not reached perfection.

There is a very decided improvement in point of domestic cleanliness, order, and regularity. The food is of better quality. The pupils have a more liberal supply of clothing. As regards sleeping accommodation, there is a visible change for the better; all sleep in the one large dormitory, and in single beds, except in one or two cases where the children are mere infants. The bed clothing, perhaps, is not as clean or yet as ample as it should be, nor are the appliances for personal cleanliness sufficient; but yet on all these points improvement is manifest. The dormitory is very clean and well ventilated. There is no sickness among the children. The cooking is now conducted in a detached building, and so occasions no inconvenience to the boys when in school, as was the case when Mr. Rolleston made his visit. The time table shows that the hours for school, work, and recreation are judiciously alternated. Two of the boys are told off every week to assist in domestic operations.

Proficiency of the Pupils.

Of the nine who came before me for examination, not one had been under instruction for a period in excess of twelve months. Two had only joined the school a fortnight previous to my visit; so that but little proficiency could be expected. Three read English monosyllables; two were fair in simple addition, one failed; two write on paper, one on slate. The remaining are learning the alphabet, and to make figures on slates.

HENRY TAYLOR.
