

I observe that in the 15th clause of the Act provision is made for the issue of certain regulations by the Colonial Secretary as to the proficiency to be required in order to entitle children to a grant from the Government. It seems highly desirable that this provision should be acted upon, and that some authoritative standard and system should be established for the guidance of masters and inspectors. It is probable that in the course of a few years the great desirability of establishing one system of State education for the Colony will be generally felt, and that it will then be found desirable to appoint a commission to deal with this whole subject, including the education of the Natives. In the meanwhile I would earnestly impress on the Government the great waste of labor and money which result from the want of a system in that branch of popular education of which the Colony has already undertaken the responsibility.

As a small instance, I may mention that it is from lack of any recognized standard that in the annexed reports I have preferred using letters of the alphabet to words for denoting the proficiency of different scholars. I did not feel that it would be just either to master or pupils to say that a backwardness, which would be regarded in a European as proof of want of diligence, and on account of which the withdrawal of a grant might be recommended, should be assumed to prove the same in the case of Natives, who, before they can make any advance, have to acquire a knowledge of English—one of the most difficult of languages—and, moreover, to a certain extent, to gain a habit of abstract thought and expression, not to mention the many prejudices—such as that against industrial pursuits—and habits ingrained from babyhood, which have to be overcome before a pupil can in any way realize our European notions of a civilized being.

I would therefore suggest that a graduated standard should be drawn up and issued by the Government, to which reference could be made by Inspectors when framing their reports. I think three gradations might be conveniently made, and that the divisions between these should be marked not according to the children's age, as in the English State-system, but according to length of attendance at school. Supposing a preliminary year were allowed in every case for the acquisition of a smattering of English, the school would thus be divided into four classes. I would then recommend that a scale of amounts to be granted, coinciding with the divisions into classes, be drawn up, the highest amount being given to the first class, and the Inspector alone having the power of raising or degrading children from one class to another. By this means, in addition to the advantages of methodic arrangement, a further stimulus would be given to those responsible for the education of the children in schools aided by the Government to discharge their duties, not in the slovenly perfunctory manner noticed in some cases by Mr. Rolleston, but zealously and to the best of their ability, in order that by the advance of the pupils the grant in aid might be increased.

I would further suggest that a yearly visit from an Inspector is quite insufficient. It is true that it is enough for the words of the Act, but it certainly does not comply with the spirit of it. A formal visit once a year cannot possibly give the Inspector that intimate acquaintance with the condition of every school, and personal knowledge of the teachers, which is necessary to ensure success. The education of Natives is without doubt a special branch, at all events in the earlier stages; and masters necessarily require to be more closely watched than if they were merely giving instruction according to the ordinary routine.

There is one remark made by Sister Marie Joseph in reply to a question from me, to which I feel bound to call the attention of the Government, as opening up a very grave consideration with regard to the education of Maori girls, and the responsibility which attaches to those who undertake to raise the Natives to a civilized condition. Sister Marie Joseph informed me that unless the manager could in some way provide for the girls on leaving school, in the majority of cases they became bad characters, and that in consequence of this the managers usually endeavored to get the girls married from the school. I feel that I should be going beyond my province were I to enlarge upon this subject, but it appears plain that in the event of establishing a Maori school either the Government must shirk a portion of their responsibility with respect to Native education, or else—if they once undertake it—they cannot morally consider that that responsibility is at an end when a girl has been so far educated as at once to quicken her sense of wrong, and to make her desire to live amongst and after the manner of Europeans, but not so far as to give her the strength of principle or dread of public opinion necessary for withstanding temptation when placed beyond control, and in difficulties as to the means of leading the civilized or semi-civilized life for which she has acquired a taste.

In conclusion, I would beg respectfully to state this matter of Maori education is not one which can be dealt with in an off-hand manner, and that a mere inspection and report will have little effect in advancing it. Those who keep the schools must learn to feel that the eye of the Government is constantly upon them, and that there is a systematic arrangement by which their work will be judged, and not by any caprice on the part of individuals, a state of things which can only be brought about by continual attention and care on the part of those at the head of affairs. But unless this care is bestowed I feel sure that in a very short time the Maori education scheme will be numbered with the fossil projects for benefiting the Natives.

I have, &c.,

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Inspector of Native Schools.

Enclosure 1 in No. 4.

REPORT ON NAZARETH INSTITUTION (Roman Catholic) Freeman's Bay.

Visited 19th May, 1868.

THERE are at present ten children in this institution for whom aid is received from the General Government, and of these four are half-castes. The school is under the management of Sister Marie Joseph assisted by another English teacher and by a Native overlooker. The premises were clean and