

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE SCHOOLS.

INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

The INSPECTOR of SCHOOLS to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Napier, 30th June, 1873.

St. Stephen's, Auckland.—The first school visited by me this year was that of St. Stephen's, Auckland. Here I found twenty-eight Native boys, between the ages of seven and sixteen (against eighteen of last year); eighteen of these were Maori, and ten half-castes, besides whom there were ten European boys, who pay 1s. each per week to the institution. The Natives appear to have been gathered from Coromandel, Waikato, Mahurangi, Whangarei, Bay of Islands, East Coast, and Rotorua. The appearance of health, comfort, cleanliness and good order of those children left nothing to be desired. There has been no sickness, nor has a doctor been called in during the year. The reading of the pupils was good, and their pronunciation well attended to; their spelling and writing from dictation also were good, as was the arithmetic of the first class, though that of the lower classes was indifferent. Small progress has yet been attempted in geography. The master appears zealous, able, and on terms of perfect confidence with the pupils, who talked with me and with him with greater freedom in English than I found in any other school. The master and mistress are underpaid as compared with the masters of village schools, who receive after the first year £100 a year (at least), their work and general responsibility extending over four hours daily for five days a week, whilst that of the master of St. Stephen's lasts over the twenty-four hours of every day in the week, and takes in, not only their education, but their food, clothing, lodging, conduct out of school, and everything connected with them. This he brought strongly before me; but as he is engaged and paid by the managers of the institution, out of the capitation grant and other funds supplied to them, I do not feel called upon to offer any recommendation on the subject. The Government grant is supposed to be supplemented by a contribution of £5 per pupil per annum by the parents; but this seems a very precarious source of supply. The bedding also is supposed to be furnished by the parents, and, as a rule, this appeared to be good and sufficient, though in some few cases rather slender. I visited them at their dinner hour. Their food seemed to be excellent, and sufficient in quantity, and the whole management and appearance of the institution reflected great credit on the Rev. Mr. Burrows, the master, and the pupils. I only regretted that such good buildings, large funds, and able management should not be devoted to educational purposes of a higher character than to such as are more readily obtainable in the village schools. The Native schools which formerly existed at the Three Kings, the North Shore, and other localities near Auckland, continuing in a state of collapse, as reported last year, I proceeded from Auckland to the Bay of Islands, Whangaroa, Mongonui, and thence by land (accompanied by Mr. Bertram White, Resident Magistrate, who kindly went with me through his district) to Kaitia and Ahipara.

Ahipara.—This school, which I reported last year as nearly completed and a master nominated, has since been opened and very ably conducted by Mr Josiah Masters. I know of no case in which the results of energy and aptitude for teaching are more evident than in this school. At my visit of last year the numerous children about the kainga were squalid, dirty, and half-naked; since then the schoolhouse has been completed, and I found fifty-four pupils in school, between the ages of seven and eighteen years, of whom forty-eight were Maori, one half-caste, and five Europeans. Their appearance was quite changed: all were clean in person; and excepting in the case of orphans (to whom I have before alluded), were well clothed. There were three pupils absent, and the master anticipated a further addition to his numbers. They seemed to be cheerful, orderly, and respectful, perfectly under control without the use of the rod. Indeed, the master emphatically declares that if he could not manage a school without the aid of a rod he would give up the task altogether; but I am bound to say that his brother (also a successful master) is not of that opinion, and I allude to the subject in the hope that if this report be circulated amongst the schoolmasters, it may be useful as enabling them to compare the experience of others with their own.

The attendance at the Ahipara School has been regular, and their progress good; their reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic, all that could be expected from six months' tuition; their pronunciation is well attended to, and all instruction is given in English. The hours of attendance are four and a half; the pupils healthy; no death has occurred. The Committee are useful, and anxious to assist the master, with whom they seem thoroughly satisfied.