

It will be seen, therefore, that we are in danger of subsidising two different kinds of schools—not one preparatory to, and acting in conjunction with, the other; but both giving the same elementary education, and likely to be antagonistic.

*Pakowhai.*—On the 2nd instant, I visited the school at Pakowhai, which presented a very different appearance to that which I reported last year. There were then 63 pupils in school, out of 65 on the books—there were now but 17, the average for the year being 24. But this falling off proceeds in a great degree from causes which are not to be regretted. One-half of the then pupils are now being taught at their own Kainga (Omahu), whilst a considerable number have moved away to Poverty Bay, where schools have also been established.

The master, however, has had great difficulty in keeping his school together. The unhappy agitation of the Native mind, which sought to make them consider not only the Government but all the Europeans whom they most respected as their fraudulent enemies, has been much against the Pakowhai School, the two leading members of the Committee being those who took the most prominent part before the Commission lately sitting in Napier.

Excepting from the chief Karaitiana, the master does not seem to have met with much support or encouragement. He complains that the books, which are not of the authorised kinds furnished from Auckland or Wellington, but upon the authority of the Committee from Napier, are not quite suitable, and upon those grounds, and also that a candidate who was unsuccessful when he was himself selected for the Pakowhai School has since been appointed to a Native school upon a higher salary, he appears to be disinclined to retain charge of the school. The Education Bill which has lately been passed in this Province will cause a demand for masters for the Provincial schools, and trained masters like Mr. Bissel will not care to retain charge of Native schools, unless they meet with aid and encouragement.

The ages of the 17 present in school were from 6 to 17 years. Their progress, so far as I could compare the 17 with the 63 of last year, seemed scarcely such as I had hoped; their reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic not so good as it would probably have been had there been no disturbance of school routine. Their pronunciation of English was not equal to that of many other schools.

I recommend that the Natives be encouraged to elect a new Committee, which should have time to attend to the school, and give all the help possible to the master; that all promises made to him as to salary, the fencing in of his land, &c., should be promptly carried out; and that the Committee should attend only to Pakowhai School, allowing Omahu to provide its own; also, that a proper selection of books should be supplied through the usual channel.

*Omahu.*—On the 3rd instant, I proceeded to inspect the Omahu school, but found the holidays had commenced the day before—an evidence of the want of system which prevails as regards these schools, for both being under the same Committee, I found one at work, the other in vacation, the masters having been unable to obtain directions on that head from the Committee.

I heard from the master that his greatest number had been 45, his least number 30, and his average 40, of whom 26 are Maori, 6 half-castes, and 6 Europeans, their ages varying from 6 to 18 years. The hours of attendance are 4, viz., from 10 a.m. to 12, and from 1 p.m. to 3. Their health (as at Pakowhai also) had been good. There had been one death, that of a boy of 16, brought on by disease induced by a serious accident.

A serious complication has arisen here which, if not promptly dealt with, may injure, or even break up, the school.

The master states that he is authorised by the Committee to take European boys as boarders in the schoolhouse, in which he lives, and which was built, as I understand, partly with Native funds. The chief Renata Kawhepo, the great encourager of this school, and a man of generous instincts, does not object to this, but demands that Maori boys shall also be taken as boarders. This is objected to by the Europeans, and Renata has been offended, and nearly alienated from the school.

I recommend that this boarding system be immediately put a stop to. Masters should accept their office upon a fixed salary, and not seek to add to it by other means, which I find invariably influence the school unfavorably.

The same complaint of want of interest on the part of the Committee, unsuitable description of books, &c., is made here as at Pakowhai. I recommend here, also, the election of a new Committee, having time and inclination to do the work, with a carefully-selected Chairman, and care to do everything for the master's comfort which he can fairly ask.

It will be seen by the foregoing that I do not look upon the state of the Native Schools in this Province as very satisfactory.

*St. Joseph's, Providence.*—The expense of the 20 pupils at St. Joseph's Providence should educate 200 in village schools; its political effect upon the Natives is inappreciable; nor am I aware that it can be considered as even a charitable expenditure, seeing that the parents are able to pay for the support and education of their own children.

*Meanee.*—The establishment of a similar institution at Meanee will, I consider, greatly augment the expense to the colony, and militate against the usefulness of the village schools.

*Te Aute.*—To judge from the constant allusions to this establishment in the Provincial Press, and the debates in the Provincial Council, it gives intense dissatisfaction to both Europeans and Natives. It is a splendid and munificent provision for the education of the Natives, and they will not be satisfied until they see their intentions thoroughly carried out.

*Pakowhai and Omahu.*—These schools, which started with so much promise, require to be at once attended to. There is no reason why they should not achieve all that was hoped from them, but they must not be neglected.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

A. H. RUSSELL.