

SIR,—

Opotiki, 2nd February, 1874.

I have the honor to submit the following report on Native Schools in the Bay of Plenty and Lake Districts:—

1. *Whakatane School*: Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart.—I inspected this school on December 16th last. The number of scholars present was 45. The school had been opened about five months, but many of the children had been previously taught by the wife of the chief Wepiha Apanui. The first class consisted of 15 scholars. The reading of about half of them (from an elementary book) was good, of the rest indifferent; their writing in copy-books and from dictation, good. In arithmetic, three of them were able to work sums in practice, and appeared to be well grounded in the other rules; the rest acquitted themselves but indifferently. In the lower classes about ten read easy sentences very fairly, and were able to work the simple rules of arithmetic; the rest were mere beginners. The whole school had been taught the outlines of geography from maps. Mrs. Stewart had also taught the children some English songs and glees, which they appeared to take great pleasure in singing. I believe that this might be advantageously extended to other schools, as tending to make the school agreeable to the children themselves. The discipline was not so good in this school as in others which I visited, but this is to be accounted for, I believe, by the fact of the teacher having had a very large school to manage alone (at first there were as many as 100 on the books), Mrs. Stewart having only lately joined him.

2. *Ohiwa School*: Teacher, Mr. Avent.—This school was inspected on December 17th, when there were 13 scholars present. The first class consisted of 4 scholars. Their reading, in "Nelson's Third Book," was very good, the pronunciation only being somewhat defective. Their writing in copy-books and from dictation, their spelling and arithmetic, up to reduction, were also very good. The junior scholars were able to read well in simpler books ("Step by Step"), and had all been taught writing and the first rules of arithmetic. The school not having yet been supplied with maps, they have been taught but little geography. They have been taught singing, of which they appear fond, and in which they succeed better than might be supposed. They have little or no knowledge of colloquial English. The discipline was very good, and altogether this school impressed me very favourably, every scholar appearing to have been carefully taught, and to know thoroughly what he had learnt.

3. *Omarumutu School*: Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Clarke.—This school was inspected on December 19th, when the number of scholars present was 26. It was only opened on August 13th last, and as none of the Whakatohea children had previously had any schooling, and as Mrs. Clarke had but just joined her husband, I scarcely expected to be able to report much progress. In the first class of boys, 12 were present. The reading, in Nelson's "Step by Step," of about half was good; of the rest, indifferent. Their writing, on slate, and arithmetic (first four simple rules) were good. In the first class of girls, 9 were present. The reading of three of them ("Step by Step") was good; of the rest, bad. The junior classes were commencing to learn to read. Some of the scholars had a fair knowledge of the map of New Zealand; and the girls had been taught sewing by Mrs. Clarke. The discipline was fair.

4. *Matata School*: Mr. and Mrs. Creeke.—I inspected this school on January 20th, in company with Te Wikiriwhi, the Native Chairman of the School Committee. The number of children present was 23. The first class comprised 8 pupils; they read but indifferently; their writing in copy-books was fair, and their dictation good. The junior classes read but indifferently. In arithmetic the scholars acquitted themselves better, 2 being in practice, 7 in compound multiplication, and the rest in the simple rules, all being able to work well as far as they had learnt. Their knowledge of geography was slight; of colloquial English, none. The girls had been taught sewing by Mrs. Creeke. The discipline was fair. The teacher complained of having been unable to obtain suitable books, which may account to some extent for the indifferent reading of most of his pupils.

5. *Maketu School*: Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Rudman.—I inspected this school on January 21st, in company with the Rev. Ihaia Ahu, the Chairman of Committee. The number of scholars present was 20.

The first class consisted of the two daughters of the Chairman. I examined them in advanced reading of prose and poetry, writing from dictation, grammar, and arithmetic as far as the rule of three. They appear to have had a really good education, and are able to converse in English on common subjects. I think that the elder of these young women (Kataraina) might be advantageously employed as an assistant teacher at one of the larger village schools.

The second class consisted of 7 children; the reading, from "Phillips' Series, No. 2," and spelling of three were good (especially of one boy, a son of Ihaia's); of the rest, bad. Their writing on slates was good, and the simple arithmetic of some of them fair. The third class of 11 appeared to be mere beginners. Some of the girls had been taught sewing and fancy work by Mrs. Rudman. The discipline was good.

With the exception of the Rev. Ihaia Ahu's children, and two or three more, who, I conclude, owe their advancement to the former master, the pupils in this school show but little progress. This is attributed by the master to the apathy shown by the late School Committee; and he hopes that under the new Committee, with Ihaia as Chairman, the children will attend with regularity, and make good progress.

6. *Rotoiti School*: Teacher, Major Wood.—I proceeded on January 22nd to inspect this school. Te Hareti, one of the School Committee, accompanied me. The number of scholars