

The inclemency of the weather and the uncertainty of being able to return from the island within a reasonable time, prevented me visiting the school. I consequently wrote to the Rev. Mr. Wohlers, requesting him to furnish a full report of its progress from the commencement, for the information of the Government, and forwarded him a series of questions, with a view to elucidate a clear account of the proceedings to enable an impartial opinion to be formed of the result of his efforts to promote the education of the Natives on the island; and I have much pleasure in appending his account (Appendix A) of the present condition of the school, together with a return (Appendix C) showing the progress made in education by the pupils who have attended since the commencement, which entirely dispels any feeling that might otherwise have existed respecting the inefficiency of the school. But even supposing the condition of affairs had been as bad as they wished to represent, if Topi and others had possessed a spark of gratitude towards one who has lived amongst them for the last thirty years, devoting the best years of his life for the sole purpose of promoting their religious and social welfare, they would have been the last to lend themselves to a course which, if effectuated, would lead to his forced retirement.

*Otago Heads.*—The Otago Heads School was formally opened in the month of March, 1869, a Mr. Oldfield, who conducted it for about two months and then resigned, and was succeeded, after a lapse of four months, by Mr. Henry Leask, who continued in this position till the end of 1871, when he was succeeded by the present master, Mr. Walker, on the 1st January, 1872. The school and master's house stand on land set apart by the Natives as a church reserve. Part of the building now used for school purposes was built at the expense of the Natives, and has since been enlarged by the Government, who also contributed £286 for the master's house. The school building is not particularly well adapted for the purpose, the plan having been badly devised; it has the disadvantage also of being stuck up on tall piles on the spur of a hill, which tends to make it excessively cold in the winter. The room is only warmed by a fireplace at one end of it, which is so inconveniently placed as to be almost useless, and should be superseded by a stove, to be placed in the centre of the room to enable the children to have ready access to warm themselves; and, as a means of adding to the warmth, the open space under the building should be boarded up. The master informed me that the discomfort experienced in the school was made an excuse by the parents to keep the children at home on cold wet days—a practice that causes a great waste of time. Some alterations are also required in the house to make it comfortable, viz., the formation of a passage through to the kitchen; the rooms to be re-papered, and the outer walls of the building painted, and a verandah built in front. The kitchen chimney requires pulling down and rebuilding, owing to it being too small to be of any service, besides being given to smoke to such an extent that it cannot be used excepting at great inconvenience; this necessitates all the cooking being done in the sitting-room. The skilling at the back should be carried the whole length of the building, so as to secure the additional advantage of an extra room. A few loads of stones and sand about the house are much wanted, as the place becomes a perfect puddle in wet weather. The piece of land apportioned for the school requires fencing in with a substantial outer fence, for the use of the master, and a smaller plot divided off with a paling fence for a garden. It is very desirable that this work should be put in hand as early as possible, especially the improvements required to be made to the house and school, to promote the comfort of all concerned. In the interior of the school an under shelf is needed to all the desks for the convenience of putting away books &c. in use; and a cupboard is necessary to keep the school requisites in. Two reflecting lamps are also wanted for the night school, and receptacles for ink-wells on the top of the desks.

The school was inspected on the 28th April. The number of pupils on the roll is 25, viz., 19 males and 6 females. Of these, 14 were present on the occasion, and 11 were absent with their parents on a visit to some of the northern settlements. The love of wandering about, inherent in the Maori, militates very much against the progress of the children, and in this instance was the means of preventing 6 of the best scholars being present, much to the annoyance of the master, who naturally would have preferred the school to make as good a display as possible.

The school is conducted as closely as possible on the system of education in use in the province, and the hours of instruction are from 9 a.m. till noon, and from 1 p.m. till 3 p.m. The master has every requisite qualification for his office, and is devoted and indefatigable in his endeavours to improve the minds of his pupils.

The children, considering the short time they have been under the present master, have made remarkable progress in reading, writing, arithmetic, and knowledge of the English language. Almost all are acquainted with the first four rules of arithmetic, and some can do all the compound rules. One of the pupils in the first class had advanced as far as practice, and another to simple proportion.

Notwithstanding that the progress of the Natives in learning the English language is necessarily slow, all the pupils can read and pronounce very fairly, besides having a good knowledge of the etymology and syntax of grammar. Their spelling was also good, the children in the first and second classes especially so. Their knowledge in this branch was not restricted to easy words, but extended to words of several syllables, and to words of the same sound, with their meanings.

The children in the first and second classes displayed a good knowledge of physical geography and English history, their answers being apt and correct, especially those in the first class. Nearly all the pupils presented very creditable specimens of writing, both on slates and