

proceeds become available for distribution amongst the Maoris; and, as long as he holds this opinion and can induce others to think with him, the school will never be warmly supported. He told me that if Mr. Wholers left he would not allow any one else to occupy the school premises. It is entirely owing to Mr. Wholers' personal influence that any children attend, and it is very discouraging to see so few at school, and to hear the covert sneers at the earnest efforts made for their improvement.

It is a curious fact that the Maoris attribute their lessening numbers to their having adopted the creed of their rulers, and to their having availed themselves of the educational advantages presented by them. No wonder, then, that they regard both religious and educational institutions with suspicion.

I found every one in great concern about Topi's wife, who was dangerously ill. I regret to say that she died a few days after my departure. She was an excellent woman, and took much interest in the welfare of the school.

*The Bluff School*: Inspected 23rd November, 1877. Master, Mr. Cooke.—Number on the books, 12. Present at inspection, 8. Registers carefully kept.

1st Class.—Reading, 5th Reading Book: Two; both read exceedingly well. Spelling very good. Meaning of the text thoroughly understood.

2nd Class.—Two reading 4th Book. Both read well.

3rd Class.—Four reading 3rd Book. All read very well.

Arithmetic: Two were doing decimal fractions—one, a girl, remarkably well. Six doing simple rules.

Dictation: Five very good; three fair.

Writing: The copy-books of all showed care, and four were very good.

There was nothing in the appearance of the half-caste children attending this school to distinguish them from the English children. All were clean and tidy in their persons; and, in class work, proved themselves quite equal in ability to the best of the English pupils.

The only complaint Mr. Cooke had to make was that they were rather irregular in their attendance. Considering how the people have improved during the past few years, there is every reason to hope that this fault will soon be remedied.

The capitation grant has not yet been paid to this school, and the parents of the children expressed themselves as very much disappointed at Mr. Commissioner Mackay's promise not being fulfilled. They continue to pay the fees themselves. I was glad to hear as good a report this year, as on my last, of the sobriety and honesty of the half-caste population at the Bluff.

Mr. Cooke is a most zealous and intelligent master, and deserves great credit for the way he has brought his scholars on.

*Riverton School*: Master, Mr. H. Ireland. Inspected November 24th, 1876.—Highest number on roll, 23. Present at inspection, 8 girls, 8 boys: total, 16. Registers carefully kept.

Reading: 1st Class: Number in class, 2. Reading, 5th Royal Reader, fairly well; understood meaning. Spelling, fair.—2nd Class: Number in class, 2. Book, 3rd Royal Reader. Reading, good, but rather wanting in expression. Knew meaning of the text. Spelling good.—3rd Class: Number in class, 6. 2nd Book Royal Reader. Three good, three fair; understood lesson, and could spell fairly.—4th Class: Number in class, 6. Letters and monosyllables.

Dictation: There has been much improvement in this branch. Six did fairly well.

Writing: Thirteen writing in copy-books; all showed improvement since last year; books cleaner and neater.

Arithmetic: Two doing simple proportion, one good, one fair; one, compound multiplication; one, simple division; one, simple multiplication; four, simple addition. Rather backward in arithmetic. Tables: Four knew multiplication table; all want more practice.

Geography: Only four knew anything of the subject. The most proficient was a visitor from Flint's Bush.

Drill: No drill taught, and in consequence bad discipline and slovenly behaviour prevail.

The first thing I remarked on entering the schoolroom was the intense closeness. I felt so faint after being a few minutes there that I had to go outside. I advised the master in future to keep the door leading into the church open. It is hardly a matter for surprise that Mr. Ireland complains of the dullness of his pupils, for in such an atmosphere they cannot fail to be stupified. Mr. Ireland is very earnest and zealous, but if he could import more method into his teaching the results would be more satisfactory.

It is unfortunate for him that his best pupils have been away shearing on every occasion I have visited the school, and it is hard for me under the circumstances to avoid taking too unfavourable a view of the work done. Seeing only the more backward scholars, it is hardly possible to judge fairly of the school: at the same time, there is no surer test of efficiency than the rate of progress in the lower classes. The Native community I was sorry to find thoroughly disorganized. Most of the Natives have left, in consequence of Horomona Pukuheti's infatuated attachment to a dissolute white woman, whom he found one morning lying bruised and helpless on his door-step. He took her in out of charity, and eventually listened to her proposal to make her his wife: in spite of the remonstrances of his friends, European and Maori, he yielded, and since then there has been no peace in the little community. The woman came in during my examination in a state of intoxication, and was with difficulty induced to go away.

I visited the Natives to the south of Riverton, both at Korako Bay and Nga Whakaputaputa, with the view of inducing them to send their children—upwards of twenty in number—to Riverton, but I was not successful. They urged, and with much reason, that Riverton was too far for day scholars to go to, and that they could not afford to board them there. They pleaded strongly for the erection of a school between Korako Bay and Nga Whakaputaputa, and were supported in this by one or two settlers in the neighbourhood.

*Flint's Bush School*.—I did not go to Flint's Bush, because I heard, from the lad I met at Riverton, that so few went there, I did not think it desirable to incur the expense of carriage hire.

*Taieri Bridge School*.—Master, Mr. Morgan. Inspected November 27th, 1876.—Registers carefully kept. On the books, 15. Present, 8.