

annum, the rate paid to the district schools, without requiring the Government to incur the expense of erecting a schoolroom (where it will not be permanently required), I think that it would be conferring a benefit on the Natives at Molyneux if she were engaged. The lady is thoroughly competent, having been a professional teacher.

*Kaiapoi School*.—This school is still closed. But as all traces of infectious disease have passed away, and the Natives are anxious to have the school reopened, I would respectfully recommend its immediate re-opening.

*Wairau Native School*: Master, Captain Curling. Inspected May 16th, 1877.—Registers carefully kept. Highest number on the books, 13. Present at inspection, 3 boys, 8 girls: total, 11.

1st Class: Reading Book, 3rd Royal Reader. Number in class, 5. Four, good; one, fair. Pronunciation very distinct, showing that great pains had been taken by the teacher. Spelling of this class good, every word occurring in the lesson being correctly spelt. Grammar: Fairly acquainted with parts of speech, and elementary rules. Dictation: Three, fair; two, imperfect. Class wants more practice. Arithmetic: Two doing simple fractions fairly; one, simple proportion; two, compound division.

2nd Class: Number in class, 3. Reading: 2nd Royal Reader. All three read fairly. Spelt more correctly than they read. Pronunciation not so distinct as that of 1st class. Arithmetic: Five doing addition, subtraction, multiplication. One good, three fair, one imperfect. Both this class and the one in advance of it did their sums more quickly and correctly than last year.

3rd Class: Number in class, 3. Beginning to read and write.

Writing: Copy-books clean and carefully written. Cyphering-books: Figures well made, and sums neatly entered.

Geography: Five in the 1st class showed a thorough acquaintance with the principal points on the map of the world, and the map of New Zealand.

Tables: Weights and measures. Four good, three fair. Class requires to be exercised oftener in these tables.

Drill: The marching was particularly good. The beneficial effect of drill was very noticeable at this school; for, owing to the attention paid to it, the children were well behaved and promptly obedient, in spite of the systematic efforts made by those opposed to the school to undermine the master's influence over the children.

Sewing: Though Mrs. Curling offers to teach the girls to sew, the parents will not furnish them with materials, so that very little sewing is done in school hours. Mrs. Curling is often employed to cut out clothing, which the Native women run up at home with their sewing machines.

The schoolroom was clean and well furnished, and the yard and approaches cleaner than I have ever noticed them before.

I was sorry to hear that the Natives of this place, especially the Rangitane section, are very much addicted to drink. Even the children are allowed to drink to excess. One intelligent-looking boy, about thirteen years of age, was so unaccountably dull during my examination that I asked the master if he could explain how it was. He said the boy's friends attributed his dullness to the fact that he had been so often drunk since his infancy.

In the master's report for quarter ending March 31st, 1877, he says: "In the matter of drinking and smoking the girls are far worse than the boys. In fact, the boys, whilst they are regularly attending school, are very good indeed in their obedience to my orders against smoking and drinking; but four out of five of the girls, young as they are, will do both whenever there is a chance of my not hearing of it. They sometimes come to school quite stupid from smoking." The parents, as the master says, are entirely to blame in this matter. One man, who complained to me about the punishment his child received on one occasion in school, admitted that he allowed her (a child of nine years of age) to get drunk.

I held an inquiry, lasting several hours, into the charges brought against the master by some of the school committee. The result proved the frivolous nature of the charges, but disclosed a strong feeling of opposition against the school existing in the minds of many of the Natives; and, as I have reason to fear that, when this fact comes to the knowledge of the Government, it may eventually lead to the closing of the school, I wish to show how great an injury would thereby be inflicted on a very deserving section of the Maori population at Wairau, and how undesirable it is to deprive the children of the place of the only means of raising them from the degraded condition into which their parents have sunk.

The opposition to the school arises from the feelings of jealousy entertained by Rangitane against Ngatitōa. The Rangitane were conquered by Ngatitōa, under the leadership of Te Rauparaha, and reduced to slavery. They obtained their freedom when their masters embraced Christianity. In course of time, they discovered that English law placed them on an equality with their former masters, and ever since then they have tried to recover the rights they enjoyed before they were conquered. Whatever Ngatitōa favours they oppose. Te Rore, a very intelligent man, the chief of that portion of Ngatitōa settled at Wairau, is deeply interested in the school; not only sends his own children and induces his friends to do so, but gets children from distant places and maintains them at his own cost, in order to keep up the numbers in attendance. Rangitane, seeing him so bent upon maintaining the school, have set themselves deliberately to reduce the numbers and to injure the credit of it. They have taken away their own children, and try to induce others to do the same. In judging the average attendance at this school the facts I have stated ought to be borne in mind, and consideration shown towards those who are contending under very great difficulties for the maintenance of the school. Not only ought the school to be kept open for those, however few, who really value it, but also for the sake of the children of those who desire to see it closed. It cannot be right to abandon these children altogether to the vicious influence of their degraded parents. The school, even if they never enter it, will be to them a standing protest against the evil conduct they may witness around them; and, if their parents do not quickly reform, I hope to see them compelled by law to send their children to school, and so prevent their sinking into a worse condition than ever their savage forefathers were in.

*Waikawa School*.—A commodious schoolroom and master's house have just been erected at Waikawa, a Native village about three miles from Picton.