

*Night School*: The numbers having dwindled down to one, and that one attending very irregularly, Mr. Trail was obliged to close the night school. There is a cutter mania just now prevailing in the Island, and all the young men and lads are engaged sailing them. The children are all very clean, well-dressed, quiet, and orderly. Mr. Trail complains that the attendance fluctuates very much. In some weeks during the past year the number fell to ten. The figures 10, 20, 10, 18, 20, 13, represented the attendance during six consecutive weeks. The distance at which many of the children live is one cause of this irregularity. The roads are steep, and in many places muddy, and during the rough weather often experienced in these parts they may be excused for non-attendance. But, making every allowance, there is no doubt that the parents are most to blame, and I fear that, as long as they need to be coaxed to send their children to school, the same complaint will continue year by year to be made.

I was rejoiced to find, on my arrival at the Neck, that the schoolroom and master's house were finished and occupied, and that the buildings were so large and well built, as the Maoris at the Bluff had spoken very disparagingly of them.

The schoolroom is 30 feet by 18 feet, with 9 feet studs, built of red-pine and lined throughout, and floored with tongued-and-grooved boards. It is varnished inside, and lighted by four large sash windows, which open; there is a large brick chimney on the south-west side. The room is well-furnished with desks and forms, black-board and easel, and maps, and forms a striking contrast to the dingy little room in which Mr. Trail first began his work.

The dwelling-house stands at a little distance from the schoolroom: it is 28 feet square; the studs in front are 10 feet, and at the back 6 feet. There are five rooms, three of which are lined and papered. The roof is covered with corrugated iron. Both buildings were put up for the small sum of £300 (including architect's fee, £10), and were well though cheaply built. Fortunately one of the contractors took a special interest in the work, as his children attend the school. To lighten the cost, the School Committee promised to carry up the materials from the beach to the site of the buildings, but when the time came to carry out their promise very few came forward, and Walter Joss and Bullen, with Mr. Trail, were left to do all the work. I was glad to find that by Mr. Trail's marriage the Maoris at the Neck had secured another firm friend, Mrs. Trail being the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Wholers, of Ruapuke, and well known to all the people on both islands.

At the Bluff I met with Topi Patuki, the leading chief of Southland, who was then on his way to Riverton, but finding I was going to Stewart's Island he preferred to go with me. As it had been intimated to me that Topi was working against the schools in the South, I was glad of an opportunity of ascertaining exactly what his views were about them. When I had finished my examination on the 27th February, Topi requested me to meet the School Committee, as he wanted to ask me some questions in their presence. Having consented to do so, he proceeded to question me about the site of the school buildings, how it was obtained, and in whom vested, and out of what funds the buildings had been erected. I told him that if he had given me due notice I should have been better prepared to answer him. In the first place, as to the site, it contained ten acres, and had been acquired from Manuel Goomes in exchange for an equal acreage on Rabbit Island, and that the land was a Government reserve for educational purposes. With reference to the second question, the buildings were erected out of a sum of £300, £50 being contributed by the residents at the Neck, £50 by the Presbyterian Synod of Otago, and £200 granted by the General Government; but whether the grant, or any portion of it, was derived from the accumulated interest on the £2,000 reserved out of the Stewart's Island purchase, I could not say. Before separating, the Committee expressed their desire to mark the opening of the new buildings by a tea meeting to be held at three o'clock the following day, and to which they invited me. At the appointed hour the entire population of the Neck gathered round the schoolhouse, most of the adults carrying contributions of food to the feast. On the completion of the internal arrangements, the guests were admitted. The tables were covered with a miscellaneous assortment of eatables, which were all served up after European fashion. The room was too small to admit of every one being seated at once, and the people had to enter in relays. Before they separated Topi rose and expressed the pleasure it gave him to be present on that occasion. He praised the school and the master, and he was followed by many others who did the same, and I hope that he and they will continue to manifest the same good-will towards this and like institutions, for they can only successfully accomplish their work when cordially supported by the Natives themselves.

The same evil agency employed last year to bring about the removal of the master at Waikouaiti was used at the Neck a few months previous to my arrival, for the same object. The wild ravings of a poor insane woman were repeated, as statements of fact, by certain persons who attributed the late fever epidemic to some error on Mr. Trail's part. But I am happy to say that his character was too well established for such baseless rumours to do him any permanent injury. In their present impetuous condition the Maoris are tempted to resort to every device to replenish their straitened resources, and the idea they now have in Southland that the closing of the schools would lead to their getting back their £2,000 endowments is very prejudicial to the interests of Native education in that district.

*Bluff School*: Master, Mr. J. L. Cook.—Visited 3rd March, 1878. Registers carefully kept. Highest number in books: Boys, 3; girls, 6; total, 9.

Having been detained by stress of weather at Stewart's Island, I was unable to visit the Bluff during school hours. But I inspected the registers, and received a promise from Mr. Cook that he would forward to me a statement of the attainments of the several scholars, but this he has forgotten to do. I learned from him that no allowance on account of the half-castes attending his school has ever been received by him; and this was made a matter of complaint to me by the half-castes resident in the place, who are at a loss to know why they have to pay school fees while the children of half-castes in every other part of the South Island receive free education.

*Port Molyneux School*: Mistress, Miss Jones.—Not being aware, when I passed through to Otago in March last, that this school was opened, I did not visit the Port, as it is rather an inaccessible place. Having subsequently ascertained that there was now a school, I wrote to Miss Jones, the teacher, and