

Drill: Sixteen of the elder boys were put through their exercise, and displayed great proficiency in marching, although the steepness and roughness of the ground was much against them.

The discipline of the school was excellent. The children were clean and well-behaved. The schoolroom is small and inconvenient, and at present overcrowded. A suitable schoolroom might be built for £200. The desks supplied since my last visit have proved a great convenience. It would add to the comfort of the children if the playground were levelled; the cost of doing it would not be very much.

The progress made by the senior classes, both in reading and arithmetic, during the past year, was very marked, and surpassed anything I have yet witnessed. The advancement was not confined to a few picked scholars, but extended to entire classes, comprising more than half the number of children in attendance at the school. Mr. Lucas must have bestowed more than ordinary attention upon his pupils to have achieved such a result. A proof of the proficiency attained by his scholars was given at the public examination which took place at Portobello on the 5th of June, 1878, when several of Mr. Lucas's pupils competed with the English children belonging to the school there, and defeated them in most of the subjects they were examined in. Mr. Taiaroa, M.H.R., Rev. E. Ngara Karetai, and most of the Natives resident at Otago Heads, were present throughout the examination. After the distribution of the prizes furnished by the Government to the successful scholars, several speeches were made bearing on the subject of education.

*Taiari Ferry*: Master, Mr. Morgan.—Inspected 28th November, 1878. Registers carefully kept. Highest number on the books, 19. Present at inspection, 17.

Reading: 1st Class: Number in class, 2. Book, 4th Royal Reader. Two good. Pronunciation good. Text understood. Spelling good. Dictation good.—2nd Class: Number in class, 3. Book, 3rd Royal Reader. Reading good. Spelling fair. Dictation fair.—3rd Class: Number in class, 4. Book, Sequel to 2nd Royal Reader. Reading of this class fair. Dictation good.—4th Class: Number in class, 7. Learning letters and monosyllables, and to form strokes.

Arithmetic: Nine knew multiplication tables and weights and measures perfectly, two doing proportion and decimals well, three doing compound multiplication and division well, four doing simple addition and subtraction fairly. Figures well made, and work neatly set down on the slates.

Writing: Nine writing fairly in copybooks, one remarkably well.

Grammar: Seven answered readily easy questions in English grammar.

Geography: All the elder children were well up in the geography of New Zealand, and on the subject generally.

The children seemed bright and intelligent. Mr. Morgan's practice of exercising them daily in mental arithmetic evidently has a beneficial effect upon them. It would be well if all who are engaged in teaching Maori children would bear in mind that mental arithmetic affords the readiest means of reaching their intellects and forcing them to think; and it is an exercise that the children invariably take an interest in. I noticed one child in particular who had made great progress since my last examination. Hitherto it had been very difficult to get her to speak out of a whisper, and a word from the master caused floods of tears to flow; but on this occasion she was all that could be desired in a pupil. But the master told me that while being examined the day before by the District School Inspector, she suddenly went off into one of her old fits of crying, and so failed to pass the standard she was being examined for. Something said by the Inspector roused her Maori blood, and, though she knew the answers well, she would do nothing more. I have recorded this instance of waywardness to show how impossible it would be, without doing a great injustice to the masters, to introduce into Native schools the system now adopted in examination and classification in the English primary schools.

Some of the children were clad in mere rags, and looked quite unfit to associate with respectable children. On representing their destitute condition to the Hon. the Minister for Native Affairs, I am glad to say that they were at once provided with suitable clothing. The schoolroom and master's house are exceedingly uncomfortable; and I found that Mr. Morgan contemplated removing to some other school, partly on this account, partly because he found his salary diminished through allowing Maori children to attend.

Mr. Morgan has always taken a special interest in the Native children, and has successfully resisted the efforts of those European parents and members of the Committee who wished to oust them from his school. His success was in a great measure due to the fact that the Committee found the capitation grant for Native children allowed by the Government a great assistance towards paying the master's salary. Under the new Education Act this inducement no longer existed, as the special grant from the Native Department had ceased. The payment of the master being dependent upon the number of children in his school, Mr. Morgan found, not only that his numbers were fewer than they would otherwise have been, but that, from peculiarity of temperament, the Native children often failed to pass the examination creditably, and that he suffered accordingly. As it was almost certain that Mr. Morgan's successor, in the event of his leaving, would refuse to admit Native scholars, and that, in consequence, there was a likelihood of a heavy expenditure being incurred for school buildings, and the maintenance of another master at Taiari Ferry, and as I found that Mr. Morgan was willing to remain, provided sufficient inducement was held out to him, I laid the matter before the Hon. Mr. Sheehan, who sanctioned an annual capitation allowance of £3 10s. per head on the average attendance of Native children; and I am glad to report that Mr. Morgan agreed to these terms, and has decided to remain at his post.

*Arahura*: Master, Mr. Curtis.—Inspected Thursday, 30th January, 1879. Registers carefully kept. Highest number on the books, 25: of these, 15 are English; Maori—Boys 9, girls 1, total 10.

Mr. Fitall, the late master, closed the school on the 30th November, and it was to have been opened on the 20th January; but, owing to the enlargement of the schoolhouse and the absence of the Maoris, who were attending a Native Land Court at Greymouth, the school had not been reopened at the date of my visit.