

1880.

NEW ZEALAND.

NAVAL TRAINING SCHOOL, KOHIMARAMA :

(REPORT UPON INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT AND WORKING OF).

Laid upon the Table by the Hon. the Minister of Education, with the leave of the House.

SIR,—

Wellington, 26th August, 1880.

I have the honor to submit my report upon an inquiry undertaken in accordance with the terms of your memorandum of the 9th ultimo, directing me to make “a thorough investigation into the whole of the management and working of the Naval Training School” at Kohimarama, and to ascertain the reasons of the “frequent changes of subordinate officers” in that institution.

The correspondence (Marine Department, 80/1,428) put into my hands for my guidance consisted of (1) a letter addressed to the editor of the *Auckland Evening Star* (17th June, 1880), and signed by “H. D. Bezer, late Sub-Manager of the Naval Training School, Kohimarama;” (2) letters from Captain Breton to the schoolmaster and the cook, and from them to him, referring to statements made in Mr. Bezer’s letter; and (3) a letter from Captain Breton, the manager of the school, bringing the case under the notice of the Minister charged with the administration of the Naval Training Schools Act. This correspondence I enclose.

On my arrival in Auckland, on the 13th ultimo, I found that Mr. Bezer had lately left for Whangaroa on his way to Samoa. I therefore determined to begin the inquiry by asking Captain Breton for the names of any persons in Auckland whom he believed to be dissatisfied with the management of the school. He readily afforded me information, which I found to be quite accurate, and abundantly sufficient for my purpose; and he begged me to make the investigation as thorough as possible. My first interview with him took place at the school on the 14th ultimo, and, after a cursory view of the institution, I arranged with him that I would make inquiry of the persons he had named, and that, when I had heard their statements, I would confer with him upon the questions involved in their evidence, and would give some time to personal observation of the working of the school.

Acting on Captain Breton’s advice, I tried to see Mr. Cleverly. I found that he was to leave Auckland for Dunedin on the morning of the 15th July. Four times on the afternoon of the 14th I called at an office where I thought it likely I might meet with him. I also wrote to him, and in consequence he made one or two ineffectual attempts to find me, and, failing in that, he wrote to me, saying that he was under the necessity of leaving Auckland, but that he had left an affidavit for me. I afterwards learned that he had sent a petition last session to the House of Representatives, praying for redress of a grievance, the grievance being alleged wrongful dismissal from the office of sub-manager at the Naval Training School. The affidavit, however, does not relate to the matter of the petition, but is connected with another case.

Another person named by Captain Breton was Mr. W. I. Speight. Mr. Speight informed me that he had written to the “Minister for Customs” last November, complaining of the manner in which Captain Breton had dismissed him from the office of schoolmaster. Mr. Speight also gave me the names of several persons who, as he believed, were willing to give testimony adverse to the present system of management at Kohimarama.

A third person named by Captain Breton appeared likely to be an important witness; but I found him unwilling to make any statement unless I would accept it in confidence, or could issue an authoritative summons. I consider it therefore unnecessary to mention his name. I may, however, say that he is one of the two persons referred to in Captain Tilly’s letter attached to page 13 of the notes of my proceedings on the 31st July, and that that letter shows that both these persons were willing to accept re-engagements in the service of the school, and both agreed in saying “that there was no reason or ground of any unpleasantness as between them and” Captain Breton.

After an interview with Mr. W. I. Speight I came to the conclusion that I ought not to proceed with the inquiry until I could obtain the official papers relating to the cases of Mr. Cleverly and Mr. Speight. I made application for the papers to the Secretary of the Marine Department, and in due course received them. They are enclosed with this report (Marine, 79/2,936 and 79/3,009).

On the 31st ultimo I took the evidence of Mr. and Mrs. Speight, and the first part of Captain Breton’s evidence. On the 3rd instant I went to Kohimarama, arriving about half-past ten in the morning, and remained there until about eleven the next morning. I saw the whole of one day’s work in the school, and in the garden, and in the way of nautical instruction. I was present at prayers, at meals, at the hour of awarding and administering punishment, and at play-time; I went through the

dormitory at night; and I saw for myself what was the condition of all the buildings and offices. Captain Breton showed me his books—cash-book, letter-book, stores-accounts in two forms, registers of admission and discharge, of apprenticeship and licensing, and of absconders, record of offences and punishments, record of orders made on parents for payment, and of payments received by the police, register of letters franked for boys, boys' ledger (containing *inter alia* the accounts of the amusement fund), and several others. He also submitted to my notice the letters he had received from parents, employers, and boys who had left the school. On this occasion I conversed freely and fully with Captain Breton, and took notes of his statements on many points. I also heard the schoolmaster and one of the naval instructors with reference to Mr. Bezer's conduct at the school, and had an interview with all the officers together.

On the 4th instant I received statements from Captain Anderson, Captain P. Jones, and Mr. G. Jones, and from Mr. Newton, the cook, whom I visited in the Auckland Hospital to procure his evidence.

I left Auckland on the 5th instant. Just before leaving I took down a statement made by Mr. Keen, who was once an officer of the school. I also received from Mr. Speight a statement covering ten pages, and containing some new matter, which I could not then stay to consider. The statement included a reference to a transaction in which Captain Breton and the Rev. Dr. Kinder were concerned. On my return to Wellington I wrote to Captain Breton and Dr. Kinder on the subject. From Dr. Kinder I have since received a reply which shows that Mr. Speight's view of Captain Breton's conduct and its consequences is a mistaken one. Dr. Kinder's letter, together with a memorandum from Captain Breton on the same subject, is attached to the notes of my inquiry, which are herewith enclosed.

In the absence of Mr. Bezer, the only statement of his which I had to consider was contained in his letter to the Auckland *Evening Star*. He says that the cook and the schoolmaster are the "ruling features of the school;" that one of these two told him "that just a word from him would put the manager out altogether;" that the manager keeps one of the two there to save him from going to the dogs with drink; that the sub-manager is not allowed to interfere with the schoolmaster, and is virtually under him; and that when he (Mr. Bezer) complained of the scandalous way in which the food was cooked, he was told "that the cook had been there two years—and that was the last of it." Letters (enclosed—Marine 80/1,428) from the cook and schoolmaster emphatically deny the assertion that one of them had said he had power to "put the manager out" of his office. Captain Breton says the cook is the best man who ever filled the post, and that on that account, and because he is an elderly man without friends in the colony, he was allowed to retain his situation after having twice been seen in a state of intoxication; but that, after the second offence, his stay was made conditional on total abstinence from intoxicants, and that the other officers received instructions to report on any repetition of the offence (Notes, July 31, p. 9). Mrs. Speight's evidence (July 31, p. 8) is confirmatory of Captain Breton's as to the value of the cook's services. Captain Breton explains that by the regulations the sub-manager's office is superior to that of the schoolmaster; but that while the schoolmaster is in school or superintending garden operations the manager carefully avoids all appearance of unnecessary interference with him, and expects the sub-manager to do the same (July 31, p. 9). Captain Breton's letter of June 20, 1880 (Marine, 80/1,428), refers to Mr. Bezer's dissatisfaction with the cooking of the food supplied for his own table. Captain Breton says that the objection was a frivolous one, and that Mr. Bezer proposed to cook his own food, and was told that fuel was not allowed for that purpose, but that if he chose to apply to the Government for a supply of fuel his application would be forwarded for consideration. The morning after making the complaint Mr. Bezer resigned.

Mr. Bezer states in his letter that on Sunday the boys are allowed to engage in noisy play and in fighting; that he has seen boys punished for not fighting in a respectable manner; that the manager pays no attention to the work done in the schoolroom; that the boys have only two hours' work a day in the schoolroom (and that under a master whose efficiency is challenged by an insinuation); and that, while there are three boats at the manager's service, the officers, when they have occasion to go to town, must walk, whatever the weather may be. Captain Breton's reply (July 31, pp. 9, 10) is in effect as follows: That no romping or noisy games are permitted on Sunday until church service is ended, but that after that it is better for the boys to engage in cricket and other amusements innocent in themselves than to be kept under a constraint which would render them moody, and lead to conversation on old associations and habits and to the plotting of mischief; that, to avoid incessant tale-telling, boys have been told that it is better to settle such little matters as they often complain of by fighting it out and shaking hands, but that on Sunday and during working hours fighting is prohibited; that he did once punish two boys for not fighting fair, in a case in which one of the combatants had bitten the other's hand, and had had a piece of his nose kicked off in return; that the time for school work is three hours a day for every boy, and is fixed by Order in Council; that the manager obtains sufficient knowledge of the state of the boys, with regard to the work done in school hours, by means of reports from the schoolmaster, and by taking charge of the school work himself whenever the schoolmaster is absent on leave; and that the time at which the use of a boat would be of the greatest service to either of the instructors is just the time when, by the absence of one or more instructors, the work is rendered heavier for those who remain on duty, and when it would therefore be most inconvenient to send a boat out. He himself very rarely has a boat out for his own use, except as required in the discharge of duty.

Mr. Bezer's letter makes no reference to the circumstances of his resignation, and does not contain any matter which calls for consideration separately and apart from the general question of the management of the school.

Mr. Cleverly's case is set forth in his petition presented to the House of Representatives last session. In the petition he states that he was first appointed as schoolmaster at a salary of £10 a month, the engagement being terminable by a week's notice on either side; that afterwards, with the approval of the authorities in Wellington, he was promoted to be sub-manager, with a salary of £150

a year; that Captain Breton, while acknowledging that he had performed his duties efficiently, proposed to dismiss him with a week's notice; that he considered that he could not be dismissed except by the authorities in Wellington, and not by them with less than a month's notice; and that he declined to accept a week's notice, and left at once. The Public Petitions Committee reported that he should have complained, in the first instance, through his superior officer. (Marine, 79/3,009.)

The case having been thus dealt with, I did not consider myself at liberty to investigate it; but I made a note of a brief statement by Captain Breton to the effect that Mr. Cleverly was deficient in the power of control, both over the subordinate officers and over the boys, and that he was negligent of the routine duties of the institution; and, further, that his appointment to the higher position and salary did not affect the condition of his original engagement which rendered him liable to be dismissed at a week's notice.

Mr. W. I. Speight was schoolmaster at the Naval Training School from November, 1874, to January, 1876, when he was dismissed, with sufficient reason. Mrs. Speight instructed the boys in sewing from May, 1875, to October, 1879. Mr. Speight was reappointed as schoolmaster in September, 1879, and resigned in October. On the 3rd of that month Captain Breton called Mr. Speight into his office and told him that he had noticed that the sub-manager's orders were not obeyed. In the conversation that ensued Captain Breton made some reference to the fact that, as his office was separated only by a partition from Mr. Speight's room, much of what was going on in one room could be heard in the other. Mr. Speight's statement is that Captain Breton accused him of listening. Mr. Speight gave a week's notice and left, and his wife also resigned. He wrote to the Minister for Customs in November, setting forth his case, enclosing a letter from the sub-manager exonerating him from the charge of neglect of orders, and suggested that Captain Breton should be dismissed. I enclose Mr. Speight's letter to the Minister, with the correspondence between Mr. Speight and Mr. Cleverly, and the minute written by Captain Breton, in December, when the matter was referred to him (Marine, 79/2,936).

Mr. Speight represented to me that, in offering evidence as to his own case and the state of the school, his object was the good of the school, "as well," he added, "as to have myself reinstated; but under another—an able and efficient—manager, who will be able to treat his officers with the respect that is due to their several ranks." His statement of the case, as shown in my notes (July 31, pp. 1-3), is rather fuller than the account given in his letter to the Minister, and he supports his statement by handing in an affidavit from Mr. Cleverly (attached to p. 2 of notes, July 31). Mr. Cleverly asserts that Mr. Speight never disobeyed his orders, and that Captain Breton did charge Mr. Speight with listening. This affidavit Captain Breton characterizes as altogether untrue, so far as it contradicts the statement made by him last December (Marine, 79/2,936). He reaffirms the minute accuracy of his own statement, and he says that Mr. Cleverly's complaints of Mr. Speight's insubordination were very frequent—complaints made sometimes almost with tears. The evidence is so conflicting that it is very difficult to say what the truth is. Mr. Speight and Mr. Cleverly say that Captain Breton accused Mr. Speight of listening to what was going on in the office. Captain Breton denies the assertion. I think it likely that the words Captain Breton used were spoken with one meaning and heard with another; that he referred to the slenderness of the partition, intending to intimate that he had ready means of knowing that Mr. Speight was in his private apartment at a time when his duty lay with the boys in the schoolroom, and that those who heard him thought that he wished to convey the idea that Mr. Speight was taking advantage of the thinness of the partition to listen to what occurred in the office. It is possible, also, that Mr. Cleverly, while he denies that he had any reason to complain of insubordination on Mr. Speight's part, would not deny that he had spoken to Captain Breton in terms of complaint against Mr. Speight. If this could be assumed, it would, taken with my supposition with regard to the slender partition, dispose of the apparent contradictions between the statements which have come under my notice, but it would of course imply a want of veracity on Mr. Cleverly's part, and therefore I cannot propose it as a definite solution of the difficulty. I can only put Captain Breton's assertion and that of Mr. Cleverly side by side, as I have done, and call attention to the discrepancy between them. Captain Breton says that Mr. Cleverly frequently complained of Mr. Speight's inattention to duty, "almost with tears." Mr. Cleverly says that Mr. Speight always did his duty. It must be remembered that the main question is not whether Mr. Speight always did his duty, because he is not simply seeking reinstatement. He aims at the removal of Captain Breton first, and at his own reappointment after Captain Breton's removal; and the question is whether or not Captain Breton has been guilty, in this case, of arbitrary conduct, of insulting behaviour to a subordinate, and of untruthfulness. I do not think the evidence is such as to justify an affirmative answer to the question.

My instructions refer particularly to the "frequent changes of subordinate officers." The subordinate officers are the sub-manager, the schoolmaster, the two seamen-instructors, the sewing-mistress, and the cook—six in all. The first appointments were made in November, 1874, and the total number of appointments from that date up to the time of this inquiry is 82. Ten of the appointments, however, were by way of promotion from one office to another, or of the reverse process, so that the number of appointments to the service of the institution is 72. The number of persons appointed is 68, one having joined the service three several times, and two having been each appointed twice. Deducting from 72 (the number of appointments made) the number of officers still in the service (6), the number of resignations and dismissals is seen to be 66; and, as the institution has been in existence 68 months, it follows that on an average one officer resigns or is dismissed in each month, or that the average period of an officer's service is six months. Mrs. Speight was four years and a half in the service; the present cook served one year and ten months under his first engagement; Mr. R. Watt remained about a year and nine months in the school, first as seaman-instructor, and afterwards as schoolmaster; Mr. Speight's first term of service was fourteen months; and Mr. R. Thompson's service under his first appointment extended to thirteen months. No other officer has ever remained a full year. There are fifty cases in which the service did not extend to six months; and in twenty-four of these cases it was less than one month. (Nominal return attached to Notes, July 31.)

The office of sub-manager was instituted less than a year ago. It has been filled by five different persons, and the fifth was about to leave at the time of my visit. Mr. Cleverly (to whose case I have already referred) held the office about two months; the next sub-manager resigned in less than three months, the manager having declined to punish a boy as the sub-manager desired; the next remained eighteen days only, and was dismissed, being, according to Captain Breton's report, "entirely unfit and grossly impertinent;" then came Mr. Bezer for a period of three months, followed by another, who is just leaving after a few weeks' service.

There have been fourteen appointments to the office of schoolmaster. Four of the schoolmasters have been discharged on the ground that they were unfit for the post, and one for drunkenness; one was made seaman-instructor, being found unfit for the office of schoolmaster; one was promoted to be sub-manager; one was dismissed because a seaman was preferred to a landsman; one resigned for reasons connected with his family circumstances; one because the manager complained of the way in which he did his work; one because the manager found fault with him for speaking to his superior officer with his hands in his pockets; one because he understood that the manager accused him of listening; and one without assigning a reason.

Of the other officers, ten are entered as dismissed for incompetency; four for impertinence; ten for various offences, as, insubordination, negligence, teaching boys to deceive, dirty habits; nine resigned without assigning reasons; others to go to sea or to business; others through illness, and for various reasons.

It is very certain that such frequent changes must be detrimental to the school. Great waste appears to be involved in a succession of probationary appointments, which result only in proving the unfitness of the persons employed; and further waste arises from the loss of competent servants when they have been long enough in the institution to understand their work. The good influences which would flow from pleasant relations established between the boys and suitable instructors, who had their respect and confidence, do not come into play while the instructors are coming and going at the rate which prevails at Kohimarama. Personal influences are scarcely felt in such circumstances; each instructor is part of a machine, and the mechanical and routine element in the school preponderates over the personal.

The tendency of Mr. Speight's statement made to me in the course of this inquiry is to throw all the blame for the frequency of these changes upon Captain Breton, and to represent that he is so arbitrary that engagements dependent on his will cannot long endure, and so overbearing that men of independent spirit are driven to resign. The evidence I have been able to collect does not substantiate this view of the case. Captain Breton is evidently a rigid disciplinarian, and will not tolerate any act of disobedience to orders or of disrespectful conduct towards a superior officer; and it may be that in this respect he demands more than he can always get from his officers, and is not prone to make concessions; that he is (as several gentlemen who spoke to me very highly of him described him) unbending; but strict discipline is one of the most important requisites in such an institution. I am disposed to attach more importance to another view of the case, which is, that perhaps there is not sufficient care exercised in making appointments. Captain Breton describes many of the officers who have remained only a short time with him as "unfit for the position," "quite unfit," "utterly unfit." Still, it is possible that in every case he appointed the most eligible, or the least objectionable, of the candidates. If so, it is necessary to inquire why eligible candidates do not offer, and to discuss the reasons. One reason may be that the area of selection is narrowed by the fact that it is desirable to appoint men who understand nautical affairs. In this connection I may remark that seafaring men are often of a roving disposition, and that they are not as likely to remain long in one place as most other men. Another reason may be that there are no quarters at Kohimarama suitable for men with families. And here, again, comes in an occasion of frequent change, because a single man can so easily pack up his belongings and go. A third reason may perhaps be found in the uncertainty of tenure. An engagement terminable by a week's notice is not attractive to the best class from which officers might be drawn. Under "The Education Act, 1877," a schoolmaster, unless guilty of gross misconduct, cannot be dismissed without three months' notice. If appointments and dismissals were made more formal—if, for example, the power of appointment and dismissal were vested in the Minister, and exercised upon the receipt of a report from the manager, and if three months' notice of dismissal were made necessary—it might be easier to obtain good men. I am afraid that another reason is that the salaries are low—sub-manager, £150, with quarters and board; schoolmaster, £120, with quarters and board; instructors, £7 a month, with quarters and board; cook, 30s. a week, with quarters and board; sewing-mistress (and mender), £40, with quarters and board. It should, I think, be a rule that the schoolmaster should be a certificated teacher under "The Education Act, 1877." In my judgment it is more important that he should have a certificate than that he should have a knowledge of the sea. In the case of this officer the difficulty of selection is increased by requiring him to superintend the gardening operations.

The school site is, in most respects, an admirable one, the principal objection being its close proximity to a seaport town. This affords facilities to absconders, and moreover brings the boys, who often have to take a boat to Auckland, into too frequent contact with sailors and loungers on the wharves. Captain Breton informs me that he regards these visits to Auckland as a necessary evil, to be kept within the narrowest possible limits. These visits would be less frequent if the manager had a horse and cart, so that he could drive to Auckland. He tells me that the purchase of a horse, cart, plough, and harrow would be the means of effecting a saving, and would afford improved facility for teaching farm work, in which he is competent to give instruction. At present, horse, plough, and harrow are occasionally hired.

The school-buildings are, on the whole, well adapted to their purpose. The schoolroom and dormitory are, practically, one long room, divided by a partition, which does not reach to the ceiling; and I noticed that in the morning, when the boys assembled in the schoolroom for prayers, the air was not very pure. The impurity was due largely to the fact that there is no closet accessible to the boys after the dormitory is locked for the night, and that buckets are placed for their use, which in the

morning are very offensive. The manager wishes to have a closet made outside, connected with the dormitory by a corridor, and I strongly recommend this proposal to your consideration. I also recommend that a play-shed be erected on the open space between the wooden buildings and the kitchen. The stone wall of the enclosure would form one side of the shed, which should be without a floor. At present the play-hours in the evenings and on wet days are spent in the schoolroom, where every noise is an annoyance to the officers in their quarters, and where it is impossible for studious boys to read in peace. I am satisfied that, if there were a shed in which the boys could be at liberty to romp, and where they could exercise themselves in gymnastics, there would be a considerable diminution in the number of petty offences, and, consequently, in the number of punishments. The schoolroom would then be a place of refuge for those boys who take delight in reading. The play-shed and the closet could be built for about £77. A few pounds more would suffice to provide gymnastic apparatus. The sewing-mistress has no fireplace in her private apartment: I think it is only reasonable to recommend the outlay of a few pounds to provide her with a very necessary comfort.

With regard to Captain Breton himself, I wish to say that all I saw of him and of his work produced on my mind an impression thoroughly agreeing with the testimony borne to his character and services by several gentlemen who have had much longer acquaintance with him than I have, and who speak of him as a strictly conscientious and thoroughly honourable man, scrupulous, precise, and zealous in the performance of his duty.

The daily routine of the school was followed in my presence in such a way as to satisfy me that punctuality, order, method, and strict discipline are habitual there.

The food is of the best quality, sufficient in quantity, and well cooked. The clothing is all according to rules, and the rules in this respect are all that could be desired. The industrial training, in addition to instruction in seaman's work, includes the making of all the clothes that the boys wear, gardening, haymaking, milking, and so much of farm work as is involved in raising a crop of potatoes.

Of the nautical instruction I am not qualified to speak. At present it is very much limited by the want of a vessel, the schooner which has been built for the use of the school being in the hands of the builders, with whom there is some dispute, so that the practical work is confined to the use of the boats. The boys receive regular instruction in the names and uses of sails, ropes, &c., illustrated by a model ship, and they are taught splicing, the making of knots, &c.

The arrangements for instruction in the elements of an ordinary education are not satisfactory. The time allowed to each watch is two hours a day, and they have three-quarters of an hour's work together in the evening. The evening work is carried on without slates and school-books, and consists of oral instruction or the reading of some book. I do not think that two hours is sufficient for the regular school work; but it is difficult to see how more time could be given to it consistently with the keeping-up of nautical instruction and gardening. I have two suggestions to make for utilizing the two hours to better advantage. First, although the present master is painstaking and attentive, he has not the technical skill which would render it possible to make the best use of the short school time; and it is desirable to substitute in his place a trained schoolmaster, or a certificated master who has proved himself thoroughly competent. In the second place, instead of attending school by watches, the most forward boys of the port watch might attend school at the same time as the most forward boys of the starboard watch, and all the backward boys might in the same way attend together, so as to secure economical classification for school purposes. As things are now, many boys must go out into the world unable to read with comfort or to write a decent letter. None of the boys now in the school are sufficiently advanced to receive instruction in navigation. Those who leave understand that, if at a future time they require such instruction, they may return to the school and receive it from Captain Breton.

The defaulters' book, which contains a record of all offences and punishments, shows that punishment is very frequent. Looking over the record for the month of July, I found, I think, only one boy who had been not once punished, and several boys had been up for punishment on more than half the mornings of the month. I am afraid that such frequent punishment tends to the increase of offences, that familiarity with the cane breeds contempt of it in many cases, and that some boys who dread punishment have so little hope of escaping it, that they become reckless. It is not inflicted in anger, but in a calm, judicial spirit, at a set time every morning just after prayers. The manager has found that if the right of administering punishment is granted to the officers it is not always judiciously used. He therefore reserves the right to himself, and receives the reports of the officers every morning; and he cannot very well decline to punish a boy who has been reported, unless there is clear evidence of some mistake or serious want of judgment on the part of the officer. I spoke to the officers on this subject, and begged them not to report mere childish offences until, by frequent repetition or by some circumstance attending them, they assumed the character of serious disobedience or insubordination. The officers suggested to me that encouragement to good conduct might be afforded by giving some premium to any boy whose name is not entered at all in the defaulters' book for a set term—say, of one month. But Captain Breton says he has tried encouragement in many ways with very little success, while at the same time he has proved that corporal punishment has a very slight deterrent effect. He is of opinion that the character of the boys as a whole has been injuriously affected by the presence of a few who ought to have been sent to prison, or at least to a reformatory, and that while a practically criminal element is present in the school it is difficult to rule, whether with the aid of few punishments or many. The "black list," which involves an extra share of dirty work and a loss of play-time, appears to be dreaded more than the cane. The cells are only used in extreme cases. The "cat" is not in use. In some cases the whole school has been punished, as, by the stopping of the allowance of butter, sugar, and treacle, and by the closing of the library for a time. It is very satisfactory to know that the boys regard the closing of the library as a punishment; but it appears to me that that very fact shows that such a punishment involves the withdrawal of a very efficacious humanizing influence, and I should fear that any punishment extending to the school as a whole might lead to plotting and to wholesale desertion.

Desertion is not of rare occurrence. Its value as a symptom by which the state of feeling in the school may be estimated is very much reduced by the fact that the situation affords considerable facilities to escape.

The devotion of some hours of the Sunday to sports is not in my judgment calculated to bring the habits and views of the boys into accord with those of the respectable part of a British community; and on that ground, apart from any religious considerations, I think it is to be deprecated. The difficulty of keeping the boys out of mischief on Sunday ought, I think, to be met in some other way.

The destination and career of the boys who have been discharged are shown in a return furnished by Captain Breton. Mr. Speight, who has an intimate knowledge of the boys, and who encourages them to visit at his house, where Mrs. Speight makes them welcome and exercises a very good influence over them, has compiled a summary statement, the accuracy of which I have no reason to doubt. He shows that of the number who have passed out of the institution (150) 1 died, 2 were expelled, 4 committed to gaol, 55 were discharged when their time had expired, or were sent home, 4 absconded and were not retaken, and 94 were apprenticed—65 to the sea and 29 on land. Of those who were apprenticed one-third have deserted or absconded—22 from service at sea, and 10 from service on land. He regards this as evidence of the failure of the institution. Considering the vagrant habits of the boys, and the presence of a criminal element among them, I cannot say that I agree with him.

Mr. Speight's evidence and written statements (which I enclose) refer to many minor points of interest, and most of these are noticed in Captain Breton's statements, of which I submit the notes. I am unwilling to encumber this report—already longer than I could have wished—by discussing these points, and I must satisfy myself by asking you to be so good as to look over the papers.

The officers asked me to direct your attention to a request which they lately preferred, that they might be supplied with a suit of uniform once a year. I think that it would be better to grant them a small addition to their salary.

I strongly recommend that the section (6) of "The Naval Training Schools Act, 1874," which provides for the appointment of an Inspector, or Inspectors, be brought into operation, if it were only as a protection against ill rumours; and that the senior Inspector of Schools in the educational district of Auckland be the Inspector of the common-school work in the institution at Kohimarama.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

WM. JAS. HABENS.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBUXY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1880.

Price 6d.]