

3. *Report by the Secretary for Education.*

SIR,—

Department of Education, Wellington, 29th October, 1880.

I visited Kohimarama Naval Training School on the morning of Wednesday, the 6th instant, and remained there until the afternoon of the next day, or about twenty-eight hours. I again visited the school on Monday the 18th, and spent several hours with the Manager in coming to an agreement on a number of matters which had been fully discussed by us at my former visit.

During my first visit I made myself acquainted with one day's work as regards day-school, sewing-room, nautical instruction, cooking, meals, play and recreation, evening and morning prayers, going to bed, &c. I inspected the grounds, buildings, the schooner, and the Manager's books. I had long conversations with the Manager on a variety of subjects connected with the school. I talked with the officials, and noted how they went about their work. I went among the boys when at play, and watched their demeanour, and I was thus able to form an opinion generally as to the state of matters at the school. I found that there had been no Sub-Manager for a week or two, that a third seaman-instructor had been engaged to make up to some extent for the want of his services, and that Mr. Thompson, the schoolmaster, was discharging the more important of the Sub-Manager's duties. I asked the Manager to continue these arrangements, and to refrain from appointing another Sub-Manager until I should have an opportunity of submitting to you a proposal for a re-organization of the staff.

The new schooner "*Kohimarama*" is now in the possession of the school, and a number of the boys have been receiving instruction on board. The services performed by the schooner and the Customs launch now render all but unnecessary the taking of the boat and crew (of boys) to Auckland. I append a note of requirements to render the schooner thoroughly fit for the work for which she is intended.

The Manager informed me that he had noticed a decided improvement in the conduct of the boys generally, and of some of the officials, since Mr. Habens's visit, and he attributed this to that gentleman's intercourse with them, and the good advice he had tendered to them. I had reason to conclude, however, that the officers, or some of them, had to some extent failed to make on all occasions the very important distinction pointed out by Mr. Habens between trifling offences, often arising from mere boyish thoughtlessness, which might very well be overlooked or dealt with (if necessary) by the official himself, and those more aggravated forms of vice, disobedience, or insubordination, which ought to be reported to the Manager. In a short address which I delivered to the officers, when by themselves, I endeavoured to impress upon them the great necessity for the exercise of their own judgment in the making of this very important distinction. I tried also to impress upon them by argument and illustration the necessity of their ever keeping in mind the wholesome maxim: "First be yourselves all you would have your boys to be." From what reached my own ears when there, I deemed it necessary also to advise the officers to avoid the scolding and sometimes bullying tone of voice, in the issuing of directions to the boys, into which many people in authority (often unconsciously) fall.

Mr. Habens's report* and the copious notes already submitted to you by him leave me little more to do than to report as to recommendations already made by that officer. I refer to these in the order of their importance:—

The Appointment of a Certificated Schoolmaster, and the better Classification of the Boys for School Instruction.—On my first communicating these proposals to the Manager he seemed to have difficulty in agreeing to them; and it was not until my second visit—after he had fully considered the arguments I had adduced in support of the proposed changes—that he was able to assure me that he saw his way more clearly, and that he would endeavour loyally to give effect to your directions in this matter. It is unnecessary to mention the objections raised by the Manager. The chief difficulty apprehended by him was the impossibility of defining, with sufficient clearness, the relationship of the Manager and the schoolmaster to the school and to each other with reference to control and discipline. In the draft regulations appended to this report I have endeavoured to define the position and duties of the schoolmaster so as to leave the least possible room for any difficulty. There is some force in the Manager's objection to the proposed change in the classification of the boys for school attendance, more especially now that a number of them must be absent for some days at a time on board the schooner on a cruise, but Mr. Habens's reasons for the change of classification are so strong that it ought undoubtedly to be made, even though attended by some drawbacks as regards other arrangements.

Re-organization of the Staff.—The question of the re-organization of the staff may well be considered in connection with the revision of the school arrangements. There is at present no Sub-Manager. Mr. Thompson, the schoolmaster, has so acquitted himself as to gain the confidence of the Manager; and, to all appearance, he is a man whose services ought to be permanently retained for the institution. With the Manager's concurrence, I submit the following recommendations:—That the title of Sub-Manager be abolished; that Mr. Thompson be appointed chief seaman-instructor, at his present salary of £120 a year; that he fulfil the duties formerly performed by the Sub-Manager, the most important of which is the taking charge of the institution in the Manager's absence; that he be granted the use of the quarters (a room and a kitchen) formerly occupied by the Sub-Manager, for himself, wife, and infant; and that, to avoid any difficulty as to food and cooking, he do not receive rations, fuel, or light from the school stores, but be paid a sum at the rate of £20 a year by way of commutation.

I agree with Mr. Habens and the Manager, that a chief cause of the frequent change of officers, and of the difficulty of keeping good ones, has arisen from the inadequacy of the salaries, and the want of quarters for married men. The Manager assures me that, for £8 instead of £7 a month, a better class of men is likely to be got for the post of seaman instructor. But, assuming the impossibility of obtaining an increase of salary in any case, at the present time, I submit the following scheme of re-adjustment of staff and salaries:—

* Appendix to Journals of the House of Representatives, 1880, H.—1G.