

*Meeting of Commissioners appointed to enquire into the Industrial Schools named in the letter from the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer, dated 9th December, 1857.*

School House, Otaki, 8th January, 1858.

PRESENT: William Fitzherbert, Esquire, Chairman, Charles Clifford, James May, and Henry St. Hill, Esquires.

HONARE TARATOA, after explanation, through the interpretation of Mr. W. Buller, of the object of the Commission, states for the information of the Commissioners:—Is not aware of any Grant of Land for the maintenance of the Schools.

Is the only Teacher engaged at present in the School.

Teaches English and the Native language, reading, writing, and arithmetic, conveyed in both those languages. There are seven boys and six girls, who are boarders in the establishment. These are regular scholars, amongst these two boys and three girls are Half Castes. There are some day scholars who attend the school, but their attendance is very irregular, and does not consider himself responsible for their attendance. (a)

Teaches these day scholars singing and Geography—and in doing so, endeavours to convey to them a knowledge of English. Does not give them the same English lessons as he does the boarders. Has been a teacher in the school for about five years. Five years and two months. Has been by himself for the last twelve months. Previous to that he was under Teacher. Mr. Clark was the Teacher when he first came to the school, then Mr. Wadsworth, then Mr. Skeet, and then Mr. Baker.

The number of scholars has greatly diminished since he first came to the school.

There were about 90 scholars when he first came to the school. Thinks it has been the children's own fault that they have diminished in number. When a child has been chastised he has kept away from the school, and the parents have lent themselves to his keeping away from the school. Does not know of any other cause than that he has given for the falling off of the number. The English teachers were severe in their chastisement at the time they had the management of the school. Has not himself found it necessary to chastise them so much. Since he has had charge, the numbers have neither increased nor diminished.

Teaches both sexes together. Their ages may range from 8 to 15 years, but is not certain of this. He never heard of any remonstrance made as to the severity of the English teachers. The boys are taught out-door employment: teaches them to put up fences, to make their clothes, to plant potatoes, and to dig the soil. The pupils rise at half-past 5 o'clock generally. They attend prayers at 6 o'clock; after prayers they have half an hour's instruction. They then have their breakfast. At school from 9 to 11. After that they are employed at out-door labor to 1 o'clock. They have an hour for dinner. After dinner they are again employed out of doors, in the winter to about 5 o'clock, in the summer to about 7 o'clock. They have not been taught to plough, but they do a little carting. The children pay no fees. Receives a salary of £30 a year with board. His whole time is devoted to the School. The boys are boarded at the School, the girls at Mr. Hadfield's. Lives with his wife with the boys. Is responsible for their discipline. Is attentive to that, and sees that the boys have plates, knives and forks at their meals, and that they attend to cleanliness of their persons.

(Witness dictated a few words in English which he wrote down as a specimen of his writing). The boys are not taught any Mechanical Trade. Each child obtains Mr. Hadfield's consent for his admission into the School.

TAMIHANA RAUPARAHA, having had explained to him the object of the Commission, and especially as to appreciation by the Natives of the Institution at Otaki, states: Is aware that there are Grants of Land at Otaki for the maintenance of the Schools. The land was given by himself and other Natives at Otaki. Thinks as many as 7 or 800 acres. Understands that sums of money have been given by the Government towards the support of these Schools. When he was in England a few years back he collected £389 18s. 11½d. for the Otaki School, which he handed over to Archdeacon Hadfield. Explained to the subscribers in England his object in seeking their assistance, namely, to support the Native Schools at Otaki.

The Rev. Mr. Taylor, of Wanganui, and the Rev. S. Williams, were present when he handed over the order for this money. He told Archdeacon Hadfield that he wanted to have a good School at Otaki, that there should be a really good English master to take charge of the School. This was in the year 1853. Thinks that if there was a really good English master the School would be more flourishing than it is at present, particularly if not interfered with by any person. Cannot suggest any other matter that might improve the School. The master is the main thing. Thinks Archdeacon Hadfield too severe with the children. Mr. Williams was not so much so. Thinks the falling off in the number of scholars has arisen more from the severity than from the chastisement of the masters. Thinks the parents of the children are quite alive to the education of their children. There might be about 100 scholars, male and female, who would attend the school if it were better managed.

(a) Some of these questions were put in English, to test his qualifications, the others in Maori.