

FURTHER REPORT ON SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCE OF AUCKLAND.

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SIR,—

In compliance with the terms of your letters of June 23, 1857, (Nos. 498 and 502) appointing me to inspect the Native Schools in the Province of Auckland, I have the honour to report as follows:—

I have visited St. Mary's and St. Anne's Schools, in conjunction with Dr. Lee and Lieut. Colonel Russell; the school at the Three Kings, with Colonel Russell; Kohanga, Taupiri, Otawhao, and St. Stephen's, alone,—the four last mentioned schools having been previously inspected by Colonel Russell.

It is unnecessary, in this report, to repeat information which has been already conveyed to you, so minutely, by my co-adjutor, Colonel Russell. It suffices to observe that in regard to St. Mary's, St. Anne's, and the Three Kings, we were agreed on every point; that in regard to the schools which we visited separately, I find upon comparison that I have given rather more good marks to the pupils than Colonel Russell has given. But this trifling difference may be accounted for by improvement during the time (several months) which elapsed between our respective visits.

I have to express general satisfaction with the progress of the pupils, all of whom, excepting beginners, were separately examined by me.

At St. Mary's and St. Anne's, the systematic regularity with which the establishment is conducted, and the extreme precision apparent in details of management, is remarkable.

At the Three Kings, the perfect discipline to which the pupils had been subjected was equally apparent. It is much to be regretted that a master so capable as Mr. Reid has shewn himself should, through considerations as I understand of health, have quitted that establishment.

Having been directed by you not to examine the pupils at any school in religious or theological subjects, unless at the express request of the manager, such examination took place only at Taupiri and at St. Stephen's, where the request was formally made. At those two schools I carefully tested the acquaintance of the pupils with the Scriptures, putting of course fair questions only, but still such as could not well be answered by rote, without thoughtfulness and comprehension of the subject; and am gratified in being able to state that at Taupiri the pupils very far surpassed my expectations. At St. Stephen's the pupils were not so far advanced. This however, I attribute to their education having been commenced, for the most part, at a later period of life, and also perhaps to their less perfect knowledge of the English language.

The importance of commencing the education of Natives at a very early age strongly impressed itself upon me, throughout the whole course of the several examinations; the Native intellect becoming comparatively unimpressionable at an earlier period than I had previously supposed.

At St. Stephen's I was particularly requested to examine the school accounts, the manager, Mr. Kissling, appearing desirous that I should make mention in my report of their having been laid before me. Without having examined them so closely as to perform the duties of an auditor, which I considered to be beyond my Province, I have to state that they appeared to me quite satisfactory; as they did, indeed, wherever else I went through them.

I now proceed to offer a few general observations on certain points which appear to need consideration by the Government.

It is not without difficulty that the Natives have hitherto been induced to avail themselves of the advantages offered by the schools. Scholars, generally speaking, do not present themselves for tuition, but have to be sought for by the managers of the schools. For this reason, schools in the vicinity of Auckland are comparatively inefficient for the work of civilisation. It is becoming more and more evident that the schools must be taken to the Natives, in their own districts, instead of endeavouring to bring the Natives to the schools. Establishments near to Auckland may be useful as normal or training schools for teachers; and, in regard to the Church of England, as affording the best means of efficiently preparing Natives for ordination; but the difficulty of obtaining pupils, and the increased expense of maintaining those establishments, render them comparatively ineffective for the education of children. On the question of increased expense, I refer you to Mr. Kissling's "Report of St. Stephen's School for the year ending March 31st, 1857," in which it is stated that