

The greatest number of pupils on the books since the school opened is 34, and the least number is 9. The average daily attendance for the year ended 30th June, 1873, was 19, viz., 12 males and 7 females. The amount of payment hitherto has been at the rate of £4 per annum for each average pupil in attendance, of which the Government contributed three-fourths, and the parents one-fourth. This system has been altered since the 1st January last, and the full amount is now paid by the Government. The present arrangement is far more satisfactory for the masters, as they had considerable difficulty under the former system in collecting the proportion payable by the parents, and it is only just, all things considered, that they should be relieved of the annoyance; for, as a rule the disagreements and difficulties to be encountered in connection with the process of teaching Native children is quite sufficient to contend with, without being continually perplexed about the monetary part. The imposition of a fee might have a wholesome effect (although experience goes to prove to the contrary) in giving the parents more pride in educating their children; but in cases where it is resorted to, I would strongly recommend that the Government should undertake the collection of it. In any case the system need not be reverted to in the South, as the schools in the neighbourhood of Foveaux Strait possess the advantage of a fund accruing from the endowment of 2,000 acres set apart in terms of the Stewart's Island purchase for educational purposes. The land has been let for 21 years, from the 1st July, 1874, at a rental of £100 per annum, and the sum of £425, collected from the tenant (Mr Kingswell) for the occupation of the land to the 30th ultimo, under the terms of payment formerly arranged, of which, and other circumstances concerning the disposition of the land, my letter of the 2nd April last will have fully informed you. With regard to the other schools now in operation, or which may ultimately be brought into operation in the southern provinces, the Natives look to the fulfilment of the promises formerly made by the Government concerning schools, as a means for providing for the education of their children.

The general health of the pupils attending the Riverton School is reported to be good, only five deaths having occurred amongst them during a period of four years, and those were caused chiefly by an epidemic that prevailed at the settlement towards the end of last year.

At the general apportionment of the reserve, of which I have already acquainted you, an acre of land was set apart for the church and school, and requires fencing in, to which purpose a portion of the £425 adverted to above might be fairly devoted.

*Bluff.*—At the Bluff, Campbelltown, there are 7 children attending the local school, for whom the parents have hitherto paid the fees, which range from 4s. to 6s. per quarter, according to the various stages of proficiency attained by the scholars. Besides the number attending school, there are 13 others who will shortly be old enough to attend; but the limited means of the parents preclude the possibility of their being sent without aid from the Government; and on the occasion of my visit there, they were induced to request me to represent their case for favourable consideration. I informed them that the Government had consented, as far back as August, 1868, to pay the same proportion for the attendance of their children at the local school as had been agreed on in the case of purely Native Schools in other places; but they pleaded entire ignorance of the arrangement. The District Committee, however, were perfectly aware of it, and had expressed their concurrence; but there the matter appeared to have ended, as no demand has been made for payment, although the children have been in regular attendance since the arrangement was effected.

With reference to the request made by these people, I would beg to recommend that a fair proportion of the sum accruing from the school endowment in Southland should be devoted to the education of their children, as they are fully as much entitled to participate in the income as other residents in the South. The total amount might be fairly apportioned between the existing schools at Riverton and Ruapuke, for the education of the children of half-castes and Natives residing at the Bluff, and as a subsidy for the education of the Native and half-caste children residing at the Neck, Stewart's Island, whenever a school is established there by the Education Board.

*Ruapuke.*—The Ruapuke School was opened in July, 1868, under Mr. and Mrs. Henri; and during the first quarter there were 51 children on the roll, and 42 in regular attendance. Since then, a diminution of the population of the island has taken place through deaths and the removal of a number of the half-caste families to Stewart's Island. The average daily attendance during the year ended the 30th June, 1873, was 22, viz., 12 males and 10 females. The school and master's house stand upon a block of ten acres, given by the Natives, in 1867, for educational purposes, and originally cost £320. To this a further sum of £100 was subsequently contributed by the Government to enlarge the master's house.

The school seems to have fallen into disfavour of late. The true cause is believed to be attributable to the desire on the part of some of the Natives—but principally on that of Teone Topi Patuki, who has engendered a feeling of discontent in the minds of others—to upset the dedication of the £2,000 set apart in terms of the Stewart's Island purchase for educational purposes, in order that they may obtain the money to fritter away on some fruitless purpose of their own. Topi, who has never been distinguished by an abnegation of self, feels that, under the present arrangement, he only receives a proportionate share of the benefit accruing from the money, in common with others; but if by any means he could sacrifice the school, and so obtain a refund of the original sum, his share as principal man of the tribe would be much greater. This will probably be found to be the true cause of discontent.