

This article contains searchable text which was automatically generated and may contain errors. Join the community and correct any errors you spot to help us improve Papers Past.

Switch to [View correctable text](#) to explore this feature.

---

## KING COUNTRY SCHOOLS

## KING COUNTRY SCHOOLS

King Country Chronicle, Volume V,  
Issue 347, 22 March 1911, Page 7

### Using This Item

Waitomo Investments is the copyright owner for the King Country Chronicle. You can reproduce in-copyright material from this newspaper for non-commercial use under a [Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 3.0 New Zealand licence](#). This newspaper is not available for commercial use without the consent of Waitomo Investments. For advice on reproduction of out-of-copyright material from this newspaper, please refer to the [Copyright guide](#).

## MR C. J. PARR'S VISIT.

### LIVELY DEPUTATIONS.

Following on his visit to Te Kuiti, Mr C. J. Parr, chairman of the Auckland Education Board, accompanied by Mr John Farrell, architect to the Board, travelled out to Pio Pio on Saturday afternoon, for the purpose of interviewing settlers and committee men on the alleged grievances under which the backblocks are existing, educationally.

Mr Buckley, representing Ratanui settlers, first waited on the chairman, and after explaining the situation in his district, Mr Parr said that, if they would undertake that at least 15 children should attend and commence and build a shack of some kind, in the meantime the Board would undertake to send a tent up. They would also send furniture with the tent, and try to get the thing through while the roads are good. As soon as the attendance was, say 20, he thought the department would build a school.

Mr Buckley said they would prefer to build on the existing site, but if not, were willing to put the school on the education site.

Mr Parr said what they had better do was to form a committee and write for a grant, which would be sent. Without a committee no grant was available.

Mr Buckley mentioned the reserve, which wanted fencing. It was five acres in extent and if the Board found the wire settlers would erect the fence.

Mr Parr said if the shack was not up by the winter the tent would be

up by the winter the same result be removed. The inspector had reported unfavourably, but he recognised settlers were off the beaten track, and so the arrangement was off the beaten track. They wanted to help the settlers all they could.

#### A QUESTION OF SITE.

Messrs Johnstone, Halmond and Larsen, respectively, waited on the chairman with reference to school sites in the Mapara settlement.

Mr Parr said the application of last year was dealt with by Inspector Burnside. There were 24 children.

Mr Halmond: Forty-two children already on the roll elsewhere are in the settlement. There is no teacher, and we are anxious to have a school.

Mr Parr: Yes, and the Board is very anxious, too, but if you squabble amongst yourselves, don't blame us. The inspector reported, and recommended a central site of three acres on the scenery reserve, and a building to accommodate 40 children.

Mr Johnstone (to Mr Halmond): Were you voicing all the settlers, my Christian friend?

Mr Halmond: Yes.

Mr Johnstone: I don't think so.

Mr Parr: A petition from settlers at one end of the settlement objected to the scenery site. We sent this to the Inspector, taking notice of it, as we always do, and he replied "I am quite aware there is a school site which will serve the Wairere end of the block, and there is also another site serving Te Kuiti end of the block." In February you wrote, Mr Johnstone, saying settlers unanimously agreed to the site.

Mr Johnston: They were unanimously agreed. (To Mr Halmond): You agreed?

Mr Halmond: I don't care if the school is on the top of Mount Cook. I was trying to equalise the distances from both ends.

Mr Parr: Mr Johnstone wrote: "There has been some underhand work going on, to further their own selfish ends." Were you serving your selfish ends, Mr Halmond?

Mr Halmond: No. I was not.

MR HALMOND: NO, I WAS NOT.

Mr Parr: We sent your letter on to Inspector Burnside, Mr Johnstone, and he held to his central site. The Board was willing to apply for it but there is this difference of opinion as to the site.

Mr Halmond: Mr Parr, let me introduce Mr Larsen, one of the earliest settlers along with myself, in the block. I have nine children and he has about 12.

Mr Larsen: I should just like to say a few words. If the school is built as the Inspector says, it will leave the Johnstone settlers entirely out. If built the other way it will leave the others entirely out. There is another site!

Mr Parr: How many more sites? How far are you, Johnstone, from the central site.

Mr Johnstone: Three or four miles and without roads. There are also three or four settlers there, some with roads and others none.

Mr Halmond (To Mr Johnstone): Burnside asked settlers in your district and they sent round a petition.

Mr Johnstone (to the chairman): The site I am battling for has 25 to 30 children close to it.

Mr Larsen favoured the old school site, section 7.

Mr Johnstone: It is practically in the centre of the block.

Mr Parr: But the Inspector reported the scenery reserve as the most central.

Mr Johnstone: There has been some underhand work going on.

Mr Parr: I didn't think any underhand work went on in the King Country. I thought it was only in the cities.

Mr Halmond: The settlement is a very long one, about 10 miles in length and half-moon shaped at that. I said let the department put up a

## A STORMY INTERVIEW.

Messrs G. Elliott (chairman of Pio Pio School Committee), Bevege, Hattaway, Johnstone and Hickey, members of the committee, waited on Mr Parr.

Mr Elliott extended a hearty welcome to Pio Pio to Mr Parr. He was pleased to know that the Board of Education was alive to its responsibilities in regard to Pio Pio. No hurried visit, however, no matter how keen the visitor, could give a correct impression of the difficulties settlers had to deal with.

Mr Parr: You represent Pio Pio, Mr Elliott? I am as keenly alive as you are to the wants of the back-blocks. Get to the real business.

Mr Elliott: I want to get to business, Mr Parr, and to show that our grievances are real. We don't accuse the Auckland Education Board of inactivity. The district is so large that this movement for separation has arisen. We have had no proper school building. We have been turned out of our school. Notice was given again and again---

Mr Parr: I really can't allow you to say that.

Mr Elliott: Well, in October last year a representation was made to the Board that the school was no longer available.

Mr Parr: The records don't show it and the officers deny having received it.

Mr Elliott: At the eleventh hour we were turned out and we formed a meeting here and wired to the Board. It was a whole week before a reply was received. Was not that a grievance?

Mr Parr: The tent was sent at the beginning of the school year.

Mr Elliott: The school year was not the time we were turned out. The examination was held under a haw-

Mr Parr: If you will kindly let me hear what your grievances are I'm here to listen to them. After all—what does it matter? You drag up this affair of being examined under a hawthorn tree. What does it matter?

Mr Elliott said he was astonished to find the Education Board knew nothing of the site. The site was still available. At one time there were factions, but they were united and appointed to meet the inspector. When his report came he recommended a rocky site. They found it to be a dusty one and objectionable in other ways. They were not opposing it, but said "Here's a site you can readily get." If the inspector's site was adopted they wouldn't get a school this side of winter.

Mr Parr (reading from Mr Edgcumbe's report): No. 1 Rawstron's site, fifty chains from the Post Office, was a rocky one. No. 2 was 30 chains from the Post Office, between the Maori hall and the bridge, and this also was a somewhat broken one. No. 3 was 25 chains from the Post Office and was a site offered by the Maori owners, who stipulated that the school should be five chains from the road.

Mr Elliott: We strongly recommend No. 2 site. We never asked Mr Edgcumbe to indicate a new site. We wanted him to decide which of the two sites was the better.

Mr Parr: What is the land worth?

Mr Elliott: The Dairy Factory Company got it at £10 an acre.

Mr Parr: Who put the Maoris up to it?

Mr Elliott: They want no putting up to it.

Mr Parr: Another school at Trooper's road will be wanted ultimately, Mr Edgcumbe points out. He went to a lot of trouble and here you object. Then you wrote saying that you would do your best. Is that so?



you would do your best. Is that so?

Mr Elliott: The natives accuse me of stealing the land for the factory.

Mr Hattaway: The natives accuse us of loafing on the Maori. They have been applied to and want £60 an acre for the four acres. The land runs through two owners' property and they have to be approached.



Mr Parr: The position is a very awkward one.

Mr Hattaway: We have stuck to one site from the first. Mr Edgcumbe sprung a surprise on us. The inspector's report was a surprise, too. We're too far away to reach the press.

Mr Parr: Oh, no. You reach the press all right.

Mr Hattaway: I oppose Mr Edgcumbe's site, because it is wet and unhealthy and under water four months in the year. We are studying the health of our children.

Mr Elliott: My position is that I don't want to block the erection of a school if you can get a site at once. We brought our site before the Native Land Court and Mr Seymour told me that it was vested in the Education Department.

Mr Parr: I suspect that when we get to the bottom of this there is no title to it.

Mr Elliott: The difference is that in our case the natives are willing and in the other they are not.

Mr Parr: Which ever site is taken I expect it will have to be taken under the Public Works Act. I am sorry you opposed Mr Edgcumbe's site, as if you were agreeable the Education Board would take it under the Public Works Act.

Mr Elliott: Members of the committee are agreeable to the purchase of the site if it can be acquired quickly.

In reply to Mr Parr, Mr Bevege said the site was a good one, but for the water backing up. The examination under the hawthorn tree was reported to the Board. The school was held under the tree for a week. A tangi was on at the time and that was why they were turned out of the building. He informed the Board himself.

Mr Parr: Well, we will take it that you did, sir. I don't think the world

is going to stop because of this open-air examination. All over the world to-day the tendency is to work more in the open air in connection with schools. Before I visit the sites I wish to say a few words. It is alleged there are hardships and grievances in the King Country. The Education Board is keenly alive to the needs of settlers in this great district, and as soon as applications are made we deal with them promptly.

Mr Parr then illustrated some of the difficulties the Board had to contend with, mentioning the cases of Mairoa and Waimiha as examples. He was several times interrupted by Messrs Elliott and Hattaway when speaking and some warm passages at arms took place, Mr Parr averring that in all other places he had visited he had been met with courtesy, but had been insulted that afternoon at Pio Pio.

Mr Hattaway: When I appeared before your Board the then chairman said they had only two or three minutes to spare, after we had travelled 150 miles to visit it. We were working within the Act, Mr Parr, and you cannot do more than that yourself.

Mr Parr: Well, if you don't wish to hear me I have nothing more to say.

Mr Elliott: We will give you a fair hearing.

Mr Parr: I have been right through Piriaka, Manunui and Owhanga, and I have failed to find any existing grievance and they were opposed to any proposal to separate this district and make a new one.

Mr Elliott: I beg to differ. I have a letter from Taumarunui.

Mr Parr: I don't think the department will hear of it. At the present time you have the right to nominate a candidate for the Board of Educa-

tion. If you want a candidate on the Board, why not nominate and put him in? The tendency is to amalgamate smaller Boards. It was unfortunate that the Maoris turned you out of the hall after being there two years. One would have expected they would have given us a little longer time to erect the new school. That is my opinion. The position to-day is that the Board of Education is ready to go ahead--to put up a school--but there is the question of your site. Mr Edgcumbe visits Pio Pio, selects a site, and now we find Mr Hattaway objects.

Mr Hattaway: Because it is a wet one.

Mr Parr: Yes, that may be. As soon as you get the site settled you'll get the school. The Board is most anxious to get on with its work. If you can suggest any way of getting a site I'll undertake to get on with the work within a week.

At this point Mr Parr intimated that he would view the various sites, and Messrs Bevege, Elliott and Hattaway expressed the thanks of the committee that the chairman had visited Pio Pio. They further asked Mr Parr to excuse the warm words that had been passed, said, as they were, in the heat of the moment.

Mr Parr, with the committee, then visited the various sites suggested for the new school. Eventually the Board's chairman informed the committee that, if the natives would give three acres on the hill where the present tent was, he thought the Board would accept the site. If Mr Elliott could guarantee that the Board would get a title and that there would be no native obstruction, he would telegraph to the department, urging an immediate grant, so that tenders might be called for the new

building without delay.

Mr Elliott said the committee would guarantee that there would be no trouble with the natives, if that site were accepted, and that the Board would get a title.

Mr Parr said there was always the question of the department being satisfied, but he could say that, so far as he was concerned, he preferred the site to any of the others. He pointed out that Mr Bevege was wrong when he said that the Board was guilty of delay since October, at which time he stated the Board was notified that the Maoris would want the Hall at Christmas. Mr Parr then went through the correspondence which showed that in October the Board sent Inspector Burnside to report on getting a site for the new school. On the 4th November the inspector reported in favour of the hill site, but the Paemako committee, through its chairman, wrote to the Board, and strongly objected to that site, as being too close to their school. Furthermore, the land was native, with eight or nine different owners. Under the circumstances, the inspector altered his recommendation, and suggested Rawstron's site. This did not satisfy the residents. Mr Edgcumbe then visited the district, and fixed another site, which also did not satisfy some of the residents. The Board was, therefore, in this position: That it was ready to go on with the building, but was blocked because of the native difficulties and because some residents, and the adjoining committee, were at sixes and sevens over the question of site. Mr Parr concluded "I think, under the circumstances, both Mr Elliott and Mr Hattaway owe me a apology for saying that the Board has neglected them since October. The Board was ready to go on with a building at once, if they could agree on a site.

Mr Hattaway: That letter from Mr Tarrant to the Board is a surprise to me. I had no idea that the Paemako committee were objecting and had caused the alteration in the sites. If I had known this I would not have spoken so heatedly. I am pleased, Mr Parr, you have come and cleared things up. Your visit has done good.

Mr Parr then said he would send a surveyor in on Monday to survey the site, it being understood the committee would guarantee the title and save the Board any trouble with the Maoris. If the department in Wellington accepted the site, the new building could be proceeded with at once. He hoped the committee would help, by sending the Board the particulars asked for last week.