

big building capable of boarding one hundred and fifty to two hundred boys, and this was only lost by fire a little while ago. We were never informed by the Whitireia trustees that they were asking for power to divert the Whitireia funds to Wairarapa. We would have objected if we had known of those proceedings. We did, however, ask the trustees to build a school in Otaki out of the proceeds of the two reserves. Through the non-fulfilment by the Whitireia trustees of the trust, some of us petitioned Parliament in 1876, praying that the land be returned to us. In the same year, or thereabouts, Wi Parata took proceedings in the Supreme Court to get the land back from the Church of England trustees. He failed. I and others, in 1896, petitioned Parliament to have the land returned to us, and the Native Affairs Committee reported to the effect that, since the trust has never been carried out, the Government be recommended to bring down legislation to give effect to the prayer of the petitioners. Ever since 1896, I, and others, have been petitioning Parliament almost every year. Last year we petitioned Parliament for a Royal Commission to be set up to inquire into these trusts, with a view of in the end getting the two trusts joined and the proceeds applied to the building and equipment of an efficient school in Otaki for our children. We have also asked Hone Heke and Mr. Field to do whatever they could for us in this matter for a number of years, and, in 1898, the Government actually brought in a Bill to Parliament, but the influence of the Church was too great to obtain its passage. The object of the Bill was, in its main features, to have the trust fulfilled. We now come to you for the same thing—to report that the two trusts be joined and the proceeds be devoted to building a school in Otaki and its proper equipment; and not to allow the proceeds of Whitireia to be spent in Wairarapa. In the event of the Whitireia trustees not agreeing to that, then I would ask that the land be given back to us. I do not know of any Ngatiraukawa and Ngatitoo children being at the Wairarapa Church of England Mission school. Of the Ngatiraukawa and Ngatitoo on the West Coast here, there are none of our children at the school in Wairarapa. If there are Ngatiraukawa and Ngatitoo children at that school, they are the descendants of Ngatiraukawa women who married Ngatikahungunu husbands, who are living in the Wairarapa ever since their marriage with their husbands. The names of these women are:—Tare Kuti, Maraea Kuti, Metapere, Paranihia Iria te Hapoki. I think the Church of England trustees should cease in both cases—Whitireia and Otaki reserves. My reasons for saying this are: (a) In the case of the Otaki reserves trustees, notwithstanding that they complied with the words of Bishop Selwyn by erecting and equipping a school, the management of that school has fallen off. The education is not sufficient for the future equipment of our children; and the head of our Church has for years lapsed from his work in our midst. (b) As regards Whitireia, the trustees of this reserve have never attempted to carry out Bishop Selwyn's words to our elders; and the Church of England ministers have ceased taking an interest for a long period of years in our people at Porirua and in Otaki. I mean the proper spiritual and moral work of the Church. I think the two reserves should be now controlled by a Board consisting of three Government officials and two Maoris. As to religious teaching, I think it should not be taught in this school during school hours or while the boarders are boarding here. My first two reasons for this are contained in (a) and (b) above mentioned. And, further, (a) there are many Ngatiraukawa Roman Catholic children and a fairly large number of Ngatitoo Mormon children in Porirua who ought to receive the same advantages as our children of the Church of England; (b) religious teaching could be taught to the children by their parents at their homes and in their own churches when they leave this school for their holidays, and at other times. I would like to see our children taught and brought up properly in the teachings of their respective Churches, I admit, but I would object to my children or grandchildren being taught the doctrines of another Church; and I know the parents of other children of other Churches would object to our Church of England teaching. If it could be done without any inconvenience, I would suggest that each Sunday the boys of each Church be allowed to attend their own service at their own churches, and to attend Sunday-school conducted by people of their own belief, in their own buildings away from this school. I cannot agree or appreciate a mixed or a picked text-book made up by a number of religious bodies for the purpose of teaching our children. I would do without the school and ask for a return of the land to us rather than suffer the above. I hold that if the ministers of our Church were alive and active, they could, with our (the parents) help, teach ourselves and our children in our respective religions, and get us to take a closer observance in their respective teachings. I, myself, always attend church every service when in Otaki, and I always go and attend service in my own religion when there is any service being held when I am away in other places. I always endeavour to carry out the teaching of my church—the Church of England.

#### RAIHA PUHA examined.

*Witness (to Mr. Stafford):* I am a daughter of Rawhiri Puaha, of Ngatitoo, one of the donors of Whitireia land in Porirua to Bishop Selwyn. An uncle of mine, Rawhiri Kanae, was also amongst the donors, and also a cousin of my father's, Nohorua. All the donors are relatives of mine. I object to the action of the Whitireia trustees in spending the Whitireia funds on a school in Wairarapa. I object because it is an act which violates the reasons which caused our elders to give this land to Bishop Selwyn. That reason was: they believed when the land was asked for by Bishop Selwyn of our people he gave them to understand that a school was to be built in the midst of their people, and for the benefit of the children of their people. I object because it is contrary to Native custom. This land was given to Bishop Selwyn because he asked for it, and Matene to Whiwhi, Tamihana te Rauparaha, and Bishop Selwyn came to Porirua from Otaki and asked Ngatitoo to hand it over to the Bishop for a school. My elders agreed, because they wanted their children to be educated in English ways and pursuits. My father waited, and so did Ngatitoo, for the school to be erected, as the Ngatiraukawa had had a school already built in Otaki, and because he could not get one built he sent my brother to the Auckland (St. John's) College. My uncle, Hohepa Tamaihangā, had always urged Bishop Hadfield to have a school built, but of no avail. I wish that a school be built from the proceeds of the two reserves.