

58. You do not know of any children who have gone from the West Coast to the Wairarapa ?—Not one.

59. How long has the school been established in the Wairarapa ?—About two years.

60. Can you give us any idea of what the feelings of the Natives would be in the matter ?—My experience is that they would refuse to send a single child there.

61. What are your grounds for thinking so ?—From conversations with the Natives up and down the Coast ; they are all against it entirely.

62. If a school is to be established, you consider the best scheme would be to establish it at Otaki ?—Decidedly.

63. And with proper control you might have a better attendance of day-scholars ?—Yes.

64. Supposing there was legal power to compel attendance, would you find any difficulty ?—No ; I do not think there are six in Otaki who do not attend school now.

65. The mission school has fallen off very much of late years in attendance ?—No.

66. What are the numbers who attend the school now ?—For a number of years it has been about twenty or thirty. The population itself has decreased greatly since there were 170 boys there. There are a good number attending the Roman Catholic and State schools. There are thirty-five attending our school.

67. The money contributed from Porirua was contributed on the basis that Porirua children were being educated here ?—So far as I know.

68. Is there any practical distinction between the two trusts ? Are they not both for religious teaching ?—Yes.

69. Although one refers to the mission and the other to the Bishop, the practical intention is the same ?—Doubtless.

70. Do you not think it proper, under the circumstances, that the funds from Porirua should be used to establish a school at Otaki ?—I do.

71. Do you not think it is the best purpose they could be put to ?—I have said so.

72. *Mr. Quick.*] You have spoken of the objection to sending children to the Wairarapa : how is it there is no terrible objection to sending them to Te Aute ?—For the reason that Archdeacon Williams is at the head of that school ; for no other reason. He taught the parents of these children, and was looked up to as their father. There was great objection to Te Aute at first, but after one or two had been induced to go, it was found no harm came to them.

73. But there must be children who have gone there who were born after he left here ?—But he has been in constant communication with them.

74. Do you think if Archdeacon Williams died, Te Aute would not get them ?—I could not say.

75. *Mr. Chapman.*] The scheme put forward by Mr. Stafford apparently is that there should be no religious education at the school : have you sufficient experience of the Maoris and knowledge of their ways of thought to be able to say whether they would approve of a school where their children would be taught no religion at all ?—From what I know of them, I should think they would not like it.

76. Quite apart from the fact that one of the purposes of the cession was religious education ?—Yes:

77. Do you think the sentiment of the Maoris as expressed in the “ cession ” survives to this day ?—Not to the same extent, apparently ; but, as far as I know, it still exists.

78. *Mr. Wardell.*] It was mentioned by a witness yesterday that the State subsidised the school to the extent of £1,300 or £1,500 a year for some years : have you any knowledge of that ?—No. I have been told by Bishop Hadfield that it never received anything. I know nothing of it.

79. Do you think a school of a higher class than now exists at Otaki would be a better thing for the Native community of the West Coast than two schools of a lower grade—one at Otaki and one at Papawai ?—I should say a higher-grade school here would be the better, because there are State schools within reach of the Natives.

80. I mean a school to include education from the kindergarten up to the highest ordinary State standard ?—I should say one large school is better than two small ones.

81. *Mr. Stafford.*] What is the largest Ngatiraukawa settlement ?—Otaki, I should think.

WILLIAM BURNES SMITH examined.

Witness (to Mr. Wardell) : I am master of the Otaki State School. The average daily attendance is at present 170 ; the average daily attendance of Native children I could not give exactly, but there are twenty-five Maori and half-caste children on the roll.

82. *Mr. Wardell.*] How does their average attendance compare with those of European children on the roll ?—It is not so good.

83. Are there any special circumstances in your knowledge contributing to this difference ?—Occasions arise more frequently among the Maoris ; a tangi will take a great many children away, in or out of the district. And working in the fields and home-work takes down the average attendance of Maoris more than in the case of white children.

84. Have you formed any opinion as to whether greater advantages would be afforded the Native children if they were maintained and boarded in a school rather than by their attendance at a day-school ?—I have formed the conclusion that it would be a great advantage to the Native children to be boarded.

85. Are they attentive pupils ?—They are attentive and good-natured, but they have not the staying-power of white children, and get careless at times.

86. Have you observed any racial animosity between the European and the Native children ?—I never had a single case of any trouble between them ; they mix freely and friendly. If there is any bias, it is rather that the Maori children are inclined to be popular among the white. They are good-tempered and generous to a fault.