

102. But surely, generally speaking, when a gift is made for a particular thing the donors' intention has to be considered somehow. The intention of the original donors was not only that there should be religious education, but that there should be religious education under the clergy and Church of England?—But here is another feature of the Maori argument: "It is all very well to discuss the past ideas, they were all right, but we are changing now and we want to give the benefits of this school to all the Ngatiraukawa, whether Church of England or Roman Catholic, or any other sect."

103. How would it give it to these people who think religious education is part of the scheme?—I would give you the answer of Heni. She said it is entirely right that all the different children of different religions should receive the same advantages as the Church of England children, and she said, "We can teach our children by allowing them to go to our own church, or we can teach our own children at our own homes."

104. Did they ever do so?—Speaking from my knowledge of the past, up to about ten years ago the Church of England everywhere in New Zealand from the Bay of Islands to here was particularly strong. But since that time there has been an incursion of the Mormon religion, and it has cut into large areas of the Church of England religious people, and not only in this district. At Porirua, those who were Church of England before were converted by the Mormons. At present in my electorate more than seven thousand have seceded from the Church of England and become Mormons. The rule in those days was that the Maori lay readers every Sunday after service kept the people to teach the catechism. It was the same thing here; all the early lay readers undertook the work of teaching the catechism. But that has ceased. The cause I do not know. The Commission has not asked many of the Native witnesses. I believe they could have said why the Church of England has failed. Here is another reason: In my district the Church of England has failed in every essential among the Maoris. They generally used to go and visit every settlement and see whether there were any sick, and see to those who were dead by burying them; but during the last ten years in the Bay of Islands and Hokianga that has not been done. You will find no minister going round to the settlements as in the early days, and this is one of the main causes which has led the Natives to be lax in attendance at church.

105. That appears to me to show that they will not get religious education at home?—You are quite right. But one of the main causes here, according to their own statements, is the fact that, after asking the Bishop of Wellington year after year to fulfil the trust and build a school, when they heard the funds were diverted to Wairarapa it caused many parents to refuse to attend service here.

106. What chance will the children have of receiving religious education if they do not get it at school?—I would suggest it would be far better that the benefits of a school should be allowed to spread to children of all religions, than to force religious subjects on a fixed scale and drive the children of another faith away from it.

107. We have no evidence that that would be so; when there was no other school for them to go to they would go to the present school?—I know the religious feeling among the Maoris; I have acted as a mediator between two hapus in relation to religious differences. I had to interfere to prevent bloodshed in consequence of excitement over discussion over religious teaching. Their religious feeling is not so mild as some Europeans think. It is as strong among the Maoris as amongst the Europeans.

108. *Mr. Wardell.*] Do you conceive it would be for the benefit of the Native community to establish a low-class school at Porirua for the benefit of the local children, and to divert a portion of the income from Whitireia for that purpose?—No; if that is done you will cripple this intended institution. You want to get all the funds you can get to make the scheme a success.

109. How would the children at Porirua benefit by a school here?—By becoming boarders. Every effort should be made to create as strong a fund as possible.

110. *Mr. Stafford.*] Do the Natives think that as in the public schools there is liberty of conscience there should be the same in Native schools?—I have not heard the opinions of the Natives here, but the opinion of my own people divided up into three or four religions is that it is a great advantage to the parents to have Native Government schools, and to have them in an absence of religion. They greatly appreciate the adoption of a system which enabled them all to send their children for ordinary education. Religious matter is not allowed in Government Native schools.

Mr. Stafford put in *whakapapa* showing descent of Heni te Whiwhi, which was affirmed by Hakaraia te Whena.

HEMI TE KAWANA (JAMES COOTES) examined.

*Witness:* I am a Ngatitooa and Ngatiraukawa. I have heard the scheme which has been put before the Commissioners, and I approve of it. I say it is a good scheme.

111. *Mr. Stafford.*] It is a very much better scheme than to send the money to the Wairarapa?—Certainly; we all approve of it, and we signed it.

112. *Mr. Wardell.*] Is it the general wish of the Ngatiraukawa assembled in Otaki that this scheme should be given effect to?—We helped to make it.

113. *Mr. Chapman.*] You do not want to have religious education?—It is not allowed in the State schools. It would bar many from attending school if it were allowed, because there are a number of religious bodies here. Roman Catholics and others would not allow their children to attend. We have been perpetually asking Government to bring this to a head. We spoke to the Premier when he was here, and he promised this should be last December, when Huia Onslow was here.