

87. *Mr. Stafford.*] Do you think, if a well-kept school were established in Otaki, it would be better for the Maoris themselves?—Yes, I think so.

88. If funds were available for teaching and boarding, and so on, and the school were well equipped, would it not be an advantage to the Natives?—Decidedly it would; you would have a homogeneous school.

89. Could it be so arranged as to get the attendance of the children?—I am afraid it would need special legislation.

90. Assuming the system adopted contains the same machinery for compulsion as yours, would it be a success?—Undoubtedly.

91. Do you think such a school is wanted in Otaki?—I do.

92. *Mr. Chapman.*] A school with compulsion?—We have compulsory powers in the State school with reference to Maori children, and our Truant Officer has acted on several occasions.

93. *Mr. Stafford.*] Do you think there are a considerable number of Native children in and around Otaki that want education, and are not being educated at all?—There are a considerable number.

94. *The Chairman.*] Have you formed any opinion as to whether there are any considerable number of children of Ngatiraukawa in the Otaki district whose parents or relations would desire that they should have what is called a better kind of education rather than a useful education? Would they prefer to send their children to a school where carpentry and blacksmithing and farming operations are taught, rather than to a school of a higher class—a secondary school with industrial training?—I have not had very much opportunity of forming an opinion on that subject, but I gather from the parents I have asked that there is not a very great ambition to go further than the Seventh Standard. My opinion is that the Seventh or any other standard is not so important as giving practical technical education to enable them to earn a livelihood later on, and not go back to their hapu and forget what they have learned. Any school should make a strong point of giving the children technical education; that should be the strongest point.

95. *Mr. Wardell.*] In some schools, the obligations of an industrial training is claimed to be satisfied by teaching boys milking cows and getting in the horses and doing a little farming: does that satisfy in your mind the requirements of industrial training?—Not at all.

96. You suggest they should be taught trades to enable them to take positions as skilled artisans?—That is my idea.

MRS. JENNINGS examined.

*Witness (to Mr. Wardell):* I am teacher of the Otaki Mission School. I have thirty-five children on the roll—twenty boys and five girls. The average attendance since the beginning of the year has been about twenty-five. The ages of the children range from fourteen years to five (boys); the eldest of the girls is eleven. The proportion of the sexes varies a little; there are generally a few more boys than girls. The attendance is always fluctuating; there are good and bad times—more bad than good. I attribute the bad attendance to the indifference of the parents. They seem to get worked up occasionally, and the children come regularly; then the attendance drops, and we call on them, and the attendance grows up again, and so it goes on. I instruct them up to the Fourth Standard. Those who desire to go beyond, the boys go to Te Aute and the girls to Hukarere. Those who go are transported at the cost of their parents. Their education and maintenance is free. I usually look to send two or three a year to Te Aute, but I do not always do so. It is boys who generally go; not so many girls go on. The girls generally leave school when they are fourteen or fifteen. There are no records of the school prior to March, 1903, when it was burned down. Since that fire three boys have gone to Te Aute; two of these are still there; one came away on account of illness. There was accommodation in the large school building for over a hundred; the rooms were not all furnished; there was bedding supplied for ten at most.

97. *Mr. Wardell.*] We have been told that at one period there were over one hundred boarding there. Have you any reason to know that?—I have heard so.

98. What became of the furniture?—At the time of the fire there was a stack of iron bedsteads.

99. Is there any desire on the part of the parents that the children should board?—Yes; I have frequently had parents asking me to take their children to board.

100. Do you think it would be for their advantage to board?—Most decidedly.

101. What is the cost of boarding?—About 1s. a day; that is what is allowed to me. I consider, in the seventeen years I have had it, it just pays expenses; perhaps a larger establishment would be cheaper.

102. *Mr. Chapman.*] That is allowed for their food?—Yes.

103. Does that allow for attendance as well?—They live with me as part of my household, and I receive that for looking after them and mending, and so on; 1s. covers it all, unless I want anything special in the way of bedding, &c., when a special charge is made on the fund.

104. Have you any experience of day-scholars?—It is a day-school principally.

105. You have heard what has been said about irregularity of attendance: do you agree with it?—Yes, the attendance of day-scholars is most uncertain and irregular; it cannot be depended upon.

106. *Mr. Quick.*] If the school were restored, it would accommodate 120?—Yes, easily.

107. In other words, the Church Missionary Society could do it now as it was done before?—Yes. I suppose so.

*Mr. McWilliam* said that when there were 170 boys there they were working and growing their own food; they worked only half-time in the school.

108. *Mr. Stafford.*] Are there 150 Maori children in Otaki?—I could hardly say; including half-castes there would be.