

OTAKI, FRIDAY, 9TH JUNE, 1905.

The scheme submitted by Mr. Stafford having been read (see Appendix),

*The Chairman* : The mode of dealing with these Porirua and Otaki trusts by amalgamating them and applying them in the way that has been read has been officially announced and interpreted. We are asked to recommend that this plan shall be adopted. If there are any persons who desire to address us against the adoption of this plan, now is the time for them to do so.

WI PARATA examined.

*Witness* : I am one. I object to this scheme. I will commence from the time when the Natives gave this land to the Church. The first person who brought the news of the Gospel to these parts was a Maori, and Waikanae was the first place where he announced the new Gospel. Ngatiawa were the people living there then, and Ngatitōa. After this trouble arose, known as the fight at Kuititanga ; at that time Ngatiraukawa had not embraced Christianity. Ngatiawa and Ngatitōa only had done so. After the battle of Kuititanga, the Ngatiraukawa thought they had been beaten because the Ngatitōa and Ngatiawa were Christians. Tamihana te Rauparaha and Matene te Whiwhi went to Ngapuhi to get the new religion and a clergyman, and Mr. Hadfield came and took up his residence at Waikanae. He went there because the people there had embraced Christianity. After that, Ngatiraukawa embraced Christianity. Then Mr. Hadfield used to travel between Waikanae and Otaki, visiting each place. After that, religion spread to Rangitikei and to Wellington, and when the Bishop heard all these people had embraced Christianity he came down here, and as soon as he got here he commenced to apply to Ngatiraukawa for land. Tamihana te Rauparaha and Matene were the chief men in the tribe—the other chiefs took their lead from them and supported what they did and said. Accordingly a meeting was held in Otaki, and the question of giving land to the Bishop was discussed. The land was to be given for the purpose of teaching the people principles of Christianity only ; they did not know of anything at the time beyond that. After that Matene and Tamihana went to Porirua to ask Ngatitōa to also hand over a piece of land for the same purpose, and they consented to do so. They meant it was not to be applied to any other purpose than the teaching of religion. In the year 1850 the land was Crown-granted, and the conditions upon which it was given were altered. The people who gave the land had never been informed that the land would be diverted in this way ; the grant was made in secret, it was not made in the presence of Ngatitōa and with their full knowledge, they being the people who had given the land. I will confine my remarks now to Porirua only. Owing to the length of time during which this land lay idle without any school on it—from 1850 to 1860—the donors, seeing it was idle, requested the Church to give it back to them, on the occasion of a meeting with Governor Brown at Kohimaramara, near Auckland, and ever since that time we have kept that in view and wished this land to be returned to us. Fifteen years after 1860 I took proceedings at law against the Bishop, for the reason that the purpose for which the land had been given had not been carried out. But I did not appear in presence before the Supreme Court, the matter was conducted in another room, and there it was decided that this land was Crown land, and apparently the original gift by the Maoris of the land was put on one side and not considered at all. After that the Natives sent a petition to Parliament to have the land returned to them ; that was not to ask for the erection of a school there, but for the land to be returned to them. Since I have been here listening to the powers conferred upon the Commission, I have come to the conclusion that they are not in accordance with the intentions for which the land was given by the Maoris. They are entirely from a European point of view, not a Maori. The object of giving the land was with the object of teaching the new religion, with a view to cause intertribal wars and the killing of men to cease. Now I hear to-day that it is suggested that the children are to be taught how to kill and destroy human beings. At the time the land was given it was so given under the powers of the Treaty of Waitangi. At that time the Maoris still had their mana, and they gave their land under their mana. But when the land was Crown-granted that mana was set on one side, and the land appeared under a different mana. I will not presume to say anything about the Governor's instructions to you and the inquiry you are to hold into this land. It would appear that the Commission has come here to make inquiries because the trusts have not been given effect to, and it is with a view to having them given effect to the Commission is now sitting. I will leave out the first four paragraphs, and will take the fifth. In regard to this, I have to say if these trusts cannot be carried out in their integrity, then I say, return us the land. In reference to clause 6, in the case of the Porirua grant, it is here suggested if the scheme approved by the Supreme Court cannot be given effect to what modifications can be made, and if that cannot be done the land should be given back to the Maoris. The Commission should not consider the Crown grant only, but should also consider the gift behind the Crown grant. This land was given under the mana of the Treaty of Waitangi, which was approved of by the Queen. The Treaty of Waitangi gave certain powers, but this was taken away outside the powers of the Treaty of Waitangi. Speaking for myself, I cannot approve of the present scheme. The part I most disapprove of is the part where it is suggested that Maori children should be taught how to kill human beings—military drill. That is not the work of religion ; that was not the purpose for which the land was given. I attended the school at Otaki. At that time the children attending the school were mostly older than eight or nine years—they were well grown boys ; they were so selected to be strong and work in the fields. I was attending the school in 1852, and I saw that the masters treated the Maori children differently from the manner in which they treated European children. We were taught only to read and write—to read Maori books and to write Maori only. At the time Archdeacon Williams, of Te Aute, had charge of the school I was here. I saw no good in it ; others may have seen good in it, but I saw no good in the way in which he looked after the children. Most of their time was occupied in tilling the soil. I do not wish to say anything bad of the clergymen of those days, but I am informing the Commission of what they did. From that time to this, this strange way of managing a mission school has been in force.