

166. And the Girls' School is on the same lines?—Yes. If we get a half-caste whose parents are in a position to pay, they are expected to pay.

167. But there is no rule?—No definite rule.

168. Does the Wanganui Collegiate School take the aboriginal inhabitants; can they go to that school?—I believe they can.

169. *Mr. Ngata.*] Do the authorities ever advertise in the way of pointing out to the people of both races the benefits of the institution, and that it exists for the benefit of both races, or is that generally known?—I think it is generally known. The trustees never advertise it.

170. *The Chairman.*] Is there an Old Boys' Association?—Yes.

Associations?—They have annual meetings, and papers are read, and these are published afterwards.

171. Have they started a journal such as is issued by the Nelson and Wanganui Old Boys' Associations?—They have annual meetings, and papers are read, and these are published afterwards.

172. There is no special publicity given to the school by advertisement?—No.

173. *Mr. Ngata.*] What is your opinion in regard to the allegation published in one of the papers that the fact of the school being open to the children of both races is not generally known?—The children of both races do attend.

174. But the fact is not very prominently brought forward?—We have always considered that the trust was intended mainly for the Natives. It is the same with a number of other trusts, in which clauses were inserted specifying that they are for the benefit of the children of both races of His Majesty's subjects in New Zealand, and of children of destitute parents in the Pacific islands.

175. With regard to manual and technical education, I think you have had opportunities of hearing expressions of opinions from old students on the question, having attended the conferences of the Te Aute Students' Association?—I have not attended many, because I had not the opportunity.

176. But I think you have heard expressions of opinion from old students on the subject?—I do not think I have. I do not know what their opinion is.

177. *The Chairman.*] I suppose you agree that it is advisable that the benefits to be derived from the College should be advertised as publicly as possible?—There is no objection to it.

178. There was no objection from the Natives in regard to the amalgamation of these grants?—I never heard of any.

179. Did you ever hear any objections from Europeans?—No.

180. Or to the trusts being worked as one concern?—I never heard of any.

181. I suppose there is no doubt it is more efficiently worked as one concern than it could be if divided into an English school and a Maori school?—Yes.

182. However, Mr. Thornton will be able to give us full particulars of that?—Yes.

THURSDAY 17TH MAY, 1906.

*The Chairman:* Before proceeding with the taking of evidence, I wish to know if the Natives desire to appear before the Commission?

*Mr. I. Hutana:* I wish to represent the Natives before this Commission.

*The Chairman:* I would like to know, Mr. Bird, if you have anything further to say with regard to your position before the Commission?

*Mr. Bird:* I only wish to say, sir, that the head of the Education Department has instructed me by telegram to the effect that he approves of the position I have taken up. The view of the Department as expressed by him is that the Education Department has nothing whatever to do with the issuing of Royal Commissions. A Royal Commission is issued by the Governor on the advice of the Cabinet. It is not competent for the Education Department to in any way direct the proceedings of a Royal Commission. The connection of the Education Department with the Te Aute trust has been confined, as I have said before, merely to giving expert advice in regard to the subjects of school instruction. It has been a condition on which the scholarships are given to boys attending Te Aute and to girls attending Hukarere that the schools shall be open to inspection and examination by Government officers. I might say that the trusts were given in charge of the trustees long before the birth of the Education Department.

*The Chairman:* All I want to know is whether you represent the Department here this morning, or whether you simply adhere to the position as defined by you yesterday.

*Mr. Bird:* I take up the same position as yesterday.

*The Chairman:* As there appears to be some misapprehension as to the position taken up by the Commission in regard to the Education Department, I wish, for the information of the members of the Commission, to refer to the correspondence which has taken place between the Commission and the Department on the subject. First of all, a telegram was sent on the 10th May to the Native Department, asking the Under-Secretary to intimate whether the Department wished to be represented before the Commission, and we said the Commission would be glad to see the presence of its representative at the meeting to be held that day. I will read now the telegrams we sent and the replies received. On the 10th May this telegram was sent:—

“The Under-Secretary, Education, Wellington.—At its meeting here to-day the Te Aute Commission determined that Education Department ought to be represented before the Commission during its proceedings, and will expect a representative at its next meeting here on Monday next.”