

5. Have you been asked by the trustees or by the Archdeacon or by any one connected with the trust to give evidence?—No; I have come in response to the general invitation advertised in the newspapers. I would have come down last week but that I was out of sorts. I have not spoken to the Archdeacon or to the trustees on the subject. I cannot speak in regard to the educational side of the institution; but I would like to say the conduct of the boys on the trains when I have been travelling to and fro has been remarkably good, and compares very favourably with that of other young lads travelling in the trains.

6. Have you ever considered the question of cutting up the estate, and whether it would cut up into small farms?—I have not. There are two different classes of land in the estate. The land between the College and the hills is very good, but as you get further towards Kaikora it is decidedly poor. I think if the estate was cut up it would require to be in good-sized allotments.

7. Is it suitable for dairying purposes?—I suppose as suitable as the other land around here; but I have a rather poor opinion of dairying. It has not been a success in this district at all.

8. Do you know of people who have tried it?—I have been a shareholder in the Heretaunga Dairy Factory for the last ten years, and I have not seen a sixpence in dividends. The suppliers have been doing well enough, but not the shareholders. I can only speak personally from a sheep-farming and a stock-carrying point of view. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the dairying industry to give an opinion.

9. *Mr. Hogg.*] Do you think, at the time the land was leased to the Archdeacon, if it had been offered by public auction or by public tender it would have fetched any higher value than was got for it?—I do not think so—not from a reliable tenant.

10. Assuming it was cut up into 500- or 600-acre farms, and was offered for, say, twenty-one years, with compensation for improvements, do you think it would fetch a much higher rental?—No doubt there is a portion at the back of the house, between the College and the hills, that is very good; but the land towards Kaikora in dry seasons is very poor.

11. Is the property pretty well watered?—Yes.

12. *The Chairman.*] Do you know what it would cost to cut up the estate and road it, and prepare it for closer settlement?—No.

13. *Mr. Elliott.*] Have you employed any of the Te Aute boys?—Yes, I have had several.

14. Do they compare favourably as farm and station hands with Europeans?—Yes. Maoris, as a rule, are very good station hands. In that class of work and as agricultural labourers they are quite equal to the average European farmer. In fact, so far as working reapers-and-binders and other farm machinery is concerned, they are a long way superior. They seem to have a natural aptitude for this class of work. Of course I am not speaking of the Te Aute boys in particular, but of Maoris in general.

PARATENE NGATA examined.

15. *The Chairman.*] Where do you live?—At Waiomatatini, Waiapu.

16. What is your occupation?—I am an Assessor of the Native Land Court. My young men and children carry on farming operations. I am fifty-seven years of age.

17. Do you know the Hawke's Bay District?—Yes, I am acquainted with it. I have lived in the district for two and three years at odd times. I first became acquainted with this district in the year 1869. I was then a militiaman, at the time of the war.

18. Do you know the Te Aute trust estate and school?—My first acquaintance with Te Aute was by hearsay, but afterwards I saw the place in 1883, when I went there to take my children to school.

19. How many sons did you take there?—Two. I also had some nephews there. Altogether there were fourteen of my own immediate connections at Te Aute at that time. I was their guardian and parent, as it were. I stayed at Te Aute for perhaps a couple of weeks, taking stock of the place, and seeing how they managed things at the school. I remember, in talking with the master at the time, pitying myself for having been born so soon. I said I would like to have been born in these later days, so as to have had the advantage of the school.

20. Have you any suggestions to offer in regard to the school?—I saw that at that time the school was well conducted. The first thing I noticed was that they taught the children to love and respect one another, and not to quarrel and fight. Then I noticed that they graded the children according to their ages, and that they were particular in looking after the interests of the younger children. I may say that during this time I was attending the school during school hours, looking on at the work. I was one of those who encouraged and supported the school from the Maori standpoint.

21. Will you tell us something about the influence of Te Aute boys on the Maoris?—The elder boys, after leaving school and returning to their hapus, would be admitted to take part in the meetings held by the elder people, and to take part in the management of the affairs of the hapu. The Te Aute students could thoroughly explain matters to their elders from the European standpoint. The old people would listen to what they had to say, and would then have their suggestions carried out. One thing these Te Aute old boys were very energetic about was to suppress the consumption of spirituous liquors, and to try and put an end to tangis and other Maori customs detrimental to the welfare of the race. They used to travel from village to village and from district to district to carry on this work, and out of that grew the annual conferences of the Te Aute old boys and the formation of what is now known as the Te Aute Old Boys' Association. The movement has spread all over the Island, and all the leading chiefs of the Island have become members of that society. I am a member of it. It was that movement which inspired the Maori Councils Act of 1900. That is some of the fruit due to the efforts of the students from Te Aute College. Then in my district it is the Te Aute students who manage and carry on the farm and station operations. They are not working for themselves only, but for the whole of the hapu. These are what I consider the fruits