

is something wrong either in the system of education or in the system of teaching. Probably the fault may not be with the teachers or the system; it may be the incapacity of the girls themselves—in fact, in many cases that is the cause.

4. *Mr. Lee.*] Where are they defective?—In a proper knowledge of the English language; they fail in their examinations.

5. Where do they show this deficiency when they enter life?—There are two Native girls in the Wellington Hospital, and, I am told, according to the doctor in charge, there are no better nurses in the Hospital than these two Native girls. They understand how to handle a patient and all that, but they cannot pass their examinations to enable them to gain their certificates. They were put there to enable them to become qualified nurses for work amongst the Native people. That is the instance which made me realise there is something wrong in these girls' schools, or probably, on the other hand, it is not in these girls to work up to that standard.

6. *Mr. Ngata.*] That is probably the explanation. A lot of these girls can do all the practical work, but fail in the theoretical part of the examination?—That is so. There are many faults on the Native side in regard to equipping Native children with the necessary education. However, if something could be done in regard to the creation of more colleges like that at Te Aute at the centres I have suggested, leaving Te Aute to cover the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay Districts—

7. *The Chairman.*] Do you intend to pool Te Aute with these Wairarapa reserves?—Yes, because they belong to the one people. There is no reason for jealousy. In fact, it would greatly benefit the people on the East Coast if the revenue from these reserves were pooled to strengthen Te Aute in some branch or another of education. I am pointing out the absurdity of running a small college on the revenue accruing from these two reserves at Kaikokirikiri and Ngaumutawa, with the help of some donations from some English gentleman. That is not sufficient. Now, Te Aute belongs to the same people. It is strong at the present time, but it could be strengthened further, and it could be improved for the benefit of the children from the Wairarapa right up to Hawke's Bay and Petane.

8. In pooling these reserves, how would you provide for the children who could not go to Te Aute, or whose parents could not afford to send them?—In any case, the same difficulty is meeting the Natives at the present time. Clareville College is there now, but they cannot enter. So far as I know, they can only keep twelve boys at Clareville, and the children in the Wairarapa would muster over three hundred, I believe. However, some of the Natives could take advantage of the public schools, and that, to my mind, would be a very good thing. That would enable the children to be taught up to a certain point—say, up to the Fifth Standard—which would enable them to be forwarded on to Te Aute, according to the rules of the Native Education Department. I was going to point out the weak spots in our Native educational system all round. Our Government village schools are entirely necessary as a sort of kindergarten in which to teach the children some idea of English. The standards from one to four are very weak. The latter is not equivalent to the fourth at Te Aute or at St. Stephen's. The result is that many boys pass the Fourth Standard in the Government village schools, and only a few, according to the rules of the Native Education Department, can be sent forward to Te Aute and St. Stephen's. So you will realise this is a bar to many boys who pass the Fourth Standard in the Native village schools. They go back to their homes, and they have no further opportunities of pursuing higher education, and the result is that the education taught them at the village schools becomes of no use at all. The point I wish to emphasize is that there is no opening for the boys who pass the Fourth Standard in the village schools. The only alternative for the Department is to attach some of them to some trade. The position is this: out of, say, 100 boys who pass the Fourth Standard each year in our Native village schools, Te Aute is entitled to only seven or ten, and St. Stephen's to twenty; and the number who are apprenticed to trades is very small. There is the block which bars the progress of the majority of the boys. They have to go back to their homes, because I doubt very much whether the Department will allow them to remain on at the village schools to the detriment of the younger boys and girls coming on.

9. *Mr. Lee.*] I think so. They are bound, do you not think, to find sufficient elementary education for the wants of the country?—But there is the question of accommodation. I have been following this up and watching it very, very closely. In 1904, for instance, there were not more than six boys, I believe, who passed the Sixth Standard. However, that is the weak spot in our Native educational system, and it would be an improvement, and it would assist the Government village schools, if boarding-schools, very much like those at Te Aute and St. Stephen's, were established by the Government in such central places as I have suggested—viz., say, one in North Auckland district, one in the heart of the Waikato, one in the Bay of Plenty, and one on the West Coast. For the East Coast Natives there is the school at Waerenga-a-hika, near Gisborne. If such boarding-schools could be established it would greatly improve the education of the boys and girls coming from the village schools. The Natives suffer under several disabilities. The parents are poor; they have not the means to clothe their children properly; they have not the means in many instances to feed them properly right throughout the year. Owing to these causes the children are kept at home by the parents, and they only go to school once in a while; whereas if these boarding-schools were available for the children coming from the Native village schools the standard of education would be raised, and the Native children would be better equipped for the higher educational standard taught at Te Aute and St. Stephen's, and at the other colleges to be appointed for the higher education of Native children. As I have said before, the most important feature in the education of Native children is a knowledge in agriculture. I think teaching in agriculture ought to be made a very, very strong point at only one centre—at Te Aute. Of course, we have to take into consideration the question of means in advocating any schemes or reforms, and that is the reason why I say Te Aute would probably be the best place. It has better land,