

that are required for a certificate, the standard is exactly the same for the Fifth and Sixth Standards—and has been for several years—as it has been in the public schools. I have examined classes that were candidates for certificates of proficiency in Standard VI at Te Aute College, Queen Victoria School, St. Stephen's, Hukarere, and St. Joseph's—with an assistant I examined all of them in December, 1904. We issued certificates of proficiency—that is, certificates of a good pass in Standard VI—and I say that if an Inspector of any Education Board had examined those children, he would, in my judgment, have given them the same certificates as he would have given to European children of any ordinary Board school. That is the standard that has been set up in Native schools. The standard of English is not lowered in the Fifth and Sixth Standards. Allowance is made for English being a foreign language up to the Fourth Standard, but no allowance is made in the Fifth and Sixth Standards. With regard to English at St. Stephen's, it is perfectly true that in December, 1904, when I inspected the school and thoroughly examined all the boys—it is perfectly true that the English was not so good as it ought to have been, and in my report of 1905 it is stated that the English in the two upper classes was not nearly so good as the English in the lower classes. And the reason for that was not hard to find. It was this: the teacher in the upper classes was not as efficient as he ought to have been—he has been changed since—partly, probably, because he was speaking to the boys in Maori; they were translating Maori, and they were talking in Maori on the playground, whereas at Te Aute they talk English on the playground. They must talk English on the playground at Te Aute, whereas at St. Stephen's you hear them talking Maori on the playground. And I must say that in the case of the Native boys who had come from the Native village schools the pronunciation of English was distinctly better than that of the average European boy. The English in the lower classes was good, whereas in the upper it was bad. It was good in the lower classes because of the immense advance in the teaching of English in the Maori village schools in the last two or three years. The amount of practice has been more than doubled, and we have given up the use of translation at the earlier stages. Last year I had some one to help me at the examination at St. Stephen's—I did very little examination myself—but I took the oral examination in agriculture, health, and in one or two other subjects. I noticed that in the case of the younger boys who had come up to the higher classes their English, instead of going back, had improved, and I think there will be an improvement now at St. Stephen's in English. The teacher who has been appointed there was one of the best teachers in our Native village schools. With regard to Te Aute, Mr. Bird's evidence—which I fully corroborate—was that the English there has been very much improved. Te Aute also gives evidence of the fact that the English at the Native village schools has improved. The teaching of English in the Native village schools has so much improved that they find no use for the two lowest classes at Te Aute now. The boys can do the necessary English before they go there, and the upper classes have improved, showing that the abolition of these two lower classes has not affected the school in respect to English. That proves that Mr. Thornton was perfectly justified in doing away with the two lower classes for the teaching of elementary English at Te Aute. No evidence could be stronger than that. They have not now to teach elementary English there, because the boys come there speaking English and writing English. I wish I had with me to show the Commission a letter written by a girl in the Fourth Standard at a Maori village school. It is as well-written a letter as you could get from any Fourth Standard pupil in any English school. I should like to give evidence at greater length with regard to the Wanganui Collegiate School. I suppose it is open to me to express an opinion as to the view I take of the position that the trust should occupy in the education system of the colony, for it seems to me that it would be best to regard the trust as part of the education system of the colony; and I am more inclined to do that because in the days when the grant was given it was a very common practice on the part of the Government to give these grants in trust to one or other of three religious bodies. With three or four exceptions, there hardly seem to have been any educational trusts given in the early days except to religious bodies as trustees. It was the then way of giving them, and particularly so in the Wellington Provincial District. The Provincial Ordinance of 1847 the Commission has already had before it, and that seems to contemplate that the recognised method of dealing with educational trusts was to give them to religious bodies, which were then the most organized bodies outside the Government. Later on, from time to time, but more especially in the year 1878, a large number of other grants were given. These grants were given not any longer to religious bodies, but to special Boards of Governors to manage for educational purposes; and I cannot help thinking that the general ideas of the Government were more or less the same in the case of the early trusts as they were in the case of the later trusts, the only difference being, as I have said, that the early trusts were given to religious bodies as trustees and the later trusts to special bodies. Of course, there are two important distinctions: one is what I have already named—the giving of these to a religious body in trust; and the second one, the specifying certain subjects of instruction—religious instruction, industrial training, and instruction in the English language. It seems to me that I might therefore suggest to the Commission that to carry out the principles of the trust on lines that are recognised elsewhere the trusts have to be slightly modified in so far as that we should regard them as part of the general education system of the colony; and the Commission might—this is only a suggestion—the Commission might take that view of it, and yet at the same time regard as more or less the fact that the authorities of the Church of England are the trustees under the terms of the grant. The position in regard to the general secondary-school system at present is that, if you include the district high schools, there are now something like 4,500 pupils who are receiving free secondary education. They have to pass certain qualifying examinations to show that they are fit to receive secondary education, and in every considerable town—and a good many towns of smaller size—there is either a high school or a district high school giving free secondary education. District high schools are not in their very character suited for towns that are large enough to have a considerable number of secondary pupils, because a district high school consists of two departments—a primary department and a secondary