

299. Are you aware of any regulations on that subject?—I am not. As regards this poverty and indigence clause, we always considered it related only to foreigners and to educational poverty and indigence, and not pecuniary; because, in the latter case, foreigners could not have afforded to send their children to the school, and the Trust respecting them would have been a mockery. We considered them entitled to send children to the school if they could show that they had no means of educating them at home. My business, as an engineer, brings me constantly into contact with the labouring classes, but I never met with one who could not afford to educate his children.

300. At the present fees?—I do not say at the present endowed-school fees, but the fees that were paid at the Government schools.

301. Are you aware that there are no fees at the Government schools?—I mean the fees paid at the Government schools before the present system was started.

302. Do you know the amount of the fees at the Government schools before the present system?—I think it was about £1 or £1 10s. a quarter, according to the pupils' ages; and school rates were also paid by the children's parents as well as others.

303. Do you know what the income of the school is now for rents?—I believe between £600 and £700 a year, but it was far less till lately, and will be far higher in future. When this endowment was first granted, the whole European population of that part of the country numbered only about 250 souls, scattered over more than 400 square miles, and the land only could be let in blocks suitable for paddocks and milk farms. As the old leases fall in, it is being cut into smaller blocks and building sites.

304. There are some private schools at Wanganui, are there not?—Yes; there are.

305. Do you know the fees at those schools?—I believe they are about the same as those of the endowed school.

306. Is the education at the endowed school superior to that in the private schools?—There is no school in Wanganui at which as good an education could be got as at the endowed school, except perhaps at the high school. Mr. Peat had to send his boy to Nelson the other day, after taking him from the endowed school. Mr. Godwin has also lately started a private school, and very possibly as good an education may be got there while it lasts.

307. Are you aware what fees he charges?—I am not.

308. I suppose school fees depend to a larger extent upon the ability of the teacher?—Yes.

309. And not upon the machinery of the school?—Yes. The masters of the endowed school are both Cambridge graduates.

310. Are you aware that experience in teaching is half the battle?—Of course I am aware of that. I know that a well-educated man may be an indifferent teacher for want of experience, while a half-educated man, with experience, may be a good teacher.

311. How is the endowment applied?—I believe the whole of it goes to the maintenance of the school. I do not think any Maori children are maintained out of the funds now.

312. Are you aware of the status of the children attending the school: are their parents wealthy people?—There is no restriction about that. Some are rich, some poor.

313. Are any of them, as a matter of fact, the children of wealthy parents?—Some of them are; some are not.

314. As a rule?—No; not as a rule.

315. What is the average daily attendance?—About 25, I believe.

316. What was the average daily attendance last year?—I think a little over 20.

317. Are you aware that a report was sent in by the teacher stating that it was 36 at the end of last year?—Well, his report would be correct. I know the school fell off for a time from various causes. It unfortunately became necessary to discharge the headmaster, and some people did not feel the same confidence in a new teacher as in him. Just at that time Mr. Thomson came to Wanganui, and started a new school, to which boys were sent who otherwise would have gone to the endowed school; and afterwards Mr. Godwin came back and started his private school, and some of his friends sent their boys to him. The falling off was only temporary, and I believe the numbers are increasing again.

318. You have stated that you hoped one of the results of the school would be the elevation of the Maori, by imparting to him a higher education?—I hoped that would be the result.

319. Then, as Maoris are not now attending the school, do you think it has failed in that respect?—It has been a partial failure in that respect.

320. Do you know the names of the Trustees?—I am not sure who all the Trustees are.

321. Have you read the Bill?—I saw a copy of it in a Wanganui paper.

322. The Trustees are the Bishop of Wellington, Mr. George Hunter, and Mr. W. M. Bannatyne. Do you know if these Trustees have been in Wanganui lately?—I am not aware whether the laymen have or have not. The Bishop has been in Wanganui lately.

323. Do you know how the school is managed?—The Trustees have a local agent, Mr. Edward Churton, a very energetic business man, who consults with Mr. F. R. Jackson and Mr. H. J. Jones, two of the shrewdest business men in the place.

324. What are Mr. Churton's duties?—He receives rents and looks after the general management of the estate under the Trustees.

325. Has he anything to do with the management of the school?—No; I think not.

326. Are you aware whether there is any local body managing the school?—No; and I think it is a good thing that there is not. I have seen the evil of it in the common schools.

327. Would you go so far as to say there should be no local management?—I think as it is at present it is far better. There is less local pressure and wire-pulling, and the school discipline is not weakened by the masters being interfered with needlessly.

328. Do you know how the Trustees manage it now?—I believe they manage it as well as it can be managed.

329. Have you any knowledge whether they hold local meetings, or investigate the management of the school?—No; I have not.