

442. There are Maori children attending the school now?—I speak with some little hesitation, because I have not been in Wanganui, and my business with the Trust has been in connection with accounts.

443. That was what I was asking you—whether you considered your duties simply extended to collecting accounts and moneys?—My duties would extend further than that, only it was not convenient for me to go to Wanganui.

444. Then you cannot say whether the school was properly managed or not?—I have always heard it was properly managed, through Mr. Jackson and Mr. Churton, who availed themselves of the assistance of Mr. Jones.

445. Does he look after the scholastic management?—I think Mr. Churton looks after the general management, and does a great deal for the institution.

446. Do you think if there were only twenty-five children attending the school, and that cost nearly £700 a year, that charging these children £6 to £7 a year, that is getting education for the amount of money expended?—Perhaps not; but still, more could not be done at the time. There was every probability at one time of the school increasing in numbers, but they fell off considerably; one cause being a change of masters, and another the building of the new school-room.

447. Do your co-Trustees in Wellington take any greater interest personally in the management than you do yourself?—Mr. Hunter is the only other Trustee, except the Bishop. The Bishop has always relieved us of that part of the duties.

448. You looked after the accounts?—I looked after the accounts.

449. And you left the other matters to the Bishop?—That was it.

450. And do you think that was carrying out the objects of the Trust?—If I had known I was called upon to do more, and I had been required, I should have done so; but the Bishop looked after the school, and, I believed, carefully.

451. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Would you consider it would be any infringement of legal rights if the management of this school were handed over to a local body, without disturbing the Trust at all?—That I cannot say. The only circumstance that would guide me was when Mr. Godwin, the late schoolmaster, was found fault with for irregularities; and when the people there persuaded the Trustees to allow him to remain a little longer, and we had afterwards to dispense with him. That makes me think that local management would not be so good.

452. Still, you are not prepared to say that you would consider it an infringement or otherwise of vested rights?—I do not exactly know what you mean by “vested rights;” but the Church of England understood it is in the grant, because there is no doubt that originally the grant was for the Church of England, and to the Bishop of New Zealand, and so far, I should imagine, the Church has vested rights.

453. And, having vested rights, you consider it would be an infraction of them to remove the administration from Wellington to Wanganui?—I think so.

454. *Mr. Hislop.*] Is there any advantage to the Church in having the management of this Trust?—I do not know that there is to the Church itself; but I think if the grant had been made to other denominations, they would have put the same interpretation upon it that I do, and would have claimed the same right to hold the property.

455. But is there anything to be gained by the Church in keeping the Trust?—I was going to say that they look forward to much more than at present.

456. Do they look forward to establishing a Church of England school?—I have not heard that is the intention, except keeping on the present school. They have lately built new school-rooms—I suppose with the intention of carrying on the school.

457. I will quote from the evidence of the Bishop, given before the Royal Commission. He says, in answer to this question, “As a matter of fact, the school was attended by children of all denominations?”—“Yes; but possibly we would now be inclined to restrict it, and make it more of a Church school, if the community were well supplied with the High school and other schools.” Has the Bishop consulted you with regard to that?—I heard him say it possibly might be the intention some time ago; but I do not know that it was a fixed thing.

458. But have you any intention in that direction?—I cannot say, except that as a Trustee I should be guided more by my Bishop.

459. If the Bishop went that way, you would go with him?—Well, if he gave me good reasons, I think I would.

460. *The Chairman.*] Is there a periodical audit of accounts?—Yes, once a year.

461. Who is the auditor?—The school accounts are always audited by some Government officer who certifies to them. Last year's accounts were audited by the Collector of Customs, Wanganui.

462. The auditor has the examining of the accounts every year up to the 30th June?—Yes, and signs a certificate. He has the examining of the accounts, and finds them correct so far as the vouchers are concerned.

463. How is Mr. Churton paid?—I do not think he is paid anything; all he does is from love.

464. He is a commission agent in Wanganui?—Yes.

465. He holds a power of attorney from the Trustees?—Yes.

466. But does he not receive commission on the rents collected?—I cannot say positively; I know he does a great deal for nothing, but I do not know whether he charges commission on the rents collected.

467. I see by the Blue Book here that Mr. Churton's commission is put down as follows:—“Commission—1 per cent.—on negotiating sale of land for railway purposes, £6; E. Churton's commission—5 per cent. on amount collected, £763—£38 8s.”

468. I received a letter from the Bishop the other day informing us that Mr. Travers was appointed counsel for the Trustees. Would he wish to be present at our meetings?—I do not know—I have not seen him; but I will inform Mr. Travers.