

*Wiremu Erueti*: The exchange of land that has taken place is a new matter, and we would like that explained to us.

*The Chairman*: That was explained by the witness this morning. We have also asked the Registrar of Deeds to come here and produce deeds, showing the original grants and the pieces exchanged, and so forth. I would like the Natives to be informed that we will hold a meeting at Te Aute if it is necessary. We wish to give them every chance, but the main evidence must be taken here.

*Wiremu Erueti*: Another matter we wish to lay before the Commission is this: We would like the school to be at once carried on according to the trust, and that there should be no divergence from the trust.

*The Chairman*: I would like the Natives to appoint a representative to listen to the evidence taken here, and then to make out a memorandum of the matters they wish to bring before us. Upon receipt of that we will then decide as to holding a meeting at Te Aute, and if we decide to go there due notice will be given to them.

*Wiremu Erueti*: That will satisfy us. We will do that.

JOHN BECKETT FIELDER examined.

1. *The Chairman*.] What is your occupation?—I am registrar of the Diocese of Waiapu, and also one of the trustees of the Te Aute trust.

2. When were you appointed a trustee?—On the 21st August, 1885.

3. That is the first time you had anything to do with this trust?—Yes.

4. And do you, as well as being trustee, occupy any other position, such as secretary to the trust, or have you the custody of the deeds and documents?—I have had, and I have at the present time, the custody of the whole of the trust deeds of the Diocese of Waiapu as registrar of the diocese—the whole of the deeds relating to all trust properties are in my custody.

5. Do the Te Aute trustees hold any regular meetings?—Yes, since 1900, and since I took an active interest in the trust. Our first meeting was on the 4th May, 1900, at Mr. A. G. Cotterill's office, Napier.

6. Do you keep a minute-book?—Yes.

7. Which you now produce?—Yes.

8. Under whose instructions were the minutes kept?—Under the instructions of the board. I may say that I am what you might call the corresponding trustee to the trust.

9. Do the trustees keep any banking account?—No.

10. Do they receive any of the moneys, or disburse any of the moneys of the trust?—No.

11. Do they take any part whatever in the management of the trust?—No—that is to say, in the interior economy of the trust.

12. Who acted in the capacity in which you now act? Who kept the minute-book prior to this minute-book?—To the best of my knowledge and belief, there was a minute-book kept, but the trustees were in Wellington. I cannot say definitely.

13. You have none in your possession?—No. Of course, I presume they kept them.

14. Will you say what part the trustees took in the administration of the trust in your time?—It was in reference to the leasing of the estate, and in reference to the landed estate.

15. To whom was that intrusted?—To Archdeacon Samuel Williams, under authority from the trustees.

16. He has administered the whole of that part of the trust on behalf of the trustees from the beginning of the trust?—Yes, and up to the present time.

17. That is to say, the appointment of teachers and the general supervision of the College has been under his control?—Yes.

18. And the financial part of the trust—in regard to receipts and expenditure?—Yes. He reported to the Diocesan Synod, and also to the General Synod.

19. Accounts of receipts and disbursements were sent in regularly?—Yes, regularly, since 1892. They have been published in the Synod reports since then.

20. You can produce them by-and-by?—Yes.

21. Did the trustees visit the College from time to time?—Yes.

22. And they had a general knowledge of what was going on?—Yes.

23. And everything that was done met with their approval?—Yes.

24. Were the accounts audited from time to time?—Yes, every year.

25. And the books were kept at the College?—Yes.

26. Do you know whether any of the funds coming from the estate were applied in establishing any other school or schools?—Yes.

27. What school?—Hukarere Native Girls' School. That was established by the authority of the trustees in the first instance, and by Act of Parliament.

28. Moneys coming out of the Te Aute Estate proper have been applied in maintaining Hukarere?—Yes.

29. We had it from the Bishop the other day that Hukarere was a gift by the first Bishop of Waiapu, Bishop William Williams?—Yes.

30. The Te Aute moneys were paid over to the Hukarere School under the authority of Act of Parliament?—Yes, of 1892. That Act recites the conditions and who the trustees were.

31. Do you know what moneys from the Te Aute Estate have been so applied?—I only know from the published accounts. They show the amounts.

32. During your time, have the trustees paid any money, or allowed any money out of the funds, to the Archdeacon as superintendent at Te Aute?—None whatever. His services have been given voluntarily.

33. Have the trustees paid him any moneys out of the funds for improvements, or anything of that sort?—No, nothing. He has expended very large sums of money on the improvement of the estate, and he has been allowed nothing for it.