

2,300 acres, somewhat as shown on the enclosed plan, should be offered to the Government at a fair price, including the tenant's interest. The purchase-money could be paid in cash, and possession taken at a date to suit the convenience of Archdeacon Williams, the tenant, with whom you could no doubt arrange.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant, A. BARRON, Chairman, Board of Land Purchase Commissioners.—The Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Waiapu, Napier.” That matter came before the trustees, and it was not acceded to. That appears in the minute-book. As the corresponding trustee, I sent this reply: “Diocese of Waiapu, Napier, 21st February, 1906.—The Chairman, Board of Land Purchase Commissioners, Wellington.—Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 31st ultimo, addressed to the Right Rev. the Bishop of this diocese, requesting this board of trustees of the Te Aute trust to offer to the Government for small-settlement purposes about 2,300 acres of the land of the Te Aute College trust, and, in reply, I beg to inform you that the board cannot accede to your request.—Yours faithfully, J. B. FIELDER, for self and co-trustees.”

121. Have the trustees ever received any complaints from the Natives or from anybody else in regard to their administration of the estate?—Nothing, either directly or indirectly, that I am aware of.

122. Has it ever been suggested that the trustees in the administration of the estate have acted otherwise than in the interests of the trust?—No. I may say there has been some anonymous correspondence in the newspapers.

123. We do not take notice of anonymous correspondence?—That is so. There has never been a complaint. If there had been any official communication it would have been addressed to the trustees, and I have heard of nothing.

124. Has the Education Department ever written to the trustees, or in any way communicated with them, asking for information in regard to their administration outside the question of technical education?—Never, that I am aware of.

125. Has the Education Department, or the officers of the Department, ever visited you or the College, and asked to see your deeds and documents and accounts?—I do not know whether they have visited Te Aute, but they have never been to me as one of the trustees or as registrar of the diocese to see the deeds, conveyances, grants, or leases.

126. Have the trustees at all times been willing and ready to show their accounts, deeds, and documents, and their dealings as trustees to the Education Department, or to the Government generally?—Yes, or to any one else. Our accounts are always published each year, and are generally circulated.

127. Is there any other matter you desire to bring before the Commission, or have you anything further to volunteer?—All I can say is that the trustees always have been and always shall be quite willing and anxious to give all the information they can in reference to the administration of the trust. I have a copy of the Commission.

128. *Mr. Hogg.*] By whom are the trustees appointed?—By the Diocesan Trusts Board. The board of each diocese is constituted by the canon of the General Synod.

129. You were appointed in 1885?—Yes, with the Bishop of Waiapu, Sir William Russell, Mr. J. N. Williams, and Mr. A. J. Cotterill. We replaced Bishop Hadfield and the other trustees in Wellington. I produce the appointments of trustees, dated the 13th May, 1862 [Exhibit No. 16]; 21st August, 1885 [Exhibit No. 17]; 20th September, 1895 [Exhibit No. 18]; and June, 1903 [Exhibit No. 19].

130. The first meeting of the trustees, according to this minute-book, was held in 1900?—That was the first meeting of which I kept the minutes when I became corresponding trustee, *vice* Mr. Cotterill, who had previously held that position. He was one of the trustees and also solicitor for the estate. There are no minute-books of the previous meetings to my knowledge; but I do not say there were no minute-books kept. I would like very much to obtain all these ancient documents.

131. *The Chairman.*] Will you take steps to ascertain whether any documents or deeds or papers relating to this trust are in Wellington?—I will. I do not know to whom I am to apply, because all the previous trustees are dead.

132. I suppose these records are kept for the Synod by some responsible officer?—I suppose so.

133. *Mr. Hogg.*] When did this exchange of land take place?—On the 4th May, 1900.

134. This land was valued: can you say whether there is much land on the estate of a similar quality to the land that was exchanged? Is the land that was exchanged a fair sample of the land throughout the estate, or was it a piece of land of exceptional value?—I have never been over the estate, and can hardly say. Of course the Archdeacon can answer that question. I know the estate has gained considerably by the exchange.

135. Since that exchange was made, do you think from your own knowledge of what is going on that the price of land has increased?—Yes, the price of land in Hawke's Bay has increased considerably.

136. In 1903 a lease was executed for twelve years?—Yes.

137. How is it that you departed from the usual term of seven or fourteen or twenty-one years?—I do not know. A lease is granted for all periods.

138. Who suggested twelve years?—It was discussed at our meeting, and it was suggested—I do not know by whom—that we should give a lease for twelve years.

139. On a previous occasion the lease was for fourteen years, consisting of two terms, and the rent was increased very materially during the second term: what I want to know is whether the matter was discussed, and why that process was not adopted in regard to the subsequent leases?—I do not think the question was ever raised, so far as my memory serves me.

140. Are you aware whether there has been any agitation on the part of the people of Napier or neighbourhood for the subdivision of this land?—I have heard nothing of it.

141. You have heard nothing of any petitions or meetings, or anything of that sort?—No.