

194. When was your position better defined?—Well, my position was denned between these three stools.

195. But when was your position satisfactorily defined by power of attorney or otherwise?—It was at an early date. Bishop Selwyn asked me to act as a trustee, and I said I would rather not. I said I would rather act for the trustees as a whole if they would trust me, and that if they would give me a free hand I would take the position, but not otherwise. They were evidently satisfied I should take that position, and they gave me a power of attorney, which I now produce [Exhibit No. 20]. I have had everything to do with it from that time.

196. When did you first become a tenant of the trustees?—It was some years afterwards. I never could understand why they made up their minds to lease the property. I was quite content to keep on as manager for the estate, and to get all I could out of it for the school; but they made up their minds that they would lease it, and I had given up all idea of having anything whatever to do with it until I was urged by some people to retain the property in my own hands. My reply was, "Well, if the trustees fix the rent they want for it I will then say whether I will take it up or not." They did so, and I thought I saw my way to get along, and I accepted it.

197. When was that?—When they granted a lease for £500 a year.

198. Can you fix approximately the date when you became the tenant of the trustees?—I can give it to you exactly.

199. Was there a written lease?—Yes, a proper deed.

200. And how long did that continue in force?—I think seven years.

201. Have you got a copy of the first lease?—I am under the impression I handed them up to Mr. Cotterill, but I will not be positive. I will search for it.

202. Did that lease expire in the ordinary course of things?—Yes.

203. And during the time that lease was in existence did you pay the rent to anybody, or did you disburse the moneys yourself?—I disbursed the money. I was advancing money for everything at that time. We were heavily in debt.

204. Up to the time of the first lease you were simply there as agent or manager for the trustees, doing the best you could with the means at your disposal to educate these children?—Yes, to do the best I could for them and then for the property. We had ceased taking children at that time.

205. And then you became a tenant?—Yes.

206. And also agent for the trustees as well?—Yes, and superintendent of the educational work. I think we opened the school as it stands now in 1872.

207. Then you were agent for the trustees, and you have continued in that position right up to the present day?—Yes.

208. That is to say, the trustees never interfered with you in any way?—No; they placed confidence in me. Mr. Stokes was the visiting trustee from Wellington. He came up repeatedly. I satisfied the trustees from year to year that everything was right.

209. And ever since then they have allowed you to carry the work on on the same lines?—Yes. They have always been satisfied, and I have always said, "You have only to let me know at any time that you would like a change."

210. Then a second lease was granted?—Yes; it was agreed by valuation.

211. And that was satisfactory to both sides?—Yes.

212. And then came a third lease in 1892, and then the last lease?—Yes.

213. Do you say, talking generally, that all these leases were fair leases, and leases which the trustees were justified in entering into on behalf of the people for whose benefit the trust was created?—I think so, certainly. I know that for some years I did not get the money back that I paid; but, still, the object of my life, I may say, was the school, and I was never averse to losing a little money on it.

214. Have you received any money or compensation whatever for your individual exertions on behalf of this trust?—None whatever. I received a moderate salary for the first few years from the Church Missionary Society for my services as a missionary, and then I released them from all expense on my behalf. That is some thirty or forty years ago. I have never had sixpence from any Department for the work I have done.

215. Did you advance any moneys or expend any moneys of your own on the property?—Yes, large sums of money. In most instances, I entered the heavier sums and worked them out of the place with interest, and the same with the money that I borrowed for erecting the buildings. There was a fund, which I might call a family fund, provided to a great extent by an aunt of mine in England, a sister of the first Bishop of Waiapu. This fund was offered to me for Te Aute, and I declined. I said, "No. I have another bird to kill. I will take it, and I will give a moderate rate of interest on it; but there is another important thing to be taken in hand." That was the Hukarere School for the girls, and I applied that money gradually, as it was wanted, to the erection of the Hukarere School and to the upkeep of it. I might mention that the Church Missionary Society gave £150 for each of the schools for salaries, but after some length of time—I cannot say exactly when—they said they felt obliged to discontinue it. The calls upon them were too heavy, and we managed to carry on without their assistance.

216. Does the trust property owe you any money in respect of advances or money expended on behalf of the trust?—No. There were some moneys paid to the Hukarere School, but they were gifts. There were also many gifts I gave to the Te Aute School that were never entered at all. For instance, in the early start 250 ewes were given us, and we could not supply meat out of them. I believe I supplied the whole of the meat for many years.

217. Did you keep books while acting as agent for the trustees, showing the receipts and expenditure?—Yes; everything was shown in the books, excepting what I gave.

218. The books do not show the money you gave?—No.

219. Do you say that any of the moneys you advanced were in the nature of loans?—Yes, some of them were.