

182. *Mr. Hogg.*] Do you think Te Aute would fetch a much higher rental if cut up into reasonable-sized farms?—I have no doubt it would fetch more rent, but I do not think it would be a benefit to the College.

183. *Mr. Elliott.*] Do you know what rent the Archdeacon is paying?—Only by what I see in the papers—6s. 3d. per acre.

184. You know also that in addition to the rent he contributes in milk and cheap meat equal to £150 a year?—Oh, yes. £150 would not cover it.

185. You think it is more than that?—I think so. I do not think it would be for the benefit of the College if the estate was taken out of the Archdeacon's hands.

186. Would it not be to the advantage of the College if it produced more rent?—Yes; but if it did produce more rent the trustees would have to go to considerable more expense in paying to have the place managed.

187. Would the farmers not manage it themselves?—I mean, for instance, the Archdeacon renders a lot of assistance to the school and teacher that the trustees would have to pay for if the Archdeacon was not there to do it.

188. They would have to replace the Archdeacon's services in connection with the school?—Yes, by some competent person.

189. Then the Archdeacon has devoted a lot of attention and service to the College?—Yes. In fact, in the district he has always been looked upon as the owner of it. I was seven years in the Archdeacon's employ, and I know the assistance he has always rendered to the school.

190. *The Chairman.*] You know how the property has been farmed?—Yes.

191. Was any money spared in making a good property of it?—No; it has always been farmed to the best advantage.

192. It has always been kept in good heart?—Yes. Of course a lot of it is cleared bush land, and that sort of land at Te Aute always keeps in good heart.

193. *Mr. Hogg.*] While you were there did you notice if the trustees took any active interest in the College?—No. In fact, I never noticed the trustees there, with the exception of Mr. J. N. Williams. He was often there, but whether on business in connection with the College I do not know.

JAMES NELSON WILLIAMS examined.

194. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Williams?—I am a sheep-farmer, Hawke's Bay.

195. You are one of the trustees of the Te Aute Estate, appointed by the General Synod?—Yes.

196. How long have you been a trustee?—I think since about 1884.

197. You were a trustee at the time of the lease in 1892?—Yes.

198. And you were a party to that lease?—Yes.

199. You know about the 1903 lease?—Yes.

200. Did you take any part whatever in the negotiations?—No. I was present when it first came up for discussion, and I at once said I would have nothing to do with it, as Archdeacon Williams was a relative of mine, and I took no further part in the negotiations.

201. You know the terms of the lease?—Yes.

202. Looking at the whole of the circumstances, in your opinion, is it a fair lease and in the interests of the trust?—I think the rent given is very ample indeed. I thought so at the time.

203. You say that the lease is one that is beneficial to the trust?—I do.

204. And having regard to all the circumstances and the history of the trust, and Archdeacon Williams's connection with the trust, you think the trustees acted wisely?—I think the trustees, having had a good tenant in the past, would not have acted wisely if they had thrown him over lightly in making a new lease. I would not do that if I were transacting my own private business.

205. Of course, you were a party to this lease, but it was signed by your attorney?—Yes; I was absent at the time.

206. You know about the exchange?—Yes.

207. You sanctioned that as one of the trustees?—Yes.

208. Do you consider that a proper exchange?—I consider that was an exchange for the benefit of the trust. The land the trust got is more valuable than the land given for it.

209. I think most of the witnesses say that in the exchange the trust got the best of the bargain: do you agree?—Without doubt.

210. Do you know the reason for the exchange?—I think there were two reasons. It was to the Archdeacon's advantage, as owning the adjoining land, to get that piece; but he gave up land of considerably better value as land. The land he gave up was extremely valuable, I consider, to the trust.

211. Speaking generally, you say it was to the advantage of the trust to make that exchange?—Yes.

212. *Mr. Lee.*] Do you know anything of a flock of sheep that was on this station at one time?—That was many years ago.

213. Yes?—I have a dim recollection of it.

214. You do not know its history?—No.

215. How many times have you been over the property?—Years ago I was over it frequently. I lived myself at the back of it some distance—up along the mountains—and I used to cross one part of the property to get to where I lived.

217. Have you taken an interest in the school?—I have not taken any personal interest in the manner in which the education is carried on.

218. Do you happen to know whether the children in it have been healthy or has there been sickness?—I believe there has been sickness; but I should say where you get a number of Maoris together the sickness in the case of the College students was less than if they had been in their own kaingas.