

144. You think it would be an act of extravagance on the part of the trustees at present, even supposing they had ample means, to destroy the present buildings?—I do, at present.

145. You think they are quite satisfactory for their purpose, and will be so for some years to come?—I think they are serviceable, healthy, and sanitary buildings. Every year we are doing something to make them better. They were built in 1880.

146. Is there ample means of escape in the event of fire?—Yes. There are ropes from every window, and the boys have fire practice.

147. They had their own station there?—Yes, a fire-hose.

148. Do you know anything about the high school that occupies a portion of the estate?—I do not know much about it. I know the land is let at a small rental.

149. With regard to the estate generally, it comprises 250 acres, and lies within the Borough of Wanganui, and, I suppose, it has been the desire of the trustees to get as much revenue from it as possible: what steps have the trustees taken of late years to attain that object?—Well, of late years there have been one or two alterations in the way of putting the leases up to auction, which was not done before.

150. A very large portion of the estate still remains to be dealt with?—Yes; unfortunately, we are very short of money indeed, and we cannot make the roads necessary in any subdivision of the estate. That hampers us completely.

151. In order to cut the estate up, under the Municipal Corporations Act, you have to lay off certain roads, 66 ft. wide, and have to metal and drain them, and so forth, and that involves a large expenditure of money?—Yes, and we have no funds for the purpose.

152. Of course, after the roads are made and metalled the Corporation takes them over, and the maintenance of the roads then falls on the borough?—Yes.

153. And until that is done the cost falls on the trustees?—Yes, and that has been the difficulty.

154. I suppose the trustees have also considered the question as to whether they can dedicate a portion of the estate for roads?—We did get an opinion on that point.

155. In your opinion, could the estate or portions of the estate have been let on building leases if efforts had been made in that direction?—I think Mr. Maclean and Mr. Beckett will be able to give better evidence on that point than I can. They have always managed the leases.

156. There was a considerable land-boom in Wanganui two or three years ago?—Yes, and the opposite now. That is why we thought it advisable to wait with some building leases that we had.

157. You admit, if you had the funds, it would be advisable to push the land into the market?—Yes; I think that is the key to the whole question, although I do not know that this is the best time to do so.

158. Do you not think it would be desirable from a business point of view, instead of reserving the frontages along the Avenue for ornamental purposes, to cut them up into building allotments, and let them on long building leases?—I do not think we are keeping them for ornamental purposes.

159. I suppose you admit the Avenue frontages are the very best?—Yes.

160. And if they were let on lease with some restriction as to the kind of building, they would bring in a very large revenue indeed?—Yes. That is why some wanted us to give up our present buildings and build on the other side of the railway.

161. Have you ever considered the question of exchanging for the reserve on St. John's Hill?—We have very often considered it. The idea was to get a more healthy situation. I do not think it would be so convenient for the day boys.

162. I suppose that is not worth considering as against the benefit from a health point of view?—I think it would be a very good thing, but since I found we could not make the exchange without an Act of Parliament I did not go to see the site for myself. I think the Wanganui Valley is rather enervating, but I protest against it being called unhealthy, which is a very different thing. No doubt it would be a good thing if the exchange could be effected, because it would be better to get the more bracing site. I have not actually investigated the subsoil there.

163. I believe the general physique of the boys is very good indeed?—It is excellent. They have a very fair amount of manly sports, and they go in for a large amount of Sandow exercises.

164. It has been said in regard to all the schools that the matter of sports has been overdone: what is your opinion about that?—I do not believe it is much overdone. I think it is a very hard thing to actually strike the happy mean.

165. *Mr. Hogg.*] Has any fund yet been created from which you could improve the land?—We have never had anything to lay by.

166. Then, if you thought it desirable to make roads and streets, and so on, you never had the means?—No.

167. Have you ever considered the desirability of providing in your leases for compensation for improvements?—I believe so. I have not a copy of the lease at present. I am not sure on the point. Mr. Quick has managed the legal business in connection with leasing.

168. Is the school subject to inspection?—Not regular inspection. We have often got one or two examiners from outside, and we like it if we can get it.

169. You never asked any Government Inspector to visit it on behalf of the Education Department?—I think the Inspector-General of Schools goes every year. Of course, that is the sort of thing we welcome.

170. You invite the Education Department to send its Inspectors there?—We should be very pleased to do anything that would tend to the efficiency of the school.

171. *Mr. Lee.*] One of the terms of the trust was that the school was supplied for industrial training: considering the advance that has now been made in teaching in technical schools, do you think that the carpentry that now is taught is enough to satisfy the intention of the deed?—Of course, it is a disputed point as to how much industrial training there should be at the school.