

Enclosure.

85. *The Chairman.*] You stated in your evidence in 1869 that there were some cattle there occasionally before it was laid down in grass. Does that state of things still continue?—That was only to meet the then existing state of circumstances. They were only grazing in the summer when the fern was growing. They were removed during the winter months.

86. *Hon. Mr. Russell.*] What became of those cattle?—I followed the advice given me by the Hon. Mr. Russell, Bishop Abraham, and others, and retained them in my own hands. The proceeds were appropriated to public purposes.

87. How were the proceeds appropriated?—In educational and charitable purposes. I do not think I am called upon to state particulars.

DEAR SIR,—

Te Aute, 11th June, 1906.

I have received through Mr. Fielder your letter of the 8th instant, together with enclosed extract from evidence given by myself before Select Committee of the Legislative Council in 1875, relating to certain cattle said to belong to the trust.

In reply, I have to state that the cattle referred to were not the property of the trust. They belonged to me exclusively. This is clearly implied in the extract under notice. You will observe that I declined to state particulars as to the appropriation of the proceeds. Had it not been clearly understood that the cattle were my own private property, my refusal to answer would have been challenged, as the Council had an undoubted right to know all particulars concerning the trust property. The terms "belonging to the trust" and "taken over by the trust," which occur in your letter under reply are thus seen to be erroneous.

The facts were briefly as follows: The cattle in question, a small mob of about thirty or forty head, were pastured elsewhere during the winter; but on the summer months, with the object of improving the land, they were turned on to the school property to assist in eating down the growing fern. With the same object in view, I offered to take other cattle from neighbours, but my offer was declined.

As regards the proceeds, they were expended at my own discretion in charitable and educational purposes, and in the general furtherance of my work in the district.

I am, &c.,

SAMUEL WILLIAMS.

P.S.—I may add that there were never any cattle belonging to the trust?—S. W.

R. A. Loughnan, Secretary, Te Aute Trust Commission, Wanganui.

Mr. E. N. Liffiton and Rev. Mr. Maclean appeared on behalf of the trustees of the Wanganui Industrial School Trust Estate.

Mr. Hone Heke, M.H.R. (Northern Maori District): I desire to give evidence before the Commission, and I also desire to point out that I am acting on behalf of some Natives of Wanganui who are interested in this question.

The Chairman: You appear on behalf of the Wanganui Natives, and have been instructed by them?

Mr. Heke: Practically so. I desire to name some of them. There is Mete Kingi, who has sent in a communication to the Acting-Premier in regard to this matter. He has been appointed by the Wanganui Natives to appear and give evidence, and there are several other Natives who also wish to give evidence. Dr. Buck has also asked to give evidence. Mr. Donald Fraser, who has lived amongst the Natives in the Rangitikei district for the last forty years, also desires to tender evidence. I make this statement because I am leaving for Wellington by the midday train. I intend to return in three or four days, and will be happy to give my evidence then, or I can give my evidence on the return of the Commission to Wellington.

The Chairman: We will endeavour to meet your convenience as far as possible.

Mr. G. Hogben: I am here to assist the Commission as far as lies in my power, and will be prepared to give evidence on behalf of the Education Department.

The Chairman stated the terms of the original trust, and the Commission was read by the Secretary of the Commission.

CHARLES EVAN MACKAY examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You are Mayor of the Borough of Wanganui?—Yes.

2. You tender your evidence as a private citizen?—Yes. I have received no instructions from the Corporation as to appearing. I merely desire to give evidence as to the way in which the trust estate has been administered—that is to say, as to the way in which the land comprising the trust property has been administered. I think the feeling of the majority of the people of Wanganui is that the estate has not been satisfactorily administered—that neither the town nor the trust has got the advantage from the estate which they should have done, considering its value and its adaptability for letting purposes. The estate consists roughly of some 250 acres, which is nearly a quarter of the area of the Borough of Wanganui, in which the land is situated. It is all level land, admirably adapted for building-sites. It has a long frontage to the main street of Wanganui; in fact, on every side it is bounded by a public street. I consider it is a great pity that the estate has not been roaded and subdivided, and put upon the market on building-leases. If that had been done, I have no doubt a great part of it would have been built on, and would have been bringing in a good revenue to the trust. As it is, it chokes the growth of the town in the direction in which it is most natural for the town to spread, and it forces people who desire to get land for building-sites to go outside the borough and take sections there. Some three years ago the demand for land increased very materially here—from three to four years ago. If they had then put up the land of this estate upon proper building-leases, I feel certain it would have gone off very well. I understand that there are difficulties in the way—that an Act of Parliament