

would be required to enable the trustees to spend money in roading, and, what would probably be necessary, to borrow money for that purpose. But I feel certain that if the trustees had applied for such an Act they would not have had any difficulty in getting it passed. It is apparent that something must be done soon. The present buildings, I understand, are inadequate for the number of students who attend the school. Not merely so, but the buildings are getting old, and are not so well adapted for their purpose as they used to be. I think it is recognised that shortly the school will have to be rebuilt, and it has always seemed to me that the proper thing to have done would have been to have provided for the cutting-up of the estate and putting it on the market, at the same time getting power to borrow for that purpose. I do not think there would be any difficulty in getting an Act passed for that purpose. With regard to the management of the estate, I believe that it should be under a board of management in Wanganui itself, and not as at present managed from Wellington. As it is, the control is now under a board of trustees in Wellington. I believe it is the general opinion that the management should be vested in a Wanganui body, and not a Wellington body. A local body would be more familiar with the circumstances; they are on the spot, and they would know better what is required to be done than any Wellington body can know. Of course, there has always been a representative of the trustees here, but at present I understand they have altered that somewhat. Until recently, I believe I am correct in stating, Mr. Liffiton has acted with full power. Now I understand that Mr. Liffiton has some part of the control, and the Rev. Mr. Maclean has other matters within his jurisdiction. If that is so, I think it is a mistake to divide authority like that. For the purposes of the trust there should be one person or body to whom one could look for everything.

3. In other words, the trustees should be local men?—Not that all the trustees should be local men, but the managing trustees should be local men. At present, if a lease is required all the deeds are prepared in Wellington. I believe that some years ago they were prepared in Wanganui, but now, I understand, they are all prepared in Wellington. That in itself is a disadvantage. Of course, this is a small matter compared with the administration of the trust. But I certainly think the administration of the trust should be vested in a Wanganui body, and not in a Wellington body. With the view of assisting the Commission I have instructed the Town Clerk to prepare a return showing what has been done with a borough reserve situated alongside—and just the same nature as the Wanganui College property—a property known as Smiley's paddock—which was cut up for building purposes some years ago. I propose to put before the Commission a statement showing what revenue the borough derived from it before it was cut up, and what revenue it now derives from it, and how that land has been built upon since it has been cut up.

4. What are the terms of the borough leases?—Forty-two-year leases. I shall furnish the Commission with a form of the lease.

5. Did those leases have any purchasers?—Yes, the leases went off well. They have all been taken up, and they have now all been built on.

6. Can you say what was the area?—No; I could not tell you exactly what was the area of Smiley's paddock, but the return prepared by the Town Clerk will show that. That return will also give the total rents, the number of houses erected on the land; it will also show the cost of roading, surveying, &c.

7. Of course, you know the school trustees have no power to raise money for the purposes of roading?—I understand that.

8. In order to form streets, the trustees will have to arrange with the borough under the Municipal Corporations Act?—Yes.

9. That means, they have got to form streets, metal them, form footpaths, and put in drains before the borough will take them over?—Yes.

10. I suppose the borough would be prepared to fairly consider any proposal made to them on that subject?—Yes; I have no doubt such a proposal would get fair consideration.

11. If the estate was cut up and leased, and was covered with houses, the borough would get a large increase in revenue from it in the way of rates?—Yes. I understand, though, that the advocates of rating on the unimproved value will demand another poll here. If that is carried the increase would not be so great.

12. Does this estate pay borough taxation?—Yes, they pay taxes, except this: that they claim to be exempt under the Rating Act in respect to 4 acres on which the school stands. There is a dispute as to their liability to pay rates on 4 acres connected with the school, in regard to which they claim to be exempt. Of course, the school-grounds cover a good deal more than 4 acres, but it is a question whether 4 acres should be exempt.

13. Have you heard any proposals or suggestions that the reserve at the top of the hill might be exchanged for a piece of land belonging to the trust alongside the racecourse, Public Domain, cricket-ground, and so forth—a new college to be built on the top of the hill?—I have heard no such suggestion.

14. I suppose that is a matter that would be considered by the borough?—We would consider it, but whether we should agree to the suggestion I cannot say.

15. Do you know anything about the other church reserves on the Victoria Avenue—the church reserves owned by Wesleyans, Presbyterians, and the Roman Catholic Church?—Yes; each of these bodies has a reserve on the Victoria Avenue.

16. Do you know the terms of their trust?—No. I believe they vary, except that they are generally for church purposes.

17. You do not know whether they are also for educational purposes?—I do not think so. A good deal of the Catholic property has been bought at various times, and was not included in the original grant.

18. What have you to say as to the Wanganui Collegiate School itself?—I think the school is an institution of which we are all proud.

19. The discipline at the school and the conduct of the students are good?—Yes.