

JOHN MORGAN examined.

87. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—I am a settler, resident in Wanganui.

88. You tender yourself as a witness and wish to make a statement?—If you will allow me, I will begin from the beginning, which is from 1853. I could mention a good deal in connection with the early history of the grant.

89. *The Chairman.*] We have that correspondence before us, and we take it that the trust is property set forth in the grant, and if anybody wishes to attack it the Supreme Court is open to them?—As I am not allowed to deal with the question of the validity of the grant, I will only say that there has never been a school established according to the terms of the trust. In looking over the list of students I can only see the name of one Maori. I maintain the trust has not been carried out in a proper manner. I also contend that a large portion of the land is in a worse state now than when I first saw it in 1853. I am speaking of the condition of the land itself. The land has never been properly managed.

90. Will you formulate your complaints against the trustees?—In the first place, the land is not drained. It is in a very bad state, and land that was once very fair land is now simply blowing sandhills, in consequence of the manner in which it has been leased.

91. Your first complaint is that the land has not been properly managed?—Yes.

92. What is your second complaint?—The way in which the land has been leased has caused a good deal of it to become blowing sands. I also contend that the school has never been established according to the terms of the grant.

93. You say that the school is not open to Maoris?—I do not know that, but there are no Maoris there to my knowledge. I would like to read the following letter from Bishop Selwyn, dated the 12th September, 1866: "SIR,—As I have ceased to be a trustee of the Wanganui Industrial School, I can do nothing by myself to secure a proper and useful administration of the trust. I find by the report of the trustees made to the General Synod in May, 1865, that the annual income was £200; accumulated capital, £515. The Public Grammar School in Auckland, also founded by Sir George Grey, has an annual income of £600, and accumulated capital £2,000, or more. But the Provincial Council have not yet seen their way clear to any plan for the foundation of a public school, and passed a resolution, I think two years ago, that the estate must be 'nursed' till a large capital has been accumulated. This leads me to think that there may be difficulties, of which at this distance I am no judge, which prevent the trustees from establishing any institution at present. The estate is held subject to any regulations which may be made from time to time by the General Synod. No regulations were applied for or issued at the meeting of the Synod in 1865. But the trustees are also subject to any regulations which may be made by the Standing Commission of the Synod. The simple course, then, will be for yourself, or any other person interested in the question, to forward a written memorial to me, as Chairman of the Standing Commission, stating your case, giving a copy of the document beforehand to the trustees of the Industrial School, in order that they may put in their answer. I will then bring the subject before the Standing Commission which meets frequently, and prompt attention will be given to the matter. My own private opinion is that, without any alteration of the terms of the trust, the industrial school estate may be made extensively useful 'for the improvement of education in the District of Wanganui irrespective of creed or class.'—Yours very respectfully, G. A., New Zealand."

94. A public meeting was held before that, and afterwards was there not a petition sent to Wellington?—Yes, there was a great deal done; but we omitted to take the matter to the Supreme Court.

95. What have you to say now?—This grant comprises nearly a quarter of the area of the Town of Wanganui. There has not been a drain put through it. I could show you water lying on the surface of the land as it was fifty years ago. It is a menace to the health of Wanganui, and it is a bar to the progress of the town. I propose that the trust should be taken away from the trustees altogether.

96. And give it to whom?—To the Government or to the Borough Council, so long as it can be made use of.

97. For what?—For building and general purposes, and for the benefit of Wanganui. I maintain it was *ultra vires* on the part of Sir George Grey to give that grant.

98. What is to become of the income?—Let the Government have it, or let the trustees lease the land, the same as in the case of the Hospital leases.

99. What would you do with the income?—Maintain the school as was first intended.

100. What sort of school?—An industrial school.

101. For whose benefit? Who should be the students to attend the school?—Sir George Grey gave the land for the benefit, I believe, of the Native race and for the benefit of poor children, and it should be devoted to that purpose now. Although we know that the position of educational affairs has altered since Sir George Grey gave the grant, still, I think it should not be diverted from its original purpose. There has been a very large revenue received from the school lately, and I want to know where that has all gone.

102. What are the alterations you suggest in the trust?—If the land is maintained as a trust, I say the trustees should be Wanganui people, and the trust should be for the benefit of Wanganui. It is part of the township, and the land has been taken from the Borough of Wanganui, and every day the residents are put to inconvenience in having to go round that large block of land instead of going through it. I say the trustees have not done their duty.

103. I take it one of your complaints is that the trustees have not been active in getting rid of the land on building-leases?—They have not done all they ought to have done.

104. Have you any complaint to make in reference to the school or the kind of teaching given there?—No.

105. Am I right in saying that the burden of your complaint is that the trustees have not acted as practical business men would have done in the way of cutting up the estate and leasing it, and thus getting the best revenue from it?—Yes. I say that every quarter-acre thus cut up would have been occupied. I also say that streets have not been laid out through the estate.