

25. Do you not think if the Borough Council had made good roads all round the external boundaries of the estate it would have induced the trustees to cut up the block and make roads through it?—No, I do not think so. There is a conflict between them.

26. *Mr. Ngata.*] You say you have not set foot on the estate for thirty years?—That is so, but I have been round it many times.

27. You generally will have got your impression of the administration of the estate from a distance?—I have been close to the estate. You do not need to go on it for that purpose. You can see the swampy land, and the gorse growing, and the sand blowing, from the road.

28. Have you put yourself in a position to inquire into the details of the administration of this estate? Have you taken the trouble to look up the papers bearing on the work of these previous Commissions and Committees?—I have had all that before me long ago. I have been interested in this concern for the last forty years.

29. You do not seem to know many details of the administration?—Not of the Collegiate School.

30. Or of the estate?—Oh, yes. I know it is mismanaged.

31. Do you know anything about the educational value of the institution?—No.

32. Do you not think the educational part of the work is worth inquiring into, because that is the object of the trust?—I think it should be strictly inquired into.

33. I mean personally: you did not think it worth inquiring into?—The fact is, if I went I should not get any information.

34. *Mr. Elliott.*] As you take so much interest in this trust, would you care to become a trustee?—I do not think I would. I am afraid I should not do any good.

EDWARD NOLLOTH LIFFITON examined.

35. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Land agent and accountant, Wanganui.

36. How long have you been here?—At the end of this year I shall have been here fifty years, excepting three years I was away in the north of Auckland. I have been a member of the Borough Council for about fifteen or twenty years.

37. Have you been appointed by the trustees of the Wanganui Collegiate School to act as their agent?—My predecessor was Mr. Churton. In 1885 I received the following letters appointing me: "Wellington, 10th August, 1885.—DEAR SIR,—I am directed by the trustees of the Wanganui Industrial School Estate to inform you that they have appointed you their agent in the room of the late Mr. Churton, on the same terms as he held office—namely, that you receive 5 per cent. upon the rents collected. I shall be obliged if you will communicate with Mr. H. I. Jones, one of the trustees, as to taking over books, papers, &c., belonging to the estate. I enclose an authority for you to collect rents in case it is required.—CHARLES POWLES, Secretary to the Trustees." Then there is this letter: "Wellington, 10th August, 1885.—Mr. Edward Nolloth Liffiton, of Wanganui, has been appointed by the trustees of the Wanganui Industrial School Estate as their agent, and is hereby appointed and authorised to collect rents and transact business connected with the estate.—By order of the trustees.—CHARLES POWLES, Secretary."

38. Did you ever receive any other authority from the trustees?—I did. I had a power of attorney on those lines. A few years ago the trustees were incorporated under the Unclassified Societies Act.

39. Do you produce the power of attorney?—I returned it to Wellington about twelve or eighteen months ago, as it was considered a nullity. I can produce a copy of the power of attorney. I had it last in my hand about fifteen months ago. I sent it to the secretary of the trustees in Wellington—Mr. Gualter. He requested me so to do by direction of the trustees.

40. Has it been returned to you?—I am not sure. I cannot find it.

41. Do you produce a letter from Mr. Gualter enclosing it?—Yes, about twelve month ago. That letter is in my office. I will produce it.

42. What has become of the power of attorney?—I kept the power of attorney and those two letters in my safe. I do not think Mr. Gualter returned the power of attorney. I did not write to him for it because I considered it obsolete. I looked upon the matter as utterly unimportant.

43. You say you did not receive the power of attorney back from Mr. Gualter?—I am not sure; but my opinion is that I did not receive it back.

44. Have you any letter acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Gualter's letter?—I cannot tell you without looking at my letter-book. I will see if there is such a letter. I will wire to Wellington, and get the power of attorney.

45. Are you still acting under that power of attorney?—No.

46. Was the power of attorney ever cancelled?—I understood from Mr. Quick that the power of attorney was not valid after the estate was incorporated. They wrote to me telling me that it was not necessary to prepare a fresh power of attorney.

47. What were your duties as agent of the trustees?—To collect the rents and advertise the lands for letting as they came in, and to refer all tenders to the resident trustee, who would advise acceptance or otherwise.

48. Had you anything to do with the management of the school—the teaching, or anything of that sort?—No.

49. Do you receive any moneys from Mr. Empson?—I do.

50. What moneys do you receive from him?—I receive what are called the capitation fees, and the tuition fees, and the music fees. I receive £6 per boarder per annum.

51. Have you always kept a trust account?—Not a trust account. It is a separate account kept in the Bank of New South Wales.

52. Do all the moneys you receive go straight into the bank?—Yes; all the accounts are paid by cheque.