

293. Supposing the endowment were given to the borough, how would they deal with it?—It would be let to tenants.

294. But before it could be let, the borough would have to make streets?—Not necessarily. It would have to be let, and then the special-rating powers of the Borough Council could be invoked and the ratepayers could express an opinion upon it. It would not be for the present trustees to express their opinion upon it, because that would be of no value; but if the ratepayers expressed the opinion that a special rate should be put on as security for a loan, no doubt the loan might be adopted by the borough, and would be agreed to by the Government. I happen to be specially interested in the question of special-rating areas, and within the last few weeks have obtained a series of legal opinions, for which I dare say I will have to pay a good deal.

295. Then you have changed your view since the introduction of your Bill in 1876?—I am very glad you have put that question. At that time I should have very much preferred that the grant should have been upset; but there were difficulties in the way. Sir Julius Vogel was a colleague of mine then, and after some consultation together we decided if possible to arrive at some compromise with the Bishop. The Bishop could at that time have carried everything before him on his own side, so far as the trust was concerned. We thought it would be better to do that than to go to law about it at considerable expense, and submit to the inconvenience which the upsetting of the grant might cause, so Sir Julius Vogel had an interview with His Lordship—for a particular reason I did not go to that interview—but Sir Julius Vogel came away from the interview under the impression—as he stated in writing to me—that the Bishop as a trustee was willing to agree to a compromise in order to avoid litigation, and Sir Julius and myself embodied, first in a letter and then in a Bill, as nearly as we could the compromise to which we believed the Bishop would agree. But it was not because I believed in the compromise that I agreed to it. I should, however, have been very glad to have seen the compromise carried, because it would have improved the position. It certainly would have left my original idea perfectly intact that the grant ought to be upset and revert to the public.

296. Did the Bishop agree to the Bill?—No; on the contrary, he opposed it. Sir Julius Vogel and I wrote a joint letter to him, and the Bishop replied to it in a very curt letter, and a very disappointing letter. I hope I have made myself clear that I did not abandon my original idea, but I was prepared to agree to a reasonable compromise. Mr. Ballance's Bill was very much the same as mine.

297. You tried to get the Bill through the House?—Yes.

298. Would you try to get a similar Bill passed now—with some modifications?—I should be very glad to see such a Bill passed. But I want to take care that I do not abandon my idea that as a matter of abstract justice I think the grant should revert to the public. We were prepared to allow the Bishop and the Synod to elect no fewer than four members of the board of trustees. We claimed that the chairman ought to be the Mayor of the Borough of Wanganui, and that the other four trustees should be appointed from the immediate neighbourhood of Wanganui.

299. Mr. Ballance's Bill was passed by the Lower House?—Yes, and it was read a first time in the Council, and then appears to have been dropped.

300. You say that the original grant was void?—Yes.

301. *Mr. Hogg.*] Do you think the objects of the trust have been carried out?—Certainly not.

302. What did you understand by the term "industrial" school?—The phrase itself is denied; but I always accustomed myself to using the phrase, and I have heard the headmaster, Mr. Nicholls, use the phrase repeatedly. I should be glad to see it turned into a technical school now. The more technical education is indulged in in any fresh system of education the more it will come towards my views.

303. I suppose the intention was that the school should be beneficial to the children of the community generally?—That is my opinion; but especially to poor children who would not otherwise have opportunities of education.

304. You would not think of designating the children of workers "pauper children" simply because they were poor?—Oh, no. These things must be looked at in a broad common-sense light, and if you get that as the general intention you should be satisfied not to carry out too strictly what the particular wording might be construed to mean.

305. Do you think the land endowment of the school can be properly managed by a board in Wellington?—They are at a great disadvantage, and besides that, I believe in the popular element. I say this as a matter of belief, that if this school had been under trustees periodically elected it could not have remained for fifty-four years in practically its old condition; that the people would not have stood it; they would have rectified it at the next election. I have known the past headmasters of the school well—Mr. Nicholls, Mr. Godwin, and Mr. Harvey have all been personal friends of mine, and I may say the present headmaster and I are friends too. Moreover, I have had two sons educated at the school, also two grandchildren. I ask you to consider that as showing that I have no personal feeling of animosity in the matter whatever. Whatever I have said has been said from a sense of public duty.

306. *Mr. Lee.*] I should like your opinion as to the character of the school. The country is now well supplied with primary schools at which poor children can receive education. I should like to know your opinion as to what service the school could give the State?—I should be perfectly willing to leave that to the General Assembly when the country becomes possessed of the grant. I think the estate should be devoted to the interests of education; but, as I hinted just now, that education should tend largely and liberally in the direction of technical education in its broadest sense. A school that gives a knowledge of scientific farming, for instance, I should call a technical school. I should like to say that I am not a volunteer in this case. I was requested to give evidence, or I should not have volunteered.

307. *Mr. Hogg.*] In Masterton we have an endowment for educational purposes by means of which various improvements have been made in the town. Do you not think if the money from this