

grant were applied in a similar way here it would be far more useful to the community?—You are touching me on a rather tender point just now, because I think this is a good school. I do not say that I altogether agree with the character of education given, because I think there is too much classical teaching and too much sport. But on the whole it is a capital school, and I should be very sorry to see it broken up; and, if I may be allowed to speak locally for one moment, I should be very sorry to see this money going away from the Borough of Wanganui—going to Masterton, for example. I should not like to see this money taken away and given to another district. I am not liberal enough for that. Scholars would be welcome from all places.

308. *Mr. Ngata.*] A great deal was made in Hawke's Bay about the co-education of the races. What is your feeling about the matter in connection with the Wanganui College?—I should like to see co-education; but there is this initial difficulty: take a place where there are only a few Natives and very few European children. A difficulty arises there at first, but by-and-by that difficulty passes away. I should say that as soon as education gets advanced to any moderate degree the two races ought to be educated together. I will carry that not only into education, but into every other respect with regard to Maoris and Pakehas.

309. The Natives tell me something about a provision in the sale to the Company as to tenths. Were you aware of any such provision?—Yes, I was quite aware of it; but it was not so in the case of the lands purchased around this neighbourhood. It was distinctly so in some other cases. In the South Island and about Wellington it was a most serious consideration.

310. *Mr. Hogben.*] Do you think that the religious difficulty might be met with a conscience clause to this effect: that no pupil should be refused admission to the school or should be under any disqualification on account of any religious creed or belief of himself or his parents, or that he should be bound to attend any service or Sunday-school, or should be under any disqualification if he did not attend?—I understand we have a similar provision in the present Education Act. I can only say that what you suggest would be a decided improvement, and its tendency is towards my opinions.

THURSDAY, 14TH JUNE, 1906.

EDWARD NOLLOTH LIFFITON further examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] Are you in a position now to supply the documents we requested yesterday?—Yesterday I said I was not aware that any written application was sent to the Borough Council, accompanying the map of the proposed streets; but that a personal application was made. I remembered afterwards there was a written application, and I now produce a copy of the letter, as follows: "5th October, 1905.—The Mayor and Councillors, Wanganui.—GENTLEMEN,—I am writing on behalf of the trustees of the Wanganui Collegiate School Estate to ask if you will be willing to make, in accordance with your requirements, and take over the roads marked green on the accompanying map, making the sections marked blue on the map a special-rating area to meet the cost, the trustees in the first instance to be responsible for the special rate. If you are willing to entertain this proposal, you will kindly arrange to give the trustees an estimate of the probable cost, in order that they may be able to know if they can meet the annual charge?—I am, &c., T. B. MACLEAN, trustee."

2. I asked you yesterday to produce your power of attorney, but this morning I received it by post from Mr. Gualter, who wrote to say he was sending it in response to a telegram sent by you: is this the power of attorney from the trustees to you?—Yes [Exhibit No. 50]. I have also verified the schedule of tenants which I produced yesterday.

ARTHUR GORBELL BIGNELL examined.

3. *The Chairman.*] You are a contractor and builder in Wanganui?—Yes.

4. You are the ex-Mayor?—Yes. I was Mayor for two years and a half.

5. You tender yourself as a witness—on your own account, or on behalf of the citizens?—Practically on my own account, because I think I can give some information which will be valuable to the Commission, to the trustees, and to the citizens.

6. Kindly state what you wish to say?—So far as my statement is concerned, I simply wish to give evidence of what has occurred and of what has appealed to me during my residence in Wanganui for the last twelve years. I know nothing of the ancient history of the trust, except what I have read in the papers and what I have gathered from outside sources. But I have been a member of the Borough Council some six years, and latterly as Mayor I have taken a more active interest in all local affairs. Therefore I am pretty well in touch with this estate so far as it affects the town, and as a big portion of the town itself. So far as the school is concerned as a scholastic institution, I have nothing but praise for its management. I hold it is a valuable asset to Wanganui, from a financial aspect and for other reasons. It attracts a large number of people, and they come to the town for the purpose of educating their children at the College. They come here temporarily, and many of them become permanent residents, and thus help to build up the town. The school, so far as my observation goes, is a credit to all those who control it. It enjoys a splendid reputation for its system of education and for the excellent method in which it is conducted. One point that has always struck me is the interest taken in the school by the old scholars. Last Easter I had occasion to attend a sports gathering there, and there were some eighty old boys—some of them middle-aged men—who had come long distances simply to attend that gathering as a sort of reunion, and to meet the present headmaster, Mr. Empson, who, of course, was their headmaster as well. It appears to me that the school has a very good effect not only on the boys themselves, but right through their after-life, when they will come like that to show their appreciation at a good deal of inconvenience, I dare say, to themselves. Now, so far as the management of the estate is concerned, I have very strong opinions, because this is a matter I have