

DAVID MURRAY examined.

306. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—I am an engineer, residing in Wanganui.

307. You have been asked to give evidence by Mr. Morgan?—Yes.

308. *Mr. Morgan.*] You have been a tenant under the trustees of the school estate?—Yes.

309. Will you state if, in your opinion, the leases tend to an improvement of the estate or otherwise?—I may say I had a lease of $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres on the corner of the extension of Wilson Street and Ingestre Street for twenty-one years, at a rental of £16 10s. a year. Before the railway was constructed I used the paddock for grazing my horses, but eventually I shifted my dwellinghouse on to the section, and later on I erected three other houses and a two-stalled stable, and a cartshed. The lease went on all right until within eighteen months to two years of the expiry of the lease, and then my son wrote to the secretary of the trustees, asking if they would grant us an extension of the lease for a term of seven years at an increase of 25 per cent. on the rent. We asked for this in order to try and pay ourselves back for our heavy expenditure in building. I think I am right in saying it was six to eight months before we got a reply, and then we were told we could not get a renewal. As other tenants who took land on the same street at the same time as I did got extensions of their leases without paying an extra penny for them, I went to the agent myself to try and get an extension, and to find out why we were singled out for persecution. I was told that was easily accounted for; it was because I had put plenty of property on the land.

310. Were the trustees under any legal obligation to give you a renewal of that lease?—I should not like to say there was any legal obligation, but, in justice as between man and man, and considering what I had spent, I think I was entitled to a renewal.

311. Do you suggest that the trustees in not granting you a renewal of the lease were actuated by feelings of unfairness towards you?—I do not know. I was told the renewal was refused because of the amount of buildings I had erected on the land.

312. *Mr. Hogg.*] Were the buildings insured?—Yes, in my name.

313. How much were they insured for when you left?—They would be insured for about £500 at the least.

314. Were they habitable?—Yes, they were all occupied.

315. And you were all turned out?—Yes.

316. Were the buildings very old?—No; the oldest one was about eighteen years old.

317. *The Chairman.*] You were not bound to build on the lease?—No.

318. When the lease expired and the property reverted to the trust, were not the trustees bound to do the best they could for the trust in reletting the property?—But I think as between man and man I was entitled to a renewal of the lease.

319. Do you say there was any obligation on the trustees to renew the lease in that manner?—I have just told you this to show what they have done.

JOHN PATON WATT examined.

320. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—I am Borough Valuer, in the employ of the Borough Council.

321. What is your opinion about the value of this endowment estate?—Last year the borough valuation of the whole property was £3,319—that was the annual letting-value, and my total value of the property as it stands is £135,300.

322. That is in its present condition?—No; that is allowing 63 acres of the estate to be taken away for the purpose of road and street formation. I have estimated 672 quarter-acre sections at £100,080. I say without fear of contradiction that no quarter-acre section in the Borough of Wanganui can be bought to-day for £100 cash.

FRIDAY, 15TH JUNE, 1906.

CHARLES EVAN MACKAY further examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You are Mayor of Wanganui. I should like to ask you this further question: Do you think that the Borough Council will try to meet the trustees as far as they can in the matter of drainage and streets?—Any proposals from the trustees would get a fair reception from the Borough Council, but I should not like to say what action the Council would take.

2. *Mr. Hogg.*] Do you think the failure of the trustees to improve this property is hindering the progress of Wanganui?—Certainly that is so, in my opinion. It hinders progress, as I have stated, in its natural outlet. I believe that if that estate had been put on the market the condition of the town generally would have been improved, and our valuations would have been improved too.

TAKARANGI METE KINGI examined.

3. *The Chairman.*] Are you a Native chief of the Wanganui district?—Yes.

4. Do you speak as a representative of the Maoris, and have you been authorised to speak on their behalf?—Yes; the Natives at Putiki held a meeting, and I and some others were delegated to come here and speak. I have heard that the piece of land on which the College stands was set apart as an endowment for a school for Maori children. That has been stated by the old people of our race. When the Rev. Mr. Nicholls was here there was a Native school on the land. I know of a number of Natives who attended that school. Some time after that I desired to send a son of mine to the school. I saw Bishop Hadfield in reference to the matter, and he told me that he did not know exactly what the arrangements were. The Bishop did not agree to my request. Later on my son was sent to the Wanganui High School, but did not stay there long. He left on account of disagreements with the European children. Afterwards a grandson of my brother attended the College, but I cannot say upon what terms. Maihi is the name of the boy. I think Maori children