

more in the development of the estate. I think in all fairness the Commission should know that the trustees have a twofold duty—one was undoubtedly to develop the estate, and the other was to provide a system of education from the proceeds of the estate. Evidence has been given by every witness that one part of that trust has been very efficiently carried out, at all events so far as education is concerned, and there is no exception whatever taken to the school or education carried on there. Therefore, when you consider the limited amount of funds at the disposal of the trustees, and that one part of the trust has required and received large sums of money from that small amount available, it very largely mitigates the blame that might appear to be due to the trustees for not having developed the estate more rapidly than they have done in the past. I also want to draw your attention to the evidence as published in the papers—I was not present at the time owing to other duties—both by the Mayor, the ex-Mayor, and by Mr. Gilmour, the Foreman of Works, as to the cost of roading and preparing for leasing that small portion of the estate that was exhibited to you on the map. I notice Mr. Gilmour gives the cost of that as £18,400-odd. If the Commission realise that the trustees are already receiving from that piece of land an annual rental of £140 (which they would lose if the land were cut up in the way proposed), and that the rentals from these 189 sections for some considerable time would not meet the outlay necessary for interest and sinking fund on £18,000, the Commission will have some idea of the difficulties that beset the trustees. I can assure the Commission that the present trustees—I cannot speak for the past trustees—are as anxious as anybody—as anxious as Mr. Morgan—to cut up and develop this estate. The difficulty arises from the fact of the smallness of the funds at their disposal, and that they have no powers whatever by which they can borrow money to carry out such improvements. It has been suggested that the Borough Council might borrow this money for them for that portion of the estate I have referred to, and you know what, in the opinion of the borough foreman, it will cost to drain and road and prepare for leasing that portion of the estate. When the estimate is received by the trustees officially they will consider the matter very carefully; but I cannot say offhand whether they can face a liability of £18,000, covering so small a portion of the estate. Besides which, it will be some years before the 189 sections would be let if placed on the market. The choicer sections would be taken up at once, and probably at a very fair rental; the other sections would be on the hands of the trustees for some years. The average rental, so far as one can form an opinion from what has been received in the past, would not exceed from £5 10s. to £6 for these sections. Some choice ones would bring more than that; the others would bring less. I mention this because this estimate of £18,000 is very discouraging and disappointing to me. I had hoped it would not exceed £10,000. The cost would be very much less if a larger area could be cut up, no doubt.

31. *Mr. Ngata.*] That estimate of £18,000 includes the main drain?—It includes the main drain, but that main drain would have to be paid for out of the 189 sections. It does not affect the outlay of the trustees in interest and sinking fund. The main drain would be very valuable in future cutting-up. If we were in a position to cut up and put on the market a very large number of sections it would be cheaper; but they would not be taken up. There is no demand in Wanganui for sections. The demand at present is a small demand. A larger demand could be created no doubt by the trustees abandoning the building clause, and allowing the land to be taken up for speculative purposes. I do not know whether the trustees would think it was in the interests of the estate to do that.

32. *The Chairman.*] But if they did that, and rating on the unimproved value was brought into force, I think probably buildings would go up?—It is quite open to consideration whether we might not abandon the building clause and allow what would necessarily follow—a certain amount of speculation by people who would then speculate in the leases. I am very anxious that the Commission and the public of Wanganui should know that the trustees are as keen as they can possibly be on cutting up the estate. I may say the Diocesan Trust Board, in the last vacancy, in appointing Mr. Beckett did so because he has a special knowledge of and has been concerned in cutting up estates, and it was hoped he would help the trustees very materially in doing this.

33. You say the trustees have been in the past hampered by want of power to borrow, and so forth: what steps do the trustees propose to take to get rid of that disability?—The proposal is, of course, that the borough should borrow on their behalf under the scheme already put before the Council. That seems to be the simplest way.

34. Do you not think the trustees might have applied to the Supreme Court or Parliament for power to borrow years ago?—Well, I would not like to pass judgment on the trustees who are dead and buried. I sympathize very largely with the people of Wanganui in their desire to see the estate cut up. I am a citizen of Wanganui, and I see how it is retarding the town; but one might be disposed to make a hasty judgment.

35. Have the trustees considered what steps they should take to get rid of this disability?—The trustees have considered the matter, and they think the best way is that the Borough Council should borrow for them, by declaring that portion of the estate a special-rating area. We have made that proposition to the Council, and it has been favourably considered so far. But, as I point out, the cost is so excessive.

36. But if the matter was gone into by competent engineers it might turn out to be less?—The trustees are very anxious to do it if they can.

37. Do the trustees intend to use their best efforts with the Borough Council with a view to accomplishing that end?—They do.

38. Did you hear Mr. Empson's evidence as to the conditions of admission, more especially as to the denominational side of the school?—I read that in the paper.

39. Would you, as one of the trustees, be prepared to consent to this: while maintaining the denominational feature of the school as far as possible, to introduce into any legislation that might be brought before the House a clause giving the parents of children of other denominations the right to send their children to the College as boarders, with a liberal conscience clause, so that