

department—and the primary department in a large town is so large that the headmaster of the combined school cannot give proper attention both to a large primary department and to a large secondary department. In towns, therefore, of any considerable size it is expedient that secondary education should be given in a separate school. I might give one or two examples of towns in the same position as Wanganui: The Palmerston North High School was founded under section 88 of the Education Act of 1904; New Plymouth has one established under a separate Act of its own; Dannevirke has a high school established under the Act of 1888. I mention those as towns that come under the same conditions as Wanganui. Wanganui has no high school. It has a district high school, and it is distinctly one of those cases in which it is a disadvantage for the secondary department to be attached to the primary department, which is so large that the secondary pupils cannot get the full benefit of secondary instruction. At Wanganui there are from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pupils at the present time who are qualified to receive free secondary education, so that if a high school giving free secondary education were established there would be that number ready to enter it. The Wanganui Collegiate School does not meet that want, and therefore Wanganui is not a place in the same position in regard to secondary education as the other towns of the colony. There is therefore a defect there in the general education system of the colony, inasmuch as a considerable town is left without the same advantages possessed by other towns of about the same size. It seems to me, therefore, that the question would be still unsolved as part of the general education system of the colony, unless there was some means of giving free secondary education to those who pass a qualifying examination in Wanganui just as elsewhere. In Palmerston North, New Plymouth, Dannevirke, and in other places (except Wellington and Wanganui) the high schools have come under section 87 of the Education Act. The Wanganui Collegiate School could not, in my opinion, admit from a hundred to a hundred and fifty free pupils with the present revenue that it is receiving; there would not be enough to support the school, because the Wanganui Collegiate School is not entitled to receive the grants provided under the Act. The cost per head to keep it equally efficient might be taken as £12 or £12 10s. Its income is not sufficient—in addition to what it is doing—to admit from a hundred to a hundred and fifty free pupils, because that would require from £1,800 to £1,875 in addition to what it is receiving now. I say that as preliminary to one of my suggestions: that, as Wanganui has been cut out by the Legislature, after consideration, from participating in the benefits of the grants under section 87 of the Education Act, the only way to meet that, and to get those grants necessary in order to work the school, would be that from the trust there should be 20 acres, we will say, given as an endowment and site for a high school under section 88. Such a high school would not be under the control of the trust, but would be founded in the manner prescribed by that section. Five acres would be needed for a good site—that would be ample for a good site—and if 15 acres were given for an endowment, in course of time the 15 acres might, I suggest, produce an income of £400 or £450 per annum to supplement what the high school would get from the secondary-school commissioners and from the capitation grants. That is my suggestion in order that Wanganui should benefit just as much from the general education system of the colony as other towns in a similar position. Whether there should also be a site for a public school—that is to say, whether the site of 5 acres for the public school should be secured to the public school or not—is not perhaps, of so great importance. I believe it is included in the amount paid out of Vote No. 62, Item 1, “Rent for public schools,” and the Department pays that £5 to the Wanganui Board every year. If it is not doing so, the Wanganui Board could claim it, and it could be paid out of that vote; but it might be worth consideration whether that site should not be given as well. These free places, I take it, would be given without distinction of race, creed, or anything else, just as in other secondary schools. That provision would carry out this trust as regards all those resident in Wanganui and the neighbourhood, whether Europeans or Maoris. The free secondary places under the Act are open to all now, and the Government scholarships given for Maori secondary schools are really practically on the same conditions as those in European secondary schools, so that all those in and about Wanganui could get free secondary education, and that would meet all the cases of poor and destitute persons who were living in the neighbourhood, and that would solve that aspect of the question entirely. Then, with regard to the present school, I would suggest that there should be a Board to manage the trust, to consist of one representative of the Borough Council—the Mayor or some other member—the Chairman or some other member of the Wanganui County Council, and the Chairman or some other member of the Waitotara County Council; four members appointed by the General Synod or the Diocesan Synod, two of them, I should say, to be resident within ten or twenty miles of the Town of Wanganui, so that they could attend the meetings whenever required. Or that might be met in another way, by providing that the Board meet monthly, and that if a member were absent from more than two consecutive monthly meetings without leave being granted his seat should be vacated. Then, I think, there should be a scheme drawn up in the manner suggested by section 90 of the Education Act, and that, if the Board and the Minister of Education did not agree, there should be a Commission of the same kind appointed as suggested in section 90 for drawing up a scheme.

*The Chairman:* In my opinion the tribunal should consist of persons thoroughly independent and unbiassed—of persons in no way parties to the dispute.

*Witness:* Surely there should be some person representing the general education system of the colony. Technical matters would have to be decided, and the arbitrators should be persons with technical knowledge. They have simply to draw up a scheme, and that scheme must be drawn up by educational experts. In regard to the trustees, I think there should be a board differently constituted to the present board of trustees, but leaving the majority of the members still to be nominated by the Church authorities. I think it might be understood that the religious education given is religious education in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England; but there should be a complete conscience clause in respect of all classes—whether day-pupils or boarders.