

Mr. Bryce. During a debate in Parliament he estimated an acre to be worth £100. The Trustees thought that sum was quite sufficient. The Trustees had no desire to extort a large sum of money from Government as many had done; they considered such a procedure should not be encouraged. Therefore, I say that these statements made by Mr. Peat were not altogether correct. Further on in his evidence Mr. Peat makes a statement as to Mr. Anson—this is, I presume, Mr. Henson—being paid a sum of money as compensation for resigning a lease, and states that it was notorious that any one could get £200, £300, or £500 for an industrial-school lease immediately after it was made. I took the trouble, yesterday, to telegraph to Mr. Churton, and he replied as follows: "Never heard of any such offer. Henson, the oldest tenant, says the same. Wanted to sell his own 39 acres, after six years' work and expenditure, for £300. Could not get a better offer than £70. Gave £100 for 6 acres front Avenue, ten years to run, but only on assurance from Durie that he would extend lease, with removal of building clause, which he did not. Gave £17 10s. at auction for 6 acres at the back, fifteen years to run. Kirkpatrick's trustees sold by auction 12½ acres, seven years at £14, for 20s." [Vide Appendix B.] The statement made by Peat was given before the Royal Commission. This will give some idea of the value of his evidence. He also states that the whole of the reserve was within the boundary of the town proper when the grant was made. I am quite sure that it never was at that time part of the town. It was part of the Waitotara Road District, and subsequently included within the limits of the town in order that it might be rated.

90. *The Chairman.* Are we to understand from you that Peat was brought down to state a case against the Trustees?—I should have said sent down. I did not mean to assert that the Royal Commission brought him down for that purpose.

91. Who brought him down?—He came expressly to Wellington to oppose the Trustees. Mr. Peat told Mr. Saunders that he should take some steps to alter the status of the Trust, as I had declined to accede to a request of his. I believe he came to Wellington expressly to oppose the Trustees.

92. With regard to Mr. Peat's statement as to the value of lands, are you not aware there have been great changes in the value of lands during the last six years or so?—I do not know whether there has. I have not attended much to that subject recently. All our late leases have been sold by auction.

93. Do you know what quarter-acre sections are selling for now, situated in Victoria Avenue?—No, I cannot say.

94. Mr. Peat says in his evidence that the average daily attendance for last quarter was twenty-five, do you know what it was?—The average daily attendance for the past year—that is, from the 30th June, 1878, to 30th June, 1879—was thirty. This is stated in the report of Mr. Saunders. I cannot tell you what it was last quarter.

96. What was the attendance during Mr. Godwin's *régime*—say, the daily attendance for the year 1877?—Fifty-three were down in the books. Godwin frequently complained about the boys constantly changing about, coming for a few weeks and then leaving.

97. Can you state what the attendance was during the last quarter that Mr. Godwin was teacher?—I do not know that I could now.

98. I would call your attention to the question and answer in the report of the Commission: It was asked, "Was there a falling off in the school?" This was your answer: "I knew the school fell off."—I think Mr. Hunter explained that yesterday. Godwin got into bad habits, and complaints were made about his conduct. I made all the inquiries I could, and came to the conclusion that he had better be discharged at once. Some gentlemen, with a friendly feeling, called on me, and asked that he might have another chance. He was then allowed to remain. There was then some legal difficulty in regard to dismissing him without giving him three months' notice. He had been in the school for twelve years, and had been an excellent teacher.

99. Was there any improvement in the school after Godwin left?—For a short time it improved, and then declined again. The second master had charge of it for a time alone. He became discouraged, because he was doing the headmaster's work and only receiving second master's salary.

100. When did Mr. Godwin leave?—In April, 1878.

101. Has the school improved since then?—Yes, I believe so.

102. I see in your evidence you say that the attendance was forty-five?—I have no recollection of saying so.

103. Have you a return of the average daily attendance for the year 1878?—I do not think I have it with me. There is no doubt that the numbers in the school fell off at that time. It was left for a short time without a headmaster, and some of the parents took their children away.

104. Have you any idea of the average daily attendance for the year 1878?—I cannot exactly say. The returns show, as I have just shown by Mr. Saunders's report, an average of thirty from July, 1878, to 30th June, 1879; but I do not know how low it fell just afterwards.

105. Do you know what the fees were?—£6 for children under eleven years, and £7 over.

106. There was no free education at that time, then?—No, the funds would not admit of it.

107. What is the income?—It changes as the leases fall in, so I cannot say definitely.

108. You state that infringement of the Trust would amount to confiscation. Do you think it unfair?—I certainly think so. The school should be conducted exclusively according to the principles of the Church of England. The Trust was granted to Bishop Selwyn—that is, Bishop of New Zealand and his successors.

109. Do you think the terms of the deed state that it should be in the charge of the Church of England?—Undoubtedly so. Some grants at the same time were given to the Roman Catholics, and there was a part of the Town Belt of the Town of Wellington given to the Wesleyan body. They sold it, and made good use of the money for their own purposes; and I maintain that this reserve is of the same character, only granted to the Church of England.

110. Do you think the terms implied in the grant mean that?—I certainly believe so. Mr. Hart, the Royal Commissioner, had no doubt of it.