

388. I understood you to say it was for all classes and creeds?—But, looking at the wording of the Trust, the clause that religious instruction should be given might be construed to mean “according to the tenets of the English Church.”

389. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] But you said you do not construe it that way?—No; I do not.

390. *Mr. Hislop.*] You would not think it right to convert it into a Church institution?—No; I do not think that should be done.

391. If the Trustees were to endeavour to convert it into such a thing as that, do you not consider it would be a wrong on their part?—I think it would. I consider that we of the English Church hold the estate in trust for the general good.

392. Do you not think that would be an infringement of the Trust?—That would be my view of the matter; but I do not know what the lawyers would say.

393. And in any such case as that you would assist in getting the estate out of the hands of the Trustees?—I should endeavour to get them to alter their course.

394. Do you not think it is wrong to allow such men to remain Trustees until they can effect their object?—I do not think it is until they indicate a disposition to do so.

395. But suppose they did indicate a disposition to do so?—I should use my influence to have the Trustees altered; to get the Synod to appoint fresh Trustees.

396. Would you consider this an infringement of the Trust: “I think the school should be conducted exclusively according to the principles of the Church of England. The Trust was granted to Bishop Selwyn, that is, the Bishop of New Zealand and his successors.—Do you think the terms of the deed state that it should be under 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 Wellington given to the Wesleyan body. They sold it and made good use of the money for their own purposes. I maintain that this reserve is of the same character, only granted to the Church of England.—Do you think the terms implied in the grant mean that?—I certainly mean so. Mr. Hart, the Royal Commissioner, had no doubt about it.” Do you think they would be justified in doing that. Have you any doubt as to that?—I believe they would have to get a Bill passed by the Assembly, as the Wesleyans did in the Wellington case, to get permission to sell this endowment. I am sure the Wanganui Church people would be strongly opposed to doing anything of the kind. I fancy, too, the Public Trusts Act would prevent it.

397. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Would you consider it an act of confiscation to remove these Trusts from their present management in Wellington, and place them under local management without disturbing the terms of the Trust?—Not if that local body were a Church body of the same kind as the present one; but if it were transferred to other denominations I should consider it a great and unjustifiable insult to the Church.

398. *The Chairman.*] What do you mean by transferring to other denominations?—Well, transferring to a local committee elected by the general public.

399. But you would not consider it any breach of the Trust to have the local body elected out of the Church people of Wanganui?—No; I should not. I should consider that the thing ought to be in the hands of the Church. It was intrusted to them, and so long as they continue to administer the Trust fairly it ought to remain in their hands.

400. You state that the Bishop of New Zealand expended money for the drainage of the land. When the land was set aside was it immediately let?—Within a year or two.

401. And income was derived from it?—Yes; but for many years only a few shillings per acre.

402. Therefore an advance of money would have to be made for the purpose of drainage?—Yes.

403. Are you aware whether an account was kept for the purpose of this advance?—I suppose so; but do not know whether it was.

404. The money was found for the Trust?—By the Bishop; but out of what fund I cannot say.

405. Are you aware whether it was paid back out of the rents?—That I cannot say. I never saw any accounts until after it was handed over to the General Synod, though I believe accounts were rendered to the Government by the Bishop.

406. Are you aware whether the estate is in debt to the Church, or to any parties?—I am not aware that it is; there has been nothing to indicate that it is.

407. Would you infer that the money has been recouped?—Either that, or the Bishop provided funds without looking to have them recouped at all.

408. Is that likely?—I cannot say what money he had in his hands applicable to a purpose of the kind.

409. *Mr. Hislop.*] It is in evidence that “One of the questions in the evidence goes to show that it is the intention of the Trustees to confine the teaching to the Church of England?—That was an opinion of mine; I do not say that the other Trustees held it.—Is that the intention?—I think so. I do not see any reason why we should now open our doors to all denominations; at any rate, that is my private feeling in the matter.” Do you think if the Trustees proposed to carry out that intention it would be popular in Wanganui?—I am sure no one would object more than the Church people of Wanganui to its being made an exclusively denominational school. We consider the Trust is placed in the hands of the Church for the benefit of all.

410. Do you not think it is wrong to continue as a Trustee any person who would move in that direction, and who has power to do it?—Not if it is one standing by himself; but I never heard any Trustee had any such ideas, and cannot believe it. There must be some misunderstanding.

411. Did you not observe it in the evidence of the last Commission?—No, I did not.

412. *The Chairman.*] Have you any general statement to make?—Most of what I jotted down in writing I have stated now. The management of this Trust makes it contrast very favourably with other endowments in Wanganui. The Hospital endowments were given at the same time as this land. They were almost entirely nice dry level building sites near the river, and yet it was about ten years before any portion of them was let. Then about four acres were let as a paddock, and about an acre and a half was let shortly afterwards.