

Waimea South: Endowment for a school, No. 6, 9 acres 2 roods 15 perches.—This land has hitherto been in possession of Mr. Squire, on an improving lease, with no money payment. It is leased now to Mr. John Berry. This grant is in my name. I have asked Messrs. Barnicoat and Baigent to act for me. Mr. Berry is to pay rent, which will be devoted to the maintenance of the Church of England Sunday School above alluded to. The clergyman, Mr. Tripp, lived on the land, on condition of paying £18 a year.

Letter from E. BAIGENT, Esq., to the SECRETARY of the COMMISSION, respecting the two last-mentioned grants.

SIR,—

Wakefield, Waimea South, 7th March, 1870.

I have the honour to report, for your consideration, upon the Religious and Educational Trust Property situate at Wakefield, Waimea South.

As you request to know if the objects of the trust have been carried out with reference to two sections of land given for the above purpose, I would first beg leave to state that the two sections or blocks of land mentioned in your letter were one and the same gift to the district by the New Zealand Company's agent for the above object; but on the Government of New Zealand taking the responsibility of the Company, and through the Crown Lands Commissioner having sold part of the block given to the people of this district by mistake to another person named Price, the inhabitants applied to Sir George Grey, explaining to His Excellency their grievance of being deprived of a portion of the block given for the above purpose. His Excellency therefore allowed another block to be selected of equal size in lieu of the land sold. I might here state that before the Crown Grant was issued the Land Claims Commissioner required to know on what grounds the district laid claim to the second block, containing about $9\frac{1}{2}$ acres, a full report of which I forwarded to them at the time of the investigation in 1860 upon the disputed claims. I have now taken the liberty of writing to the Crown Lands Commissioner of Nelson for a copy of the letter, which I now forward, trusting that it will be appended to this report, which might answer as a record of how the land became in the possession of the inhabitants of this district; and as a further proof that where the people have a direct interest and benefit accruing from such gift there is little doubt but its progress will be quite certain to succeed. The block No. 1 contains about 10 acres, upon which the church, St. John's, stands, which has lately been enlarged for the accommodation of the inhabitants, by subscriptions from the people, aided by a small grant from the Synod, the erection of which will be better understood by reference to my letter of 1860; service regular once every Sabbath, and occasionally of a week-day evening; a portion of the section being enclosed round the church for a burial-ground, and kept in order by the assistance of the people when needed. The other portion, on which the schoolroom and master's house stands, was occupied by the master, and the Sunday and day school kept until some time after the Nelson Education Act was in force. The attendance of children becoming so numerous, the schoolroom, as then used, was not sufficiently large to accommodate the scholars then attending—and it was deemed advisable by the Central Board of Education to purchase one acre of land adjoining, and to erect a much larger schoolroom, rather than expend money by enlarging the schoolroom the property of the Church of England. The Nelson educational system being non-sectarian, no scriptural controversial teaching is permitted. I am happy to say that the school is largely attended, and will, I have no doubt, be of great advantage to the young of this district in after years. I mention the above to show that when the Provincial school commenced in their own building the Church day-school ceased, as none of the inhabitants considered it wise to keep two schools open for one object, viz., educating their children; but it was so arranged that the Church schoolroom should be used for a Sunday school. This school, I am happy to say, is still kept every Sunday, with an average attendance of about fifty. The master's house, after the removal of the master to the Provincial school, has been for some time the residence of the clergyman of the district, who was charged £14 per annum rent, the same being spent, with other donations of the people, in keeping the house and fences in repair. The house is at present unoccupied, the late clergyman having vacated the district some eighteen months ago for England.

The block No. 2, of about $9\frac{1}{2}$ acres, is the portion of land more particularly described in my letter of 1860, the grant of which conveys the land to the Bishop of the diocese, as trustee, and I remember well the late Bishop Hobhouse returning the grant to the Government to have it made in accordance with the other grant, which vests the other property belonging to the Church in this district in trustees appointed by the Synod. The grant being returned as first sent down, without any alteration, his Lordship then requested the favour of the Waimea trustees to undertake the management of this land for him, the which they willingly acceded to. This land was first let by Bishop Hobhouse to the then schoolmaster, for the term, I think, of four years, to clear and fence; after that period a further term of three years was agreed upon—that he should plant a live quick fence, and pay a small annual rent. This person having given up the teaching of the school, and he having a large family, found that he could not comply with the agreement, gave up the land without making any payment; consequently it has been unoccupied for a short time. About four months ago it was relet for a term of years, at the annual rental of £4 per year, which rent will be appropriated in keeping up the school and buildings, together with amounts supplemented by the inhabitants for keeping the above in repair. I might state that in the year 1865 no less a sum than £104 17s. 6d. was subscribed by the people, independent of the clergyman's rent and grant of Synod, for improving the schoolhouse, church, and burial-ground. As I before have stated that public property, where the people have a direct interest and voice in the advancement of the same, cannot but succeed in accordance with the requirements of the district.