

220. And these have been repaid and they appear in the books?—Yes.

221. But there were other sums of money you gave which have not been charged to any account?—Yes. I think the first I entered were those I gave to Hukarere.

222. These books and accounts are all available and will be produced later on?—I fancy so. I have not been very careful about the old books. I understood that after seven years they were not of any value. The accounts have all been rendered to and accepted by the trustees, and after that I did not attach much value to them.

223. In regard to the leases, it is insinuated that the last lease is not a fair lease: what do you say about that?—I do not know of anything in it that is unfair. I know I hesitated about accepting it. The matter has been referred to. I was annoyed to think that, after all I had done for the establishment and the money I had spent on it the trustees should add anything to the value fixed by their own valuator, who was considered perhaps as one who put on the highest values in the district. I did feel annoyed at the trustees adding another £100 a year to his figure. I took it as a sort of expression of want of confidence. I was quite prepared to abandon the property.

224. Do you consider the rent reserved by the lease—viz., £2,200 a year—is a fair rent, looking at the whole of the circumstances?—Undoubtedly so. I know a person who said, "They have put that value on it, but I do not know who is going to give it." Fortunately, there has been a great change in the markets, and I admit I have had an advantage in it; but had the price of wool and meat changed to what it was not very far back, I certainly should have lost by it. I had the advantage of having the services of young men who were able to attend to the business. It was no thanks to me personally, beyond the general supervision and the risk.

225. Have the accounts which have been rendered to the General Synod and to the trustees from time to time been truthful and proper accounts?—Certainly. Very few of them have passed through my own hands. I keep people to work these things up. I have no chance of "cooking" the accounts if I wished to.

226. Do you remember the Royal Commission of 1869?—Yes, I remember it.

227. You gave evidence before that Commission?—Yes. I remember that Mr. Domett, when I told him what I could get for the first few years for the land, made the remark, "Why, Williams, the mountain is dwindling down into a molehill." I replied, "Well, that was the position of affairs."

228. You say there that in the accounts furnished to the trustees you made no charge for management?—That is so.

229. And you also say, "I have intimated to the trustees that, whilst I have no wish to force them to deal with the property summarily, I should be glad to be relieved of the management, which is a considerable tax on my time." Did you so intimate to the trustees?—I told them that, but they preferred me to continue it. I said, "Well, if you have confidence in me I will carry it on."

230. So that, practically, you have been the trusted manager from the very beginning of the trust: with the exception of the trustees, in whom the estate is vested, you have practically been manager during the whole time?—Yes.

231. The school has been under your management?—Yes.

232. You have had the appointment of teachers?—Yes.

233. The system of education has also been under your control?—Yes.

234. And the school as we see it to-day is the result of your labours from the earliest times?—Yes.

235. And if it is a credit to the colony and to the district, you are entitled to that credit, I suppose?—I presume so.

236. No one else has helped you?—No. I looked upon the trust as a testimonial from the Crown. I had been of great assistance to the Crown on the west coast, and had received their thanks for unravelling difficulties, and helping them to open out a satisfactory system for the purchase of land. I remember Sir Donald McLean speaking to me. He was lamenting the fact that there was not an acre of land in the hands of the Government between Wellington and Auckland. I told him that if he would only change the system of land purchase I would promise him plenty. I told him he was only irritating the Natives and preventing them from working with him, and I said that if he would only adopt a different system he would soon have to legislate to prevent the Natives from denuding themselves of the whole of their land. He changed his system, and in about four years he had about 4,000,000 acres of land in the hands of the Government on the east coast, including Wairoa. "Well," he said, "they will not adopt this system in Taranaki," and I replied, "They are only making a rod for their own backs in Taranaki."

237. Have you any desire now to continue in the management of this school and estate?—I am quite willing to do so, so long as I am trusted. It is not the same labour to me that it was some years ago. I have men in whom I have confidence in the different departments, and, at my age—I am in my eighty-fifth year—I can only give a sort of general superintendence to the business.

238. I take it you would like to continue on until the trustees take it over?—Yes, if I do not run against other people. I devoted my life to the work, and I am quite willing to go on so long as I have the strength.

239. It is part of our duty to ask for "the total receipts and disbursements for each year since the creation of the trust": can you supply them?—You have most of them in print, but I can get Mr. Fielder to produce the complete lists.

240. The Commission would like to have your views on the question of technical education. Are you in favour of a modification of the present system in order to have technical education introduced into the school?—There was a good deal of correspondence with the Department on