

[Exhibit No. 24], and a deed of exchange between the trustees and Archdeacon Williams [Exhibit No. 33]. I may say that the declaration of trust in regard to the Hukarere land is not registered nor deposited in my office, but I produce a copy of it [Exhibit No. 34].

MONDAY, 21ST MAY, 1906.

*The Chairman:* I would like to state, in regard to the question of correspondence, that since we rose on Saturday I have received a letter from Mr. Hill, the Inspector of Schools for this district, informing us that he is unable to attend on the ground that he is leaving Napier to-day on business connected with his Board. I may say that Mr. Hill was invited to attend to give evidence as we understood he had some information in regard to the system of education which would be of assistance to us. His letter reads:—

“Bluff Hill, Napier, 19th May, 1906.—The Secretary, Te Aute Commission.—DEAR SIR,—I am due at Wanstead on Monday next, and examination dates are fixed up to Saturday, 2nd June, when I hope to return to Napier by the express. Unless the Chairman of the Education Board authorises me to do so, I cannot break the fixtures of my examination dates, as notices have been sent to all School Committees in the southern part of this education district, informing them of the day or days on which their schools will be examined.—Yours truly, H. HILL.”

*Mr. Ngata:* We can get him to attend if we want him to.

*The Chairman:* Of course; we can compel him to attend if it is considered desirable to have his evidence.

*Mr. Ngata:* I think his evidence will be of a very great assistance.

*The Chairman:* The only other communication is a telegram from G. P. Donnelly, in reply to a communication sent to him by the Secretary, as follows:—

“Private.—Regret cannot attend Commission on Monday, having previous appointment in Patea for that date. Have not been over the whole of trust estate. Suggest Mr. A. Dillon, M.H.R., or Mr. T. Crosse would be better able to give evidence as to value.”

However, I understand Mr. Donnelly telephoned this morning that the engagement to which he refers has been postponed, and that he is now able to attend. The Secretary has also written to the editors of the local papers asking them to reply to the letters of the 16th May, asking them to attend.

JOHN THORNTON examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You are headmaster of the Te Aute College?—Yes.
2. When did you first join that institution?—In 1878.
3. Who appointed you?—I was in communication with Archdeacon Williams and Bishop Stewart. My appointment was arranged through them.
4. Was that appointment to be headmaster of the school?—Yes.
5. Who had been headmaster before you arrived?—Mr. Reynolds.
6. I want you to tell the Commission what was the condition of the school as regards the system of education when you arrived?—When I arrived it was purely an elementary school. There were only twenty-two boys in attendance, and the highest standard of the school then was just about the same as the standard of our lowest class now—that is to say, we taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and a little geography.
7. Were there any other masters?—No others. I was the sole master to begin with.
8. Of course, it was purely and simply a boarding establishment—there are no day scholars?—Practically none.
9. What was the carrying-capacity of the school at that time?—Part of the present school-room had just been erected, which made room for more dormitories, because up to that time the school itself had been carried on in one of the present dormitories. I should say at the time I came, when we moved into the new school there was room perhaps for forty-five or fifty boys.
10. What is the capacity now?—Seventy-five is the maximum, and anything beyond that would mean crowding.
11. How many have you now?—Seventy-three.
12. Will you kindly give us a short sketch of the progress of the school from that time up to the present, as to the system of teaching, improvements in the buildings, and so on—a short sketch of the growth of the school?—After I came the numbers gradually increased, and it was soon found necessary to appoint an assistant. I tried from the very first to raise the standard of the school, and a few years later I conceived the idea of preparing Maori boys for the matriculation examination of the New Zealand University. What led me to this idea was that I felt the Maoris should not be shut out from any chance of competing with English boys in the matter of higher education. I saw that the time would come when the Maoris would wish to have their own doctors, their own lawyers, and their own clergymen, and I felt it was only just to the race to provide facilities for them doing so, especially in an institution which was a Maori endowment. Accordingly, in 1885, I think it was—I am not quite sure of the year, but it was just about twenty years ago—at the beginning of the year I selected three or four promising boys whom I thought worthy of being carried on to the higher standard. We did not begin our matriculation studies until March, and up to that time these boys had never opened a Latin book. But by hard work we managed to prepare these boys for the examination, and I am pleased to say that in the following December two of them succeeded in passing. This was referred to by the Inspector of Schools as a feat in Maori education. The standard thus founded has been maintained up to the present time, with the result that a considerable number of Maori young men have passed the matriculation examination, and thus prepared themselves for the higher walks in life. And I am pleased to say that, in the great majority of instances, we have reason to be pleased with the success