

241. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] Of any particular district?—No; with the exception of a stipulation in one of the grants that a school shall be built at Te Aute. I do not think the object of the Trust is at all limited.

242. *The Chairman.*] Will you be kind enough to explain how far the purposes of the Trust have been carried out?—On first opening the school there was no income from the estate, and I had to manage as best I could in educating the children with grants from the Education Board. As there was no money for building purposes, I had to erect raupo buildings, close to the Maori pa, in order that I might be able to give my services to the Natives of the whole district; and at this place, in addition to the time spent with the boarders, I gave the Natives an hour's instruction every day before they dispersed to their work. I kept this up for five years. I should have said that the Natives from Patangata and the Tamumu came to Te Aute to reside, in order that they might benefit by the instruction I gave them. But in 1859, in consequence of disputes with Te Hapuku principally, the Natives dispersed, and then, finding I could not be of much service there, the raupo building also falling into decay, I commenced erecting my present dwelling-house on the school estate, with the view of, as soon as possible, erecting a building for school purposes. As soon as possible we erected the present school building. Since there has been any income from the estate I have endeavoured to provide for a certain number of European children. We calculated that we could keep about twenty foundation scholars altogether, and I have endeavoured to keep five European boys. There are three European boys there now, two having left, and I purpose taking two or three more as soon as the additions to our building are completed, which are almost now fit for occupation.

243. Upon what terms are the Native scholars received?—The only stipulation I make is that the parents shall as far as possible clothe them.

244. We have had it stated to us in evidence that you make a charge of £20 per annum for children?—I should be surprised to hear any one make such an assertion. I have never charged a sixpence, nor have I received a sixpence.

245. Henare Matua made the statement?—Henare Matua must have known better; because I have had three children from his hapu, and I have never made any charge for them or received anything.

246. I understand you are manager of the estate?—Yes; I managed it for the Trust till 1869, and in 1869 the trustees came to the determination to let the property. Having, in consequence of remarks from certain quarters, decided to let the property, and having fixed the income they expected, they offered to let it to me; and I, having been advised by several gentlemen in the district to retain the management of it as far as possible, accepted the offer.

247. What rent do you pay?—I have been paying £500 a year in addition to the improvements I have made for the benefit of the estate.

248. When does that lease expire?—On 1st February next.

249. Can you give the Committee any idea of the value of the estate to sell?—I have always avoided giving an opinion on that point, and I would rather not give an opinion now.

250. Is £500 a sufficient rental for the estate now?—Certainly not.

251. I will just ask you, but not press for an answer, what in your opinion would be a sufficient rental?—I would rather not enter into that question.

252. Does the occupation of your time in the management of the estate interfere in any way with the instruction you ought to give to the children?—I may say I have not interfered with the management of the estate further than directing the person in charge.

253. Then it does not interfere?—Not in the least. Beyond that, I give my services gratuitously.

254. *Mr. Takamoana.*] Did you attend Te Hapuku's meeting?—Yes; I was there on 8th and 9th August.

255. Did Hapuku and Renata say anything to you?—Yes. Renata Kawepo was speaking to the resolution in reference to the Native Land Court Bill. He advised the meeting that they should upset or set aside all Government Courts of every description, and even went on so far as to advise the meeting to tear up (*pakaru*) their Crown grants, and hold the land as they formerly held it. Then he pointed to me and said, "Here is a Government man, Williams; let us turn him out, and take Te Aute property into our own hands." There was no other remark made upon this subject for a considerable length of time. The Natives, in speaking to the land question, made no reference to Te Aute, and after some time Renata rose again and said, "I have spoken about Te Aute, and not one of the original holders has said one word in my support." Renata Pakututa then referred to a conversation which we had had at a meeting at Te Aute twelve months previously. Hapuku called the original owners of the land together, and invited me to meet them. He then put in a claim for part of the rent of the estate. He said, "Inasmuch as our young people will not go to school, we ought to have part of the rent paid to us." I made the reply which has been already reported. The other Natives then said they had come merely out of courtesy to Hapuku to see what he wanted, but they had no wish in the matter. I replied to Hapuku that I could not pay any rent to them without the sanction of the trustees or of Parliament. Renata then rose again and said my reply was not satisfactory. They did not recognize Parliament or trustees or anybody else except me. Having given the land to me I was the only person responsible to them. He said "*He ana*," &c., "*Whakakohi a Te Wiremu*." Hapuku spoke and said, "You are right, my people wanted a minister, and I said I would only hear of Williams. He is the only person we have to deal with in the question."

256. Did you hear the reasons for which the meeting was called?—It was called in consequence of the completion of the whare runanga at Te Hapuku's. Many Native chiefs invited me to go there and open the meeting.

257. Were you not told that the Te Aute question would form part of the reasons for calling the meeting?—Certainly not.

258. Were you aware that the Native lands question was to be one?—There were no subjects mentioned to me when I was asked to attend the meeting.