

SIR,—

Education Department, Wellington, 20th December, 1878.

In reply to your letter of the 10th instant, I have the honour, by direction of the Minister of Education, to inform you that His Excellency the Governor in Council has authorised the Board of Governors of the Canterbury College to expend upon the erection of buildings for the purposes of the said College a sum not exceeding £5,500 out of the proceeds of sales of reserves, in accordance with the provisions of "The Canterbury Educational Reserves Sale and Leasing Act, 1876."

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Governors, Canterbury College, Christchurch.

JOHN HISLOP.

APPENDIX M.

The Hon. W. ROLLESTON to the SECRETARY to the COMMISSION.

SIR,—

Rangitata, 28th February, 1889.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, in which, by direction of the Royal Commission now engaged in inquiring into the working of the School of Agriculture, you ask me (1) to afford any information I can as to the reason why no action was taken by the trustees elected, by resolution of the Provincial Council of Canterbury in 1875, in respect of the trust, and how the reserves came to be included in the Act of the General Assembly entitled "The Canterbury Educational Reserves Sale and Leasing Act, 1876;" (2) to give the Commission my views as to the future management of the School of Agriculture.

On the first point, it will be understood that I am speaking to some extent from recollection, in the absence of records, and subject to correction.

The resolution referred to was passed in the last session of the Provincial Council of Canterbury, on the eve of the passing of the Act which abolished the provinces. The resolution could have no force without legislation enabling the Superintendent to constitute the trust, and convey the reserves to it. Some of the reserves specified in the Act of 1876, including some of those made for the School of Agriculture (sec. 3 of the Act), had not yet been Crown-granted to the Superintendent, and could not therefore then be dealt with by the Provincial Legislature, which was destined never to sit again; and I believe that under any circumstances an Act of the General Legislature would have been necessary to enable the reserves to be dealt with by the Waste Lands Board in the manner indicated by the Provincial Council, and subsequently provided for by the Act of 1876. There was no prospect, as will be readily understood, of the question being dealt with in the stormy session of 1875, and while some uncertainty yet hung over the fate of the provinces. When Parliament met in 1876 all that remained to be done was to obtain an enactment which would secure to the province the endowments before its final extinction. The Act, it will be observed, came into force a month before that event. The members of the General Assembly for the provincial district had virtually taken the place of the members of the Provincial Council, and they had to consider what was best to be done to secure the endowments locally, and enable the objects of the several trusts to have effect given to them with the least friction and in accordance with their original design. The carrying through such a measure was, at the time, a matter of considerable difficulty, and it would have been hopeless to attempt to carry a Bill of a more complicated character, dealing separately and in detail with the several trusts. I need scarcely point out that the position of parties in the General Assembly was peculiar, as well as the attitude generally of Canterbury members on the question of Abolition. A Bill securing local advantages to a part of the colony which favoured Abolition would naturally be viewed with disfavour by members from other provinces who were opposed to Abolition.

The Bill, however, was taken through the Lower House by myself, and through the Upper House by Sir John Hall, and has had the effect of securing the endowments to the provincial district. (See *Hansard*, 1876: Sir John Hall's speech on the second reading in the Legislative Council.)

Coming to the second point of your inquiry, I am not in a position to form an opinion as to how far the administration by the Canterbury College of the several trusts has been successful or otherwise. From what transpired in the year 1884 as to the Public Library Trust (see my letter on the subject published in the *Lyttelton Times* of the 26th March, 1884), I formed the opinion that there was a possibility of the aggrandisement of some of the trusts at the expense of others, and that the confusion necessarily incident to a violent constitutional change might lead to considerable deviation from the original intention of the Provincial Legislature. The intention, moreover, of the Provincial Legislature, had it continued to exist, would doubtless have been subject to modification with altered circumstances. For example, the land reserved has not proved to be "purely pastoral," and the unforeseen aggregation of capital consequent on the sale of lands would no doubt have called for further developments of the trust, which might have taken a more profitable direction than the large expenditure on buildings which has taken place. However this may be, it seems to me that a closer definition of the several trusts now administered by the Canterbury College is required, to prevent any possibility of confusion of accounts, and inequalities of administration which might be thought unduly to favour any one trust or locality within the provincial district at the expense of others interested. The Commission will no doubt have had under their notice the evidence given by Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Tosswill, before the Royal Commission in 1879, as to the steps which were then being taken in founding the School of Agriculture at Lincoln (Appendix, Journals H. of R., H., 1879). With regard to this particular trust, it appears to me (a) that a modification is required in the constitution of its governing body. There is much to recommend a continuance of a connection with Canterbury College, but there should be a provision insuring a representation, in the selection of trustees, of different parts of the province, and especially of the agricultural interest. Southern Canterbury, for example, contributed largely to the creation of the trust by foregoing for other local purposes the proceeds of land-sales which would