

Miscellaneous Grants.

[Evidence taken before Mr. Hart, at Wanganui.]

MONDAY, 18TH OCTOBER.

Hospital and Cemetery.

Dr. *Featherston*, being duly sworn, states: My name is Isaac Earl Featherston. I am Superintendent of the Province of Wellington. I know the Colonial Hospital at Wanganui, and am cognisant of some of its affairs. The salary of the medical attendant is £150 a year, and is paid by the Provincial Government. The surgeon was to take charge of the hospital, and also to attend the Natives at Putiki. The money is paid through the Provincial Sub-Treasurer, Mr. Nixon. On one occasion I spoke to Mr. James Alexander about the rent of some of the Hospital Reserves, which I was informed he occupied, and told him to pay it to the trustees. He declined to do it.

About two years ago it was intimated to me on the part of the New Zealand Government that no further payments would be made on account of the hospital at Wanganui, or of the attendance upon Natives, except a small allowance proportioned to the number of Native patients received in the hospital. The payment of the surgeon thereupon devolved upon the Provincial authorities. I have heard to my surprise that the salary of the surgeon from the General Government has been continued to the present time.

Mr. *Buller*, being duly sworn, states: My name is Walter Lawry Buller. I live at Wanganui, and am Resident Magistrate there. When I took office as Resident Magistrate, Dr. Gibson was on the staff as Native Medical Attendant, at a salary of £150 a year. That salary has been paid up to the present time. The instructions were that he should attend Putiki once a week, and to receive all Natives who presented themselves at the hospital.

Some years ago, when acting as Native Resident Magistrate, I knew that Dr. Gibson was receiving from the General Government a salary of £150 a year from the Native Department. This was afterwards reduced to £100. I am not aware how it was raised to £150. I found it mentioned in the estimates for my department, and the money was sent to me to pay it.

Mr. *William Hutcheson*, Wanganui, a trustee of the General Cemetery, and acting as secretary, produces the minute and account book of the Cemetery.

David Stark Durie and *William Hogg Watt* state, as to the cemetery, that the accounts of the cemetery are published annually in the Provincial Government *Gazette*.

MONDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 1869.

Mr. *Harper*, being duly sworn, states: My name is Thomas Harper. I reside in Wanganui. I am a Justice of the Peace and Sheriff, and one of the trustees of the Wanganui Hospital Reserves. I was appointed by the Superintendent. As one of Dr. Rees's executors, on examining his papers I found a paper which appeared to be either a copy or original grant of the reserves. This I delivered to Mr. Watt, then one of the trustees. I was not then a trustee. Before I left the colony on a visit to England, I stirred in the business in order to get the land let. In consequence of this some portions of the land were let. The papers and accounts are kept by Mr. Watt. The trustees had a meeting, at which they appointed Mr. Hodge agent and solicitor. Since my return Mr. Hodge has informed me that he had done nothing in the business, as he had been unable to obtain the necessary particulars to enable him to do so. The attention of the trustees has never been drawn before to the state of repair of the building. I have never seen the grant since I was appointed trustee, and was not aware of the contents of it until the copy was read to me by the Commissioner, and did not know what powers the trustees had. I inquired of Mr. Watt for the grant, but he said he did not recollect having it, and did not know where it was.

The trustees took upon themselves to forward to the New Zealand Government a report commenting upon the management of the hospital and medical attendance upon the Natives.

Mr. *Field*, having been duly sworn, states: My name is Henry Claylands Field. I reside in Wanganui, where I am clerk and surveyor to the Town Board. I know the Hospital Reserves within the town. The suburban blocks 33 and 34 are neither of them occupied. Town sections 135, 138, and 139 are not occupied. Town sections 474, 475, and 480 to 490 inclusive, are not let. The four acres included in sections 514 to 521 and 526 to 533 inclusive, are let to one George Marshall a carter. I believe that no rent has been paid for these for years. I have been told by the tenant that he has tendered to several of the trustees, but neither of them would receive it. He has paid the Town Board rates on this land for several years.

I do not know what the amount of the rent is. It was Curtis's first. His trustee transferred it to James Alexander, who transferred it to Jones, after whose death his widow married Marshall, who now holds it. Town sections 130 and 131 are occupied by David Atkinson, and he makes use of them, or at least did so to a late period. Sections 127, 128, and 129 were lately occupied by James Neilson, but I understood lately that he had transferred his interest to his wife's brother, James Lockhart. It was Mrs. Neilson who told me this.

Town section 133 is let to James McElwain; I do not know for what rent. Town sections 143 and 136 are let to Messrs. Abram; I do not know for what rent.

There would be no difficulty in letting these lands, or most of them. I know there are parties willing to take some of them. It would be better to let them even at low rents than to let them lie idle with rates accumulating upon them. There is more than £100 owing to the Town Board at the present time on these properties. I think if they were offered for leases of twenty-one years to public competition as to the amount of rent, that a good rental might be obtained for them.