

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

PROVINCE OF WELLINGTON.

THE following evidence was taken before the Commissioners appointed to inquire into and report upon the condition and nature of Educational and other Trust Estates held directly under Grant from the Crown upon special trust for Religious, Educational, or Charitable Purposes (See *New Zealand Gazette* of Friday, 19th February, 1869.)

Church of England.

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

MONDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 1869.

Lot 126, Town of Wanganui.—Industrial School.

The Rev. C. H. S. Nicholls, being duly sworn, states: My name is Charles Henry Sinderby Nicholls. I am a clerk in Holy Orders, Curate of Christ Church, in Wanganui. I know the land comprised in Crown Grant referred to as No. 126, Record iv. A. There is a church built thereon of wood, and shingled. It will accommodate 330 to 350 sitters. Regular services have been performed there twice on every Sunday, and also on all high festivals. The church stands nearly in the centre of the plot. The residue of the ground has been used as a burial-ground from 1843 to 14th June, 1855, when it was discontinued pursuant to an Act of the Provincial Council of Wellington. There was a fee of 5s. for each burial paid to the church. A fee was also paid to the sexton for digging the grave. For his attendance he was paid by a salary. My experience extends from 1852. After this (June, 1855), burials took place in the new cemetery. No part of this has been separated for consecration by the Bishop, although application has been made to the trustees to permit this to be done. This application was refused. This is considered a hardship by some members of the church.

A piece of land containing 2 acres, on the racecourse, has been reserved by the Superintendent for a church burying-ground, and trustees have been appointed, but, owing to the expense which would be incurred in fencing it, nothing has been done towards its use. The land comprised in the grant, having been used indiscriminately for burials, was rendered unavailable for profitable occupation. Nevertheless it has been assessed and charged with Town Board rates at the same rates as land on either side of it, constituting an unproductive tax upon the church. The revenue of the church has thereby been so far reduced as to prevent the Vestry from keeping the fences in the state of repair in which they would deem they should be. The sittings are charged for per annum at the rate of £1 each for the first two, and 10s. for every other up to five sittings. The usual collections are made in the church.

In reference to the general cemetery I would observe that, as far as I have been able to ascertain, no means have been adopted for preserving the identity of spots in which individuals have been buried, when undistinguished by memorials erected by friends in the neighbourhood.

Lot 52, 250 acres 32 perches, Wanganui.

I know the land comprised in the grant referred to as T. F., No. 52. There is apparently an omission in the grant of some words between the words "children of," in the third line of the copy produced, and the words "other poor" in the same line. I was nominated by Sir George Grey in 1852 to take possession, and I took possession of it early in 1853.

I was informed by Sir George Grey and by the late Bishop of New Zealand that the land had been set apart as an endowment to provide for the education of children of aboriginal natives, half-castes, and destitute Europeans, and other poor and destitute persons. Sir George Grey afterwards explained that he wished it to be a foundation for a Grammar School for the town, for the benefit of all classes. I continued in charge of the land until the end of June, 1860. In February, 1853, a sum of £700 was lodged in the Wellington Bank by the late Bishop of New Zealand to the credit of three trustees for the Wanganui Industrial School. They were appointed by his Lordship, and subsequently received from him a full power of attorney to act. His Lordship informed them that the money was placed at his disposal by the Government, and it was appropriated by him as follows: the sum of £400 for the expense of a building on the land, and the sum of £300 towards the expense of fencing and improving the land. Major Durie has all the documents relating to the school. Operations in draining and fencing commenced in April, 1853, and in September or October the school-house was erected. It was opened on the 23rd May, 1854. No Maoris had offered themselves or their children for instruction, consequently children of European parents were taken in. The first Native scholars were received on the 7th February. From that time until near the end of 1859 Maori pupils were coming and going, receiving food and clothing, and continually absconding with whatever clothing they could take with them. Sometimes six months would elapse without any Maori pupil being in the school. They were told on arrival that they would be fed and clothed, but that they must work for their living. And it seemed as if the needful restraint and discipline of a school were more than they could endure. The greatest number of Maoris that I had at one time would be about thirteen. In 1859 (September) I sent to the Bishop of New Zealand a written resignation of my position as acting-trustee, and after that time the management was taken up by the Rev. Richard Taylor and Major Durie. Major Durie and Mr. Basil Taylor have since been in the management. Mr. Godwin is the present master of the Collegiate School. The District Board of