

Ian Andrew McLaren

SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
IN THE  
NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL ORDER,  
1840-1903

A thesis submitted for the degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the  
Victoria University of Wellington.  
1965

250071

## CONTENTS

Preface	page iii
Acknowledgements	v
Abbreviations	vii
Chapter	
1 In the Beginning	1
2 The Politicians Say No	57
3 'Organise Your Secondary Education'	75
4 Grist for the Mill	94
5 Recommendations, Results and Reactions	118
6 'Woodman, Spare that Tree'	154
7 The High Schools on Trial	183
8 Practical Problems	216
9 First Things First	258
10 Stagnation	291
11 Time to Advance	323
12 Action and Reaction	353
13 Conclusion	382
Appendices	391
Bibliography	414



PREFACE

In the early days of settlement in New Zealand opportunity for secondary education was a luxury sought only by a few; by the end of the nineteenth century it was becoming a necessity wanted by nearly all. To explain this educational revolution I believe it is necessary to examine not only the actual educational controversies and changes which took place in the nineteenth century, but also the developments in the contemporary social and political order of which they are a reflection. Education derives its purpose, form and content from the particular social environment in which it develops and its history, to be fully understood, must be viewed as a part of the total history of a people. My aim throughout this study has been, therefore, to describe and explain developments in secondary education not in isolation from, but in relation to, the evolving social and political order of nineteenth century New Zealand.

The study is restricted in time to the first six decades of New Zealand's history as a British colony with particular emphasis upon the quarter century between the passage of the

Education Act, 1877, and that of the Secondary Schools Act, 1903. The emphasis has been so placed because it was in those years that a social and educational tradition emerged which was to influence all New Zealand's later history and within which, I believe, we today live and think and plan.

I have not attempted to present detailed histories of individual secondary schools nor have I dwelt at length on curricular matters. The histories of many of the endowed schools founded in the nineteenth century, the governing bodies of which appear as villains or heroes of my study, have already been written or are in preparation; the curriculum of the secondary schools, imported from England, was seldom a subject of controversy or general discussion. The story of the New Zealand secondary schools up to 1903 is primarily a political and social one; it is an account of old world institutions being forced to adapt to new world circumstances. Only after the Secondary Schools Act had brought the secondary schools into greater harmony with the social order and had opened them to all children of moderate ability did educational factors at last assume priority over political, and schoolmen become of more importance than politicians in the story of secondary education in New Zealand.

Ian A. McLaren

Wellington,  
November, 1965.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted, first of all, to those who taught me history at the University of Otago - Dr. A.H. McLintock, Professor W.P. Morrell and Dr. Angus Ross - and secondly, to those who interested me in the field of educational history in particular - Mr. A.C.F. Beales, King's College, London; Professor C.L. Bailey, Victoria University of Wellington; Professor H. Richey and Assistant-Professor R. McCaul, University of Chicago. I am particularly grateful to Professor Bailey for the steady encouragement and the much-appreciated, pertinent insights he has given me from time to time while I have been pursuing this study.

I am also indebted for the assistance given to me by the librarians of the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Victoria University of Wellington Library, the General Assembly Library, the Dunedin, Christchurch and Auckland Public Libraries, and the Auckland and Nelson Institutes.

My research was facilitated by the secretaries of the governing bodies of the Nelson Colleges, Timaru Boys' High School and Wellington College; by Mr. N.L. Banks, Housemaster, Fell House, Nelson College; by the Chief Clerk, Nelson Evening Mail Office; by the secretaries of the Nelson, Otago, and Wanganui Education Boards; by Mr. W. Hansen, Assistant-Registrar (Finance) of the University of Canterbury; by

Professor F.L.W. Wood, the Victoria University of Wellington; by Professor H. Field, University of Canterbury; by Mr. John Ewing and Mr. R. Ives of the New Zealand Department of Education, Wellington; by Mr. H. Roth, Deputy-Librarian, University of Auckland and by the staff of the New Zealand Council of Educational Research, Wellington.

Finally, I would like to record my appreciation of the interest and care Miss Airdrie Burns has taken in the typing of this thesis and my gratitude to my wife for her always constructive criticism of my literary efforts.

ABBREVIATIONS

A. & P.	Acts and Proceedings.
A.J.H.R.	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives.
N.Z.J.H.R.	New Zealand Journal of the House of Representatives.
N.Z.J.L.C.	New Zealand Journal of the Legislative Council.
P.D.	Parliamentary Debates.
V. & P.	Votes and Proceedings.

## CHAPTER ONE

### IN THE BEGINNING

The New Zealand pioneer, like the North American frontiersman, has become to many New Zealanders a romanticized symbol rather than a real person struggling to adapt to a strange and often frightening environment. 'As ye sow so shall ye reap' was for the pioneer farmer an injunction to be taken literally. After exhausting his resources in buying his small-holding the pioneer farmer 'would start on foot and alone...with a heavy swag of tools etc, on his back, to which, on passing the last older settler, would be added the additional burden of a kit of seed potatoes, and some rations. With these he would camp down on his future lowly home and would work hard, for long hours on very scanty fare...to hurry in a patch of potatoes, and to make a pig-proof fence round it. He would then beat a retreat to the more settled districts, where he would seek employment until his little crop of potatoes was grown when he would return with a heavier load of rations...and this time he would be able to put in a larger crop and to build a whare, so that the next season he might have the joy of conveying his family to the scene of their future expectations. But it was hard work, and there

were many privations to undergo for the first few years....<sup>1</sup>

The struggle for material existence was for the great majority of the early settlers an all-absorbing task: the margin between success and failure was always very slight as the first settlers in Nelson found in 1844 when the New Zealand Company was unable to honour its promises.

There was no food, no money and no shops in which to get anything, so we had to get fern roots, berries, sow thistles and docks. These were boiled and used for food.... Our next door neighbour had a little baby girl.... Poor woman, she used to sit up and cry for food. I had to dig up the potatoes her husband had planted, put them in the fire, get them warm, give them to her and she would eat them like that.<sup>2</sup>

The taming of the wilderness that was New Zealand in its early years was very largely achieved by men like the Otago farmer and women like Mrs Higgins. Such people felt little need or had little energy to spare for the pursuit of things of the spirit. They had come to New Zealand to escape the economic distress which afflicted farm labourers and factory workers in England and Scotland; they had had little if any formal schooling<sup>3</sup> and it is doubtful if many of them saw much virtue in providing extensive educational facilities in their new

---

1 Anon, 'Reminiscences of Otago,' New Zealand Country Journal, July, 1889. p.291.

2 Sarah Higgins, Diary (Manuscript, Turnbull Library.)

3 Mrs Higgins, for example, was taught to write by her grandchildren so that she could record her reminiscences.

homeland. It is true that in the South Island settlements provision for elementary schooling was quickly made but not all parents took advantage of it by sending their children to school regularly. In 1870, in the House of Representatives, J.C. Richmond, who was arguing for the introduction and passage of a colonial Education Act akin to that which was then before the House of Commons, said that in Otago where very real efforts had been made to establish an adequate education system, only 5,340 school age children out of a possible 10,200 were actually attending public schools, and added,

Some years have passed this way, and it is probable that from five to ten thousand children have grown up in this Colony altogether without even the commonest education.<sup>1</sup>

Children in rural areas spent little time in school. When they 'were just able to mount a horse and wield a stockwhip, they bade good-bye to education'<sup>2</sup> and went to work breaking in land. Few stayed at school long enough to learn more than the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic.

But the apathy of the majority of settlers towards education was partially off-set by the enthusiasm of the minority who,

---

1 P.D., 1870, Vol.9, p.47.

2 P.D., 1870, Vol.8, p.43.



themselves men of considerable culture, wanted to keep up their 'boys' manners, habits and morality to at least the standard of their condition in life.'<sup>1</sup> The boards of governors or trustees of the first secondary schools included among their number a high proportion of such men although, as one early Wellington settler, H.S. Chapman wrote sadly to his father, many gentlemen of his acquaintance seemed 'to be content to bring up their sons as common stockmen - the result will be that they will inevitably become coarse, rude and unenlightened - though probably wealthy.'<sup>2</sup>

To preserve his sons from such a fate Chapman bought one hundred ewes so that, he explained to his father, 'in seven years the wool will educate them - in fourteen years the wool will send them to Oxford and Cambridge.'<sup>3</sup> In a sense, Chapman's friends, who did not concern themselves overmuch about the education of their sons and who did not attempt to preserve in a new society manners and values unsuited to it, were accepting Gibbon Wakefield's dictum that although 'in old countries modes and manners flow down-ward from the higher classes they must, in new countries ascend from the lowest class'.<sup>4</sup> Eventually Chapman gave up his

---

1 H.S.Chapman to his father, 19 December, 1847. Chapman Letters. (Typescript, Turnbull Library.)

2 Ibid., 25 October, 1845.

3 Ibid.

4 E.G.Wakefield, Art of Colonization (Oxford, 1914), p.58.

ambitions for his sons and when the eldest reached secondary school age he was enrolled as a day boy at the Rev. Edwin Wheeler's local 'Te Aro Grammar School'.

### The First Anglican and Wesleyan Foundations

In the 1840's when Chapman could see no alternative but to send his eldest son to public school in England 'to save him from the local influence'<sup>1</sup> the only institution in New Zealand which offered a superior education was Bishop Selwyn's St. John's College, but this possibility was summarily dismissed by Chapman on the grounds that such 'a school must be very mixed and the standards even of language would be low.'<sup>2</sup> St. John's College, apparently did not enjoy great popularity in the south for when Thomas Arnold, who was clearing a piece of farmland at Porirua, thought that he would be appointed first headmaster of Nelson College he wrote to his mother that it would give him 'no small satisfaction...to counteract...the mischief which is being done by the Bishop's High-Church and exclusive College at Auckland.'<sup>3</sup> In 1851 Chapman tersely dismissed the College as 'a sham'.<sup>4</sup>

---

1 Chapman, op.cit., 1 July, 1846.

2 Ibid., 19 December, 1847.

3 T.Arnold to his mother, 16 June, 1846. Letters of Thomas Arnold. (Typescript, Turnbull Library.)

4 Chapman, op.cit., 29 March, 1851.

To a man like Chapman with very set and traditional views on what a collegiate institution should be, St. John's was undoubtedly 'a sham'. Mrs Selwyn's remark that 'the College now is as Collegiate as seven caps and gowns can make it'<sup>1</sup> is an indication of the attention Selwyn paid to the external trappings and administrative structure. The studies of the boys were, however, very different from those considered by Chapman and others to be suitable for the education of gentlemen despite one master's belief that he had been able, while at St. John's, 'to insense [sic] the Colonial youth with something of the Eton spirit.'<sup>2</sup> Selwyn's College was, in fact, an indigenous creation and it was a pity that Selwyn gave to it all the outward forms of an English college. Partly by design, but largely through necessity, the College attempted to be self-supporting; it tried also to educate and train students of theology, Maori youths and adults, and colonists' sons of secondary school age. The formal education which the latter received was admitted to be very limited. Referring to the 'English scholars' the Rev. C.J. Abraham wrote: '...none of them are scholars in our sense of the word; they devote too little time to mere scholarship, having to pay for their support by bodily work.'<sup>3</sup> Hard physical, rather than scholarly, labour

---

1 Mrs Selwyn to Miss C.H.P., 25 March, 1843. Selwyn Letters (Typescript, Turnbull Library.)

2 C.J.Abraham to E.Coleridge, 3 January, 1855. Selwyn Letters.

3 C.J.Abraham to Dr.Hawtrey, 16 September, 1850. Selwyn Letters.

seems to have become characteristic of St. John's by 1850 and may have prompted Chapman to describe the college as a sham. The Bishop's rule that 'no member of the body is at liberty to consider any portion of his time as his own; except such intervals of relaxation as are allowed by the rules of the college',<sup>1</sup> was rigorously applied by the Rev. C.J. Abraham when he was warden of the college.<sup>2</sup> John Greenwood, a scholar from Nelson, kept a diary of his years at St. John's in which he recorded in considerable detail his daily round, commenting from time to time on 'the constant pressure of work and anxiety from six o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock at night.'<sup>3</sup> While admitting the practical value of much of what he learned, Greenwood nevertheless expressed the wish

1 J.K.Davis, History of St. John's (Auckland, 1911), p.32.

2 John Greenwood, Diary (Typescript, Turnbull Library), p.50.

3 Ibid., 6 May, 1852. Greenwood's duties for that day were as follows:

'6-7: Dressing. Inspection and about 10 minutes flute. To 8: Chapel. To 8.30: Breakfast and wound the chronometers. To 9: Virgil with Graham. To 10: With Mr Lloyd arranging about new tables, bunks for dormitories and gravelling path. Took sieve to be mended. To 10.30: Preparing "Praelectiones Academicae". To 12: Lecture. To 2: Levelling path. To 2.40: Dinner. To 4: Writing out list of classes. List of clothes etc. To 6: Keeping school. To 6.30: Tea. To 7: Journal. Reading over Maori Lesson. To 8: Chapel. To 9.20: Superintending Reports. To 9.40: Entering books. To 10: Cruising about the stone building for an axe. To 10.30: Chopping wood. To 11: Writing journal. BED'

that he would not have to stay much longer. Towards the end of 1852 Greenwood returned to Nelson and in the following year 'a sad cloud of calamity - a passing tempest of moral evil - settled down upon the college and compelled its dispersion for a time. Indeed the Maori Department never re-assembled.'<sup>1</sup> Put more bluntly, homosexuality had become rife among a group of the boarders and to avoid public scandal the college was disbanded. In 1854 a visitor to the college remarked that it had only half a dozen private pupils. 'There is a painful history about it all', he went on, 'and for a time it seems cut down.'<sup>2</sup> St. John's never re-entered the field of secondary or native education but became exclusively a theological college. In 1865 the Report of the General Synod contained resolutions which are in effect a post-script to the story of what Butchers called 'the first academy of higher learning in New Zealand'<sup>3</sup>:

'That this Synod is of opinion that the main object of St. John's College, Auckland is the preparation of Candidates for Holy Orders.

'That the Trustees of St. John's College be requested to give effect as far as possible to the above Resolution.'<sup>4</sup>

---

1 G.H.Curteis, Bishop Selwyn in New Zealand (London, 1889), p.143.

2 Henry Sewell, Journal (Typescript, Turnbull Library), 9 July, 1854.

3 A.G.Butchers, Young New Zealand (Dunedin, 1929), p.285.

4 As quoted in W.J.Simkin, The College of St. John the Evangelist (Wellington, 1938), p.133.

In 1842 Selwyn had expressed the hope that, by being first in the field of higher education, 'we may command nearly the whole education of the country for the future.'<sup>1</sup> This ambition was not fulfilled but its non-fulfilment was due to a complex of causes and not solely to the troubles at St. John's. However, the difficulties and disappointments Selwyn experienced in his first collegiate institution undoubtedly dissuaded him from asserting his intended claim to educational sovereignty in the Cook Straits area.

Preparations to establish a southern counterpart to St. John's began when some Maoris who had been students at St. John's offered Selwyn 500 acres of rough, undulating land at Witireia, the northern extremity of a slip of land forming the west arm of Porirua Harbour. Writing in July, 1849, to his brother-in-law, the Dean of Ely, Selwyn said the land had been given by the Maoris 'for the purpose, as they express it, "of a college for the native and English youth, that they may be united together as one people".'<sup>2</sup> The Bishop was confirmed in possession of the land by a Crown Grant in 1850 and entered into correspondence with Archdeacon Hadfield at Otaki about plans for the foundation

---

1 G.Selwyn to E.Coleridge, 27 July, 1842. Selwyn Letters.

2 H.W.Tucker, Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn, D.D. (London, 1879), i, p.280.

of Trinity College, Porirua. In February, 1853, Hadfield sent to Selwyn his suggestions for the organisation and management of the new institution which he envisaged as a selective entry, superior school, to which promising pupils from other Church schools in the province could be admitted. Initially, Archdeacon Hadfield proposed, the school should enrol fifteen selected native youths, five selected English youths and ten English scholars who would attend at their own expense.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Selwyn hoped to bring to Trinity boys from the Pacific Islands, 'swarthy youths' he called them, who could be trained to return as missionaries to their home islands.<sup>2</sup>

Trinity College, however, never became a reality. Selwyn's original enthusiasm was dampened by the 'moral calamity' which had befallen St. John's and also by the lack of support his scheme received from the citizens of Wellington where private enterprise was already providing grammar school education. The proposed College was, in any case, inconveniently sited, not only for Europeans, but also for the Maoris who were few in number in the Porirua Basin. Deterred by the prevailing apathy Selwyn lost interest in Trinity College and directed his very considerable energies to missionary work among the Pacific Islanders. No

---

1 Memorandum, O.Hadfield to G.Selwyn, 12 February, 1853. Hadfield Papers. (Manuscript, Turnbull Library.)

2 Tucker, *op.cit.*, i, pp.284-5.

attempt was made to establish even an industrial school in place of the more ambitious college because by the middle of the 1850's it was apparent that this type of school was not finding much favour among the settlers or the Maoris. 'I am not so sanguine in the success of these institutions as I was,' Hadfield wrote to Selwyn, 'and I feel strongly the force of the remarks you made to me in Auckland on the difficulty in carrying on these institutions.'<sup>1</sup> However, Trinity College, Porirua, was not allowed to sink completely into oblivion for when the Trustees appealed to the Supreme Court at the turn of the century for permission to abandon any plans for building a school at Porirua and to use income for scholarship purposes, they were refused. The Trustees took the matter to the Privy Council which over-ruled the New Zealand Court in what was styled an 'attack on the integrity of the N.Z. Court.'<sup>2</sup> It was not until 1943, almost a century after the original gift of land had been made to Selwyn, that the difficulties and confusions which seemed always to attach themselves to this particular trust were resolved by an Act of Parliament, the Otaki and Porirua Trusts Act.<sup>3</sup>

The failure of George Selwyn and Octavius Hadfield to establish a college at Porirua, and Hadfield's comment on the

---

1 O.Hadfield to G.Selwyn, 26 July, 1855. Hadfield Papers.

2 Evening Post (Wellington), 16 June, 1903.

3 'An Act to incorporate a New Board to hold the Property now held by the Porirua College Trust Board under the Otaki and Porirua Empowering Act, 1907, and to vary the Trusts upon which that Property is held.'



difficulty of carrying on institutions like the Whanganui [sic] Industrial School and the Otaki Maori School highlighted the failure of most of Grey's denominational foundations to satisfy the educational needs of settlers and Maoris. Of these early Grey foundations, Te Aute and St. Stephens eventually became quite successful secondary schools for boys, attended predominantly by Maoris; and Whanganui Industrial School has become through time and litigation the Whanganui Collegiate School, a fashionable boys' secondary school controlled by the Church of England.<sup>1</sup> Early success came to Grey's Wesleyan foundation at Three Kings, Auckland, which had an enrolment of 150 Maoris in 1851 only three years after its establishment. But the Native Institution, as it was called, failed to survive the exigencies of the Maori Wars. The Wesleyans did not attempt secondary schooling at Three Kings but opened in January, 1850, Auckland's first secondary school, a co-educational school designed for the children of Wesleyan missionaries in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji but open also to local day pupils.<sup>2</sup>

#### Non-Sectarian Secondary Schools in Wellington and Auckland

Auckland and Wellington were alike in the 1850's in their

---

1 Three Royal Commissions have at various times inquired into the use to which this school's land endowments have been put by its trustees.

2 W. Morley, The History of Methodism in New Zealand. (Wellington, 1900), pp.275-80.

lack of a public non-sectarian secondary school for boys; Grey tried to remedy this deficiency by endowing a college and grammar school in each town before he left New Zealand in 1853 but his endowments bore no immediate fruit. It was more than a decade before the Trustees in either place attempted to found actual schools.

Compared with the provisions made for the promotion of secondary education in later New Zealand Company settlements, Wellington fared badly although there was a world of difference between finance promised and finance available, as the Nelson settlers were to learn as they struggled to wrest from the Company the money set aside for the establishment of Nelson College. No land endowments for educational purposes were made in the initial laying out of the 'Town of Wellington' and it was only through Grey's endowment that Wellington College came by some of the original town sections in Thorndon and Te Aro. Because the income from these pieces of land on the fringes of settlement was small and public interest was slight, the inactivity of the Trustees passed unnoticed for many years. Between 1857 and 1864 the Board met only ten times.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> F.M. Leckie, The Early History of Wellington College, N.Z., from 1867 to 1883 (Auckland, 1934), p.31.

In his first annual report, in April 1865, T.A. Bowden, the newly-appointed Inspector of Schools for the Wellington Province and ex-headmaster of the Bishop's School, Nelson, remarked on the desirability of 'establishing a Common Middle-Class School, taking up education where it is left by the higher classes of the Elementary Schools.'<sup>1</sup> In August of that year the Provincial Council was formally asked to inquire into the state of the Grey endowments. That there was a demand for secondary education is indicated by the proliferation of private grammar schools about this time. Commenting on the opening of one of these, Messrs. Tuckey and Hamilton's Wellington Grammar and Commercial School, the editor of the New Zealand Advertiser said:

'We are glad to observe...that Wellington is, at least, to have a superior school. This City and Province is...the most backward from an educational point of view of any in New Zealand, and our youth have had to content themselves with merely rudimentary acquirements or go to some of the colleges in the South.'<sup>2</sup>

The school thus given the editorial accolade was, in fact,

---

1 A. and P., W.P.C., Session XIV, 1866. Report of Inspector of Schools, p.4.

2 New Zealand Advertiser (Wellington), 5 February, 1867.

the genesis of the present day Wellington College. Its opening coincided with the appointment of a new Board of Trustees to manage the Grey endowments. These gentlemen, impressed by the efficiency and success of the Wellington Grammar and Commercial School, acquired it from its proprietors as a going concern.<sup>1</sup> By this somewhat unusual device of taking over an established private school, the Trustees provided Wellington with a public, non-sectarian secondary school admitting boys, as T.A. Bowden said, 'without reference to their religious denominations or the nationalities to which they belong.'<sup>2</sup> Pupils had, of course, to pay fees but according to Bowden these did not make it an exclusive school for, as he told the members of the Religious, Charitable and Educational Trusts Commission, 'the boys belong to all classes of the community, from mechanics to the Superintendent of the Province.'<sup>3</sup>

In common with just about every other secondary school outside Otago, Wellington College applied for affiliation with the newly-created University of New Zealand. J.C. Andrew who, on behalf of the University, inspected all institutions which sought affiliation, was unimpressed by what he saw at Wellington College. 'The School or College at Wellington...is decidedly inferior to any of the

---

1 Leckie, op.cit., p.46.

2 A.J.H.R., 1870, Vol.IA, No.3, p.24.

3 Ibid.

other institutions which I have visited', he reported. 'The age at which lads leave Wellington College is said to be on the whole younger than is usual even in a Colony.... The cream of the school is thus incessantly being removed from it.'<sup>1</sup> The poor physical facilities and inadequate staffing were also criticized but the College, with financial assistance from the Provincial Government, met the University's requirements in these matters and secured affiliation although the problem of early leavers was not so readily solved.<sup>2</sup>

The Wellington College story was paralleled in Auckland where the Grammar School, although given its first endowment in 1850, did not open its doors to pupils until 1869. Like Wellington College and Grammar School, Auckland Grammar School sought and obtained affiliation to the University of New Zealand. Also like Wellington College, Auckland Grammar became the town's leading boys' secondary school in the shadow of which proprietary grammar schools gradually wilted and died.

#### Nelson In Quest Of Its College

The public provision of secondary education came late in Wellington and Auckland because of limited endowments and lack

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1873, Vol.3, H-3A, p.2.

2 Leckie, op.cit., p.143.

of interest in education generally at a time when the Taranaki and Waikato wars were dominating local politics.<sup>1</sup> Adequate endowments, peace, preliminary planning and genuine interest made much easier the early establishment of boys' secondary schools in Nelson and Canterbury, although even in these two planned settlements the path of educational progress did not always run smooth. There were times, especially in the early years of the Nelson settlement when, as Mrs Higgins's diary entries show,<sup>2</sup> the struggle for survival left the majority of the settlers with little time or energy to worry about higher education. The first decade of Nelson's existence was occupied by a search for a solution to the land difficulties, a solution which depended not only upon a satisfactory adjustment of relations between the New Zealand Company, the local government and the Colonial Office, but also upon a measure of agreement between the Company directors and absentee landowners in England and the resident land purchasers in the colony. Educational and land issues were closely linked during this period because upon the returns from the sale of lands depended the endowment of a college as promised in the ninth term of purchase of the agreement

---

1 A.Cumming, Per Angusta (M.A. thesis, Auckland), p.57.

2 Above, p.2.

between the settlers and the Company. This stipulated that of the £300,000 to be raised from the sale of lands, £50,000 would be devoted to 'public purposes for rendering the settlement commodious and attractive.... It is attended [sic] to apply £15,000 to religious uses and endowments for colonists of all denominations, £15,000 to the establishment of a college in the settlement, and £20,000 towards the encouragement of steam navigation.'<sup>1</sup> In 1842, a group of settlers, confident that the college endowment would soon be put at the disposal of the settlers, addressed a memorial to the Directors of the New Zealand Company asking them to consider spending some of the £15,000 college endowment for 'the support of schools for the plainer education which is all that the children of the labouring classes can afford.'<sup>2</sup> But plans for utilising the fund were, as it soon became obvious, premature. By 1843 the Company had run into such financial difficulties that apart from £7,000 in the bank its funds were exhausted.<sup>3</sup> The Company was bankrupt and the British government unsympathetic. The Company's Tenth Report with its blunt admission that it had 'been compelled to suspend entirely the proceedings of the

---

1 Nelson Examiner (Nelson), 21 May, 1842.

2 Ibid., 11 June, 1842.

3 Ruth Allan, History of Nelson to 1877 (Manuscript, Turnbull Library.)

Company as a colonising body'<sup>1</sup> dashed the hopes of those settlers who had hoped to see the early establishment of a college. But just as in Nelson the working classes after a very sharp spell of privation began to prosper, so the tide began to turn for the New Zealand Company, and when Earl Grey came to the Colonial Office in June 1846 more consideration was given the Company's needs.

In Nelson, the editor of the Nelson Examiner, hopeful that better times were ahead, resumed his agitation for the establishment of 'a college on the general principles of those of the great public schools of England'.<sup>2</sup> Such a school was necessary, he urged, to provide for the education of boys from ten or twelve to sixteen or eighteen, some of whom were being sent away to complete their education or whose parents were leaving the settlement because of the failure of the Company to honour its promise to finance a college. One such parent wrote to his mother in England deploring the lack of educational facilities offered in the settlement. 'For the sake of the dear children especially do I wish we could return. As they grow up, compared with an English child, how ignorant will they be.'<sup>3</sup>

---

1 New Zealand Company, Tenth Report, 15 March, 1844, p.4.

2 Nelson Examiner, 18 April, 1846.

3 H.C.Daniell to his mother, 13 June, 1844. Betts Collection. (Turnbull Library.)



When even the editor's best literary efforts failed to arouse much interest in what was locally called 'the College question' he changed his tactics. Instead of stressing the advantages of having a college in Nelson he stressed the long-term consequences of being without one. 'Surely the colonists of Nelson must be aware of the deplorable consequences of educational impoverishment. Each generation,' he gloomily predicted, 'instead of keeping on a par with its predecessor will assume perpetually a lower status of intelligence and virtue, until they lapse into a state of coarseness and ignorance.'<sup>1</sup> The religious life of the community in which they took such pride would also suffer because 'simultaneously with Devotion and its Creed, nay perhaps in advance of them, must march Education and the Schoolmaster.'<sup>2</sup>

Successive editors and leader writers of the Nelson Examiner among whom were William Fox, Alfred Domett and young Tom Arnold, were consistent in keeping educational issues steadfastly before the attention of the public. If angered by the apathy of the citizens or by what he considered injudicious educational legislation the editor of the day did not hesitate to speak his mind. The 1847 Education Ordinance,

---

1 Nelson Examiner, 5 September, 1846.

2 Ibid.

for example, called forth criticism which, not surprisingly, was re-echoed in Domett's Minute of Protest. 'Against this exclusive and priestly measure by which it is attempted to raise the ragged banner of bigotry in New Zealand it is the duty of every honest colonist to protest and remonstrate.'<sup>1</sup> The spirit of Trafalgar lived on in the Antipodes!

Castigation and destructive criticism were not the sole stock in trade of the occupants of the Examiner's editorial chair: they also had liberal and practical views on how schools should be organised and administered on a local, or if the opportunity offered, on a colony-wide basis. These views were expressed from time to time in the columns of the Examiner<sup>2</sup> and many of them gained legislative sanction in the Nelson Education Ordinance, 1856. Alone among the provinces, Nelson enjoyed 'educational harmony throughout the Provincial period'<sup>3</sup> and aspects of its system of public education were copied by almost every other province.

The Examiner was never more vigilant in its role of educational watchdog than in the matter of the proposed college, the 'Antipodean Eton,'<sup>4</sup> as an editor once referred to it. He was

1 Ibid., 27 November, 1847.

2 Especially in Nelson Examiner of 7 July and 11, 18 and 25 August, 1849.

3 A.G. Butchers, op.cit., p.262.

4 Nelson Examiner, 18 April, 1846.

particularly watchful of the Directors of the New Zealand Company who, in spite of repeated 'memorials' from prominent Nelson landholders, declined to hand over the Trust Funds, claiming that because of difficulties arising out of a lack of agreement between resident and absentee land purchasers it was 'obviously out of their power'<sup>1</sup> to do so. More publicly, at almost the same time, the Directors who, one disgruntled Nelsonian said, were probably more interested in their grouse shooting than in the affairs of the settlement,<sup>2</sup> were expressing their enthusiastic support for the setting up of 'a Collegiate Institution.'<sup>3</sup> By early 1850 the editor was convinced that the New Zealand Company had no intention of honouring its obligations and wrote bitterly that the Company had deliberately but without any real intention of fulfilling its promise 'planned the bait of a College to catch the imagination of men of education.'<sup>4</sup> The editor was probably too harsh in his judgement of the motives of the Directors in the halcyon days of a decade before when plans for the Nelson settlement were being finalised, but his belief that the New Zealand Company might avoid paying over the Trust Fund to the locally-elected board of trustees was well-founded.

---

1 Harington to Fox, 7 September, 1849: NZC 102/25, p.238.

2 Nelson Examiner, 24 March, 1849.

3 Ibid., 3 November, 1849.

4 Ibid.

In July 1850, the New Zealand Company ceased operations, bequeathing its Trust Fund liabilities to the British Government.

Local fears that the Trust Funds were irretrievably lost were banished by quick action by the Colonial Office which had an Act of Parliament passed in 1851 to tidy up the New Zealand Company's affairs.<sup>1</sup> It provided, among other things, that the trustees elected in Nelson were to be charged with administering the funds for promoting emigration, labour, religion, education, steam navigation and public works.

Legally, all was now well, but there was a considerable delay and much correspondence before the Trust Fund Board was able to get any money to spend. In the meantime, the editor of the Examiner returned to the attack. 'We stand sadly in need of a good high school,' he wrote. 'It is deplorable to think that a settlement which subscribed £9,000 toward the establishment of a college ten years ago should yet be in so defective a state with regard to education.'<sup>2</sup> In case concern for the educational needs of the settlement did not win a quick response from the Treasury, William Fox, a former agent of the New Zealand Company, tried another tack. 'In July last the Nelson settlement was without news from Wellington...for

---

1 'An Act to Regulate the Affairs of Certain Settlements Established by the New Zealand Company in New Zealand'. (New Munster Gazette, 1852, p.4.)

2 Nelson Examiner, 6 September, 1851.

three months while the Council was sitting at the latter place making laws affecting the former; news was ultimately received by way of Sydney,<sup>1</sup> he complained. Eventually an advance of £20,000 was made and the Trust Fund Board was able to begin its work of distributing money to the various churches, negotiating for the establishment of Nelson College and giving financial assistance to the promoters of steam navigation. The trustees were not satisfied with a mere £20,000. Negotiations with the Colonial Office were resumed; these dragged on until finally, in 1857, a further sum of £20,362. 12s. 2d. was paid over by Treasury. Belatedly but propitiously, the story of the Company and the College came to an end.

The payment into the College fund of £8,570<sup>2</sup> from the first Treasury grant made possible some real progress towards the establishment of the long-promised College. Progress was hastened by the passing of the Nelson Trust Funds Act, 1854<sup>3</sup> which, by enfranchising a great many owners of land stretching far to the south along the west coast, made it possible that control of the Trust Funds so dearly gained might yet pass out of the hands of those who had been the chief contributors and who

---

1 'Minute on the government of New Zealand.' GBPP, 1852, XXV (HC179), p.9.

2 R.J.M.Fowler, Nelson Trust Fund (M.A. thesis in Betts Collection, Turnbull Library.)

3 'An Act to make further Provision for the Administration of the Nelson Trust Funds.'

now constituted the landed gentry of Nelson. A cleavage between this articulate and well-educated class and the rest of the settlers over the use of the College funds was becoming apparent: criticism of the notion of a college catering for a very small number of boys had been common for some time and at least one citizen suspected that for reasons of personal advancement and convenience one of the trustees was urging its establishment.<sup>1</sup> It was argued that the money could be better used in either subsidising primary education or, if it had to be spent on higher education, then on country grammar schools. The obvious wish of the proponents of these schemes - William Fox was one - was to share the education grant among all classes.

To forestall any interference in what they believed was the proper use of the College Fund the trustees, acting in accordance with clause nine of the Nelson Trust Funds Act 1854,<sup>2</sup> nominated nine prominent Nelson citizens to form the Board of Governors of a non-sectarian institution dedicated to the advancement of

---

1 Saxton Diary, 30 August, 1847. (Manuscript, Turnbull Library). 'He (Dr. Greenwood) wishes to get the Trust Funds in order that he might make this place a residence for gentlemen so that there might be young men of the better class as society for his girls.... Dr. Greenwood has endeavoured to concentrate the Trust Funds on the College which he hopes to be Principal of having once kept school at Boulogne.'

2 'Trustees to dispose of Funds for the benefit of the Province of Nelson to the purposes mentioned and in such proportions as they shall think fit.'

religion and morality and the promotion of useful knowledge.<sup>1</sup> To appease those who still clamoured for grammar schools the Board of Governors established a system of free scholarships and bursaries for boys of ability in country districts.<sup>2</sup> The Governors wasted no time in acquiring a site for their College but their ambitious building projects had to be held in abeyance because of the rising costs of labour and materials caused by the Australian gold rushes. Temporary premises were found, the first headmaster, the Rev. J.C. Bagshaw appointed, and on 7 April, 1856, Nelson College formally opened with an initial enrolment of less than twelve and a class bias which, one historian of the College claimed, existed until Atmore's amalgamation of the College and Technical School in the 1920's.<sup>3</sup>

#### From Denominationalism to Secularism

Provision for education figured more prominently in plans for the Canterbury settlement than had been the case in Nelson. The proposed college in Nelson stood out in isolation; it was not an integral part of a comprehensive system of schools. No formal provision was made for elementary schooling in the

---

1 Deed of Foundation, Nelson College. (Council of Governors' Office, Nelson.)

2 R.J.M.Fowler, *op.cit.*, p.81.

3 J.G.McKay to Mrs Ruth Allan. Correspondence relating to her History of Nelson. n.d. (Manuscript, Turnbull Library.)

Company's plans, it being left to the initiative of the settlers - and this in the case of Nelson was considerable - to establish suitable schools to meet the immediate needs of the community. The Canterbury Association, by contrast, proposed to create a network of elementary schools for what the Bishop-designate, the Rev. T. Jackson, called 'the peasantry of New Canterbury'<sup>1</sup> and a college and grammar school for the sons of the gentlemen whom the Association hoped to attract to its settlement. Transplanting a cross-section of English rural society also entailed, the promoters accepted, transplanting schools appropriate for the different classes of that society.

Mr. Jackson, Principal of Battersea Normal College until his elevation to a colonial bishopric, acted as a publicity agent for the Association by travelling about England addressing public meetings. Invariably he dwelt at considerable length on the Association's educational plans. 'The Canterbury Association,' he said at Ipswich, 'propose...to devote £1 for every acre sold to the building of churches, the erection of parsonages, the endowment of clergymen, the foundations of schools for primary and secondary instruction; and last, but not least...the establishment of a college.'<sup>2</sup> The college and grammar school

---

1 Canterbury Papers, Numbers 5 and 6 (n.p., 1850), p.129.

2 Ibid., Number 4, pp.97-98.



was to be organised into two departments, the lower grammar school department catering for boys from seven to seventeen and the upper collegiate department for older youths. The grammar school department was to be designed 'to provide an efficient course of Education for youth comprising Religious and Moral instruction in strict conformity with the Doctrine and Discipline [sic] of the Established Church of England,'<sup>1</sup> and including instruction in the classics, modern languages and literature, mathematics, English history, physics, descriptive and political geography, botany, chemistry, and natural philosophy.

The scheme for Christ's College and Grammar School, which was published in full in the Nelson Examiner, allowed the editor to comment on Nelson's failure to establish a similar institution and also, drawing on local experience, to warn the Canterbury Association that its educational aspirations might receive some severe setbacks. 'In the matter of the College... difficulties of an unexpected nature will arise, and what appears feasible and easy of accomplishment in London, will be viewed in a totally different light on the plains of Port Cooper.'<sup>2</sup> The editor, however, praised the comprehensiveness

---

1 Ibid., pp. 101-102.

2 Nelson Examiner, 23 March, 1850.

of the Association's plans and recommended that Nelsonians reflect upon their merits. This suggestion drew a stinging reply from a local correspondent. He attacked the denominational nature of Canterbury's intended educational system and accused those whom he described as the 'titled and mitred gentry of an over-gorged church hierarchy', of transplanting to the new world the seeds of the very miseries the people of England were struggling to get rid of.<sup>1</sup> 'The transportation to an infant Colony of a senile Establishment... is an attempt with the old leaven to set a sponge in the new colony which might raise up a new batch of adorers at the alter [sic] of Mammon.'<sup>2</sup>

As the editor of the Nelson Examiner had warned, troubles undreamt of in London soon developed. From the outset all manner of forces impinged upon the Canterbury Association's educational plans to alter or frustrate them. First, only 17,500 acres instead of the anticipated 200,000 had been sold by May, 1851. Secondly, even the rather meagre £17,500 which had been paid into the Ecclesiastical and Educational Fund was not available for immediate use, it having been appropriated by the financially-straitened Association to finance transport and public works. Land to the value of the loan was given in

---

1 Ibid. Letter to the Editor. 30 November, 1850.

2 Ibid. Further Letter to Editor. 14 December, 1850.

exchange but the real need at the time was for capital with which to build churches and schools and to pay teachers. Thirdly, and contrary to what the settlers had been led to believe, practically no facilities had been provided in the settlement before their arrival for either worship or education. Selwyn remarked critically on his first visit to the infant settlement: 'Here I find neither church nor school nor parsonage in existence. Money enough has been spent but all in civil engineering.'<sup>1</sup> Fourthly, Jackson, who might have succeeded in setting up a school system, resigned his bishopric and returned to England leaving behind a number of elementary school teachers who, finding no employment for their particular skills, either turned to other ways of earning a living or went to other provinces.<sup>2</sup>

In such an unfavourable educational climate the college and grammar school did not readily take root and flourish. As in the other settlements, the energies of the settlers and their families had, for the first few years, to be devoted to the task of establishing themselves in their new homeland. Godley's experiences in the infant settlement impressed upon him the uselessness of trying to arouse much interest in educational matters among such people. In a speech made after

---

1 Tucker, op.cit., i, p.355.

2 Sewell, op.cit., 10 May, 1853.

his return to England he said:

'Unfortunately in new countries there is such a demand for men and money that few are content on the one hand to pay the sums that would keep their sons as gentlemen at College; and on the other, to sacrifice those sons' services just at the age when they are beginning to be useful on station or farm. A College in the English sense of the word, for three or four thousand poor and hardworking people would be out of place. It would die for want of students.'<sup>1</sup>

Henry Sewell, Godley's successor as Agent for the Association, was much more forthright. 'The talk about education is for the most part cant. People in general are too selfish and self-engrossed to think of expending time and thought on anything unremunerative,'<sup>2</sup> he wrote. Selwyn had emphasized the need to begin the College as soon as possible. 'Every year that you delay the beginning it will become more difficult to begin at all,'<sup>3</sup> the Bishop warned, but his warning was little heeded. In May, 1853, Sewell complained to Lord Lyttelton that 'we have not planned even the beginning of a college...nor built or endowed sufficient schools.'<sup>4</sup> Again, in August, he was crying, 'Only begin, plant the seed.'<sup>5</sup>

In fact, the lower department of the College and Grammar School was functioning during this time, first in Lyttelton and then in Christchurch, but it was only a shadow of the institution it had been intended to be. However, a very generous endowment

---

1 P.Cocks, Early Canterbury in the Light of Henry Sewell's Journal, 1853-56. (M.A. thesis, Canterbury), p.72.

2 Sewell, op.cit., 1 April, 1854.

3 Canterbury Papers, Numbers 1 and 2 (London, 1850), p.35.

4 Sewell, op.cit., 10 May, 1853.

5 Ibid., 22 August, 1853.

of land given to the struggling school by the first Provincial Council when Fitzgerald envisaged it as becoming the leading educational institution of the province, the apex of an efficient educational pyramid,<sup>1</sup> assured its financial future. It was founded as Christ's College by the Church Property Trustees of the Province of Canterbury on 21 May, 1855, and as long as Canterbury remained a predominantly Anglican settlement no one seems to have questioned the wisdom or justice of endowing the College out of the public estate with potentially very valuable properties.

But while most of the settlers seemed willing to accept denominationally-provided secondary education they were not so agreeable to continued control of the elementary schools by the Church of England. Growing dissatisfaction with the denominational educational system forced the Provincial Council to set up an educational commission under the chairmanship of the Hon.H.J.Tancred 'to inquire into the Existing System of Education in the Province, to report as to Future Requirements, and as to the best Provision for the Establishment and Maintenance of Schools.'<sup>2</sup>

As a result of the Commission's findings, although the Bishop of Christchurch protested vehemently and often, financial control of education was taken out of church hands and vested in

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Proceedings of the Provincial Council, Province of Canterbury. Session I. Superintendent's Address. 27 September, 1853, p.14.

<sup>2</sup> New Zealand Government Gazette, Province of Canterbury, 1 December, 1863, Vol.X, Number XXI. 'Report of the Education Commission, 1863,' p.196.

a Board of Education. Christ's College, however, because the Commissioners had restricted their inquiry to elementary education, remained unaffected by this major change in educational policy.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, in 1873, the Provincial Government, which had increasingly, since the Ordinance of 1864, made itself more and more responsible for the organisation and control of education, withdrew all financial aid from denominational schools. Thus was answered after exactly two decades, in a way which few would have envisaged in the infancy of the province, the two questions Fitzgerald had posed in his address to the inaugural meeting of the Canterbury Provincial Council.<sup>2</sup> Christ's College was deprived of its annual income from public funds but was allowed to retain its handsome land endowments although it was now clearly a private denominational school with, one visitor suggested, 'a name somewhat above the reality.'<sup>3</sup> Despite growing egalitarianism and a diminution in the influence of the Church of England, Christ's College was accepted as the school for the wealthier classes throughout most of the

1 Ibid., p.199.

2 'First, what is the relation in which the State in its corporate capacity is to stand towards the various religious bodies existing within it? And secondly, in what manner and to what extent ought the State to interfere in the education of the young?' Journal of the Proceedings of the Provincial Council, Province of Canterbury. op.cit., p.14.

3 Lord Lyttelton, Two Lectures on a Visit to the Canterbury Colony in 1867-68 (London, 1868), p.22.

provincial period and although the Presbyterian Church opened very efficient high schools in Christchurch and Lyttelton<sup>1</sup> these enjoyed but a transitory existence. Nevertheless the educational creed of the Presbyterians as it was expressed by the Rev. C. Fraser, founder of the Christchurch Academy, was more in keeping with the temper of the times than that subscribed to by many leading Anglican dignitaries. 'Our advocacy', he wrote in 1873, 'will be devoted to the general support of a general system of education for all classes, such as all classes can accept, so cheap that every family can afford it, and so complete that every child can secure the fitting development of his mental powers on the sole condition of good character and conduct.'<sup>2</sup> Where such beliefs were abroad a school which was the preserve of a privileged class was certain to lose a good deal of popular sympathy. Christ's was no exception. Before the end of the 1870's public dissatisfaction with Christ's College found open expression<sup>3</sup> and steps were taken by the Canterbury College Board of Governors to establish undenominational high schools for boys and girls.

---

1 Lyttelton Times (Christchurch), 14 June, 1862 and 16 December, 1925.

2 Rev.C.Fraser (ed.), 'Introductory Note', The Canterbury Presbyterian (Christchurch, 1874), p.2.

3 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.180.

Secondary Education South of the Waitaki

The Association of Lay Members of the Free Church of Scotland, the promoters of the projected settlement of Otago, promised intending settlers that not only would there ~~be~~ be adequate provision for primary schooling in Otago but that the Association proposed, in addition, 'to institute a seminary for boarders and day pupils, in which ample provision will be made for teaching every branch of a liberal education.'<sup>1</sup>

The man picked to be the settlement's spiritual leader, the Rev. Thomas Burns, gave much thought to the education question and to the role and status of the schoolmaster in the new community.<sup>2</sup> However, as the Nelson settlers had already learned, and the Canterbury pilgrims were soon to learn, it was one thing to plan institutions of superior learning but quite another thing to establish them. The Otago settlers, too, made the same discovery for it quickly became apparent that the Association of Lay Members had made no real provision for any form of education beyond elementary. Genuine demand for education of more than a rudimentary kind must have been small in a settlement whose chief town had only 760 inhabitants<sup>3</sup>

---

1 Otago Journal, No.1, January, 1848, p.15.

2 A.H.McLintock, History of Otago, (Dunedin, 1949), p.230.

3 C.S.Ross, The Story of the Otago Church and Settlement (Dunedin, 1887), p.24.



on the fifth anniversary of its foundation, but absence of facilities for higher education gave the dissident, non-Free Church minority an excellent weapon with which to attack their Presbyterian leaders. One discontented English woman wrote:

The want of a school is much felt by us for Willie, it was a gross deception, advertising the College, with its head Master, and under Masters, nothing of the sort exists, and I did not forget to say what I thought when the Minister came out the other day to visit all in this neighbourhood, he could only say it was a thing in perspective, and spoken of as such only, which was false, as we have the printed announcement of the head Master with two Assistants having sailed.... 1

But 'in perspective' college education had to remain for a considerable time. A committee of settlers which took steps to establish primary schools throughout the settlement in 1851 decided that 'there are no means of doing more even in Dunedin, though it is strictly to be kept in view that a Grammar School shall be established in Dunedin at the earliest possible date.'<sup>2</sup>

Early in the first session of the Provincial Council, James Macandrew urged the necessity and desirability of establishing

---

1 Letter, Sarah Low, 29 December, 1849 as quoted in footnote in McLintock, op.cit., p.268.

2 Ross, op.cit., p.75.

a high school which would also serve as a normal school<sup>1</sup> but his motion was ignored by his fellow councillors. It did not, however, pass unnoticed in the community. The Presbytery of Otago at its inaugural meeting in June, 1854, resolved to encourage 'the establishment of elementary and superior schools.'<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, the Provincial Council at its second session took cognizance of the Presbytery's wishes and appointed a select committee to inquire into education. Its report, which was adopted by the Council, included a recommendation that 'a proper academy or grammar school shall be maintained in Dunedin.'<sup>3</sup>

Soon afterwards a request was sent to the appropriate authorities in Scotland to select a rector and assistant for the High School and a teacher for each of the four district schools but no action was taken locally until almost exactly twelve months later when Cargill appointed a four-man commission, two of whom had been members of the select committee, to re-examine

---

1 V. and P., O.P.C., Session I, 18 March, 1854, p.13. At the seventeenth meeting of the O.P.C. Mr Macandrew moved: '...it will be conducive to the best interests of the Province that an Educational Institute, or High School, be established in Dunedin, over which there shall be at least two Teachers who shall be competent to teach all the higher branches of a liberal education, and to train others for the profession of Teachers throughout the rural districts of the Province.'

2 Ross, *op.cit.*, p.7.

3 V. and P., O.P.C., Session II, 1854, Appendix, pp.89-90.

the educational needs of the settlement and to prepare an educational code for Otago. Finally, in March, 1856, after much heated argument both inside and outside the Provincial Chambers, an Education Ordinance was passed which enacted, inter alia, that there should be established in Dunedin a High School, available to pupils of both sexes, whose Rector was to be given a place on the Central Board of Education created by the same Ordinance.<sup>1</sup> The Ordinance, although a masterly piece of Presbyterian legislation, was too unabashedly a sectarian measure designed to ensure that the control of education remained in the hands of Cargill and his ilk, to promote the cause of education in Otago. Instead, opposition to it became a rallying-point for disaffected elements in the Province.<sup>2</sup> The provision of higher education was not whole-heartedly endorsed; it was looked upon by some of the settlers as an affectation and extravagance which was at once both unwanted and unduly costly.<sup>3</sup> Statistics seemed to bear out these

---

1 Ibid., Session IV, 14 March, 1856, p.20. The clause relating to the proposed High School read as follows: There shall be established in Dunedin under a Rector or Headmaster... a Public School to be called the 'High School of Dunedin'.... And at the aforesaid School not only the usual branches of a good elementary English Education shall be taught, but also those higher branches of knowledge, the acquirement of which constitutes a liberal education; and said School shall be open to both male and female scholars and arrangements shall be made for the advanced male and female classes being taught separately.'

2 McLintock, op.cit., pp.377-381.

3 Otago Witness (Dunedin), 15 August, 1856.

assertions; the Otago Witness reported that the total school population of the entire province did not exceed two hundred and fifty in May 1857.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 1856 it was apparent that Otago was no more able than it had been in 1851 to support anything more than elementary education, that as McLintock says, 'zeal had outrun discretion.'<sup>2</sup> In the meantime the non-existent high school had acquired its first rector, Alexander Livingston, who arrived in the province in October, 1856, to find that not only had his high school shrunk to a district school offering only elementary instruction, but that Macandrew, one of the men largely responsible for his being in Dunedin, was inveighing against the extravagance of providing secondary education.<sup>3</sup> What Livingston was perhaps not immediately aware of, but no doubt soon discovered, was that education and politics had become inextricably intertwined to the detriment of the former. Furthermore, educational questions were overshadowed by the more pressing ones of immigration and land.<sup>4</sup> Attempts to revise the 1856 Ordinance which had become, in practice, a dead letter,<sup>5</sup>

---

1 Ibid., 30 May, 1857.

2 McLintock, op.cit., p.508.

3 Otago Witness, 14 November, 1857

4 McLintock, op.cit., p.381.

5 Otago Witness, 29 September, 1860.

were frustrated. A new Education Ordinance was passed by the Provincial Council in 1861 but it did not receive the Governor's signature because the General Government disapproved of the method proposed for raising revenue and the degree of control which the Ordinance gave the Provincial Executive.<sup>1</sup> The Ordinance was amended but twelve months elapsed before it became operative in October, 1862. Livingston, meanwhile, had resigned and become provincial auditor so that the newly-created Otago Education Board had, in effect, to make a completely fresh start in the field of secondary education.

Clause 31 of the 1862 Ordinance provided that there should be established 'The High School of Dunedin'...in which shall be taught all the branches of a liberal Education, the Latin and Greek Classics, and Mathematics and such other branches of science as the advancement of the Colony and the increase of the population may from time to time require; and the said High School shall be entirely under the superintendence and control of the Board.'<sup>2</sup> No time was lost in taking steps to establish the High School. The Education Board resolved unanimously that the population and circumstances of the Province rendered necessary the immediate establishment of a provincial high school so as 'to

---

1 Ibid., 4 April, 1862.

2 Education Ordinance (Otago), 1862.

place within the reach of the youth of this Province the means of procuring a thorough English, Classical, Commercial and Mathematical education.<sup>1</sup> It authorized the calling of tenders for the construction of a suitable building and the selection of staff in England or Scotland by the Provost of Eton and the Rectors of Edinburgh High School and Edinburgh Academy. With the implementation of clause 31 of the 1862 Ordinance, secondary education for boys in Dunedin became an established fact; clause 34 of the 1864 Education Ordinance altered the name of the school from High School of Dunedin to High School of Otago but otherwise made no significant change in the provisions for boys' secondary education. The establishment of the High School, John Hislop, the Secretary of the Education Board claimed, marked the fulfilment of the intentions of the founders of Otago who had planned 'that, while a thorough Common School education should be placed within the reach of the whole Youth of the Province, encouragement and opportunity should also be afforded to a fair proportion of them to obtain the highest and best possible instruction in the Classics, Mathematics and all the branches of study which are essential elements in a sound and complete education.'<sup>2</sup>

---

1 V. and P., O.P.C., Session XVI, 1862, Department Reports, p.36.

2 Ibid., Session XXII, 1866, Department Reports, p.12. Hislop omitted to point out that the founders' intentions had been interpreted in the 1856 Ordinance as meaning that the 'School shall be open to both male and female scholars'.

The teaching staff of the High School were well qualified to teach at an advanced level but to begin with their pupils were so poorly prepared and the period of their stay at the school so short that to attempt more than elementary education was useless. Enrolments were small in the first two or three years and there was some public criticism of the cost of maintaining such an institution. Hislop counselled patience, arguing that in the long run the High School of Otago must succeed because all the conditions of success were present. The School had a capable staff, it was financed out of provincial funds and had its own land endowments and above all, there was in Otago 'a sufficient supply of material of the right quality upon which to operate.'<sup>1</sup> In this latter and most important respect the High School of Otago had very considerable advantages over its two main rivals, Nelson and Christ's Colleges. Nelson drew its pupils from a town with 5,296 citizens and a total provincial population of only 11,910; Christ's served a town of 6,438 and a province of 32,276 but sectarian differences prevented many boys from attending it; the High School of Otago, however, was the sole secondary school in a city of 21,474 and a province of 49,019. Under such circumstances, Hislop prophesied, the High School could not fail to prosper.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Ibid., Session XVII, 1863. Report, Select Committee, p.1.

2 Ibid., Session XXII, 1866. Departmental Reports, p.18.

To persuade parents to send their sons on to the High School the Rector, the Rev. F.C. Simmons, suggested to the Provincial Council that a number of Provincial Scholarships should be awarded annually on the basis of a competitive examination.<sup>1</sup> His scheme was approved in principle but was not instituted until 1870.<sup>2</sup> Simmons's determination to make it possible for all able youths to attend the High School was further reflected in his strong opposition to proposals that the School should be made self-supporting by increasing the tuition fees. An increase in fees, he said, 'would make the High School a mere rich man's School, and a most unfit recipient of the public bounty, instead of being, as at present, common ground, where all classes may meet on equal terms, and learn a mutual respect.'<sup>3</sup> Although during the next few years too frequent changes in the administration hindered the growth of the school and seemed to make it the costly and unnecessary luxury its critics claimed it to be, those responsible for its management and for recommending reforms steadfastly refused to countenance any sharp increases in the boarding or tuition fees. The Commissioners who were asked in 1873 'to inquire into and

---

1 Ibid., Session XXI, 1865-6. Departmental Reports, p.41.

2 Ibid., Session XXVII, 1870. Departmental Reports, p.6.

3 Ibid., Session XXI, 1865-6. Departmental Reports, p.41.



report upon, the present condition of the Boys' High School, Dunedin', were most forthright in their rejection of any suggestion that the school should or could be made self-supporting by increasing the fees.

We would strongly deprecate any measure tending to give the High School an exclusive or class character, as utterly at variance with the spirit of our whole educational system; which, while not gratuitous, aims at placing the highest as well as lowest education fairly within the reach of all classes of the community. We regard the High School as an integral part of the Educational machinery of the Province, the support of which, even at considerable outlay is, so long as the State concerns itself with Education, a duty plainly incumbent upon the Government.... 1

It was the boarding charges rather than the tuition fees, however, which prevented country boys from attending the High School in greater numbers. 'Place it within moderate reach,' one farmer wrote, 'make it more popular by making it less expensive, and we shall see plenty of material afforded to the masters to operate upon, and the school what it has never been - a success.'<sup>2</sup> Well aware of this widely-held opinion the Commission recommended that efforts should be made to reduce the cost of board at the High School and that boys able to travel to Dunedin daily by train to school be encouraged to do so by the introduction of a special reduced fare. Throughout its report the Commission emphasized the necessity for encouraging able

---

1 Ibid., Session XXXII, 1873. 'Report of the High School Commission', Appendix, pp.iii-iv.

2 Bruce Herald (Milton), 22 March, 1871.

boys to attend the High School whether or not they intended to go on to university. For the majority who would leave school and go to work in the community the Commission recommended the development of a course of study more suited to their particular needs than the narrowly classical curriculum then emphasized.<sup>1</sup> Make secondary education inexpensive and make it relevant to the needs of the Province, pleaded the Commissioners; on no account allow it to become exclusive, a privilege only of the wealthy. The High School of Otago was intended to be just what its name suggested and not the preserve of a few. Admission to it was to be open to pupils from its own preparatory classes, pupils from district schools and, it was hoped, grammar school pupils who would be able to go at once into the more senior classes.

The grammar schools of Otago were a local innovation born of the desire stressed so strongly by the High School Commissioners to make access to education beyond the elementary level easier for all children throughout the Province. The Grammar Schools Ordinance of 1869 was designed to apply to 'certain districts where the population has increased more extensively than in the purely agricultural and pastoral districts and where Municipal Institutions have been adopted'<sup>2</sup> and gave effect to a Provincial

---

1 V. and P., O.P.C., Session XXXII, 1873. 'Report of the High School Commission,' Appendix, pp.1-xvii.

2 Ordinances of the Province of Otago, Session XXV, 1869.

Council resolution 'that the Tokomairiro, Lawrence, Port Chalmers and Oamaru District Schools be advanced to the position of Grammar Schools.'<sup>1</sup>

What these forebears of the later district high schools offered in the way of advanced tuition depended largely upon the capabilities of the headmaster, or rector, as he was re-designated. The standard of work achieved, however, was dependent upon the willingness of parents to allow their children to stay on at school beyond the minimum time. The opening of a flax mill in the Tokomairiro district, for example, provided a new avenue of employment for local boys and 'led to the premature removal from school of seven or eight very nice boys of from eleven to thirteen years of age.'<sup>2</sup> Sometimes such children returned to school later and because of their 'advanced age' had to be placed in the grammar school division. Consequently the rectors found it very difficult to teach at more than an elementary level. By 1875 all five grammar schools then functioning taught algebra, geometry and trigonometry and gave systematic instruction in Latin but only in the Invercargill and Oamaru Grammar Schools was the standard of work judged to be satisfactory by the inspector. In the

---

1 V. and P., O.P.C., Session XXXIV, 4 June, 1868, p.105. The reunion of Otago and Southland made necessary the creation of a grammar school at Invercargill in 1873.

2 V. and P., O.P.C., Session XXXI, 1872. Departmental Reports, p.26.

other three, early leaving had proved too much of a handicap.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the support which the grammar schools had received showed that many country settlers were eager to give not only their sons but also their daughters an extended schooling.

Pressure on the Provincial Government to establish a girls' high school had been fairly heavy and continuous since 1863. The editor of the Otago Daily Times, after congratulating the Education Board on the occasion of the opening of the High School of Otago continued: 'The High School...wants a companion institution.... Surely the education of our young women ought not to be less anxiously cared for than that of our young men.... It is to be hoped that a High School for elder girls will promptly be organized in Dunedin.'<sup>2</sup>

A Ladies' Association, of which Miss L.W. Dalrymple was the moving spirit, had already begun to seek support for a girls' high school; official recognition of the justice and reasonableness of the Association's cause came in the passing by the Provincial Council in 1864 of resolutions favouring provision for 'higher female education.'<sup>3</sup> Nothing practical resulted, however, and in his 1868 report Hislop reminded the Councillors that it was

---

1 Ibid., Session XXXIV, 1875. Departmental Reports, p.2.

2 Otago Daily Times (Dunedin), 11 August, 1863.

3 V. and P., O.P.C., Session XIX, 4 November, 1864, p.79.

time their early recommendations were put into force.<sup>1</sup> A Commission was appointed the following year 'to determine the best site and scheme for a high school and to consider whether it is expedient that provision should be made in the same building for the teaching of girls as well as boys.'<sup>2</sup> The Ladies' Association presented carefully prepared evidence of the need for a girls' school,<sup>3</sup> the benefits to the community which would accrue from it, the small extra cost involved if it were to work in conjunction with the boys' school and last, but not least, concrete suggestions as to how it might be organised. The Commission was impressed and convinced: 'any scheme...which fails to provide for the higher education of girls as well as boys, would be regarded as incomplete and unfair,' it concluded, hastening to add that, although the two schools would be run in conjunction, 'it is to be understood...that there would be two entirely distinct schools, and that the efficiency of the supervision...would be such as to render the proximity of the girls' and boys' classrooms in no degree objectionable.'<sup>4</sup>

---

1 Ibid., Session XXIV, 1868. Departmental Reports, pp.10-11.

2 Ibid., Session XXVI, Special, 1869. Appendix.

3 Ibid., p.60.

4 Ibid., p.58.

There was no further delay; the large enrolments of girls in the grammar schools and the enthusiasm evinced by parents encouraged the Education Board, whose own secretary was a powerful supporter of the cause, to select the first Lady Principal and to make provision for opening the school at the beginning of 1871. The school opened in February with seventy-eight pupils and by the beginning of the second term this number had grown to one hundred and two. The Provincial School for Girls as it was called, the first of its kind in New Zealand, made an auspicious and popular beginning, not only because it met a real need but also because many citizens felt that at last they were getting value for money out of their High School. The cost of the two schools with about equal numbers of pupils, the editor of the Evening Star noted joyfully, was only a fourth more than the boys' alone used to cost.<sup>1</sup>

### Proprietary Schools

In a history of the development of secondary education in New Zealand up to 1877 there is little room for a detailed study of the many proprietary schools which from time to time during the provincial period appeared upon the educational scene. In

---

1 Evening Star (Dunedin), 27 March, 1871.

most cases their lives were brief and their influence on further development negligible. One notable exception was Messrs Tuckey and Hamilton's Wellington Grammar School which under Provincial Government aegis became Wellington College and Grammar School. The proprietors of these schools were often very able classical scholars and good teachers but there were only a handful of parents in each settlement who were prepared to pay for their sons' education in such impractical subjects as were taught there. 'In a colony where life is so practical, to take the trouble of dinning Latin and Greek into the heads of ordinary boys would be...absurd,'<sup>1</sup> wrote Thomas Arnold who, in 1849, conducted a school in Nelson while he waited in vain to be invited to become headmaster of Nelson College. A number of the early schoolmasters, finding little demand for their services, turned to other more rewarding avenues of employment. Some, like Dr Kidd in Auckland, persisted in their work and when towards the end of the provincial period it became apparent that the example of Otago would be followed throughout New Zealand, sought positions in the new, publicly-supported colleges.

Church-sponsored secondary schools enjoyed some success in Auckland, Nelson and Christchurch. Parnell Grammar School, founded in 1854 after the dispersal of St. John's College, was

---

<sup>1</sup> T.Arnold to his mother, 14 June, 1849. Letters of Thomas Arnold (Typescript, Turnbull Library.)

a small, understaffed school which combined elementary with secondary schooling. Its admission by the University of New Zealand as an affiliated institution only served to highlight the deficiencies of trying to provide university education through the secondary schools.<sup>1</sup> Another Church of England school, the Bishop's School, which opened in 1843, pioneered secondary education in Nelson but it could not survive the loss of its outstanding principal teacher, H.F. Butt, and the competition of Nelson College; it languished for a few years until revived in 1860 under the Rev. T.A. Bowden. A succession of good teachers kept it going as a junior secondary school until 1895 when, after six years of steadily decreasing enrolments, the school was finally closed.<sup>2</sup>

Some facilities for secondary education in Nelson were also offered by the Roman Catholics where Father Moreau, assisted by Father Garin, began classes in French, Latin, Mathematics and other subjects in 1851. Hard work was obviously expected of pupils in this school; they were warned that those 'taking Latin or French must come with their exercises ready as the whole time will be spent in correcting and marking.'<sup>3</sup> Garin, with the help of sisters

---

1 See below, p.78.

2 H.F. Ault, The Nelson Narrative (Nelson, 1958), pp.202-206. Robert Lee, well-known for his work as Inspector of Schools for the Wellington Education Board, gives a good account of this school in his Log (Manuscript, General Assembly Library.)

3 Nelson Examiner, 3 June, 1854.



from a teaching order, also offered secondary schooling to girls.

In Christchurch, although Christ's College was ostensibly the boys' secondary school for the province, sectarian differences led to the founding of the two Presbyterian schools, one in Christchurch and one in Lyttelton, mentioned earlier. These were popular and well-patronised schools but they did not survive the provincial period. In the view of the secretary of the Otago Education Board neither school did distinctively upper school work.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the Presbyterian co-educational Lyttelton High School, girls' secondary education was provided by numerous 'strictly private establishments for the education of young ladies.'<sup>2</sup> Of these, Mrs Charles Thompson's Ladies' School at Avon House where 'a good English education...with instruction in Latin Grammar and Music..., and in drawing; also in the French, German and Italian languages<sup>3</sup> was imparted, 'was recognized in its day, as the leading scholastic institute.'<sup>4</sup>

Proprietary schools did not flourish in Dunedin where the competition from the High School was too great. Even private schools for girls were not common because of the avowed intention of the Provincial Council after 1864 to found a similar school for girls.

---

1 V. and P., O.P.C., Session XXII, 1866. Departmental Reports, p.15.

2 Lyttelton Times, 16 January, 1874.

3 Ibid., 7 January, 1854.

4 S.Bruce, The Earliest Days of Canterbury (Christchurch, 1932), p.182.

### In Retrospect

The two outstanding landmarks in the history of secondary education in the Crown Colony and Provincial periods were the founding of St. John's College and the establishment by the Otago Provincial Council of twin high schools for boys and girls. The first marked the importation into New Zealand of traditional English ideas about the role of religious bodies in education; the second the acceptance by the state of responsibility not only for elementary but also for secondary education for both sexes. Between these two extremes there were many variations but the trend, as provincial control of education passed into the hands of a national department, was for the Otago pattern to be the one most closely followed.

That there should have been such diversity and variety in the different approaches to secondary education is not surprising. In the beginning there was little real community of interest among the settlements and in education, as in other matters, each settlement preferred to go its own way. A letter from the Otago Settlers' Association to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, explained the position succinctly. Because of distance, diverse schemes of colonization and the exclusive appropriation by each of its own revenue for its own benefit the writer explained, 'each of the settlements of New Zealand may be said with truth to possess an individual life and attributes of its own.... This severalty and independence naturally create a strong desire on the part of each

settlement to conduct its own affairs.<sup>1</sup>

This 'severalty' was nowhere better illustrated than in the varying ways in which secondary education was provided in each of the principal settlements. Sectarian and proprietary schools catered for the needs of Auckland's youth; proprietary schools dominated the scene in Wellington while in Nelson a Roman Catholic and an Anglican school gave the only tuition 'beyond the elements' until Nelson College opened in 1856. In Canterbury's first decade the well-endowed Christ's College and Grammar School was the pre-eminent school. However, as the Nonconformist element in the community increased so did antipathy towards Christ's. Rival Presbyterian High Schools in Christchurch and Lyttelton competed with it for the small numbers of pupils seeking secondary education and by so doing prevented the development in Christchurch of one influential and successful secondary school. Only in Dunedin did such a school emerge. Otago inherited the Scots belief in the value of education; sectarian differences did not seriously hinder educational progress; endowments of land were set aside for the benefit of the High School; great prosperity and a rapid growth in population followed the discovery of gold. And yet, although conditions were so favourable, the final success of the High School was not assured until the very end of the provincial period.

---

1 G.B.P.P., 1852, XXXV Cmd.1475 , pp.65-66.

Although each settlement had its own peculiar difficulties to overcome in the matter of providing secondary education all were confronted by certain common ones. In the first place, there were few early settlers who could afford to pay for their sons' extended schooling or even when they could who were willing to do without their labour in breaking in the land. Secondly, the secondary school curriculum, mirroring as it did that of the classics-dominated grammar and public schools of England and Scotland, was sadly out of place in New Zealand. There was no room for frills in the education of most colonial boys: competence in the immediately useful subjects of writing and reckoning was all that they sought.<sup>1</sup> The ability to read Sophocles and Thucydides in Greek or Livy, Horace and Virgil in Latin<sup>2</sup> was not greatly admired. Thirdly, until the 1870's, secondary schooling lacked a raison d'être. It led nowhere unless a boy could go to England or Scotland to attend university, and at the same time it was not a self-contained, terminal form of education. Finally, although enrolments in the lower classes of secondary schools were usually high, the retention rate in the senior classes was low.

---

1 G. MacMorran, Some Schools and Schoolmasters of Early Wellington: With an Account of the Provision made for Education in Later Times (Wellington, 1900), p.2.

2 Nearly half of a schoolboy's week was spent this way at the High School of Otago in 1868. V. and P., O.P.C., Session XXIV, 1868, Departmental Reports, p.20.

These deficiencies and difficulties of the secondary schools did not excite much public interest while the schools were few in number, were attended only by a very small percentage of the children of the appropriate age group and were not an integral part of an education ladder. But by the end of the provincial period, the earlier creation of the curiously-structured University of New Zealand and the imminent introduction of a national system of primary education caused more attention to be focussed on the intermediate stage.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE POLITICIANS SAY NO

It was not until the end of the sixties, a decade during which the provinces had divided sharply into the haves and the have-nots, that the wisdom of allowing the provincial governments full educational autonomy was questioned in the General Assembly. In 1869, T. Ball, M.H.R. for Mongonui, seeking to highlight the differences in educational opportunity which existed between the provinces, asked for a detailed return from each government showing the provision it was making for primary education. Ball anticipated that such returns would, when studied in their right perspective, convince the members of the General Assembly that the time was ripe for the creation of a uniform colonial system. Ball contended that provincialism had a deleterious effect on education. 'Provincial institutions have stamped all the bad features of their character upon the different educational systems,'<sup>1</sup> he said. The only hope for education, in Ball's view, was the introduction of a comprehensive system of public schools adapted to the requirements of the Colony.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 P.D., 1869, Vol.6, p.523.

2 Ibid., p.526.

The provincial education returns fully substantiated Ball's charges and although he was not a member of the new Parliament his plea for a colonial school system was not allowed to lapse. Early in the new session J.C. Richmond of Nelson raised the educational issue, asserting that in a democratic community public education was a national responsibility.<sup>1</sup> He went on to recommend that New Zealand should establish a national education system on the same lines as that which W.E. Forster proposed for England with the additional provision of state subsidised secondary schools because, as he put it, 'every part of a true system of education must dovetail and work in with another.'<sup>2</sup> Such 'superior' schools, Richmond argued in phrases redolent of the Darwinian age, 'will form the machinery by which a process of natural selection will be carried out by aiding the most promising of the children.'<sup>3</sup> He believed 'superior' schools would provide an incentive for poor but talented children to work hard at primary school and by dint of their own efforts 'make their way up'.<sup>4</sup> Anticipating the objections to such a Utopian scheme which he knew were bound to come from some of his fellow legislators, Richmond admitted

---

1 P.D., 1870, Vol.9, p.46.

2 Ibid., p.49.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

that although he did not expect the immediate realisation of his dream he did hope that legislation would soon be passed to lay the foundations of what could in time become an articulated system. And adding to the already strong New England flavour of the debate, he quoted:

Not that I'm one that much expect  
 Milleninum by express to-morrer,  
 They will miscarry - I rec' lec'  
 Tu many on 'em to my sorrer -  
 Men ain't made angels in a day,  
 No matter how you mould and labor 'em.  
 But arter all, Time's dial plate  
 Marks cent'ries with the minute finger,  
 An' good can't never come tu late,  
 Tho' it does seem to try and linger. <sup>1</sup>

Carried away by enthusiasm, Richmond predicted that although all colonists agreed that schemes for opening up the country with railways and for bringing in immigrants were good, in the long run the Government which set about education in earnest would evoke more enthusiasm and win greater support than one which concentrated solely upon opening up and colonizing the country. Unfortunately for the cause of education, Richmond's prediction was never put to the test; at no time in the nineteenth century did educational legislation or educational reforms take precedence over land legislation or public works.

But Richmond's eloquence did inspire his colleagues and although the Premier, William Fox, did not think the time was

---

1 Ibid., p.50.



ripe to introduce a comprehensive educational measure, his hand was forced by the enthusiasm of his fellow legislators.

The Education Bill of 1871, although obviously influenced by the 1870 Education Act of the Imperial Parliament, went considerably further. It proposed, as Richmond had suggested it should, not only to maintain elementary schools but also 'to legalize and to give support to those usually known as grammar schools and high schools.'<sup>1</sup> Fox, referring eulogistically to Scottish and Massachusetts educational practice, declared that every country which had a worthwhile educational system provided a gradation of schools that enabled the poorest boy in the street to reach, by exercise of his own intelligence and application, the university of the land.<sup>2</sup>

The debate which ensued after Fox had introduced his Education Bill showed that his original reluctance to raise such an issue had been justified, for almost immediately controversies which had been lying dormant for some years were stirred up.<sup>3</sup> Although most speakers agreed that it was the

1 P.D., 1871, Vol.10, p.198. T.Ball and John Hislop, Secretary of the Otago Board of Education assisted in the drafting of the Bill. (See P.D., 1871, Vol.10, p.203).

2 Ibid.

3 Otago Daily Times, 19 September, 1871. The editor remarked that controversies were stirred up 'with which provincial legislatures had not been troubled to nearly the same extent.'

duty of the State to provide education and that the Government was to be congratulated on having brought forward the first colonial educational measure, there was little unanimity among them as to the form a colonial education system should take. Practically every one of the principal clauses of the Bill came under attack. Proposed aid to denominational schools and provisions for Bible reading in schools immediately drew the fire of all who favoured secular education. The violence of the reaction to these clauses which were derived from similar provisions in Forster's Act, together with the objection taken to the proposed employment of clergymen as school inspectors, prompted Fox to remark that 'the religious element might possibly cause its [the Bill's] shipwreck in the House, and might year after year, prevent us from getting an Education Bill suitable to the wants of the people.'<sup>1</sup>

Disagreements on the religious elements in the 1871 Bill certainly contributed largely to its eventual withdrawal, but the Bill, by bringing these out into the open, served a valuable purpose; it revealed the dangers and pitfalls which anyone intending to introduce a national education system at some future time would have to circumvent by tact and compromise.

---

<sup>1</sup> P.D., 1871, Vol.11, p.44.

It is doubtful if any New Zealand educational measure has ever aroused as much controversy in the House of Representatives as the 1871 Bill did. On none of its main provisions was any real unanimity achieved. To begin with, members could not agree on who should administer and control a colonial system. E.J.Wakefield and W. Rolleston wanted a non-political head of the educational system, a 'controller' who would hold office during good behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Such an arrangement was essential, they argued, if political bias were to be excluded from educational administration. Fox, on the other hand, would not accept such an amendment to his Bill: he insisted that New Zealand, like England, should entrust its education system to a minister accountable to Parliament. Each and every issue thereafter, major or minor, was argued at great length until finally Fox, exasperated, refused to proceed with the measure.<sup>2</sup> One member excused his own failure and that of his colleagues to hammer out a worthwhile act on the grounds that 'the country had never been fully agitated on the question...it had not been educated to the point which enabled it to grapple with the idea of a thoroughly national system of education,'<sup>3</sup> but Fox got much closer to the

---

1 Ibid., p.17.

2 Ibid., p.242. In 1873 Premier Julius Vogel introduced a similar measure but made its acceptance by the provinces entirely optional. It lapsed because the Lower House would not accept the amendments of the Legislative Council.

3 Ibid., p.15.

truth when he said that the failure of the Bill had resulted almost entirely from the lues loquendi of certain members on every conceivable topic, and the utter fatuity of the talk they had indulged in.<sup>1</sup> Fox's decision to withdraw his Bill was, politically, a wise one; not only had it aroused the ire of the provincialists but it had also threatened to fan into flames the embers of smouldering religious differences and difficulties.<sup>2</sup>

Although in 1870 Richmond had so earnestly advocated educational opportunities for all children able to benefit from secondary education, his colleagues in 1871 were notably unenthusiastic about creating a state-supported secondary school system. 'The State', said one speaker, 'has no business whatever to provide establishments more extensive than are required for elementary school instruction.'<sup>3</sup> Another experienced politician took up a very safe position by declaring that as no one had made up his mind 'respecting the higher class of learning' the main thing was to concentrate on the establishment of a uniform system of primary education, thereby laying 'a sure and safe foundation upon which a higher education might afterwards

---

1 Ibid., Vol.10, p.242.

2 A.G.Butchers, Young New Zealand, pp.289-91, gives a full account of the Bill's reception in some of the provinces.

3 P.D., 1871, Vol.10, p.31.

be based and be carried on'.<sup>1</sup>

One member, however, expressed sentiments which it is doubtful if any New Zealand politician dependent on the will of the people has dared to express since, and certainly not since the Representation Act of 1889. C.E. Haughton, the member for Wakatipu, and self-styled spokesman for what he called an influential section of the community, objected to the character and scope of the Bill's provisions. If every child in the country were to have higher education, he complained, there would be no one left to clean the boots.<sup>2</sup> All that the proposed colonial education system would do was to make every child discontented 'with that state in life in which it had pleased God to place him'.<sup>3</sup>

Haughton spoke for those who still clung to Old World notions about social class, for those who could sing with fervour and conviction Mrs Alexander's memorable lines:

The rich men in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
God made them high or lowly,  
And order'd their estate. <sup>4</sup>

Such men and women were for the most part members of the great land-owning families, the 'squattocracy,' whose privileged

---

1 Ibid., p.233.

2 Ibid., p.243.

3 Ibid., p.244.

4 Hymns Ancient and Modern, (London, 1909), p.729.

position in New Zealand politics and society was to last for two more decades. Besides their political and social privileges the squattocracy also enjoyed an educational one, that of being able to send their sons to secondary school. A comparison of the names of the boys enrolled at Nelson College in the 1860's and early 1870's with the names of squatters to whom pastoral licences were granted in the 1850's in the Wairau, Awatere and Kaihōpai districts, the 'catchment area' from which the College drew most of its early pupils, suggests that Nelson College began as it continued for the rest of the nineteenth century, a school catering largely for the sons of the landed aristocracy. This, Haughton and his ilk believed, was exactly as it should have been.

Although later speakers in the Education debate criticised the more illiberal of Haughton's remarks very few of them disagreed with his contention that secondary education was outside the scope of a colonial educational measure because it was needed by only a select few whose fathers would be well able to pay the fees. No one suggested that through the provision of wider educational opportunities children of the working classes might be helped to climb the social ladder. Nowhere in the debates was there an echo of the militant egalitarianism of contemporary folk literature which although Australian in origin must, through the influx of the Victorian diggers, have been equally well known in New Zealand in the golden sixties:

'But the curse of class distinctions from our  
 shoulders shall be hurled  
 And the sense of Human Kinship revolutionise  
 the world;  
 There'll be higher education for the  
 toilin' starvin' clown,  
 An' the rich an' educated shall be educated  
 down. 1

Such a radical philosophy was given no support in the General Assembly of 1871. 'What we need in this Colony,' said W. Murray, member for Bruce, 'is a system of education that will enable both men and women to fill, with credit to themselves, the position in life in which their lot is cast.'<sup>2</sup> Others praised the 'sturdy independence' of the working men who, with 'practical sound sense and brave hearts',<sup>3</sup> had done so much towards developing the Colony. For the children of such sturdy pioneers it was the State's duty 'to furnish...a plain, simple practical elementary education'<sup>4</sup> but nothing more. In any case, the redoubtable Mr. Haughton pointed out, the jobs for which a secondary education was required were few in number: if Parliament made secondary schooling freely available to all it would create a nation of educated paupers.<sup>5</sup>

---

1 E.L.French, 'The High School in the Australian Social Order', Comparative Education, March, 1965, p.90.

2 P.D. 1871, Vol.10, p.268.

3 Ibid., p.343.

4 Ibid., p.344.

5 Ibid., pp.243-4.

Other speakers maintained that to promote a colonial system of secondary education paid for out of general taxation was to impose an unfair tax upon the mass of the people. 'Not one in a thousand of the poorer classes send their children to school after they are fourteen years of age,'<sup>1</sup> one member said. Secondary schools should be an integral part of the educational system, E.W. Stafford submitted, but he agreed that they should not be paid for out of general taxation but by the parents of the children attending them.<sup>2</sup> 'Those who use the higher schools should pay for them,'<sup>3</sup> was very much the consensus of Lower House opinion.

The 1871 Education Bill was talked to death but it served the valuable purpose of allowing practically every current educational issue to be analysed and discussed. When C.C. Bowen, the Minister of Justice, was given the task of drafting an Education Bill he knew fairly accurately the climate of political and public opinion on most of the crucial issues his Bill raised.<sup>4</sup> It was probably because of the rough treatment meted out to proposals for State-sponsored secondary education during the 1871 debates that Bowen in his Bill provided only for the continuance of existing Otago

---

1 Ibid., p.342.

2 Ibid., p.277.

3 Ibid., p.342.

4 C.C.Bowen of Christchurch, a Cambridge graduate, pioneer settler, Provincial Councillor, Deputy-Superintendent and one-time Chairman of the Canterbury Board of Education was well fitted for the task of sponsoring a comprehensive national Education Bill. For a detailed account of the educational work of Bowen see M.Anderson, C.C.Bowen and Elementary Education in New Zealand (M.A. thesis, Canterbury University).



grammar schools and for the development of secondary tops to district schools. 'It would be out of the question to deal with secondary schools in the same manner as we are dealing with primary education,' he said. 'It is not at all pretended that we are dealing with secondary education in this Bill.'<sup>1</sup>

Discussion on the 1871 Bill had been in many ways little more than an academic exercise. Provincial school systems were in operation throughout the colony. In Nelson, North Canterbury and Otago, if not in all provinces, interference in educational matters by the central government would have been bitterly resented and fiercely contested. But with the abolition of the provinces, the whole tempo and significance of General Assembly deliberations changed. The early creation of a national primary education system was all-important and Bowen could not afford to pay much attention to anything but the achievement of that goal. Neither could he afford, in a monetary sense, to provide for secondary education because of the deficiencies in primary education which had to be made good in a number of the provinces. Besides, it was Bowen's personal view, expressed in evidence before the O'Rorke Commissioners, that the State should not

---

1 P.D., 1877, Vol.25, p.243.

provide secondary education because such interference led to the pupils 'being brought up in one groove'. 'It is a necessity', he affirmed, 'that the State should provide schools to ensure the general teaching of the elements of education; but so far as it is found necessary for the State to go beyond elementary teaching, the result is a necessary evil.'<sup>1</sup> Fox supported Bowen in his concentration upon what was essential even though it did mean shelving the plans for extending secondary education which Fox had put forward only six years before. 'We cannot afford at present,' he said, 'to provide for the higher branches of an educational system in this country; we must be content, for this year,... and probably for some years longer, with a measure of this kind, which will enable the State to secure, as far as possible, that there shall not be in the colony a child growing up in ignorance....'<sup>2</sup>

That Fox, a long-time friend of secondary education, should have spoken in such a vein, showed that the Government was fully aware of the dangers and difficulties which would bedevil the passage of its Education Bill through both Houses. In anticipation of trouble ahead it had resolved to prune the Bill down to essentials. The education of the many, not the education of the few, was the Government's first objective in 1877. There were too many children not attending primary school to allow much

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.253.

2 P.D., 1877, Vol.25, p.231.

attention to be paid to secondary education and as long as such a state of affairs continued there was unlikely to be widespread public demand for higher education. Captain William Russell, M.H.R. for Napier, did not think that secondary education was any immediate concern of the 1877 Parliament but that it would be of some future Parliament when 'the people, being themselves educated, will desire education for their children and the generation now growing up will insist on a higher standard of education than we can now bestow.'<sup>1</sup> For the present he agreed with Henry Manders's view that 'if we provide an effective system of primary education in all the outlying districts we shall have accomplished a good deal. We should see that a fair amount of education is given to the children of the poor labourer and we should also see that facilities are given to the mining classes to send their children to school.'<sup>2</sup>

Secondary education was never a real issue in the 1877 debates and came up for discussion only when a few enthusiasts like Robert Stout and Sir George Grey voiced their disappointment at the incomplete nature of the education system they were creating. Grey spoke of primary education as 'one portion of the educational edifice'<sup>3</sup> only. Stout assailed the Ministry for its lack of

---

1 Ibid., p.208.

2 Ibid., p.214.

3 Ibid., p.646.

initiative and educational statesmanship in phrases which were to become increasingly familiar through constant repetition in the next decade. It was the duty of the Government, Stout maintained, to take on responsibility for secondary as well as primary education especially as it was already committed to a heavy expenditure on university education. 'If this colony can afford to spend money every year for the support of the New Zealand University, if it can also spend large sums of money for primary schools, it is not right to overlook that which goes between - namely the secondary schools.'<sup>1</sup> The plan for district high schools he dismissed with contempt, and in Bowen's promise that there would be 'provision for scholarships which may enable children of unusual attainments and ability to carry on their education'<sup>2</sup> he professed to detect a subtle scheme 'to crush out all undenominational schools,... throw the whole care of secondary education into the hands of the Church organisations.'<sup>3</sup> Two or three other members of the House of Representatives and of the Legislative Council also expressed disappointment at the Government's failure to create 'a system by means of which the poorest child in the community might, without expense to its

---

1 Ibid., p.228. For Stout's views on the articulation of the school system see Report of the Otago High School Commission, 1873, in the Appendix to V. and P., O.P.C., Session XXXII, 1873.

2 Ibid., Vol.24, p.37.

3 Ibid.

parents, go from the rudiments of education to the higher class, to even the highest class of education,<sup>1</sup> but most of them were content to agree with Fox that while it would indeed be a blessed day for New Zealand when the highest education would be as accessible to the poorest as to the richest, in the meantime the expense of providing such a system was too great and all they could do was to pass an Act which was a small initiatory step towards achieving the desired final result.<sup>2</sup>

Outside Parliament, as in it, the question of secondary education received little attention. Stout's lectures to his fellow-members on comparative education were fully reported in the newspapers but usually without comment. One notable exception was, however, J.E. Fitzgerald's article in the New Zealand Magazine in which he joined forces with Stout by declaring that 'in a free and enlightened country there should be means by which any boy, no matter how poor, should have the opportunity of receiving as good an education as the richest in the land if he has the capacity and the will to take advantage of it.... Where there is genius and intellect no birth or station should form any obstacle to the aspirant to academical distinction.'<sup>3</sup>

Such lofty sentiments were beyond the ken of the great

---

1 Ibid., Vol.25, p.190.

2 Ibid., p.231.

3 J.E.Fitzgerald, 'The New Zealand University', New Zealand Magazine, July, 1877, p.236.

majority of colonists in 1877. 'Learning the elements' was all that most of them aspired to for their children then, and for a number of years to come. Completion of a Standard Three year was generally regarded by most settlers as being as much formal schooling as a child needed. Significantly, no one during the 1877 debates denied the right of the children of the working classes to a higher education nor questioned the wisdom of continuing, and in some cases extending, the scholarship schemes of the Provincial Boards of Education. But what no one seemed to realise during discussion of the scholarship provisions was that by making the Education Board awards tenable only at secondary schools they were penalising country scholarship winners. Formerly a number of winners of provincial awards, whose parents could not afford to send them as boarders to the town where the nearest secondary school was, had continued their schooling in a Standard Seven. Under the new Act this was no longer possible.

The actual provision for secondary education in the 1877 Act was very much less than that proposed in the 1871 Bill but it was more in keeping with the realities of contemporary colonial life. Given the conditions of the time - the lack of interest among the mass of the colonists in anything but the

rudiments of education, the limited and limiting nature of the courses offered by the few secondary schools, the small numbers of children who were qualified to go beyond the primary stage - the politicians of 1877 gave as much attention to secondary education as its place in the contemporary social order warranted.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### 'ORGANISE YOUR SECONDARY EDUCATION'

Quite deliberately, Bowen had shelved the secondary education question to ensure the passing of his Education Bill. But by this strategy he only succeeded in postponing the time when a Government would have to grasp the secondary school nettle. In the next parliamentary session Rolleston asked if the Government proposed to introduce 'any scheme for regulating the high schools on one uniform system and placing them in definite relation to the inferior schools and to the higher education of the Colony.'<sup>1</sup> G.M. O'Rorke took up the gage a few days later when he asked the Government when it intended, now that a national primary system had been created, to 'give an opportunity to the population to attain a higher class of knowledge by establishing grammar schools in all centres of population?'<sup>2</sup>

Stout, who had the previous year tongue-lashed Bowen for his caution in concentrating on establishing a primary system only was now, as Minister of Education, in a position to take

---

1 P.D., 1878, Vol.28, p.143.

2 Ibid., Vol.29, p.358.



some positive action to remove what he had called 'the greatest blot in the Bill,'<sup>1</sup> the lack of any real provision for secondary education. But now it was Stout's turn to be cautious. He claimed that the matter was too big to be dealt with casually and that a Royal Commission should first be appointed to investigate and report on the state of secondary and higher education throughout the Colony before any legislative measures were taken.<sup>2</sup>

His ministerial hesitation was justified. The University of New Zealand, although only a few years old, was already being subjected to scathing criticism. A hasty creation, made necessary in part by the rivalry of the University of Otago and Canterbury University College, the University had been established

not for the purpose of teaching, but for the purpose of encouraging...the pursuit of a liberal education, and ascertaining by means of examination the persons who have acquired proficiency in literature, science or art, by the pursuit of a liberal course of education, and of rewarding them by academical degrees and certificates of proficiency as evidence of their respective attainments....<sup>3</sup>

Its establishment had also been precipitated by a threatened proliferation of university colleges which would have given New Zealand facilities for higher education out of all proportion to the needs or demands of the time. Provincial rivalries,

---

1 P.D., 1877, Vol.25, p.228.

2 P.D., 1878, Vol.28, p.143.

3 New Zealand University Act, 1874.

however, were keen and in the period before Ranfurly Shield games permitted a certain sublimation of rivalries, each of the major provinces tried to make sure that none of the others got the edge on it in any way. Such rivalry in some respects was praiseworthy, but not in matters of higher education. The government, therefore, acted promptly and affiliated with the University of New Zealand not only the legitimate university colleges in Dunedin and Christchurch but also a curiously heterogeneous collection of secondary schools and theological colleges all of which were charged with the responsibility of preparing students for the University of New Zealand examinations.<sup>1</sup>

The learned professors in Dunedin and Christchurch did not enjoy their associations with the secondary schools, a fact Professor Brown made very clear in an address he gave at a ceremony to mark the opening of Canterbury College's 1878 academic year. 'Social conditions in the colonies and in this utilitarian age', he commented wryly, 'are not propitious for the development of university education. New Zealand has added a difficulty by doing its best to obliterate lines of demarcation between the secondary schools and university

---

1 The affiliated institutions besides the two university colleges were: Auckland College and Grammar School; Parnell Grammar School; St. John's College; Wesley College (Three Kings); Wellington College; Nelson College; Bishopdale Theological College; Christ's College and Grammar School.

education; nine-tenths of the grammar schools in New Zealand have, without any addition to their constitution or staff... been taken up into the all-embracing bosom of the University of New Zealand.<sup>1</sup>

The motives of the affiliated secondary schools in seeking the embrace of the University of New Zealand were understandable; they sought an increase in status in the eyes of the public, the setting of an external standard of scholarship, and a way of inducing boys to stay longer at school.<sup>2</sup> Regulations for affiliation were not hard to meet. To gain affiliation institutions had only to provide lecture rooms with suitable apparatus and appliances, promise that lectures would be given regularly by the teachers of the institutions, and prove to the satisfaction of the Council of the University of New Zealand that their teachers were competent to teach three of eight 'branches of education' which were defined by University regulations as: 'classics; mathematics and natural philosophy; modern languages; physical science; English language and literature; general history; moral philosophy and logic; jurisprudence.'<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the only subjects most schools could teach with any degree of competence - and that was often limited - were

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 15 March, 1878.  
 2 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.199.  
 3 A.J.H.R., 1873, H-3, p.4.

classics and mathematics. Very often, the higher education undergraduates received was as restricted in variety as it was mediocre in quality. The degenerate state of so-called higher education in New Zealand led one editorial writer to declare that 'university education has only a bowing acquaintance with higher education,'<sup>1</sup> and to describe the New Zealand University as being practically as powerless as the Convocation of the Church of England and as useless as the fifth wheel of a coach.<sup>2</sup> Less pungently, but just as emphatically, an Auckland editor described higher education as being all adrift and the peripatetic New Zealand University a failure.<sup>3</sup>

While public dissatisfaction with higher education mounted, the General Assembly was afflicted by what Rolleston termed 'High school fever',<sup>4</sup> and Dr. Pollard in the Legislative Council called 'a fashion'. 'There is in this Assembly a fashion in matters of this kind,' the doctor grumbled. 'Sometimes we have a rage for public works, sometimes we have a rage for harbours, and sometimes we have a rage for education and schools. At present, in the language of the schoolboys, "high schools are in".'<sup>5</sup>

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 29 January, 1879.

2 Ibid.

3 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), 7 February, 1879.

4 P.D., 1878, Vol.29, p.690.

5 Ibid., Vol.30, p.1123.

The 'rage' for high schools was not evidence of a belated awareness on the part of the general public of the value of secondary education and of the necessity to underpin the University of New Zealand, or of a determination to repair the deficiencies of the 1877 Education Act. Rather, it was a manifestation of a characteristic feature of nineteenth century New Zealand politics, that of each district trying, through its elected representative, to get as much out of the political pork barrel for its own purposes as was possible. Nineteenth century parliamentarians were expected to concern themselves with the welfare of their electorates and electors first, and to worry about national needs second. As late as the 1899 elections it was possible for a second-rate political hopeful to oust one of New Zealand's few statesmen by accusing him of being a 'colonial statesman' and not a dedicated fighter for his constituency.<sup>1</sup>

The extensive tracts of land set aside for the maintenance of secondary schools by the Education Reserves Act, 1877, attracted the attention of those who liked to dabble in the pork barrel. The Education Reserves Act,<sup>2</sup> as finally passed, provided that one-fourth of the education reserves throughout the country,

---

1 G.W. Russell defeated W. Rolleston in Riccarton by one vote largely on this charge. His nickname, 'Rickety', was open to different interpretations.

2 Appendix A.

a not inconsiderable area,<sup>1</sup> should be devoted to the maintenance of secondary education and the remaining three-quarters to primary education. The whole of the education reserves in each provincial district were placed in the hands of School Commissioners whose duty it was to administer the reserves and to apportion the revenue from them to primary and secondary education within the districts, according to the population, as ascertained from time to time by the census.<sup>2</sup>

The primary education share of the income from the reserves was not susceptible to political jobbery: a sum equal to each provincial district's primary school revenue from endowments was deducted from the General Assembly's education grant to each education district. Secondary school revenues were not 'colonialized' in this way but were left to the School Commissioners to allocate. In the Legislative Council there was considerable objection to the high proportion of the revenue from the reserves which was being diverted to secondary education when it was quite obvious that a national primary school system was going to cost a great deal. The Hon. Colonel Brett spoke strongly against what he described as 'this waste of money - this profligate expenditure on education',<sup>3</sup> and by his vehement eloquence persuaded his

---

1 For a detailed summary of the extent and value of the secondary school endowments see below, p. 144.

2 P.D., 1877, Vol. 25, p. 628.

3 Ibid., Vol. 27, p. 264.

fellow-councillors to reduce secondary education's share of the income from the reserves to one-eighth.

The House of Representatives refused to accept the Legislative Council's amendment, its members arguing that to reduce the proportion of revenue available to secondary education when there was no other form of government assistance would practically destroy the secondary education already provided in certain areas.<sup>1</sup> The Legislative Council, faced with this reality, retracted.

The considerable potential wealth which the Education Reserves Act secured for secondary education also ensured that for the rest of the century high schools would be the objects of vilification and jealousy among the landless, the land-hungry and the land reformers. By endowing it with great tracts of land the Reserves Act swept secondary education into the maelstrom of colonial politics.

But the long-term consequences of the Act were not at once apparent. What was apparent was the eagerness of certain districts, through their elected representatives, to make certain that a fair share, and, if possible, a more than fair share, of their provincial reserves for secondary education were attached to their local high schools. That very often no such schools existed in 1878 and that there was practically no demand for them

---

1 Ibid., Vol.27, p.266.

did not matter: land was available for the taking, and if one district dallied, another would seize the initiative and the land.

There had already been an example of what could happen. The Otago High Schools' Act, 1877, steered through the House of Representatives by Robert Stout, had endowed those schools with sufficient land to yield the revenue necessary to maintain them.<sup>1</sup> Because the rental value of back country land was very low, the Act, to ensure the necessary income for the schools, had had to set aside much of Otago's total land endowments for secondary education. To get enough land, reserves near Oamaru and Invercargill had to be allocated to the Otago High Schools. It was clear to interested observers that if the principle embodied in the Otago High Schools Act, that schools should be endowed with lands which would at the time of endowment yield enough revenue to maintain them, was to be universally applied, then all secondary education reserves would soon be allocated. Late-comers into the field would get nothing. And what this could mean for a school was well illustrated by the misfortunes of Wellington College. Once the recipient of an annual grant from the Provincial Government, this inadequately endowed school had now to depend upon the reluctant charity of the General Assembly.

---

<sup>1</sup> P.D., 1878, Vol.28, pp.360-5. The Otago High Schools got £1,250 per annum. This was the total rent from an endowment of 91,825 acres.



The existence of secondary education reserves and the example set by the Otago High Schools Act precipitated a spate of high school bills. The Hon. Mr. Waterhouse spoke of the passing of the Otago High Schools Act as having opened a door through which a whole flood that they were powerless to arrest had rushed in.<sup>1</sup> The Speaker of the Legislative Council bluntly ascribed the torrent of high school bills, not only to the passing of the Otago measure, but also to the activities of certain members of the legislature who, he said, 'are always craving to get some particular advantage for those localities to which they belong and as the Government has decided to oppose grants of money for localities this Bill, [Whangarei High School] is a little instance of the expedients adopted in lieu of expenditure on works.'<sup>2</sup> Colonial politics for many years after the passing of the Abolition of the Provinces Act were only provincial politics acted out on a somewhat larger stage. The themes remained unchanged and always to the fore was the matter of the distribution of land.

The land question was the all important one when Parliament deliberated upon the advisability of setting up high schools in such small settlements as Whangarei, Akaroa, or Ashburton. Educational considerations were given but perfunctory treatment.

---

1 Ibid., Vol.30, p.1124.

2 Ibid.

In the eyes of the legislators the principal clause in every high school bill in 1878 was that which related to land grants. Was there sufficient land available locally? What was its present value? What revenue did it yield? How much would be left over for future schools? Was there likely to be any infringement on primary school reserves?<sup>1</sup> A few protests were raised against this reckless distribution of the reserves, but these were silenced by such accepted spokesmen on education as Stout and Rolleston, both of whom defended the practice of making large endowments on the grounds that, until the Government gave the country a three-tier education system, no 'gentlemen of education' would undertake the management of high schools when they were not guaranteed against financial disaster.<sup>2</sup> A secondary school needed an assured income if it were to succeed; an assured income could be got from a certain amount of land; Parliament could approve or disapprove the allocation of that land and therefore it followed, Parliament could decide the future success or failure of a high school. In most cases, the high school bills passed with their land clauses intact, but few of the new schools so incorporated became viable institutions in the following decade. This, of course, was an educational matter and therefore of minor importance. The land had been won and that was what really mattered in 1878.

---

1 Ibid., Vol.29, p.349.

2 Ibid., p.348.

Only in the Legislative Council, where the members were not dependent upon the will of the people, was there much sustained criticism of the too rapid alienation of secondary education reserves. Dr. Pollard pointed out that, as a result of the large number of high school bills which had been passed or were in preparation, future schools would get no endowments. In Otago and Southland he said, 'the whole of the public property is gone - grabbed - appropriated by the existing institutions,<sup>1</sup> and urged that Parliament should guard against sacrificing reserves 'to the present need of a number of institutions each of which now puts its hands to the elbow in the public sack, and endeavours to get as much as possible out of it.'<sup>2</sup>

Pollard's solution to the problem was to put into a common fund all secondary education reserves and to distribute the income 'like a fertilising rain' according to the requirements of each district.<sup>3</sup> This 'colonial and statesmanlike view' - but also an Aucklanders' suggestion - met with the expected response from southern politicians who objected violently to Pollard's proposed 'spoliation'.<sup>4</sup> Provincial rivalries flared up and on this, as on many later similar occasions, the smugly virtuous, thrifty, farsighted, education-conscious

---

1 P.D., 1879, Vol.30, p.829.

2 Ibid., p.830.

3 Ibid., p.829.

4 Ibid., p.830.

Anglicans and Presbyterians of the South stood shoulder to shoulder against the conniving, spendthrift, live-for-the-present, let-the-morrow-take-care-of-itself, North Islanders. And because before the turn of the century the population of the South Island was greater than that of the North and because South Islanders usually predominated in Cabinet the indigent North was never able to wrest from the affluent South a share in the latter's extensive educational reserves.

By the end of 1878 it was clear that the secondary education issue could be shelved no longer. Many districts were clamouring for high schools and as the Government had no firm policy on secondary education it could only accede to Rolleston's advice, followed when he himself was Minister of Education, to create schools where they were needed.<sup>1</sup> But where were they needed? And what should be their relation to the primary schools on the one hand and the university on the other? Did these lines from the pen of the editor of the Lyttelton Times voice a generally held opinion?

'We cannot too strongly protest against the doctrine that the State aid to education higher than that of the primary kind is class aid. The contrary is the truth....We have abundance of zeal and ability available for higher education, but we require systematic combination and better utilised means to achieve the aims and object of our legitimate ambition....We often hear of the ladder of learning. Well, in this Colony, many rungs are missing and others are broken'.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 P.D., 1878, Vol.30, p.914.

2 Lyttelton Times, 29 January, 1879.

In Auckland similar editorial advice was tendered: 'The working of the University and Grammar Schools ought to be made to rise gradually from the common schools, and not to leave a gulf between two systems.'<sup>1</sup> 'Organise your secondary education' was an English cry which was beginning to have a faint New Zealand echo. Rolleston urged Stout to fulfil his promise earlier in the session that the Government's intentions on higher education were honourable<sup>2</sup> because although 'they seemed to be getting into a fever with regard to the high schools...there was very great reason to believe that great evil was being done to the cause they intended to promote.'<sup>3</sup> He hoped that the Government, with a Commission's help, would be able to submit 'some well-defined scheme with regard to these high schools.'<sup>4</sup>

Stout was well aware of the inadequacies of the secondary schools and inclined to the belief that much of the trouble was due to the attempt that had been made to combine grammar school work and university tuition. Money given to affiliated secondary schools to finance their university work had, in many

---

1 New Zealand Herald, 7 February, 1879.

2 Ibid.

3 P.D., 1878, Vol.29, p.690.

4 Ibid.

cases been 'frittered away' on the grammar school. 'The attempt of grammar schools to fulfil university functions,' concluded Stout, 'is a failure.'<sup>1</sup>

The grammar school-university partnership had not proved a boon to either partner. Although the schools did not really provide anything approaching higher education, in their efforts to do so they allowed their curricula to be over-influenced by what their teachers believed was the real basis of a university education. The classics and mathematics dominated most school-boys' lives from the moment they entered secondary school in Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, or Dunedin even though it was well-known that only a very small proportion of them would stay long enough to attain real proficiency in either discipline. By the late 1870's the secondary schools had, so far as their curricula were concerned, reached an impasse. Association with the University, on the one hand, strengthened the case for the retention of the classics as the core of secondary school curricula, but on the other, the elemental life of the farms, the logging camps and the goldfields, made the study of the classical languages, redolent of an environment that was gracious, stately, and assured, seem pointless and rather foolish. But in spite of

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol.28, p.425.

this, it was only in Dunedin where the traditions of the Scottish city high schools and dissenter academies were strongest, and in Auckland, where the needs of an expanding business and commercial world were beginning to exert some influence upon secondary education, that the supremacy of the classics was challenged and 'modern sides' were developed. Elsewhere, the classics and mathematics remained the staple diet for all and sundry, although the unsuitability of such a diet for colonial youth did not go entirely unnoticed. In Wellington, an advertisement which sought masters for Wellington College well-qualified in higher classics and mathematics, called forth from the Rev. C.S. Ogg, a local Presbyterian minister and a former pioneer educationist in Nelson, some stinging criticisms of the College and all its works. 'The institution has about it a pretentious and high-falutin' air which is supremely ridiculous,' he wrote. 'Do the governors not really know that what is required in the colony is a sound practical education with which young men can go out into the world and earn a living?'<sup>1</sup>

Ogg was not only interested in drawing the attention of the Wellington College governors to what he considered the shortcomings in their establishment. He hoped, very

---

1 New Zealand Times (Wellington), 14 January, 1879.

probably, to bring his own particular beliefs on what should constitute a high school curriculum in New Zealand to the notice of the Royal Commission on University and Secondary Education, then about to hold its inaugural meeting in Wellington. If his intention had been to make the College governors give second thoughts to what was taught there, he failed dismally, because the College treasurer, giving evidence before the Commission somewhat later, said of the school: 'I think that it is perfect as it stands.'<sup>1</sup>

There were not many in New Zealand who would have agreed with this view of Wellington College or of any other endowed secondary school in 1879. Resentment of the privileged independence of the secondary schools, in particular, was being voiced by those who contended that all revenue from lands set aside by the Education Reserves Act should be used for the support of the unexpectedly expensive primary system. The reserved lands of New Zealand belonged in common to the colonists, ran their argument; the great majority of the colonists sent their children only to the primary schools while the high schools were the preserve of the well-to-do. It was therefore not just, they reasoned, that one-quarter of the educational reserves should be attached to a few 'class'

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.279.



institutions while the needs of primary education were so desperate. This was an argument that recurred again and again during the next two decades and was one that even as determined a promoter of secondary education as Sir George Grey found difficult to answer.<sup>1</sup>

From resentment of the secondary schools' endowments to criticism of their function was a short step, for these schools with their essentially aristocratic curriculum appeared to many to be anachronistic and of little value in colonial society. They were affiliated with the University of New Zealand but attracted few undergraduates; what little university-level teaching a few of them did was adversely criticised by the professors in Dunedin and Christchurch. Few children stayed long enough in their upper schools to benefit from their classics-dominated curricula imported almost intact from the grammar schools of England. In their lower schools were children who could just as well, it seemed to some critics, be in the public primary schools. Where, they wondered, did secondary education begin? What was the relationship of secondary to primary education?

---

1 P.D., 1880, Vol.36, p.531.

These and other questions were being bandied about in 1878 but no one, not even the education-wise Stout, could answer all of them satisfactorily. Quite clearly, the time had come for a national stock-taking. Aware of this, Stout, in late December 1878, fulfilled an earlier promise and appointed a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of G. Maurice O'Rorke 'to inquire into and report upon the operations of the University of New Zealand and its relations to the secondary schools of the colony.'<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold's injunction to the Newcastle Commissioners 'organise your secondary education' was as appropriate in New Zealand in 1878 as it had been in England in 1860.

---

<sup>1</sup> A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.iv.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### GRIST FOR THE MILL

The recently-appointed O'Rorke Commission<sup>1</sup> sought evidence and visited educational institutions in the five centres which had university colleges or university-affiliated secondary schools: Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin. The determined independence of some at least of the secondary schools with which the Commissioners were dealing was quickly brought home to them by the refusal of the Council of Governors of Nelson College to allow an official inspection of its school. Because Nelson College was supported by endowments which had 'originated in a contract between the New Zealand Company and the settlers' and not by endowments out of the public estate, the College secretary explained to Habens, the governors had decided that no one had any right of inspection. But the governors were prepared 'unofficially' to allow anyone interested in university and higher education to see 'the working of the College.'<sup>2</sup> Christ's College were equally

---

<sup>1</sup> The members besides G.M.O'Rorke were: W.J.Habens (Secretary); W.Gisborne; J.Wallis; J.Hector; J.M.Brown; C.H.H.Cook; G.S.Sale; J.Shand; G.H.F.Ulrich; W.Macdonald; W.H.Cutten; J.A.Tole. Gisborne and Tole resigned before the Commission had completed its inquiries. Their places were taken by C.C.Bowen and W.E.Mulgan.

<sup>2</sup> Nelson College, Minutes, 2 April, 1879.

haughty. The Commissioners, its governors wrote, would be allowed to inspect the College but during their visit no 'ordinary school business would be allowed to proceed.'<sup>1</sup>

The Commissioners disliked these grudging or partial responses to their requests and in their final report, while not questioning the legal defensibility of the position taken up by the governors of Nelson and Christ's Colleges, recommended 'legislation to render these schools amenable to public investigation.'<sup>2</sup> But they did not suggest what form this legislation should take although they did recommend that as a rule the governing bodies of new high schools should include representatives of the local Education Board and Municipal and County Councils.<sup>3</sup> Despite this effort on the part of the Commission to make the secondary schools more susceptible and sensitive to public opinion and criticism, the older-established of them managed to retain their autonomy and aloofness for the remainder of the century. Their twenty year reprieve, for that was what it really amounted to, was due to two things: first, the depression of the eighties, and secondly, the priority that was given to legislation other than educational by Ballance and Seddon in the nineties.

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.viii.

2 Ibid., p.viii.

3 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.46.

The Commission, however, was only incidentally concerned with disputes with councils of governors; their real work involved, said Gisborne, two major tasks. One was to devise a means of co-ordinating the three levels of education and the other was to ensure that any primary school boy of ability had 'every assistance in rising up to the top rung of the educational ladder.'<sup>1</sup>

In the course of their inquiries into the state of secondary education the Commissioners examined witnesses on a wide variety of topics, many of which were of peculiarly local significance. But in each of the five centres visited the same key questions were always asked.

Foremost was the question of the affiliation of secondary schools with the University of New Zealand. No witness came out unreservedly in favour of it; Farquhar Macrae, Headmaster of Auckland College and Grammar School, thought that a grammar school and a college top could function in association, given certain conditions, but no other witness anywhere was nearly as sanguine. Wellington and Nelson witnesses had more doubts about the feasibility of combining secondary and university education than had Macrae while in Christchurch and Dunedin

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.297.

opposition to the practice was undisguised.<sup>1</sup> Affiliation appeared to the secretary of the North Canterbury Board of Education to be 'the great point in which the machine has so far, ... broken down.'<sup>2</sup> Bowen, appearing as a witness before he became a Commissioner, was also opposed to the union of grammar school and university college and recommended that Christ's College should disaffiliate because its true function was that of a grammar school.<sup>3</sup> The Headmaster of Christ's, while lukewarm about the value of having a university top to his grammar school, took exception to the suggestion that perhaps the poor standard of preparation for university work reached by new students at Canterbury College from Christ's was due to his school's preoccupation with its college teaching to the detriment of that of the grammar school. Headmaster Corfe's evidence revealed a certain tension in the Christchurch educational air caused largely by the determination of the Canterbury College Board of Governors to establish Christchurch and Timaru Boys' High Schools. These schools, they had claimed in a letter to the Colonial Treasurer, were necessary because no

---

1 Ibid., p.364.

2 Ibid., p.188.

3 Ibid., pp.231, 236.

intermediate school existed in the district to prepare the youths 'to take advantage of the higher education offered by the College.'<sup>1</sup> Corfe considered that a rival boys' school in Christchurch was not needed, and that the public were not unhappy, as it had been suggested to him, with the existing arrangements for secondary education. Any controversy which had arisen, he alleged, was the result of 'professorial touting for students,' an allegation which drew from Commissioner Brown, Professor of Classics and English Literature in Canterbury College, a most indignant rebuttal.<sup>2</sup>

The real cause of Corfe's bitterness was the decision of the governors of Canterbury College to establish an undenominational intermediate school charging low fees to link the already existing undenominational primary schools and university colleges, a decision strongly endorsed by public opinion. Christ's College, a spokesman for the governors of Canterbury College told the Commissioners, was a private denominational school about which they knew nothing.<sup>3</sup>

The open expression in Christchurch of such an attitude towards Christ's College should have set at rest any fears Stout still had that secondary education in New Zealand could

---

1 Ibid., p.250.

2 Ibid., pp.243-4.

3 Ibid., p.253.

become the 'preserve of denominationalism.' From this time on, Christ's College ceased to be of significance in the story of the development of secondary education in New Zealand, returning only briefly to the centre of the stage in 1903 when, in a celebrated 'breach of privilege' case, the Lyttelton Times accused the Government of intending to give state support to Christ's College and Wanganui Collegiate School.<sup>1</sup> These two schools although outside the mainstream of educational development did not lack pupils. They became the preserve of the well-to-do and the landed oligarchy.<sup>2</sup> As an observer of the New Zealand scene had predicted, the upper and middle classes of the colony as they grew in wealth and importance became 'dissatisfied with the social training and admixture of classes invariably to be found in the high schools',<sup>3</sup> and preferred to have their sons educated in the more refined atmosphere of Wanganui or Christ's.

In Christchurch the Commissioners had sought a clear definition of the upper limits of secondary education; they wanted to know where secondary schooling ended and university studies began. But their witnesses were as undecided on this point as witnesses were elsewhere about the corresponding relationship between the primary and secondary stages. On

1 Lyttelton Times, 8 September, 1903. See below, p.368.

2 John Bradshaw, New Zealand As It Is (2ed.; London, 1883), p.37. Many of this class were very wealthy. In the early 1880's some of them were receiving annual wool cheques of almost £6,000.

3 Ibid., p.294.



one thing only they all agreed: secondary education did not continue on from the sixth standard. Neither the Rev. J.C. Andrews, Headmaster of Nelson College, nor the Headmistress of Christchurch Girls' High School thought the primary school course a good preparation for secondary work, although both admitted that primary school children received a thorough grounding in the basic subjects. But in the view of the Rev. J.C. Andrews this was not enough; primary school children who went on to secondary school completely unversed in Latin and mathematics were at a grave disadvantage in comparison with children who had come up through the preparatory divisions of the secondary schools.<sup>1</sup> Yet while most of the other evidence on this topic indicated widespread dissatisfaction with primary work as preparation for secondary studies none of the expert witnesses proposed co-ordinating the work of the top primary and lower secondary classes so that the transition from primary to secondary stage might be effected with the minimum of inconvenience. In fact, they gave little indication that they appreciated the very considerable implications that the national provision of primary education had for secondary education. No one suggested that the time had come for secondary schools to close down their lower divisions. It was this failure by the secondary schools voluntarily to restrict their teaching to the post-primary level which irritated many people and did much to dim their

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, pp.150-2, 266, 293.

popularity in the next two decades. Growing antagonism in this period to anything that smacked of class privilege caused public resentment to be directed more and more against the preparatory departments of the high schools which were attended, very often solely for 'snob' reasons, by children whose parents did not want them to be associated with the children of the masses at public schools. Educationally the preparatory divisions had nothing to recommend them; socially they were obnoxious but it was left to Richard Seddon and George Hogben to take positive action against them in the 1903 Secondary Schools Act.

The most common age for entering a secondary school in 1879 seems to have been between eight and nine. Ability to read and write and sometimes to do elementary arithmetic was all that was required.<sup>1</sup> The Headmaster of Auckland Girls' High School<sup>2</sup> believed that an entrance test involving reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic with a corresponding knowledge of history and geography would have kept out fifty-three or fifty-four of his seventy-seven new scholars.<sup>3</sup> It was knowledge of this state of affairs which for the next twenty years prompted Liberal members of the House of Representatives

---

1 Ibid., pp.105, 127, 150, 193, 266.

2 Neil Heath, formerly a master at the Auckland College and Grammar School.

3 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.105.

to ask the Minister of Education from time to time for a return of all children under twelve or all children who could not pass standard three, or four, or five or six - the standard varied - who were attending secondary schools. The critics of the secondary schools, by this means, made certain that the public gaze was frequently directed towards what most Liberals regarded as unacceptable enclaves of privilege.

Usually after a witness had expatiated upon the unsuitability of primary education as a preparation for secondary studies and the difficulties the secondary schools had in placing scholarship winners in appropriate classes, a Commissioner would inquire who, in fact, did send their children to secondary schools. The answers showed clearly that in 1879 secondary schools catered only for a very restricted class in colonial society.

Auckland, with a population of about 40,000 in 1879, had a secondary school population of just under five hundred children, many of them still at the primary stage.<sup>1</sup> Even Nelson College, where numerous Governors', School Commissioners' and Education Board scholarships were available for competition among primary school children in Nelson and Marlborough, enrolled only a quarter of its new boys from the primary schools.<sup>2</sup> Two-thirds of the one hundred and twenty Nelson

---

1 Ibid., p.42.

2 Ibid., pp.150-5.

College pupils, the Rev. J.C. Andrew estimated, came from professional families and those liable to land-tax.<sup>1</sup> Nelson's other secondary school, the Bishop's School, was described by Bishop Suter as 'a superior grammar school' which because of competition from Nelson College had fallen on rather bad times. Although it had in 1879 a staff of only one, the Bishop hastened to add that it was attended - as befitted a superior school no doubt - by a 'rather superior class of boys; sons of ministers, lawyers, bankers and people of that class, and the better sort of tradespeople.'<sup>2</sup> The Bishop's description of who sent their sons to secondary school coincided with that given earlier by the Headmaster of the Parnell Grammar School. 'It is only professional men, and men of high education who will keep their boys continually, year after year, at the school.... There are some tradesmen, intelligent men, who keep their boys on at a great sacrifice, but comparatively few.... The school is open to all classes, but it is only the boys of the better educated who remain a long time, so as to attain any standard - with some exceptions.'<sup>3</sup> The Headmistress of Christchurch Girls' High School claimed that her pupils were representative of all classes in the community but what the Headmistress meant by 'all classes' is

---

1 Ibid., p.152. Above, p.65.

2 Ibid., p.141.

3 Ibid., p.76.

open to doubt as she had earlier said that the majority of her pupils came from private schools.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Dunedin High Schools, to which more than the usual number of scholarships were available, other schools described their pupils as coming from 'the middle and perhaps what we may term the higher class.'<sup>2</sup> When asked how open Auckland College and Grammar School was, a governor said rather cryptically that it was open to all who could pay eight guineas a year.<sup>3</sup> Eight guineas was about the lowest fee charged for secondary school tuition in 1879 but even this was more than most labourers and tradesmen could afford at a time when tradesmen earned ten to fourteen shillings a day, ploughmen £60 per year, and general farmhands £45, both the latter 'with rations'.<sup>4</sup> For country labourers and settlers to send their sons to secondary school was out of the question when, in addition to the tuition fee, boarding charges of forty to fifty pounds had also to be met. Winning a scholarship was of little real advantage to a country child when his parents could not afford to board him at the school or in the town.<sup>5</sup>

---

1 Ibid., p.182.

2 Ibid., p.31.

3 Ibid., p.39.

4 James Adam, Emigrant Life in the South of New Zealand (Edinburgh, 1874), pp.107, 110-112.

5 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, pp.70-1.

There was complete unanimity of opinion among all the witnesses that more and better scholarships were needed to assist the really intelligent children. Bowen said that he disliked the intensely competitive nature of the scholarship examinations conducted by the various Education Boards and schools, but agreed that his preference for a return to the old idea of giving scholarships to needy students was not feasible in New Zealand where the establishment of an invidious distinction between poor candidates and others would not be tolerated.<sup>1</sup> The Otago Education Board had been so impressed by the keenness of the competition for the twelve Board scholarships offered in 1878 - seventy one candidates competed - that it was trying to increase the number.<sup>2</sup>

That the early leaving problem of the sixties<sup>3</sup> was still a serious one in 1879 was clear from the universal agreement among the witnesses that boys did not stay a worthwhile length of time at secondary school.

The reasons for this were various. In the first place, as many witnesses freely admitted, there was little enthusiasm in the community for advanced education.<sup>4</sup> Bowen thought that

---

1 Ibid., p.237.

2 Ibid., p.312.

3 Above, p.46.

4 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.21.

the combining of secondary school and university education in the affiliated high schools so obscured the purposes and advantages of a university training that the boys were given no incentive to stay at school until they qualified for admission to a separate university college.<sup>1</sup> From Dunedin witnesses came a rather plaintive explanation of boys' eagerness to be done with the classroom: 'we find...there is a strange dislike of classical studies.'<sup>2</sup> And finally in Auckland yet another reason was given; boys were being tempted to leave school because of the numerous attractive jobs which were offering.<sup>3</sup> Prospective employers did not demand too high an educational standard. 'We are only too glad to get eligible lads in whatever shape they are - whether they pass an examination or not - if they have received a fair education',<sup>4</sup> the Inspector of the Bank of New Zealand told the Commissioners in Auckland.

### The District High Schools

The frequently mentioned inability of country children to take up Education Board scholarships at city secondary schools prompted the Commissioners to inquire into the effectiveness

---

1 Ibid., p.236.

2 Ibid., p.326.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p.101.

and popularity of the district high schools. These schools, lineal descendants of the Scottish parish schools established first in Otago<sup>1</sup> as 'grammar schools' and given national recognition in clauses 55 and 56 of the 1877 Education Act, had been in existence for a decade. Did they offer a solution, the Commissioners wondered, to what their inquiries had indicated were the chief drawbacks to secondary education throughout the colony, early leaving, unrealistic curricula, expense, and lack of co-ordination between the work of the primary and secondary branches? No one gave them much encouragement to believe that they had hit upon the right solution. Even Dunedin witnesses spoke of the local innovation with reservation: the subjects taught, although unspecified by the 1877 Act, were in practice restricted to the traditional secondary school offerings of Latin and Euclid with some English and French. Early leaving was as much a problem in the district high schools as it was in the endowed secondary schools. Quite clearly, the provision of more district high schools would not cure two of the major ills of secondary education.

But on the other hand, the district high schools did have an appeal to a number of the Commissioners. These 'poor relations' of the endowed secondary schools were giving a few

---

<sup>1</sup> Above, p.46.



country children, who would otherwise not have had the opportunity, a chance to advance their education at very little cost to their parents. The district high schools' concentration upon the traditional secondary disciplines was not as serious a fault as the first evidence had suggested. Those children, mainly girls, who were only staying on at school for a few extra months before they could go 'into service' did extra English and arithmetic and helped the teachers of the lower standards. The others, always a very select few, who hoped to go to the Boys' or Girls' High Schools in Dunedin were given a grounding in Latin and Euclid so as to make easier their transition from the primary to the secondary stage. And not the least of the district high schools' attractions in the eyes of the parliamentarians on the Commission must have been the fact that they could be established when and where they were needed by ministerial edict. No special Act of Parliament was required.<sup>1</sup>

Although the district high schools did have certain virtues, enthusiasm for them among the people was not great, probably because of the flood of high school bills just passed by the General Assembly. The attitude of the people of Thames was fairly typical. In their eagerness to have state-supported

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.317.

secondary education in the Thames Valley they had agreed - with considerable reluctance - to the setting up of a district high school. But they did so only on the understanding that a full high school would be established when the all-important land endowments were available.<sup>1</sup> The Thames attitude, and that of most of the colony north of the Waitaki towards district high schools, was tersely summed up by R.J. O'Sullivan, the Auckland inspector of schools who said, 'I look upon these schools as simply a makeshift.'<sup>2</sup>

#### Secondary Education For Girls

The Commissioners never forgot that their duties included inquiry into the best means of bringing 'secondary and superior' education within the reach of girls as well as boys.

Although one witness described the higher education of girls as the 'fad of the day'<sup>3</sup> nobody appeared hostile to it. Dunedin already had a well-established and popular Girls' High School of one hundred and thirty-nine pupils, Christchurch had a similar school with a roll of eighty-nine and the Auckland Girls' High School, although bedevilled by financial worries, had two hundred and six girls. The Auckland Education Board,

---

1 Ibid., pp.129-131.

2 Ibid., p.87.

3 Ibid., p.193.

in an attempt to attract better-qualified girls into teaching, was proposing to form a 'training class' at the local girls' school.<sup>1</sup> In Wellington the General Assembly had set aside land for a girls' secondary school in 1878 but no immediate steps were taken to open such a school.<sup>2</sup> As a temporary measure, Wellington College was providing 'higher girls' work' from eleven to one each school day, the class being held, as the Headmaster quickly added, in a separate part of the building.<sup>3</sup> The curriculum for all these young ladies in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin was practically the same - Latin, French, German and English with some elementary mathematics. Nelson was the only centre visited where there was no publicly provided girls' secondary school. As a result, some Nelson parents, dissatisfied with the standard of teaching in the proprietary schools and unwilling to send their daughters to the local convent school<sup>4</sup> had sent them to England or Victoria for their secondary schooling.<sup>5</sup>

The lack of a girls' high school in Nelson was not the result of parental apathy. As early as 1871 a deputation of citizens had asked the Council of Governors of Nelson College to take steps to establish a girls' equivalent. The governors

---

1 Ibid., p.85.

2 Ibid., p.307.

3 Ibid., p.266.

4 Above, p.51.

5 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.162.

had been sympathetic; they declared that it had been their 'long and ardently entertained wish...to erect a High School for the girls of this province'.<sup>1</sup> But the Council's professed enthusiasm for a girls' college was not translated into action. Eight years later, finding Nelson still without a girls' secondary school, the Commissioners made a special point in their interim report of recommending early 'public provision for the secondary education of girls in Nelson.'<sup>2</sup>

The Commissioners made this recommendation so promptly because they had been impressed by the full use girls made of whatever opportunities for higher education came their way. In Dunedin, for example, sixty to seventy of the one hundred and eighty teachers who attended Professor Black's Saturday morning chemistry classes were women. As many of them came by coach and rail from settlements as far afield as Oamaru, Naseby, Beaumont and Clinton this represented not only enthusiasm but real determination as well.<sup>3</sup>

On one aspect of secondary schooling for girls the witnesses were all but unanimous; it should not be 'mixed

1 Nelson College, Minutes, 28 December, 1871.

2 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.xiv.

3 Ibid., pp.343-4. Teachers who wanted to qualify for their permanent teaching certificates had to pass an examination in chemistry.

education'. Only the Rev. Samuel Edger, whose daughter, Kate, had attended Auckland College and Grammar School in 1874, and who was to become first Lady Principal of Nelson Girls' College in 1883, expressed himself as a 'strong advocate...of training the boys and girls together.'<sup>1</sup>

Neil Heath, Headmaster of the Auckland Girls' High School, said that mixed education was bad for the morale; separate schooling was better, 'especially with colonial boys and girls.'<sup>2</sup> Headmistresses did not venture their opinions.

### External Inspection

The Commissioners' own lack of agreement on the contentious inspection issue was paralleled by that of their expert witnesses. Headmasters resented the suggestion that they should open their schools to inspection by either Government or University officials. 'Independence...of some educational institutions is a very good thing,'<sup>3</sup> the Rev. J.C. Andrews asserted. Education Board members and school governors were not so sure although they could not agree as to whether inspection should be the responsibility of the Education Department or the University of New Zealand. The Secretary of the North Canterbury Education Board not only favoured University

---

1 Ibid., p.96.

2 Ibid., p.104.

3 Ibid., p.152. At which remark the Secretary of the Commission must have smiled wryly. Above, pp.94-5.

inspection of the secondary schools but also of the teachers at work unwelcome though he knew such an inspection would be.<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusions

The Royal Commission's investigations had been painstaking and thorough; for the first time secondary education had been looked at as a colonial, as distinct from a provincial, affair. And from the mass of evidence accumulated in the five centres visited, certain key facts emerged.

There was widespread dissatisfaction with attempts to combine grammar school and university teaching although Nelson College governors favoured the retention of some links between the two branches. Equal dissatisfaction was expressed with the lack of co-ordination between the primary and secondary stages, a lack which gave rise to numerous difficulties when Education Board scholarship winners entered the high schools. As the general weight of evidence was strongly in favour of increasing the numbers of scholarships the onus was on the Commission to suggest means of securing better co-ordination. Only through the provision of more scholarships could the able children of tradesmen, small farmers and labourers be given a chance to go

---

1 Ibid., p.191.

to high school; unless financial help was given, secondary education would continue to be largely a privilege of the well-to-do.

More scholarships for deserving country children were especially needed. The handicaps under which such children laboured in comparison with their city cousins were emphasised by witness after witness. Their teachers were seldom as well-qualified as town and suburban teachers to begin with and because they had responsibility for a number of classes the country teachers could not devote the time their town colleagues did to coaching the scholarship candidates.<sup>1</sup> The country children's chances were further hindered by irregularity of attendance caused by weather, bad roads and farm chores.

The Commissioners, more conscious than most of the settlers of the serious educational implications of rural isolation, sought a solution to an impending problem in the district high schools. But their witnesses gave them little encouragement to believe that in such schools would be found the answer to the educational difficulties of country areas.

The notable lack of enthusiasm for district high schools was compensated for in some measure by the goodwill which all

---

<sup>1</sup> There were, of course, numerous exceptions to this generalisation, e.g., John Stenhouse of the Lawrence District School. (For a description of Stenhouse at work see O. Duff, New Zealand Now (2ed.; Hamilton, 1956), pp.95-99.)

witnesses showed towards 'female education'. Commissioner W. Macdonald, Rector of Otago Boys' High School, assured his colleagues that in Scotland one of the outstanding features of recent educational reform had been the establishment of girls' high schools.<sup>1</sup> The Headmaster of Auckland Girls' High School dismissed as nonsense the contemporary middle-class English view that girls' abilities for higher studies were inferior to boys'.<sup>2</sup> Such a view, with its inference that women were lesser beings, was very out of place in a pioneering society and the Commissioners could be certain that they would not be running counter to public opinion if they recommended better facilities for girls' secondary schooling.<sup>3</sup>

The restriction of educational opportunities for girls was not the only feature of New Zealand secondary and higher education which many interested people thought needed remedying.

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1879, H-1, p.308.

2 Ibid., p.104.

3 Inevitably there were some who disagreed with the Commissioners. A newspaper correspondent, a woman, argued that women should stick to their own domain and that men 'should not excite our women to enter the arena of men, there to contend against them. For what do you intend to make of women possessing University degrees? Not all teachers surely? What then? - doctors, lawyers, etc?' New Zealand Herald, 22 February, 1879.



There were also those who wanted to see some drastic surgery applied to the traditional secondary school curriculum. The fact that secondary education was 'but little sought after by the parents of colonial children'<sup>1</sup> the editor of the New Zealand Times attributed to their distaste for classical studies.

The main reason for the concentration upon the ancient languages, the characteristic feature of the New Zealand secondary school curriculum throughout the nineteenth century, was not hard to find. Most of the men who taught in New Zealand's first high schools had themselves been brought up in the classical tradition and believed firmly in the value of the training in the Greek and Latin classics given in England's endowed grammar schools.<sup>2</sup> They tried, therefore, to instil into their colonial pupils something of their own appreciation and love of classical literature. That the glories of Greece and Rome were not likely to make an

---

1 New Zealand Times, 15 May, 1879.

2 English endowed grammar schools, (as distinct from the dissenting academies), had had no choice but to concentrate upon the teaching of Latin, Greek and Hebrew between 1805 and 1840. See J.W. Adamson, A Short History of Education (Cambridge, 1930), p.225.

immediate appeal to children in a land of 'barbed-wire fences, scraggy telegraph poles, half-made roads and half-ballasted railway tracks, corrugated-iron roofs and wooden shacks, and small talk revolving everlastingly round the two poles of local gossip and economic statistics',<sup>1</sup> did not seem to occur to the majority of the early schoolmasters. Most headmasters yielded reluctantly and grudgingly to parental pressure to provide a 'modern' course; only in Otago Boys' High School and Auckland College and Grammar School was the 'modern' curriculum taught with any enthusiasm and conviction. Elsewhere, earlier promises notwithstanding,<sup>2</sup> classics formed the core of the secondary school curriculum and the children of the colonial middle-class were enticed and cajoled into making some acquaintance with them.

---

1 K.N.Bell and W.P.Morrell (eds.), Select Documents on British Colonial Policy, 1830-1860 (Oxford, 1928), p.xlix.

2 e.g. the original prospectus of Christ's College promised not only a commercial but also an agricultural course.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RECOMMENDATIONS, RESULTS AND REACTIONS

The deliberations of the Royal Commissioners on the evidence that had been presented to them coincided with the general election of 1879, the second since the passing of the 1877 Education Act. Education was not a major issue; most candidates professed to believe that the 1877 Act was giving general satisfaction and should not be meddled with. Liberals were forthright in their condemnation of sectarianism and denominationalism but the Conservatives were not so unanimous. Their leader, John Hall, was accused by the Rev. C. Fraser of Christchurch, the man who had almost single-handed kept the Christchurch Boys' High School<sup>1</sup>, in existence until 1873, of proposing 'to go back to denominationalism by giving endowments to the Roman Catholics who would not fall in with the general scheme.'<sup>2</sup> Even Bowen said that he would like to see a conscience clause in the Education Act but qualified this by adding that he would not attempt to interfere if he saw that

---

1 Not the school which now bears that name.

2 Lyttelton Times, 30 August, 1879.

by doing so there was the slightest chance of destroying the national system of education.<sup>1</sup>

During the election campaign all the leading newspapers devoted considerable space to discussion of the religion-and-education controversy but as far as they were able, the candidates avoided taking sides. Their maintenance of neutrality was made easier by the absence of questions on the topic at their meetings.

Interest in secondary education was conspicuous by its absence. Only Sir George Grey took up the plea of a speaker at the 1879 Canterbury College graduation ceremony that the colony should 'educate, educate, educate in the primary schools, the middle-class schools and the University.'<sup>2</sup> New Zealand, Grey said, must give an opening to all the talent it possessed<sup>3</sup> and must educate the whole population of every grade 'in the highest possible degree...females as well as males.'<sup>4</sup>

Not just secondary education, but education generally, was a dead issue in 1879. Aspirants to the House of Representatives according to the contemporary custom advertised their political beliefs and intentions in the public notice columns of the

1 Ibid., 27 August, 1879.

2 Lyttelton Times, 6 August, 1879.

3 Ibid., 25 August, 1879.

4 Ibid., 10 September, 1879.

newspapers, and apart from an almost universal promise to support unsectarian education by the state, left education unmentioned. Political and public feeling about education was probably fairly accurately summed up by a Christchurch Liberal candidate who argued that the State's educational duty had been discharged when children had learnt the three R's. 'At that point it should put a one shilling dictionary into their hands and say: "That is all the State can give you; everything else is a luxury".'<sup>1</sup>

Because secondary education in 1879 was not a subject which concerned many people or many children, both politicians and newspaper editors ignored it. The peregrinations of the O'Rorke Commissioners went almost unnoticed in the daily papers of Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin, even when the Commission was sitting locally.

Only when, in July, 1879, the Commission presented its interim report on university education did the leading dailies devote editorials to its activities. In general they approved of the report's recommendation that the existing practice of affiliating secondary schools to the University of New Zealand should cease and that 'bona fide Colleges, such as the Otago University and Canterbury College'<sup>2</sup> be established in Auckland

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 23 August, 1879.

2 Ibid., 15 August, 1879.

and Wellington as constituent Colleges of the University. The recommendation did not apparently surprise or alarm the secondary school authorities although at the annual prize-giving at Nelson College the resident master accused the Commission of 'being bound up in Canterbury and Dunedin, and endeavouring to swamp other institutions but their own, and to bring all into the net of Canterbury and Dunedin.'<sup>1</sup> This was an unfair accusation because on the evidence they had heard the Commissioners had no alternative but to recommend as they did. The consequences of affiliation had been markedly different from the University Senate's original intention that the schools would develop collegiate 'tops' and that it would be these that would be linked with the University. Instead the demand for higher education had been disappointingly small, the collegiate divisions had not developed and the few undergraduates who attended classes at the affiliated secondary schools were usually taught in the same room as sixth and even fifth formers.

The results of the Commission's inquiry into the state of secondary education were not made public until the final report was presented to the Governor in April, 1880. 'Probably no

---

<sup>1</sup> The Colonist (Nelson), 13 December, 1879. Nelson College was reluctant to give up its university affiliations and managed to retain them longer than any of its sister institutions.

part of our report will be looked for with greater interest than that which relates to the secondary schools',<sup>1</sup> said the Commissioners but public indifference to the report did not substantiate their claim. 'The day for fostering secondary education has not yet arrived',<sup>2</sup> complained one member of the House of Representatives.

### Recommendations

There was nothing dramatically novel or revolutionary about the recommendations. A number of reforms were suggested but they were all reforms in a conservative key. The first conservative chord was struck at the beginning of the secondary schools' section when the Commissioners declared that they did not agree that the primary and secondary courses of instruction formed parts of a continuous whole.<sup>3</sup> This remark indicated plainly that the Commissioners had chosen to ignore educational trends in the United States and had looked instead only to British practice for guidance. The Commissioners had had a choice, because although they were personally more familiar with English and Scottish practice than with American, there were many people in New Zealand - including Stout, Rolleston, Fox

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.4.  
2 P.D., 1880, Vol.35, p.575.  
3 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.4.

and Grey - who knew what the Americans were doing educationally and who from time to time wrote or spoke in favour of the adoption of similar practices in New Zealand. Only six years before the Commissioners presented their report, the Michigan Supreme Court had, in an important decision, ruled that it was constitutional for tax money to be used to maintain high schools because these served as the links between publicly supported elementary schools and a publicly supported State university.<sup>1</sup> A close parallel existed in New Zealand but our Commissioners made no attempt to apply United States precedents to the local situation. Rather they turned for inspiration to the report of the English Schools Inquiry Commission of 1868.<sup>2</sup>

Two Scots on the O'Rourke Commission, Professor Shand and Dr. Macdonald, were obviously disappointed that they and their colleagues could not suggest a means of satisfying Thomas Huxley's test of a national system, 'a great educational ladder with one end in the gutter, and the other in the University.' Both men declined to concur in the majority recommendation that the fees at secondary schools should not be lower than £10 per annum. Their view, one that was to be

---

<sup>1</sup> R.O. Hahn and D.B. Bidna, Secondary Education: Origins and Directions (New York, 1965) pp.75-78.

<sup>2</sup> Usually known as the Taunton Commission. Below, p.128.



echoed many times in the next twenty years by rank-and-file Liberal politicians, was that endowments had been given to the secondary schools out of public lands so that they could offer 'an efficient education at so cheap a rate as to put it within reach of all classes of the community which were likely to take advantage of it.' Charging high fees, in the view of Shand and Macdonald, meant that secondary schools were using their endowments almost exclusively for the benefit of the wealthy.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission justified its rejection of the 'common opinion that the primary and secondary courses of instruction form parts of a continuous whole, the primary education being adapted to the requirements of children below a certain age, and the secondary suitable for young persons who have passed through the primary course'<sup>2</sup> on the grounds that the two courses were parallel, not end-on, and that to try to make the one lead on to the other was academically undesirable. Far better, the Commissioners thought, to allow the secondary schools to include lower divisions to prepare pupils for secondary school work than to interfere with the basic work of the primary schools which gave a terminal education for the majority of children. It was an indication of how widely

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.48.

2 Ibid., p.2.

accepted was the existence of a small privileged class in New Zealand in 1880, and how little overt resentment there was of their favoured position, that the Commission could endorse this arrangement. In its essentials such an organisation of the school system went perilously close to that of Prussia with its vorschulen and volksschulen. This similarity, apparently overlooked by O'Rorke and his colleagues, did not go unnoticed among Liberals, Fabians and Knights of Labour when the grim depression years of the 1880's accentuated class feeling.

Because the Commissioners believed the secondary schools should do their own preparatory teaching they expressed no surprise in their report at the low standard of entrance required by secondary schools. Rather, it was approved. 'We recommend,' the Commissioners wrote, 'a low standard for entrance because, as we have already said, the proper subjects of the secondary school course should be begun early, and children who are intended to receive the full benefit of such a course should enter upon it as soon as they can profitably do so.'<sup>1</sup>

But fortunately for New Zealand, if unfortunately for the tidiness of the Commission's recommendations, the 1877

---

1 Ibid., p.4.

Education Act had already ensured the converging of the primary and secondary school tracks. This was secured by the award of Education Board scholarships, the first holders of which were already in the secondary schools. Witnesses were unanimous in their praises of the intelligence and keenness of these youngsters and of the thoroughness of their preparation in the primary school subjects. But they were also agreed that the scholars' unfamiliarity with Latin and mathematics posed problems for the high schools. To bridge this gap between primary and secondary schools the Commissioners recommended a government grant of £100 to each of the larger primary schools 'for strengthening the staff of the school, in order that the elements of a secondary education may be imparted without endangering the efficiency of the primary education of the school.'<sup>1</sup> The genesis of these proposed 'middle-schools' is obscure.<sup>2</sup> It is very likely that the original germ of the idea came from papers<sup>3</sup> presented to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, the Transactions of which were well-known in New Zealand.<sup>4</sup>

---

1 Ibid., p.5.

2 J.E.Watson, Intermediate Schooling in New Zealand (Wellington, 1964), pp.5-6, suggests a number of possibilities.

3 e.g. Rev. John Percival, 'By What Means Can A Direct Connection be Established Between the Elementary and Secondary Schools and the Universities.' Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1870, pp.310-323.

4 The number of un-cut pages in Robert Stout's collection of the Transactions suggests that perhaps, although well-known, the papers were not so very widely read.

Further evidence that the Commissioners were not sympathetic towards the conception of a unified system of primary and secondary education is to be found in their curricular recommendations. Secondary education meant for the Commissioners an education suited only to the needs of a select few. They did not propose to create a unified system which might, as C.C. Bowen, a late addition to their ranks, had said when introducing the 1877 Education Bill, 'encourage children whose vocation is honest labour to waste in higher schools time which might be better devoted to the learning of a trade, when they have not got the special talent by which that higher education might be made immediately useful'.<sup>1</sup> Their curricular proposals were, therefore, conservative in the extreme and were not in the least likely to tempt children whose vocation was honest labour to continue on to secondary school. For those pupils intending to go to university the solid diet of classics and mathematics already provided was approved. But the Commission's inquiries had revealed the presence in the secondary schools of large numbers of pupils who had no intention of matriculating, pupils who intended to enter 'on the ordinary business of life immediately on leaving school.'<sup>2</sup>

---

1 P.D., 1877, Vol.24, p.37.

2 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.18. This colonial phenomenon had already been remarked on twenty years before by the Tasmanian Royal Commission on the State of Superior and General Education and also by a select Committee appointed by the New South Wales Government 'to inquire into the state of Sydney Grammar School.'

These children could not be ignored; a suitable course of study had to be provided for them. A few of the O'Rorke Commissioners would have liked, one suspects, to have echoed the Taunton recommendation that there should be three grades of secondary schools, the distinction between them corresponding 'roughly, but by no means exactly, to the gradations of society.'<sup>1</sup> 'If the country were populous, and its schools numerous, no doubt the demand for different kinds of education would best be met by instituting different kinds of secondary schools'<sup>2</sup> the Commissioners went as far as saying, but as such a description did not fit New Zealand they suggested that where the resources of a school permitted, a 'modern side' should be offered as an alternative to the 'classical side'.<sup>3</sup>

Such proposals did not constitute educational statesmanship of a very liberal nature; they represented an almost slavish adherence to conservative English practice and a rejection of more democratic American developments. In terms of North American practice, the Commissioners were recommending for New

---

1 'Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission' as quoted in J.S. Maclure, Educational Documents (London, 1965), p.92.

2 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.14.

3 The differences between the two 'sides' was not great:

	Classical		Modern
English	5 hours	English	5 hours
French or German	2 hours	Modern languages	4 hours
Mathematics	5 hours	Mathematics	7 hours
Latin	8 hours	Latin	5 hours
Greek	5 hours	Science	4 hours

In addition...drawing should be taught on both sides... for two hours a week. Ibid., p.14.

Zealand the creation of academies to supplement the work of the Latin schools, a recommendation made by Benjamin Franklin for Pennsylvania in 1749<sup>1</sup> and put into effect in Massachusetts later that century.<sup>2</sup> By 1880, the academies, which had early in the nineteenth century supplanted the Latin schools, had in their turn given way in popular favour to public high schools, a chain of events of which the O'Rourke Commission took no apparent cognisance.

General satisfaction with the working of scholarship schemes was expressed, and no increase in the number of Education Board scholarships offered each year was recommended. The sixty to seventy such awards which could be made annually by the Boards out of the Government grant of 1s. 6d. for every child in average attendance at their respective primary schools, allowed the Boards to maintain two scholarship winners for every ninety children above the fourth standard. By endorsing this very limited scheme the Commissioners made explicit what had been implicit in most of their other recommendations, their view that secondary education was mainly for children whose parents could pay for it.

In the light of the evidence that had been presented to them the Commissioners' recommendation on inspection was as

---

1 University of Chicago, Department of Education, Educational Documents (mimeographed, 1958).

2 J.S. Brubacher, A History of the Problems of Education (New York, 1947), p.430.

surprising as was their failure to recommend more scholarships. All witnesses had spoken of the need for an external yardstick by which to assess the quality of the work of the different schools; most thought the junior scholarship and civil service examinations were a sufficient measure but a few, and it was with these that a majority of the Commissioners agreed, held that results in external examinations did not give a true picture of the work of a school. Accordingly the Commission, with three members dissenting, recommended that the schools should be inspected and examined under the authority of the Minister of Education.<sup>1</sup> The members who disagreed with their colleagues on this point added a rider to the majority decision. 'Inspection', they wrote, '... would be intolerable to masters not trained technically in a special system such as obtains in schools of primary instruction; and it would be almost impossible to find an Inspector able to judge by a few hours' observation, of the qualifications of highly-educated masters accustomed to very different systems of teaching.'<sup>2</sup> But neither the three Commissioners nor the secondary teachers had, in practice, anything to complain about. The duty of inspecting

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.46.

2 Ibid., p.47.

the secondary schools fell upon the Secretary to the Royal Commission, W.J. Habens, in his capacity as Inspector-General and he, mindful of the teachers' resentment of inspection, took great care not to offend. 'We were practically untroubled by school inspectors in those days', wrote one former pupil of Southland Boys' High School. 'The Inspector-General of schools, the Rev. W.J. Habens, irreverently known as "Old Haybags", certainly came down from Wellington once a year, and no doubt looked through the school records. But he did not examine us, and, as far as we could see, contented himself with sitting by the master's table and blinking peacefully at the proceedings.'<sup>1</sup>

The Commission was more successful in curbing the independence of the schools in financial than in pedagogical matters, in its recommendation that the trustees of all the State-endowed schools should be required to present annual statements of their accounts to the Minister of Education. With the memory of the slight they had received from Nelson and Christ's Colleges still rankling, the Commissioners specifically recommended that the trustees of 'educational institutions of which the endowments originated in contracts between colonizing companies and the settlers'<sup>2</sup> should also submit their accounts to the Education

---

1 J. Carswell (ed), Southland Boys' High School Jubilee Record, 1880-1930 (Invercargill, 1930), p.41.

2 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, p.47.



Department for scrutiny.

Unwittingly the Commission, by requiring details of the land holdings of the various schools and the revenue they yielded so that it could decide what endowments future schools should be given, played into the hands of the schools' critics. Almost as soon as the Report was published, W.J. Speight, M.H.R. for City of Auckland East, launched an attack upon the endowed schools, using this information as his weapon. 'It is the duty of the government', he declared, 'to grasp for the purposes of revenue all of those endowments which have been made in years past and to use them to assist primary education instead of allowing the rich to be educated on the strength of them .... Deal with primary education alone...and let secondary education look out for itself for the present.'<sup>1</sup>

### Reactions

Speight failed to rally support for his crusade against the endowed schools; the apathy and indifference which had marked the Royal Commission's progress about the colony again showed itself in the public reaction to its Report. Not that

---

<sup>1</sup> P.D., 1880, Vol.35, pp.523, 575.

there was anything particularly surprising about this reaction. Royal Commissions during the Parliamentary recess had become commonplace by 1880<sup>1</sup> and this one dealt with a subject of immediate concern to very few. Its proposed university reforms made little sense to the majority of the colonists and its recommendations for secondary education, although of wider significance, were too cautious and conservative to arouse excited or sustained public comment. Nowhere in the precise pages of the Report was there a glimpse of 'the wonder that would be', of a democracy where 'rank is but the guinea stamp' and a man or his child could win the place in the community to which his talents and industry entitled him. The Commissioners' failure to produce an educational blueprint for a new society, and their inability to shake off the incubus of the old one did not go unnoticed in the House. C.A. de Lautour, M.H.R. for Mt. Ida, criticised the Report for not suggesting ways 'to engraft practical instruction upon the educational system' although the Commission's own investigations had shown how great was the demand for practical education throughout the Colony. 'The Commissioners,' de Lautour said, 'appear to think that practical education consists merely in polishing classes for professional pursuits.'<sup>2</sup>

The disappointment of de Lautour and others was justified. The Report was too much concerned with looking backwards and not enough with looking forward; it was a Report full of history but pitifully thin on prophecy.

---

1 Ibid., pp.482-3.

2 Ibid., Vol.36, pp.82-4.

## Results

But as it happened, even if the Report had been an outstanding example of far-sighted educational statesmanship, it is doubtful if its immediate effects would have been any more noteworthy. The Government which had appointed the Royal Commission was no longer in office; the 1879 elections had returned a Conservative Ministry headed by John Hall to power but neither he nor his astute Minister of Education, William Rolleston, seem to have thought that any major educational reforms were needed or, in view of an impending economic crisis, were possible. In reply to a question in the House as to what action the Government proposed to take on the Commission's recommendation that two North Island university colleges should be created, Rolleston said: 'The Government do not think in the present financial position of the colony, they are justified in incurring the expenditure involved.'<sup>1</sup>

O'Rorke was disturbed at the Government's failure to implement the more important of the Report's recommendations and towards the end of 1880 he took the unusual step - he was then Speaker of the House - of speaking in committee in order

---

1 Ibid., Vol.35, p.312.

to raise the matter. Most urgently required, he insisted, was the establishment of university colleges at Auckland and Wellington to help the North Island overcome 'the genuine academical advantages' of the South Island.<sup>1</sup> O'Rorke's plea fell upon deaf ears. The government, already seeking ways and means of economising, was not in a mood to finance the expansion of higher education. It dealt rather haphazardly with some of the minor recommendations but quickly shelved the rest.

Although the O'Rorke Commission Report did not stimulate much discussion in the General Assembly in 1880 education in general was quite frequently a subject for debate. The Committee of Supply debate on the Education Estimates was remarkable for the thoroughness and earnestness with which speakers examined the working of the national primary school system after two years of operation.<sup>2</sup> During this lengthy debate a number of speakers objected to the proposed grants-in-aid to inadequately endowed secondary schools but in the end they were approved by large majorities.

At other times throughout the year secondary education came under attack, either directly or indirectly, for various

---

1 Ibid., Vol.36, pp.606-7.

2 Ibid., pp.521-544.

reasons. In the first place, there were a good many members of both Houses who believed that the State's responsibility for education had ceased when it created an efficient, colony-wide primary school system. Speight in criticising the O'Rourke Report had made this point in the House of Representatives. John Lundon, a somewhat belligerent Irishman from Mongonui, took a similar but politically safer line, and one which must have coincided with the views of many inarticulate but prosperous colonists of little formal education when he said that cleverness, thriftiness and ability, not extended schooling, were what really mattered. 'If a man has "go" in him the want of education will not keep him back,'<sup>1</sup> he asserted.

Among the 'lififers' of the Legislative Council more forthright opinions were expressed, opinions which had not been aired in the House of Representatives since the 1871 education debates. The Hon. Mr. Waterhouse obviously subscribed to the same school of thought as Lundon. He argued that State education should be of a very rudimentary character. 'Let a child be taught the rudiments of education and if there is anything in that child...such education,

---

1 Ibid., Vol.35, p.672.

supplemented as it will be by the education which life itself affords, will enable him to rise to the highest position in the State.'<sup>1</sup> All that extended educational provision was doing, he went on later, warming to his theme, was unfitting boys to be more than occupants of some 'pettifogging small position' under the Government. The State was educating beyond their station many children whose work in life would be that of labouring people. The result, already apparent, was that young men were hanging around the towns looking for office jobs 'instead of putting on blue shirts and going out into the country.'<sup>2</sup> The present education system, a fellow-councillor agreed, was depriving the colony of men to do husbandry and mechanical work.<sup>3</sup>

Other parliamentarians took the line that state-action in secondary education was stifling private enterprise. Gisborne, a member of O'Rorke's Commission, said the State had no right to absorb in its grasp the whole system of education or to interfere with private schools,<sup>4</sup> a point

1 Ibid., Vol.36, p.175.

2 Ibid., p.176. A few months later a fellow-councillor, Colonel Brett, claimed that in New Zealand there were 'upwards of one hundred university gentlemen of high degree who cannot get employment.' (P.D., 1881, Vol.38, p.147.)

3 Ibid., p.177.

4 Ibid., Vol.36, p.493.

Waterhouse had also made. A number of critics accused the Government of destroying the educational diversity and variety which had formerly existed. Vincent Pyke quoted with approval the clause in the English Elementary Education Act of 1870 which limited state responsibility for elementary schools to those districts where 'efficient and suitable provision is not otherwise made'.<sup>1</sup> Pyke's motives in praising a dual system were transparent and although no other speaker thought it politically expedient to support him openly<sup>2</sup> his general thesis that the state should not wholly dominate the educational field was echoed by other speakers besides Gisborne. In 'the other place',<sup>3</sup> the Hon. Mr. Chamberlin sought the abolition of all government secondary schools whose teachers should then be encouraged to open private schools. Waxing both eloquent and fanciful about the over-involvement of the state in education, Chamberlin described New Zealand as the John Bull of the Southern Hemisphere entangled in the coils of a boa constrictor whose head represented the Minister of Education.

---

1 Ibid., p.495.

2 Pyke was the author of the controversial Private Schools Bill, 1882, which proposed state-aid to denominational schools. See P.D., 1882, Vol.41, p.218.

3 A phrase used in the House of Representatives to denote the Legislative Council.

'Upon the boa-constrictor I picture the teachers...of this colony' with the New Zealand John Bull, 'blood streaming forth from every pore,' trying to rise and cast off the monster crushing him to death.<sup>1</sup>

It was fortunate for the future of New Zealand education that in a twenty year period which knew only two vigorous and dynamic Ministers of Education, Rolleston and Seddon, Rolleston was in office in 1880 when criticism of the evolving education system reached a peak. His earlier refusal, because of financial difficulties, to authorise the establishment of university colleges at Auckland and Wellington did not indicate any antipathy on his part to secondary and higher education. 'I am strongly of the opinion', he said, 'that it is the business of the State to adopt the care of secondary as well as primary schools'. In his view the State, in endowing secondary schools, was only fulfilling its duty.<sup>2</sup> Earlier he had taken to task those who professed to be worried about the effects of over-educating the people. 'The working men', he retorted, 'are men who are not going to be satisfied with having the education which they pay for, doled out to their children only to the extent that they will be left workers

---

1 P.D., 1880, Vol.37, pp.3-4.

2 Ibid., Vol.36, p.540.



with their hands. The people of this country are not going to be satisfied with a miserable system that says, "Thus far you shall go and no further with your education".<sup>1</sup>

Rolleston understood the spirit and mood of the country in educational matters much better than did many of his parliamentary colleagues and his refusal to submit to pressure to curtail Government responsibility and expenditure in 1880 did much to ensure that in the ensuing depression decade the education vote was never slashed nor the system interfered with to the extent the anti-education faction wanted. The editor of a Dunedin newspaper suggested that some retrenchment in education could be achieved by 'cutting off the "fancy votes" for certain secondary schools which, being attended almost solely by the children of wealthy parents surely ought to be able to run alone now if they were not in the enjoyment of more or less handsome endowments.' But he went on, 'we have not the slightest expectation that a Ministry in which Mr. Rolleston holds the portfolio of Education, and of which Mr. Thomas Dick is a member, will propose any such crucial reforms.'<sup>2</sup> The editor was correct. When the Premier, John Hall, suggested to Rolleston that as

---

1 Ibid., p.496.

2 Evening Star, 9 July, 1880.

he had the portfolios of Justice, Mines, Lands and Education to look after he should lighten his load by relinquishing the Education portfolio he left the choice of the new Minister to Rolleston. Rolleston's choice fell upon Thomas Dick whom he knew could be relied upon to stand his ground against the attacks of the would-be retrenchers.<sup>1</sup>

Between them, Rolleston and Dick tried to cast an aura of sanctity about Education and to a remarkable degree they succeeded. Rolleston in later life remarked: 'I look back on the share I had in promoting a national system of education with more pride than on any other part of my public life'<sup>2</sup> and when he died in 1903 newspaper obituaries invariably referred to him as 'the father of our education system'.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1880 debates on education Rolleston's refusal to sacrifice the secondary schools to the cause of economy was applauded by Dr. James Wallis of Auckland and by Sir George Grey. The former pointed out that if primary education did not lead on to a higher stage it would quickly become starved and stunted and besides, 'If we have no secondary schools and no university where are we to get our teachers from?'<sup>4</sup> Grey,

1 J. Hall to W. Rolleston, n.d. (but probably late May, 1881.) Rolleston Papers (Manuscript, General Assembly Library.)

2 Quoted without source in W. Downie Stewart, William Rolleston (Christchurch, 1940), p.43.

3 Miscellaneous newspaper clippings, Rolleston Papers

4 P.D., 1880, Vol.36, p.536.

while admitting the truth of the argument that extended opportunities for secondary education would benefit townsfolk most, contended that eventually the community at large would benefit because the influence of higher education would 'spread like the ripples from a stone thrown into the water,...diminishing in force, but with ever-extending circumference.'<sup>1</sup>

Grey, as he usually did in educational matters, was taking a colonial and long-term view and his fellow legislators appreciated this. But there were few members of the House of Representatives of the same persuasion. Most of them, brought up in the restricting atmosphere of provincial government politics, still thought first of the interests of their own electorates, secondly of the well-being of their provinces and last and least of the interests of the colony. With the growth of a few large towns and the extension of settlement into remote districts a new rivalry, town versus country, had emerged.<sup>2</sup> This, as Grey's remark showed, had consequences for secondary education. The jealousies engendered by this rivalry were not nearly as important in the story of secondary schooling in the early 1880's as they were later to become, although even then one of the main

---

1 Ibid., p.530.

2 P.D., 1878, Vol.29, pp.317-26.

reasons some members had for opposing the passage of the Auckland College and Grammar School Bill was that the Auckland institution catered only for city children.<sup>1</sup>

Inter-island enmity, always latent, also came to the surface from time to time during debates on educational matters. James Macandrew, as staunch a defender of southern interests as there was in the House, argued against giving financial assistance to secondary schools in 1880 - all but one seeking help were in the North Island - on the grounds that the North Islanders should have shown foresight earlier and provided endowments. Grants for such schools were now being made at the expense of the South Island, the only 'crime' of whose people was, according to Macandrew, that they had looked ahead. In his words, 'There was nothing to have prevented the people of the North Island doing that, if they had been alive to their interests.'<sup>2</sup> Nothing, that is, besides hostile Maoris, rugged terrain, almost impenetrable forest over much of the island and a smaller European population than in the South.

Rolleston was not moved by the impassioned pleas of his

---

1 P.D., 1880, Vol.37, pp.476-9; 538-42.

2 Ibid., Vol.36, p.541.

fellow Islanders to leave inviolate their broad acres.<sup>1</sup> For one thing, he did not believe that all the so-called education reserves in the South Island, and particularly in Otago, were genuinely intended for education. Admittedly, enormous reserves had been made in the name of education on the eve of the abolition of the provinces but this had really been done 'to set aside large territories and save them from going into...the maelstrom of colonial finance.'<sup>2</sup> For another thing, the vast tracts in the hinterland of Otago were proving 'a great obstacle to settlement'<sup>3</sup> while the revenue derived from them was very small.

1 The following is a summary of secondary school reserves in 1879:

District	Acreage	Est.Capital Value £	Annual Value £
Auckland	10,377	12,190	492
Taranaki	2,756	6,986	266
Wellington	11,161	5,580	18
Hawkes Bay	<u>10,696</u>	<u>11,697</u>	<u>277</u>
NORTH ISLAND	<u>34,990</u>	<u>36,453</u>	<u>1,053</u>
Marlborough	265	950	10
Nelson	1,888	3,426	177
Canterbury	16,587	58,468	2,146
Westland	4,340	7,051	625
Otago	<u>120,760</u>	<u>211,122</u>	<u>2,739</u>
SOUTH ISLAND	<u>143,870</u>	<u>290,967</u>	<u>5,697</u>
NEW ZEALAND	178,860	317,420	6,750

2 P.D., 1880, Vol.36, p.602.

3 P.D., 1881, Vol.38, p.265.

In speaking thus, Rolleston was allowing his portfolio of Lands to take precedence over that of Education; he was also adopting an attitude towards land endowments for secondary and university education which was to become a characteristic of Ministers of Lands, and especially of the most famous and redoubtable of them all, John McKenzie. As a number of members pointed out, the breaking up of the large education endowments was not yet urgent. In the course of discussion on a private member's bill to force the sale of an extensive education-holding in Southland it became apparent that the mover of the bill, acting on behalf of his constituents, was motivated neither by a real desire to promote closer settlement nor a desire to get capital for educational development. The local farmers simply wanted to prevent the rabbits from taking over the untended education reserve and then spreading onto neighbouring properties.<sup>1</sup>

The secondary schools, for completely non-educational reasons, were in a critical position by the end of 1880. They had become political scapegoats whose valuable endowments attracted the attentions of men with little real interest in

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp.270-1. (For the seriousness of the rabbit 'plague' in Southland and the settlers' attitude to the waste lands see A.J.H.R., 1876, H-10, p.8.)

education. It was difficult, Rolleston said of the speech made by the mover of the second reading of the Education Reserves Bill, 1881, 'to ascertain whether he dwelt more upon settlement or more upon education.'<sup>1</sup> But as long as the poorly endowed high schools had to come, cap in hand, to parliament for annual grants-in-aid it was inevitable that covetous eyes would be cast upon their potentially rich heritage and repeated attempts made to despoil them of it. At this juncture the Government was faced with three possibilities; it could allow the high schools to expire altogether; it could subsidise them, or it could pass legislation which would enable them to utilise their reserves.<sup>2</sup>

Rolleston decided on the ~~latter~~<sup>last</sup> course, thereby neatly balancing the often-conflicting claims of two of his portfolios. The essential provision of the High Schools Reserves Bill<sup>3</sup> introduced by him enabled the governing bodies to sell their rural reserves and invest the capital. The interest could then be used to carry on the schools. The Bill followed the O'Rorke Commission recommendation that 'governing bodies of secondary schools be empowered...to dispose of their

---

1 Ibid., p.265.

2 P.D., 1880, Vol.37, pp.470-2.

3 'The High Schools Reserves Act', 1880. New Zealand Statutes, 1880, pp.150-2.

rural reserves...placing the proceeds on mortgage, or investing them in approved securities.<sup>1</sup> A number of members disapproved of the bill because it dealt with 'a large question in a piecemeal fashion.'<sup>2</sup> The Bill's reception in the Legislative Council was cool; all the Councillors who spoke on it expressed the fear that it would lead to a frittering away of educational resources.<sup>3</sup> F. Dillon Bell wanted it rejected so that he could introduce alternative legislation which would enable the State to resume all endowments, the revenue from which could then be allocated on a colony-wide basis.<sup>4</sup> His proposal was an echo of one made in the Lower House that the whole of higher and secondary education reserves should be thrown into a common fund for the support of grammar schools throughout the colony 'instead of being appropriated, as they were at present to particular schools situated in the vicinity of the reserves.'<sup>5</sup> This idea seems to have accorded fairly closely with prevailing public sentiment. Liberal Associations, for example, urged the introduction of legislation which would transfer the higher education endowments to primary education.<sup>6</sup>

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1, pp.10-11.

2 P.D., 1880, Vol.37, p.252.

3 Ibid., Vol.37, pp.470-2.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., Vol.36, p.538.

6 The Liberal Associations throughout the country frequently tried to influence the way in which Liberal M.H.Rs. voted on particular issues. John Ballance appears to have encouraged the Associations to make their views heard but Richard Seddon told them to 'mind their own business'.



Even Grey admitted there was a strong case for this.<sup>1</sup> Seddon, while not opposing the retention by the secondary schools of their endowments - there was a quite generous endowment available for a Westland high school - was in favour of a Government inquiry into the revenues derived by the various schools. He thought that such revenue could well be used to provide scholarships for poorer children, a school's income being maintained by an increase in the fees of those children whose parents could pay.<sup>2</sup>

The cry, 'Make the rich pay for their children's secondary education' was not Seddon's alone. Other speakers pointed out that as things were the poor were paying for the education of the rich. Education was a charge on the consolidated revenue to which all classes contributed but because the poor could not keep their children at school as long as the rich they were in effect paying for the extra three or four years' education children of the latter got.<sup>3</sup> Outside the General Assembly a parliamentary candidate, a few months later, 'expressed himself strongly' as the Lyttelton Times phrased it, on this particular issue. At present, a Liberal candidate at Temuka was reported

---

1 P.D., 1880, Vol.36, p.531.

2 Ibid., p.527.

3 Ibid., p.499.

as saying, the well-to-do got their children educated at the expense of the whole people, to an extent that gave them a superior position to their poorer neighbours who had paid for fitting them for such posts; and the process was repeated with their children.<sup>1</sup> A contrary opinion was advanced by Mr. Chamberlin, secure in his life membership of the Upper House. 'The cost of the present system,' he claimed, 'falls very heavily upon the well-to-do class... who are now trying to get some advantage from it in consequence of the large charge which is placed upon them.'<sup>2</sup>

#### The End Of An Era

Parliamentary discussion during the early eighties touched upon many facets of secondary education but two themes predominated; how much secondary education should be made available and to whom, and how should the extensive landholdings of the more fortunate endowed schools be managed?

The gentlemen of the Upper House loved to dilate upon the dangers of over-educating the children of the poorer classes to the point where, when they grew up, they would

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 7 November, 1881.

2 Ibid., Vol.37, p.3.

all want some 'genteel' occupation and would not be 'content to accept the positions their parents occupied.'<sup>1</sup> These were not sentiments, however, which were commonly aired outside the sanctuary of the Legislative Council, since manhood suffrage, although not finally won until 1889 through Sir George Grey's amendments to Sir Harry Atkinson's Representation Bill, was already being mooted.<sup>2</sup> Implicit rather than explicit in electioneering addresses throughout the early eighties was the realisation by candidates that if full manhood suffrage were imminent the standard and scope of education should be raised and extended. 'The rising generation should be educated to appreciate and enjoy intelligently the exercise of their political rights; it will therefore be necessary that the State should look to the education of the people',<sup>3</sup> one candidate said. 'Educational arrangements must be extended,' another said, 'and advantage taken of the educational facilities which the splendid reserves set aside for secondary and university education can provide. But,' he went on, 'I must point out there is a danger of this portion

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 22 November, 1881.

2 C.H.B.E., Vol.VII, Part 2, p.173. Manhood suffrage appeared as the first plank in the platform of the Canterbury Working Men's Political Association in 1881. (Lyttelton Times, 1 December, 1881.)

3 Lyttelton Times, 19 October, 1881.

of the system of education becoming a class interest because so many children have to leave school at the end of the primary stage.<sup>1</sup>

The negative attitude shown by some Legislative Councillors towards any extension of educational opportunity was fairly typical of the class they represented. Many of them were squatters or friends of squatters, men who had in their heyday

...kicked the farmer backwards  
From the fertile spots of country  
In the region of the westward -  
Never thinking of hereafter. 2

By the early eighties the forces of social change had already begun to eddy past these colonial aristocrats and depression and a spate of liberal legislation were to turn the eddy into a flood. Their view that secondary education was a prerogative of the children of the wealthy was not that of the colony at large. On the other hand, neither was there general acceptance of the egalitarian view that further education should be restricted to children who showed

---

1 Ibid., 18 October, 1881.

2 Crosbie Ward, 'Canterbury Rhymes' quoted by H.J. Sealey, Are We To Stay Here? (Lyttelton, 1881), p.16.

outstanding ability in the lower schools; that the State high schools should be confined to them alone; and that any child should be eligible for admission to them on reaching a certain standard of attainment.<sup>1</sup> But significantly, as an indication of what was to come in the 'hereafter', it was the view of the editor of the Lyttelton Times.<sup>2</sup> For the social order of 1881, the attitude of the Legislative Councillors was too reactionary, that of the editor of the Lyttelton Times too liberal to win popular acceptance.

It was a sign of the changing temper of the age that while the nominated Councillors concentrated their statesmanly attention upon the possible dangers arising from the 'over-education' of the masses, the elected Representatives directed their attention to the role of the secondary school as landlord. By selecting these respective areas of concern the Councillors indicated their pre-occupation with a social

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 23 November, 1881.

2 The Lyttelton Times was the leading Liberal journal of the nineteenth century although later the New Zealand Times came to be regarded as the mouthpiece of the Seddon administration. William Reeves Sr, was the manager of the Lyttelton Times for many years and his son W. Pember Reeves, the future Liberal Minister of Education and author of two Endowed Schools Bills, joined its editorial staff in 1874. He became editor in 1889.

order which had almost passed, the Representatives with one which was already in its infancy. As the debates which touched upon secondary education during the 1879-81 Parliament showed, secondary school endowments had become a source of jealousy between the haves and the have-nots and their respective champions among the schools themselves. Further, when secondary reserves threatened to prevent closer settlement or easy access to the hinterland the endowments caused constant dissension between settlers and boards of governors.

As the depression eighties dragged on, fear of the consequences of over-education ceased to be a matter of even academic interest; but the land wealth of higher education came in for more and more detailed scrutiny as the colony teetered on the brink of bankruptcy and desperate efforts were made by the government to retrench.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 'WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE'

Educational advance in New Zealand has always been closely dependent on the state of the country's finances. As these have fluctuated sharply from time to time so have the fortunes of education. Slump and boom, prosperity and depression are threads running through our history. Before 1876 the uneven development of education among the provinces was due largely to differences in provincial prosperity. When the provincial governments were abolished in that year high prices for wool, New Zealand's chief export, had lifted the colony to an unprecedented level of prosperity; the boom which Vogel's elaborate borrowing policy had inaugurated seemed in no danger of coming to an end.

Secure in this belief, the General Assembly passed the comprehensive and potentially expensive educational measure of 1877 and in the following year endowed many new secondary schools. With the appointment in 1879 of a Royal Commission to inquire into higher education, education, like the economy, appeared to be booming.

Then came disaster. World prices for gold and wool fell sharply but the interest charges incurred at high rates

during the Vogel boom had still to be met. By the beginning of the eighties New Zealand was in the grip of an economic depression from which it did not finally shake itself free until about 1895. The civil service was drastically retrenched and salaries were cut by ten per cent. Workmen's wages fell to a pittance, conditions in the young industries which had mushroomed during the boom deteriorated<sup>1</sup> and unemployment, particularly in the winters, was rife. In Christchurch mass meetings of the unemployed sought a government promise of relief work at 5/6 a day but the government would not offer more than 4/6.<sup>2</sup> Finally the long depression culminated in a movement of population from the colony; between 1886 and 1890 more than 8,000 people left New Zealand.<sup>3</sup>

Poverty and near-starvation were so widespread that soup kitchens had to be opened in the main towns, a fact that burned itself into the social memory.<sup>4</sup>

1 Girls were working twelve to fourteen hours a day for 2/- to 2/6 a week. Lyttelton Times, 16 November, 1881.

2 Lyttelton Times, 14 July, 1884. A description of the work and living conditions men had to endure at this time is given in E. Maxwell, Recollections and Reflections (Dunedin, 1935), p.65.

3 New Zealand Official Yearbook, 1947-49, p.22.

4 The misery of the people was described in a letter to the editor of the Christchurch Star (Christchurch), 6 October, 1884:

'You can have no conception of the poverty and misery in this city.... You would be dumbfounded at what our mechanics, their wives, and families are suffering. These men...are too proud to let the world know their position; so they silently and patiently remain at home and suffer on.... How do some of them live? Well, Sir, they do not...they simply exist. How must some of the little ones suffer! for in many cases the only covering they have at night are sacks, split down the centre, with pieces of old blanket sewed over to thicken them to keep out the cold if possible.'



The intensity and bitterness of feeling engendered by the continuing unemployment in Christchurch was well caught by one of the unemployed in the vivid - if ungrammatical - journal he kept.

Then the great slump came the Govt. went in for retrenchment everywhere discharged everyone at the addington work shop great meetings was held in Cathedral square everyday so one day they had a monster meeting and they formed a line over one thousand men four wide and marched into the mayors place of Business he was an auctioneer and he was holding a sale at the time he had a large Rough Building his name was Mr. ick they climed on top of his Bags of produce and frightened the life out of him.

the spokesman said Mr. ick we have come to see you we want work we dont want charity the most of us has been brought from the old country and was told we would get plenty of work and land and milk and honey and now we are starving.

they told him to telegraph the Governor at Wellington and tell him they were there so he had to do it and in about an hour a reply came to the effect

give the men whatever they want and I will be responsible.

so the old wooden post office they made into a soup kitchen and cart loads of Bread, meat, Blankets, Boots and everything that was wanted was brought there and for a long time it was free for anyone to go in and have free meals and Committees was formed to go round and see what was wanted at the Different houses such as wood and coals, Boots and Blankets.

a great many went to auckland some to Sydney and Melbourne if they could only pay their way out of N.Z. they did. 1

---

1 Alexander Kerr, Reminiscences (Manuscript, Turnbull Library).

The Haves and The Have-Nots

During Sir George Grey's brief Premiership from 1877 to 1879, politicians began to divide into two quite clearly distinguishable and opposing factions, the one seeking greater rights for the masses, the other stolidly defending the privileges of the well-established and the well-to-do. But the incipient radical-conservative clash foreshadowed in the debates of the General Assembly of 1877-79 did not materialise in the eighties because of the economic disaster which had overwhelmed the colony. The energies of all politicians throughout this gloomy decade were concentrated upon a search for solvency after the adventurous finance of the seventies.<sup>1</sup> The greatest burden in this search was borne by Harry Atkinson, a Conservative, except for a brief respite between 1884 and 1887 when a Liberal Ministry led by Vogel and Stout tried in vain to effect a miracle.<sup>2</sup>

While men like Alexander Kerr starved in the towns and cities, a revolution was taking place in the country but it was a pastoral, not a political one. A letter to the Otago Daily Times late in 1882 heralded the beginning of a new era in the economic and social life of New Zealand.

---

1 Robert Chapman (ed.), Ends and Means in New Zealand Politics (Auckland, 1961), p.9.

2 Vogel was Colonial Treasurer and Stout Premier and Minister of Education.

'As it is a subject of interest to many of your readers,' wrote William Soltau Davidson of the New Zealand and Australian Land Company, 'perhaps you will kindly publish the following details respecting the experimental shipment of frozen meat lately brought to London by the sailing ship Dunedin.'<sup>1</sup>

It was appropriate that in New Zealand a revolution in farming should precede a political one. The age of the great landowner was drawing to a close; the day of the small farmer was dawning.

#### Education and Politics

Two major issues, land policy and the incidence of taxation, dominated the political scene of the eighties with a third, the welfare of urban workers, compelling attention towards the end of the decade. From time to time franchise reform, the emancipation of women, secular education, and temperance and prohibition aroused controversy.<sup>2</sup>

But education, though not of major importance in this decade was frequently a subject for discussion in the General

---

1 William Davidson, A Sketch of His Life (Edinburgh, 1930), p.40.

2 W.H. Oliver, The Story of New Zealand (London, 1960), p.128.

Assembly and in the columns of the daily press. In their eagerness, even determination, to assist the Government to economise, many speakers and writers pointed to the possibilities of retrenchment in education. That the retrencher's axe was never too harshly applied to the education vote was due very largely to the absence of a firm line by any one political alliance on education and to the frequent dissolution of alliances,<sup>1</sup> some of which were determined upon educational retrenchment. Among the champions of education at critical times were men of such diverse political affiliations as Sir George Grey, William Rolleston, William Pember Reeves, Robert Stout, Christopher Bowen, Thomas Dick, Thomas Hislop and Richard Seddon.

Pastoralists and the editors of conservative newspapers seem to have been education's most prominent and consistent opponents throughout the eighties although from time to time they attracted to their side men of quite liberal persuasion who were alarmed at the mounting cost of maintaining a national system.

This cost had soared far above the predictions of the architects of the 1877 Act. School enrolments between 1877

---

1 W.H. Oliver, op.cit., p.129.

and 1885 almost doubled; between 1877 and 1880 there was an average annual increase of just on 9,000.<sup>1</sup> By 1880 the high cost of primary education was, one Legislative Councillor claimed, 'the universal topic of conversation from one end of the colony to the other.'<sup>2</sup> Rolleston managed to reduce educational expenditure by £32,000 in 1880 by discontinuing the payment of the annual allowance to School Committees of ten shillings per child in average attendance and by cutting down on school building programmes<sup>3</sup> but otherwise, while it was easy to inveigh against the cost, it was quite another matter to suggest reasonable ways of economising. The only feasible suggestion which emerged from the 1880 debates was that the school entry age should be raised to either six or seven. Such a measure would have reduced enrolments very substantially because sixty per cent of the children attending primary school were under the age of ten.<sup>4</sup> This frequently suggested alteration to the 1877 Act was always argued for on pseudo-medical grounds which proved - to the speakers' satisfaction at least - that the government was doing

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1886, E-1, p.iii.

2 P.D., 1880, Vol.36, p.513.

3 Circular telegram, Rolleston to Education Board Chairmen, 23 July, 1880. (A.J.H.R., 1881, E-1, p.11).

4 A.J.H.R., 1886, E-1, p.iii.

incalculable harm to the children of the colony by forcing five and six year olds to attend school.<sup>1</sup> Its advocates took no heed of the fact that unless the children of poor parents began their schooling at five they would have little chance of staying long enough at school to get beyond standard three.<sup>2</sup> Children of very tender years had in the 1880's to go out to work,<sup>3</sup> a state of affairs bitterly resented by working class colonists who had come to New Zealand in search of a better life for themselves and their families. A leader of the Christchurch unemployed, accusing Vogel of having attracted immigrants to New Zealand under false pretences, said that Vogel had not told him that 'although he was an able and willing man he would have to be dependent on the earnings of his little children who ought to be at school.'<sup>4</sup>

---

1 P.D., 1880, Vol.36, p.594. This argument was still in vogue eight years later. In support of raising the school entry age a Legislative Councillor quoted a statement made by Matthew Arnold before the Cross Commission. 'In Prussia they will on no account permit children to begin to learn before they are six years old. They tell you that it is settled by all the medical authorities that children have no business to begin to learn before six years.' (P.D., 1888, Vol.60, p.422).

2 P.D., 1887, Vol.59, p.904.

3 Ibid., p.89.

4 Lyttelton Times, 8 June, 1880.

As the depression deepened support for the raising of the school entry age to six or seven increased. The Auckland Inspector of Schools, R. J. O'Sullivan reported to his Education Board in favour of such a step in 1883.<sup>1</sup> During the 1884 general elections one candidate claimed that by the simple expedient of raising the school entry age the education vote could be reduced by £50,000.<sup>2</sup>

Almost every political hopeful dwelt at some length upon 'the excessive costs of administering the Education Act' during the 1884 campaign. The conservative, retrenchment-at-any-price men advocated a raising of the school entry age, the imposition of fees for schooling beyond the fourth or fifth standards, and the abolition of Normal Schools which were, they said, 'largely finishing schools for young ladies.' Liberals, especially in Canterbury, proposed to reduce expenditure, not by raising the school entry age or imposing fees at the top end of the primary school, but by doing away with the Boards of Education and increasing the powers of the School Committees. This proposal never failed to draw applause.<sup>3</sup> One novel economy, the abolition of the separate

---

1 New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly, 4 August, 1883, p.12.

2 The Daily Telegraph (Napier), 10 July, 1884.

3 Lyttelton Times, 5 July, 1884.

Maori school system, was recommended by Captain Russell in Napier for two reasons: first, that a Maori pupil cost £12. 4. 0 a year to educate as against £3. 4. 0 for a European, and secondly, that the Maori for his own good had to learn to mix with the pakehas. 'Unless he mixes', prophesied the Captain, 'he will vanish from the face of the earth.'<sup>1</sup>

With Stout's return to office as Premier and Minister of Education the education system was safe until the next election. But although Stout was an outspoken champion of education the economic conditions of the mid-eighties and the hopelessly irreconcilable political philosophies of his government's followers, ranging as they did from die-hard conservatism to extreme radicalism,<sup>2</sup> made educational advance an impossibility. During the Stout-Vogel ministry New Zealand reached the nadir of its economic fortunes. Further retrenchment was imperative and once again the 'sacred ark'<sup>3</sup> of education came under examination. 'Retrenchment in the department of

1 The Daily Telegraph, 10 July, 1884.

2 T.G. Wilson, The Rise of the New Zealand Liberal Party (Auckland, 1956), p.18.

3 'I protest...against the doctrine that the Education Department is a kind of sacred ark upon which no man's hand is to be put'. (Sir John Hall speaking at Leeston.) Lyttelton Times, 1 August, 1887.



education has become a serious necessity,' wrote the editor of the New Zealand Herald in December, 1886. 'It is hard to have to say this; and we can easily understand how the Premier in his capacity of Education Minister will be ready to say in piteous tones, "Woodman, spare that tree". But to the root even of that tree the axe must be laid, or at all events to some of its branches. The whole system is extravagantly managed, and has in fact assumed the character of a luxury the State cannot afford to pay for. The complete abolition of school fees was a grave mistake committed at the launching of the system, and though it may now be impracticable wholly to retrieve the blunder there is yet no necessity for the State being called upon to provide for any children free education beyond the fourth standard.'<sup>1</sup>

The editor's views were endorsed a few months later<sup>2</sup> by the Political Reform Associations, regional alliances of conservatives dedicated to the task of finding ways and means of avoiding heavier taxation.<sup>3</sup> All the Associations subscribed to a common programme which demanded among other things, extreme

1 New Zealand Herald, 6 December, 1886.

2 Ibid., 3, 4, 8, 30 June, 1887.

3 A report in the Lyttelton Times of 16 July, 1887 of the formation of an Amuri branch of the P.R.A. neatly illustrated the composition of many South Island Associations: 'There was a good muster of the sheep-farmers of the district present.'

retrenchment in every department of government but especially education. Of the Reform Association's proposals Keith Sinclair has written: 'These...were profoundly "conservative", both in the sense of aiming at the defence of property, and of propertied and indebted persons, at the expense of the mass of the population; and in the sense of aiming,...at the conservation of the status quo.'<sup>1</sup> The Government admitted the need for further retrenchment but hoped to avoid extreme measures by increasing customs duties and property tax. Stout refused to sacrifice the education system to the exigencies of the moment<sup>2</sup> but his opponents were convinced that the education vote could be reduced, that 'careful inquiry...would show that a considerable saving... could be effected without really impairing the efficiency of the system.'<sup>3</sup>

The Political Reform Association in Canterbury gradually evolved a quite plausible set of educational proposals which its speakers, after a few prefatory and disarming remarks about the need to prune the educational tree to keep it within decent limits, would then propound. There were four main points:

---

1 Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), Studies of a Small Democracy (Auckland, 1963), p.111.

2 Otago Daily Times, 15 June, 1887.

3 Lyttelton Times, 2 July, 1887 (quoted from Sir John Hall's election notice).

first, no children under the age of seven should be allowed to attend school; secondly, free education should stop at standard four; thirdly, no child who had not passed the fourth standard at fourteen years of age should be allowed to continue and finally, a suggestion that there should be a state scholarship scheme which would allow free standard five and six tuition to ten per cent of the children who passed standard four.<sup>1</sup> The maintenance of the status quo was certainly the educational objective of the conservatives. 'I would not be so unfair as to turn off any master or turn away any children, but I want to see that the number of either does not increase',<sup>2</sup> said one Political Reformer.

As the 1887 elections drew near a leading article in the Lyttelton Times predicted the destruction of the national education system if Hall and Atkinson should win. Hall's election manifesto, the editor declared, was nothing but a programme designed to protect the interests of the big landowners. 'It is the Estates versus Education. Protect the big landowner and let the little child take care of itself.'<sup>3</sup>

---

1 The Press (Christchurch), 27 July, 1887.

2 Lyttelton Times, 26 July, 1887.

3 Ibid., 4 July, 1887.

This was a very convenient bogey to raise just before polling day but it was, as the editor must have known, an over-simplification and over-statement of the dangers facing the education system. Since 1880 when talk of retrenchment first began, education had been threatened many times but each time the interests of 'the little child' had been capably looked after. Rolleston, when Minister of Education, had realised the existence and potential strength of anti-education factions in the colony. His greatest fear was that the propertied classes might combine with the churches - the one to save their pockets, the others to increase their influence - to destroy the national, secular system. In 1884, although no longer Minister of Education, Rolleston still had the cause of education very much at heart and in a letter to Henry Hill,<sup>1</sup> the Hawkes Bay inspector of schools, he expressed the hope that the people would 'not be led away under the influence of temporary pecuniary difficulties, or at the instance of any class of politicians or financiers to abandon what they have built up at so much cost of "toil of heart and knees and hands".'<sup>2</sup>

---

1 H.T. Hill, the founder and first editor of the New Zealand Schoolmaster, was an amateur geologist, anthropologist, botanist and historian as well as inspector of schools in Hawkes Bay and secretary of the Education Board.

2 W. Rolleston to H.T. Hill, 17 May, 1884. Rolleston Papers, Letter Book 5.

But for a short time in 1884 education seemed to be threatened from a completely unexpected quarter. Vogel, co-leader of the Liberals with Stout, remarked that he thought that the expenditure on education out of the consolidated revenue was excessive.<sup>1</sup> Liberals were stunned that such a statement should have been made by one of their leaders and quickly told him so. 'Education... is not the proper branch of the public service to be made a scapegoat for extravagance elsewhere,' expostulated the editor of the Lyttelton Times. 'Education is not to be led out to the slaughter that public works and the Civil Service generally may escape.'<sup>2</sup> 'Leave the education system alone,'<sup>3</sup> scolded a Liberal candidate in St. Albans and Vogel, experienced politician that he was, sensing that attacks on the national education system would lose him more support than it would gain, lapsed into silence on educational matters.

Those who advocated cutting educational costs did not persist in 1884 as they were to do three years later. For one thing, the real depths of the depression had not yet

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 17 May, 1884.

2 Ibid., 3 July, 1884.

3 Ibid., 8 July, 1884.

been reached and for another it was quite easy for those who opposed educational retrenchment to prove that any claim that the people were being over-educated was nonsense. The last census returns had shown that among New Zealand adults (not including Maoris and Chinese) only 71.12 per cent could read and write.<sup>1</sup> Inspectors' reports suggested that notwithstanding the marked increase in the numbers of children enrolled in the primary schools, the level of education attained by most of them was very low. In sixty-five schools examined in Southland the inspector found only thirty-one children in standard six, twenty of whom came from three town schools.<sup>2</sup> The reports of other inspectors told the same dismal story. A visitor from Australia the previous year had made similar observations, describing the New Zealand school system as 'of fairly comprehensive character - comprehensive in design and theory that is; for to the fullest realisation of the Act in practice the conditions have, as yet, in many districts of the colony been far from favourable.'<sup>3</sup> Obstacles hindering the perfect working of the Education Act the Australian visitor had listed as 'bad roads, denominational prejudice,

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, May, 1882, p.162.

2 A.J.H.R., 1884, Session 1, E-18, pp.41-2.

3 Victorian Review (Melbourne), 2 July, 1883, p.234.

local differences over school sites, the want of a satisfactory working of the compulsory clause and an insufficient staff of male teachers holding the higher grades of certificates.<sup>1</sup> W.C. Hodgson, Inspector in Nelson and Marlborough, had in his 1881 Report specifically countered any suggestion that there was a likelihood of children being over-educated. He pointed out that when most children left school at the end of the fourth standard all they had learned was to read a passage from a newspaper, to write a short letter without gross misspellings and to make out or check a tradesman's bill.<sup>2</sup> Evidence against the charge that the state was providing too much education was overwhelming and it was accordingly quietly dropped as election day drew near. There was no real political capital in it for anyone.

But the charge, although dropped, was not forgotten, and was revived by the Political Reform Associations three years later. A similar pattern to that of 1884 was repeated. The anti-education faction were quickly on the offensive; the depression was at its worst and they claimed that desperate ills demanded desperate remedies. The education vote must

---

1 Ibid.

2 A.J.H.R., 1881, E-1B, p.17.

be reduced, cried the Conservatives. In Stratford a Conservative candidate proposed cutting the primary system back to standard four and 'sweeping away' all higher education.<sup>1</sup> To Rolleston's dismay his leader, Sir John Hall, succumbed to pressure and spoke in favour of a reduction in the education vote.<sup>2</sup> The Political Reformers were jubilant and increased their attacks on education. But they went too far and in 1887, as in 1884, the friends of the little children came to their aid. In August the Lyttelton Times gleefully reported that C.C. Bowen had defected from the ranks of the Political Reformers because of their education policy.<sup>3</sup>

Although the editor of the Lyttelton Times had chosen to believe that the national system's very existence was threatened, in fact the conservatives had chosen unwisely when they selected education as their prime target. Education became a rallying point for the Liberals; the Conservatives' attack upon it was cited as proof that the wealthy cared only for themselves and their own interests. 'This is a form of class warfare', stormed the journalist-turned-politician, W. Pember Reeves, 'which will force the poor and unemployed to herd in the towns

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 22 July, 1883.

2 W.Rolleston to R.Oliver, 2 July, 1887, Rolleston Papers.

3 Lyttelton Times, 6 August, 1887.



until they become a festering sore to break out in Red Socialism, and a crusade against property.'<sup>1</sup>

Teachers were urged to ask parliamentary candidates outright what their views on education were. A writer in the New Zealand Schoolmaster, after cautioning teachers to beware of 'slippery politicians' who intended to cripple education but did not dare to say so openly, suggested putting two questions to them. 'First, are you in favour of raising the school age to seven years and secondly, do you think state education should stop at standard four?'<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the colony, the Liberals defended the education vote against the retrenchers' axe. 'Education is the great issue.... Cutting and hacking education is not retrenchment, it is taking away the people's privilege,' said Ballance at Wanganui.<sup>3</sup> 'Education is the one thing the poor should and do have the right to freely share with the rich,'<sup>4</sup> declared Reeves in his maiden electioneering address, an address which he had prefaced with a plea for forbearance for a beginner.

1 Ibid., 4 July and 12 August, 1887.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, July, 1887, p.182.

3 Lyttelton Times, 20 July, 1887.

4 Ibid., 6 July, 1887. The reporter at the meeting happily described the speech as having 'fairly held the audience enthralled.' (Reeves, it will be remembered, was on the editorial staff of the Times and his father was the manager).

But the greatest champion and propagandist of them all for the cause of education, its knight in shining armour, was Robert Stout who stumped the country pleading that the people demand the education vote be left intact. His political addresses became more and more lectures in comparative education, packed with facts and figures carefully marshalled and displayed to their best advantage. His eloquence affected even the editor of the Auckland Star, hitherto an advocate of sharp educational retrenchment who, after attending one of Stout's campaign addresses, wrote:

Ministers prolific with promises may come and go, their nostrums for reviving prosperity dying with them. The only guarantee of future good government and greatness lies in an educated populace, and when we hear candidates professedly speaking in the interests of the working men, talking about shutting the doors of the public schools against their children and leaving them in the gutters if they are under seven, and refusing them education if through misfortunes or early struggles they have been unable to obtain it before they are fourteen, and closing the doors of the higher educational institutions against them altogether it is time that some one man who has himself found the pathway to the highest distinction should stand forth, and proclaim in a voice of thunder, "I would rather sink into obscurity than see this great wrong done to the people of New Zealand".<sup>1</sup>

Stout's thunder was not exhausted by his North Island perorations; its loudest blast was reserved for the

---

1 Auckland Star (Auckland), 28 July, 1887.

Christchurch Political Reform Association's educational proposals. These, the Lyttelton Times claimed, he crushed with facts and figures, closeness of reasoning and wealth of supporting argument.<sup>1</sup> In particular in an address in the Theatre Royal in Christchurch, Stout concentrated upon the Political Reformers' proposal to restrict free education to the fourth standard 'to save the rich one-sixteenth of a penny in the pound property-tax.' 'The rich' he went on, 'do not restrict their own children's education to the fourth standard level. Why then should others?' Their apparently generous offer of scholarships for clever boys beyond standard four, Stout pointed out, was educationally suspect because no one could tell at that age just who was clever. Mental abilities often did not develop until much later. If New Zealand were to restrict the educational opportunities it offered its youth it would lose its chance of becoming a leading nation. Germany, the United States and Scotland had forged ahead industrially and commercially while Russia and Spain had sunk into an economic torpor solely because of their respective attitudes to education.<sup>2</sup> If New Zealand-born children are not to get a worse education than they could get

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 11 August, 1887.

2 Ibid., 10 August, 1887.

in the old world, Stout argued, 'the education vote and system must be maintained at all hazards.'<sup>1</sup> 'The only way to raise a nation is by education.... And I tell you it is good economy to pay the teacher rather than the policeman,...' he said on another occasion.<sup>2</sup> Even before Stout's Theatre Royal address lambasting all who dared meddle with the education system other Conservatives besides Bowen had begun to dissociate themselves from the extremist views expressed by Political Reform Associations. Atkinson, leader of the Conservatives but a true socialist at heart,<sup>3</sup> had never subscribed to the Political Reformers' education policy;<sup>4</sup> his moderation and Stout's crusade combined forced the anti-education extremists to reconsider their position. As election day approached extremist attacks on the education system became less and less vehement and the editors of such conservative journals as The Press and the Otago Daily Times contented themselves with echoing in a variety of guises the face-saving formula that the Conservatives stood for a reduction in the education vote so long as this did not impair the efficiency of the system.

- 
- 1 New Zealand Times, 20 July, 1887.
  - 2 Lyttelton Times, 9 August, 1887.
  - 3 Robert Chapman, op. cit., p.9.
  - 4 Lyttelton Times, 16 July, 1887.

### The Conservatives' Swan Song

Stout and Vogel had been elected to office in 1884 in the hope that the latter could, through his financial wizardry, restore the economic health of the colony. He had failed and the electors, disillusioned, turned again to the Conservatives. Although little educational advance could be expected under Atkinson's government when George Fisher held the Education portfolio,<sup>1</sup> Stout in his campaigning had so stressed the need to preserve the system intact that it was impossible for the free trade - extreme retrenchment group in the General Assembly of 1887-91 to force their leader into making drastic reductions in the education vote. The Political Reform Associations had asked for a Royal Commission to be appointed to inquire into the workings of the education system: Atkinson partially acceded to their request by appointing a Select Committee of the House.<sup>2</sup>

The Select Committee met for the first time on 10 November, 1887, its purpose being, as W. Pember Reeves remarked, to

---

<sup>1</sup> George Fisher, publican, drunkard, wife-beater and buffoon, was not one of New Zealand's more noteworthy educationists. Atkinson, after a short time, relieved him of his portfolio but his popularity with certain sections of the Wellington City electorate ensured his regular return to parliament and the equally regular introduction of what he considered an educational masterpiece, the Public Schools Bill. Below, p.201.

<sup>2</sup> See A.J.H.R., 1887, Session II, I-1 for Committee's report.

'try' an education system which the government had already decided to 'hang'.<sup>1</sup> This comment was prompted by the fact that already on 1 November Atkinson had given notice to the Education Boards by Order-in-Council that the school entry age was to be raised to six and the capitation grant per pupil reduced to £3. 15. 0.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee, with much of the ground cut from under its feet, concentrated its inquiries upon the top end of the primary school. In particular it sought the reactions of expert witnesses to the proposal that fees should be charged above standard four. Inspector-General Habens in his evidence did not mince his words. 'Such an imposition is contrary to the intention of the 1877 Act,' he said, 'and will do great harm to the education system. Only 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ % of total primary school enrolments, about 11,000 children, advance beyond standard four and if fees are imposed at this level the number will decrease greatly.'<sup>3</sup> Dr. John Hislop,

1 P.D., 1887, Vol.58, p.106.

2 The Otago Education Board consulted Robert Stout professionally as to the legality of these regulations. His opinion was that the regulation dealing with the school age was a positive alteration of the 1877 Education Act and therefore ultra vires. Parliament in the end endorsed the Government's proposals except that relating to the age of entry. For a detailed discussion of this topic see A.G. Butchers, Education in New Zealand (Dunedin, 1930), pp.34-6.

3 A.J.H.R., 1887, Session II, I-8, p.19.

Secretary of the Education Department, opposing the imposition of fees agreed with Habens: 'The main sufferers...will undoubtedly be the children of the humbler and less wealthy classes;...one of the effects of such fees becoming legally leviable would be to convert the public schools into class schools.'<sup>1</sup> Education Board inspectors were also almost unanimously opposed to fee-charging although two were prepared to accept the imposition of fees as a last resort. The majority argued that it was unjust to the children of the poor to deprive them of the chance to go on to secondary education by winning a scholarship in standard six. In the long run it would be the state which would suffer most from the failure of children of intelligence to develop to their fullest capacities.<sup>2</sup> The Educational Institutes were equally adamant in their refusal to condone fee-charging in standards five and six. Already, the Otago Education Institute pointed out, parents who kept their children on at school beyond standard four had in the present condition of the colony to pinch and scrape to do so. The additional burden of fees would be too much for many families to bear.<sup>3</sup>

---

1 Ibid., p.61.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

The members of the Select Committee, pondered the written evidence before them, 'a stack of opinions three feet high'<sup>1</sup> listened to numerous witnesses and with admirable promptitude drew up their report, the gist of which was that it was 'unadvisable at present to seriously interfere with the education system.'<sup>2</sup> And with this advice Atkinson and his new Minister of Education, Thomas Hislop, son of the Secretary of the Education Department, were happy to concur. Some economies had been achieved, only a few children were taking advantage of the free tuition offered in standards five and six in any case - only eight in every hundred attending Board schools in Hawkes Bay were beyond standard four<sup>3</sup> and roll numbers were not increasing with anything like the rapidity that had marked the beginning of the decade. The Minister of Education noted in his 1889 Report that 'in one district (Westland) an actual decline has taken place in the number of children under instruction, and in some others the increase is very small.'<sup>4</sup> In 1890 the increase in the number of children attending primary schools was smaller

---

1 Quoted without source in A.G. Butchers, Education in New Zealand, p.35.

2 A.J.H.R., 1887, Session II, I-8, p.2.

3 A.J.H.R., 1888, E-1B, p.20.

4 A.J.H.R., 1889, E-1, p.ii.



than for any year since 1881.<sup>1</sup> The costs of maintaining the education system no longer frightened the majority of Atkinson's conservative following although a few grumbled on.

But what did alarm the Conservatives was the growing strength of the Liberal opposition which was 'gathering up all the forces of discontent - small farmers hungry for access to the land,...trade unionists and manufacturers eager for protective legislation, temperance reformers and woman suffragists.'<sup>2</sup> The landed oligarchy were unable to deal with the new crises which were developing. The prevalence of 'sweating'<sup>3</sup> in Dunedin exposed in the sermons of the Rev. Rutherford Waddell and the articles of Silas Spragg<sup>4</sup> forced the Government to intervene in a new field in which it had little competence or confidence.<sup>5</sup> General social discontent and a growing sense of solidarity within the trade union movement fostered by the continued unemployment of the eighties culminated in the maritime strike of 1890, New Zealand's first experience of 'industrial warfare'. But the closing years of the decade were not entirely shrouded

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1891, Session II, E-1, p.i.

2 C.H.B.E., Vol.VII, Part 2, p.178.

3 'Sweating' was the outcome of sub-contracting in the clothing trades.

4 Otago Daily Times, 22, 24, 28 January, 1888.

5 A.J.H.R., 1890, H-5, 'Report of the Sweating Commission!'

in unrelieved gloom. Refrigeration was beginning to have effect upon the colony's farm economy; sheep farmers were no longer so dependent upon their returns from wool and dairying for export was also developing.<sup>1</sup> The isolation of the Maori was slowly being broken down as the railways in the North Island were pushed further and further into the King's Country<sup>2</sup> and settlers followed the construction gangs.

The revolution in farming which had its origin in the eighties contributed also to a social revolution which by the end of the decade had, aided by Atkinson's Representation Act of 1889, gathered sufficient momentum to sweep the Conservatives from office in the general elections of 1890. Industrial discontent and antagonism to land monopoly reinforced by the Utopian socialism of Bellamy's widely read Looking Backward and Henry George's 1889 lecture tour

---

1 The following export statistics highlight the extent of the revolution in farming:

	<u>Wool</u>	<u>Frozen Meat</u>	<u>Butter</u>	<u>Cheese</u>
1882	3,118,554	19,339	52,088	10,130
1884	3,267,527	345,090	66,593	25,074
1893	3,774,738	1,085,167	254,645	99,626
1894	4,827,016	1,194,545	251,280	115,203
1900	4,749,196	2,123,881	740,620	229,111

From: New Zealand Official Yearbook, 1902 (Synopsis of Statistics)

2 A.J.H.R., 1885, D-6, pp.2-5.

of the colony, together with William Pember Reeves's own articles upon various socialist commonwealths<sup>1</sup> brought about the dissolution of the old social order. The full implications of the new one for New Zealand society in general and education in particular the next decade was to reveal.

---

1 C.H.B.E., Vol.VII, Part 2, pp.176-178.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE HIGH SCHOOLS ON TRIAL

Quite early in the eighties Dr. Macdonald, the Rector of Otago Boys' High School, described the high schools of New Zealand as being 'on trial'.<sup>1</sup> And on trial they remained, with their fate still undecided, when the decade ended. Popular feeling had often run strongly against them in the intervening years; they had been criticised on many counts, educational, social and political. Their own domestic histories had frequently been unhappy; the depression had reduced their incomes from endowments, roll numbers had fallen off and quarrels between headmasters and their boards of governors had led to a number of unpleasant incidents.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Auckland Teachers' Association, Report of the Formation of the New Zealand Educational Institute (Auckland, 1883), p.9.

2 An indication of the 'domestic' troubles of the high schools was given in the presidential address to the second conference of secondary teachers in 1889. 'No less than five headmasters who were in office at the commencement of the year,' said the president, 'have ceased to be so now, and only one of these has been removed by natural causes.' New Zealand Schoolmaster, February, 1889, p.129.

(The insecurity of the tenure enjoyed by New Zealand headmasters at this time attracted attention in England where, in an unidentified journal, a clipping from which is preserved in George Hogben's Scrapbook in the Alexander Turnbull Library, this comment appeared:

'In the seven oldest schools in the Colony no less than twenty-two headmasters have thrown up the reins of office, or had them snatched from them by their "governing committee" in as many years.')

They continued to remain - and this time the words are those of Macdonald's successor - 'on their probation'<sup>1</sup> at the beginning of the nineties.

Yet, unpopular as they were in this decade, secondary schools were spared attacks as sustained and as intense as those mounted against the primary schools. Why was it that an apparent luxury had an easier passage through the turbulent eighties than an obvious necessity?

The answer seems to have lain in the possession by the secondary schools of two very valuable supports in troubled times, independent means and influential friends. Unlike the primary schools, most of the well-established secondary schools were not dependent upon an annual parliamentary vote for their finance: the revenue from their reserves allowed them to weather the frequent storms of criticism which burst over their heads. And whenever the criticism became more than they could shrug off, the secondary school men could depend upon their friends in the General Assembly to come to their assistance.<sup>2</sup> Prominent Liberals and Conservatives

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, January, 1890, p.114.

2 Many school governors were members of either the House of Representatives or the Legislative Council.

were alike defenders of the cause of secondary education, but for different reasons. Men like Stout, Rolleston, Reeves, Grey and Seddon believed in extending the educational ladder so that all children, regardless of the social position of their parents, could, if they had the ability and diligence, climb to the top and qualify themselves for the professions and public life. Others, like George Fisher, Minister of Education from 1887-1889<sup>1</sup>, and a majority of the Legislative Councillors, defended the secondary schools in the interests of the social class they represented, the only class which could afford to send its children to secondary school in any number.

Even though during election campaigns many local Liberal candidates inveighed against the class nature of the endowed schools, throughout the eighties the Lyttelton Times consistently supported state-sponsorship of secondary education. In 1887 the editor was at pains to point out to the Canterbury Political Reform Association that its continued demands for retrenchment in the primary school system were turning public opinion against the high schools with their assured incomes.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Above, p.175.

2 Lyttelton Times, 20 July, 1887.

He was clearly suggesting to the Political Reformers that if they wanted to maintain the high schools for the benefit of the class they represented they should not insist on a 'topping and tailing' of the primary schools.

It was against the exclusiveness of the secondary schools that most of the criticism of the eighties was directed. The less far-sighted Liberals were not concerned with the future possibilities of secondary schooling for the working classes, but rather with the immediate advantages the affluent were deriving from it.

The explanation for this short-term outlook is not hard to find. About seventy per cent of primary school children left school at the end of their standard four year;<sup>1</sup> throughout the eighties the percentage of the total enrolment remaining at school between the ages of thirteen and fifteen remained constant at around ten per. cent. Consequently there were very few children of working class parents qualified to seek admission to the endowed secondary schools. The exclusiveness of most high schools was seldom caused by any deliberate social discrimination on their part, but simply by the inability of working class parents to meet the costs

---

1 P.D., 1888, Vol.60, p.428.

involved. 'A poor man,' said G.M. Adams, the self-styled 'common barber' Liberal candidate at Amberley, 'cannot send his children to a high school, as it costs him £3 or £4 a term for schooling, and £25 or £30 at the very least, for board. It is all right enough for the rich man, but as I have said before, a poor man cannot possibly do it.'<sup>1</sup> Adams was echoing similar sentiments to those expressed in Temuka during the previous election campaign by another working-class Liberal who had challenged his audience to name a ploughman or labourer whose son had received any advantage from the high schools. 'It is only the rich', he claimed, 'who can reap any advantage.'<sup>2</sup> But in 1887 the fledgling politician, W. Pember Reeves, took Liberal candidates to task for making similar remarks up and down the province; in his view such utterances did more harm than good to the workers' cause. 'Christchurch Boys' and Girls' High Schools are not the preserve of the rich only,' he said, 'because two-thirds of the children attending them come from working-class homes.'<sup>3</sup> Whether Reeves was correct or not about the pupils of the two schools he mentioned it is not now possible to judge; certainly

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 30 June, 1884.

2 Ibid., 19 October, 1881.

3 Ibid., 9 August, 1887.



most people believed that entrance to the high schools was restricted to a few scholarship winners and the children of the well-to-do. Mr. J. Caughley, the Director of Education from 1921 to 1927, reminiscing about his schooldays recalled that when he was a schoolboy '...there were very few scholarships...and only a very few could come to the secondary schools. All the others had to pay fees and the fees were very heavy. I may say when I was at school, a school with nine hundred pupils, I do not suppose that more than five boys from that school went to the high school by means of scholarships each year.'<sup>1</sup>

As criticism of their exclusiveness mounted, secondary schools increased the number of scholarships and exhibitions offered out of endowment income. But in the view of an historian of Nelson College, this was done in the case of that particular school only to increase numbers and not to widen the social spectrum represented in the school. 'Even when a system of exhibitions was begun there was an idea of increasing numbers, but only in the main for their own class, the exhibitions being open to those living at least four miles from the College and therefore presumably having to pay board.... When I made my first acquaintance with the school in 1906

---

<sup>1</sup> Notes for an address given by Mr. Caughley in Nelson, 12 November, 1925 (Typescript, Nelson College Council Office), p.2.

there were recent Old Boys who could tell me of experiencing class opposition as tradesmen's sons,'<sup>1</sup> wrote J.G. McKay. This comment casts some doubt on the complete validity of J.E. Watson's assertion that '...the high schools themselves were sincere in their professed desire to spread the benefits of secondary education to all who had shown themselves fit to profit by it.'<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the eighties the complaint that the secondary schools were class establishments, places for the education of children whose parents were in affluent or comparatively affluent circumstances,<sup>3</sup> was made over and over again. The Secretary-Inspector of the Westland Education Board in a memorandum to the 1887 Select Committee accused the high schools of 'providing the luxuries of education...chiefly for the benefit of the wealthier classes and at the expense of the taxpayer in general.'<sup>4</sup>

This latter charge merely repeated what had been a common complaint against the secondary schools for a number of years. When bills to establish high schools at Rangiora and Akaroa had been before the House of Representatives in 1881 and it was apparent that the running expenses of these schools could not

---

1 J.G.McKay, 'Preliminary Draft for a History of Nelson College' (Manuscript, Nelson College Council Office.)

2 J.E.Watson, Intermediate Schooling in New Zealand (Wellington, 1964), p.4.

3 New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly, 9 June, 1883, p.11.

4 A.J.H.R., 1887, I-8, p.26.

be met out of endowment income, a number of members had objected to the creation of more schools claiming that the immediate need for them was very doubtful and that they would have to be subsidised out of the general taxation. Early in 1882 the editor of the New Zealand Schoolmaster estimated that in the previous year the government had paid £19 per head, directly and indirectly towards the education of 1,200 high school pupils of well-to-do parents.<sup>1</sup> Similar charges were levelled at the high schools each election, with much quoting of statistics to show the great disparity which existed between the cost of educating primary and secondary school children. And always the point was made that the parents of high school children were paying only a fraction of the full cost; the difference was made up out of public moneys. By 1889 the resentment felt by those who believed that primary education should receive priority over secondary was well summed up by an article in the October issue of the New Zealand Schoolmaster analysing the recently published report<sup>2</sup> on secondary schools. This had shown that the total expenditure on the 2,170 pupils attending secondary school had amounted to £75,000 or £34 per head. School fees had accounted for only £20,000, leaving £55,000 to be found out of public moneys. But even this was

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, January, 1882, p.94.

2 A.J.H.R., 1889, E-9.

not the full amount contributed by the government because, the writer of the article pointed out, 'of the £20,000 some part comes from the grant to primary education, thereby increasing the grant to secondary education by an amount which appears each year in the government statistics as money spent on primary schools. The colony, therefore, hands over something like £30 per head for each high school scholar.... We are surprised that a colony which can give £30 per scholar to its high schools thinks it such fearful extravagance to give about £3 per head for the education of the scholars in its primary schools.'<sup>1</sup> Articles like this were calculated to deepen resentment of the privileged secondary schools, especially if they were read by, or their content repeated to, parents who had had to send their children out to work at the age of ten or twelve. Such people would readily believe the politicians who cried that 'the grossest injustice was being inflicted on the masses'<sup>2</sup>, that many children were being allowed to grow up in ignorance while a few got a superior education<sup>3</sup> because of the support the government gave to secondary education.

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, October, 1889, p.55.

2 P.D., 1883, Vol.45, p.432.

3 Daily Telegraph, 9 July, 1884.

The single most frequently, and at times bitterly criticised, feature of the secondary schools was the lower school which catered for children of primary school age. Pedagogically, the retention by the high schools of junior divisions was justified on the grounds that children intending to pursue the study of classics and mathematics had to begin their studies early.<sup>1</sup> Economically, they were indispensable; the fees derived from the relatively large junior classes were a necessary source of income. 'Without the attendance of the lower forms,' said Dr. Brown, Chairman of the Otago Education Board in evidence before the 1887 Select Committee, '...it would be impossible for the higher schools to keep up the requisite staff.'<sup>2</sup> Socially, the existence of an alternative form of primary education was undesirable. Stout admitted when he was Minister of Education in 1885 that one of the major causes of public antipathy to the high schools was the fact that in the eyes of many people the high schools were not real high schools at all.<sup>3</sup> As early as 1882 members of the House of Representatives had objected to the development of lower schools 'which catered for the children of parents who

---

1 P.D., 1885, Vol.52, p.113. This was an arrangement which had already received the blessing of the O'Rorke Commissioners.

2 A.J.H.R., 1887, Session II, I-8, p.9.

3 P.D., 1885, Vol.52, p.113.

thought primary schools not good enough for them.<sup>1</sup> Public condemnation of the lower schools did nothing to lessen their popularity among those who sent their children to them, especially as a disproportionate number of scholarships were won by their pupils.<sup>2</sup> In vain Sir George Grey argued that the high schools were intended only for those who had passed the upper standards, and who sought an advanced education.<sup>3</sup> So long as there was a lack of proper gradation between the primary and secondary stages some parents who were genuinely concerned about their children's educational welfare would patronise the lower divisions; in addition there were always those who considered themselves socially superior and so would not send their children to the ordinary primary schools. A speaker at a meeting at Cust of the Canterbury Electors' Association, the Liberal equivalent of the Political Reform Association, claimed that at Rangiora High School there were fifteen children who would not be above the third standard in a public primary school. 'If the High Schools have to cadge pupils from other schools,' he went on amid cheers, 'they at least should have passed the standard of the primary schools.'<sup>4</sup>

---

1 P.D., 1882, Vol.43, p.402.

2 As early as 1883 critics of the lower divisions of the secondary schools were arguing 'that no one should...be allowed to compete for a Junior scholarship who had not for at least one year immediately prior to the examination been in attendance at a public primary school, or a district high school.'

New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly, 6 October, 1883, p.7.

3 Lyttelton Times, 25 August, 1887.

4 Ibid., 1 August, 1887.

The Inspector-General, although prepared to tolerate the lower schools because of the difficulty of effecting satisfactory transition from primary to secondary school, regretted that for reasons of social exclusiveness some parents would not send their children to the primary school, and that the secondary school, by providing instruction for such children, was lending itself to the perpetuation of class distinctions.<sup>1</sup> But the governing bodies of the endowed schools took little heed of this criticism. Their junior divisions remained as a source of annoyance to many throughout the nineties.

Politically, both in and out of the General Assembly, it was the land holdings of the secondary schools, not the way the schools were organised, which attracted most attention. Discussions on almost every high school bill in the General Assembly between 1878 and 1881 centred around the clauses which attached certain blocks of land to particular schools. In the case of the New Plymouth High School Bill there was no discussion of any educational issues at all; the only question asked was 'Where are the reserves to come from?' and when the sponsors of the bill could not give a satisfactory answer its passage was delayed six months while the necessary detailed information

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1881, Session II, I-8, p.22.

was collected.<sup>1</sup>

The recommendation of the O'Rorke Commission that high schools should not be provided in towns with populations under 5,000 was sometimes, but not always, abided by. High Schools at Rangiora with a population of 1,700 and at Akaroa with even fewer people were authorised in 1881 although district high schools would have been more appropriate in both towns. Canterbury members of the Lower House united to press the claims of Rangiora and Akaroa ostensibly because local parents were finding the expense of maintaining their children at the city high schools too great<sup>2</sup> but more likely because the members for those districts wanted to make certain of their share of the remaining secondary reserves of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup> The Legislative Councillors entertained the same suspicions too, but were not prepared to reject the Akaroa High School Bill. In the words of one of them, 'We have swallowed some eighteen camels, and I am not prepared to strain out this particular gnat.'<sup>4</sup>

Criticism of the management of the secondary school endowments and the use to which the revenue was put was varied.

- 
- 1 P.D., 1881, Vol.40, pp.657-8.
  - 2 Lyttelton Times, 23 November, 1881.
  - 3 P.D., 1883, Vol.46, p.89.
  - 4 P.D., 1881, Vol.40, p.482.



A common complaint was that the land was not being properly farmed and that education reserves were 'characterised by neglected fences and good-for-nothing buildings.'<sup>1</sup> By the late eighties this criticism was usually linked with the complaint that the reserves were inhibiting settlement. Sir Harry Atkinson, in reply to a question as to whether the Government proposed any legislative action 'to secure that educational and other reserves shall be so administered as to afford facilities for settlement instead of proving a barrier thereto', replied that such legislation was 'under consideration.'<sup>2</sup> Other critics objected to the revenue from these lands being used to support a level of education which working-class children could not take advantage of. 'The education endowments belong to all', said one candidate in 1884, 'yet the proceeds from them are used for the benefit of the rich.'<sup>3</sup> In Canterbury, opposition to land endowments for secondary education was closely linked with local antagonism towards the Board of Governors of Canterbury College. One rather intemperate member of the House of Representatives who had asked for the accounts of the Canterbury College Board to

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 15 November, 1881 and 15 May, 1884.  
 2 P.D., 1888, Vol.61, p.26.  
 3 Lyttelton Times, 11 July, 1884.

be laid before the House in 1883<sup>1</sup> claimed that he could prove that the public funds the Governors handled 'are at this very moment used...in affording an education of the highest class to the sons and daughters of those who are well able to educate their children at other schools.'<sup>2</sup> This was not a particularly unusual circumstance in 1884; the same accusation could have been made with equal validity against the controlling bodies of almost any of the endowed schools. Although no inquiry into the affairs of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College followed from Mr. Wynn-Williams's campaign, returns of the endowments vested in the governing bodies of public secondary schools were asked for later that year in both branches of the General Assembly. Seddon sought a very detailed return showing not only the acreages and whereabouts of the reserves, but also exact information as to 'value - present rental - money from sales - how invested - interest gained - name of governing bodies and profits since the abolition of the provinces.'<sup>3</sup> As the colony sank deeper and deeper into depression those who were determined to keep the primary system intact cast envious eyes upon the secondary school reserves. All education reserves, many speakers urged

---

1 P.D., 1883, Vol.46, p.143.

2 Lyttelton Times, 2 June, 1884.

3 N.Z.J.H.R., 20 August, 1884, p.11. (The information sought was printed in A.J.H.R., 1885, E-11, pp.7-12.)

during the 1884 election preliminaries, should be put into one fund for the preservation of the primary schools.<sup>1</sup> This idea was frequently mooted in the Lower House<sup>2</sup> where antipathy to the endowed schools increased with the passing of each dreary year. In 1888 the House of Representatives threw out a bill to endow Auckland Girls' High School, an indication of the determination of the majority of its members to maintain inviolate the rights of primary education. They professed to believe that the land with which the Girls' High School was to be endowed was being taken from reserves set aside for primary education. This was not the case, as the members well knew, but they seem to have taken this opportunity to register a protest against what many of them considered was favouritism of secondary education by the Premier and his Minister of Education.<sup>3</sup>

Such was the mood of the times that the proposal to add the secondary education reserves to those already allocated to primary education won support all over New Zealand. But another scheme which was widely and enthusiastically canvassed in the eighties in the North Island received no support from

---

1 e.g. Daily Telegraph, 5 July, 1884.

2 P.D., 1887, Vol.59, p.903.

3 P.D., 1888, Vol.60, p.145.

southerners. During the course of a debate on secondary education in the House of Representatives in 1883<sup>1</sup> a number of members called for a 'colonializing' of secondary education reserves so that the whole colony could share in them. From the general the debate soon turned to the particular, and it became very obvious that the North Islanders were trying to prise loose from Otago and Canterbury their enormous education endowments. When the drift of the discussion became clear, the South Islanders, regardless of political affiliations, closed their ranks and turned to face the common foe. Objection by an Auckland to the continued existence of provincial endowments for secondary education drew a sharp retort from a Canterbury member. 'Such objection', he said, 'is an attack made by those who have squandered their lands and have not made reserves for the education of the rising community.... Those people have squandered their property; and now, when they see that others have provided for future generations they say they want to share with them.'<sup>2</sup>

The stand taken by their members was applauded by the editors of the leading South Island newspapers. In an irate editorial, the Lyttelton Times accused Wellington of 'centralizing tendencies' and of trying to plunder Canterbury's land.<sup>3</sup> But

---

1 P.D., 1883, Vol.45, pp.421-438.

2 Ibid., p.423.

3 Lyttelton Times, 4 October, 1883

neither southern solidarity nor the Minister of Education's fervently expressed hope that no one would contemplate putting impious hands upon the educational endowments of Otago and Canterbury<sup>1</sup> silenced the critics. 'I will never rest satisfied until we have all the endowments of the South Island for secondary education confiscated by the State,'<sup>2</sup> vowed Colonel Robert Trimble, M.H.R. for Grey and Bell.

The Lyttelton Times embarked upon a campaign to alert the citizens of Canterbury to the enormity of the crime the North Islanders were proposing to perpetrate. Colonialization, it was claimed, would undo the labour of past years and would rob the 'Middle Island', especially Canterbury, of the fruits of their far-sightedness and wisdom.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, the editor consoled himself on another occasion, there was no need to worry because most Canterbury people, 'not having been Wellingtonised will, we should imagine, object to a robbery more direct and impudent than anything, even Canterbury, has yet endured.'<sup>4</sup> But just in case he advised local members should be pledged to protect 'our reserves.'<sup>5</sup>

The threat of colonialization of the secondary reserves

---

1 P.D., 1883, Vol.45, pp.421-438.

2 P.D., 1884, Vol.49, p.234.

3 Lyttelton Times, 20 May, 1884.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 3 July, 1884.

was one that was to haunt the governors of secondary schools for many years to come: all educational legislation was closely scrutinised for clauses which might permit or portend such a move. In 1889, sections twenty-nine to thirty-one of Fisher's Education Bill alarmed the secondary school men;<sup>1</sup> their friends in the General Assembly made it clear that they would do all in their power to block the passage of the Bill. Primary school teachers were not enthusiastic about some of Fisher's proposals either, and welcomed as allies the Representatives who had taken fright at the hint of impending colonialization. But the editor of the New Zealand Schoolmaster warned that although such opposition to the Bill would be of great service, there should be no misunderstanding as to the underlying motives. These men did not have the real educational interests of the colony at heart; they were the self-same members who had formerly voted for a reduction in primary school grants. 'They have done all this willingly and

---

1 Section 31 in particular seemed ominous. 'All real and personal property immediately before the coming into operation of this Act vested in any Education Board constituted under any Act hereby repealed, except such property as is described in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth sections of this Act, shall by the operation of this Act become the property of Her Majesty the Queen, to be held and applied for the purposes of this Act in such manner as to the Minister of Education shall seem fit.'

Bills and Private Bills, 1889, No.108. (General Assembly Library.)

cheerfully, but they will not vote for anything which might tend to diminish the subsidy paid by the state towards the education of the well-to-do classes.... For the colonialization of the reserves would mean that, in districts at present holding large secondary reserves, the classes who now enjoy a High School education for their very youngest children at a cheap rate would have to pay something more for it than they now do.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting that the editor was directing attention not to the class nature of the high schools proper, a favourite theme a year or two earlier among the defenders of the primary schools, but to their lower schools. The shift of emphasis was a reflection of the growing awareness among more thoughtful working class parents of the potential value for their own children of these much abused bastions of privilege. Almost unnoticed during the eighties, an increasing number of district school children had been going on to high school as scholarship winners. In Otago Boys' High School, Stout pointed out in an article to the Schoolmaster in 1889, eighty per cent of the pupils were from district schools.<sup>2</sup>

Rank-and-file Liberals did not understand that a silent educational and social revolution was taking place and when

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, June, 1889, pp.205-6.

2 Ibid., April, 1889, p.166.

during the 1887 election campaign they repeated the denunciations of the high schools which had won them applause in 1881 and 1884, they were reprimanded by their party's theorists. 'Such charges,' said Pember Reeves, 'are true specimens of demagogues' work, and are setting class against class with a vengeance.... Working class parents should not be content with five or six years' schooling for their youngsters when the rich give theirs eighteen.'<sup>1</sup> Stout also urged the working classes not to cut off their noses to spite their faces by demanding the confiscation of secondary school endowments. The rich were not dependent upon state aid for the education of their children; they could afford to employ tutors or could send their children abroad or could set up private secondary schools. 'If we have no secondary schools', Stout said, repeating a warning he had given three years earlier<sup>2</sup>, 'the poor man's sons will be deprived of higher education, and the result will be that we will create class distinction and of the worst sort because it is education that stops all class distinction.'<sup>3</sup>

Although such arguments did not convince or satisfy

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 12 August, 1887. Above, p.187.

2 P.D., 1884, Vol.49, p.231.

3 Lyttelton Times, 10 August, 1887.



everyone who opposed state aid to the high schools, the demand that secondary endowments should be used for primary schooling was seldom heard after Atkinson had accepted the judgement of the Select Committee on Education that it was unadvisable to interfere with the national system.<sup>1</sup> Those who advocated colonialization of reserves were in a quite different category. They did not threaten secondary education as such but only the privileged status of secondary education in the South Island. Too forthright criticism of southern secondary endowments by the less fortunate northerners was kept to a minimum throughout the eighties by the practice of making annual grants to needy high schools. When these grants were under discussion a number of members of the Lower House always seized the opportunity to criticise various aspects of the management and administration of the secondary schools and almost inevitably to propose that the grants be not made. But when the final votes were taken, the subsidies were usually approved by big majorities. Significantly, Otago and Canterbury members rarely opposed the grants; they were well aware that if they did, the North Islanders would press for colonialization of all secondary reserves.

---

1 Above, p.178.<sup>9</sup>

The main general criticisms of the secondary schools in the eighties were directed at their real or impugned class nature and at the possession by some of them of great tracts of land. They were, however, assailed by more sectional interests on other grounds as well. Among their critics the New Zealand Educational Institute was at times particularly prominent. The Institute had come into being in 1883 at a conference at which both secondary and primary interests were represented. Dr. Macdonald, the high schools' representative, spoke at length on the need for both branches to work together as members of one profession<sup>1</sup> but within a few years the gap between the two had widened considerably. That this should have been so was not surprising; the high schools, even if they were lacking in popularity, enjoyed a status in the community which the primary schools did not have. Above all, the primary teachers resented the autonomy of the high schools in many professional matters. Their teachers did not require trained teachers' certificates; the schools were immune from detailed inspection, the occasional visits of the Inspector-General being little more than social calls; their annual examinations could be conducted in any way that the headmasters and governors thought fit.<sup>2</sup> Primary school teachers were very

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 5 January, 1883.

2 A fact often commented upon in the editorial and correspondence columns of the New Zealand Schoolmaster, 1883-9.

suspicious of the standards of attainment in the lower schools especially when they read, as many of them probably did, that in 1883 the examiners of Wellington College 'examined Forms I and II viva voce and also by work on their slates'<sup>1</sup> and contrasted that arrangement with the Education Department's requirement that Board inspectors make all children above standard two do written examinations. 'What is wanted is a strict examination of the various secondary or endowed schools throughout the Colony,'<sup>2</sup> wrote the editor of the Schoolmaster in 1886, but in spite of a resolution to the same effect at the 1887 New Zealand Education Institute Conference, no action was taken by the government. When, as so often happened, ex-primary school children did particularly well at high schools, the secondary school teachers attributed the children's successes to the superiority of their teaching; the occasional failures were blamed on the inadequacies of their primary school training.<sup>3</sup> The Headmaster of Christchurch Boys' High School, C.E. Bevan-Brown, prepared a report on primary-secondary liaison for the 1888 New Zealand Education Institute Conference<sup>4</sup> and although

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1884, Session I, E-9, pp.12-13.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, September, 1886, p.25. This was not a new cry. A Southland correspondent had written in similar vein to the New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly, June 9, 1883, p.11. 'High schools, too, should be tested as strictly by examinations officially conducted as are the other schools supported by the State.'

3 New Zealand Schoolmaster, August, 1889, p.10.

4 Ibid., February, 1888, p.112. Below, p.237.

there was much talk about co-operation and co-ordination between the two levels, this was not achieved in practice, and the Institute from about that time on became almost completely concerned with the needs and problems of primary education and primary teachers.

The primary teachers were not alone in their belief that the secondary schools had too much independence. The member for Kumara, R.J.Seddon, recommended closer supervision of all schools, primary and secondary, by Board inspectors.<sup>1</sup> Robert Stout, in his ministerial statement on education in 1885 complained that although the government had the right to appoint some governors to high school boards and to require the schools to be opened to inspection by the Inspector-General, it had no direct control over them; it could not prescribe their courses of study, nor could it interfere with their internal management, nor could it even provide that their course of tuition should stand in proper relation to that of the primary school or of the University.<sup>2</sup> Rolleston concurred with Stout in his objection to this dichotomy: '(I) am of opinion', he wrote, 'that without loss of individuality, or

---

1 P.D., 1883, Vol.46, p.81.

2 P.D., 1885, Vol.52, p.111.

of local interest, the High Schools could be brought into more direct and systematic relation to the Education Department and the national system of education.<sup>1</sup> Again in his 1886 education statement Stout made the same criticisms of the secondary school system as he had in 1885 and added, 'I believe that dealing with this question of secondary education cannot be long delayed.'<sup>2</sup> In this prophecy Stout was wrong; for various reasons effective control over the secondary schools by the Education Department was not to come for another seventeen years. For exactly a quarter of a century, the endowed schools were able to enjoy, although in the face of mounting criticism, the independence which Grey, the reluctant centralist, and Ballance, his Education Minister, had chosen to leave them when they implemented the 1877 Education Act.

The layman was not much concerned with technicalities of control and curriculum but he was, especially in depression times, concerned with anything that smacked of waste or misuse of public money. The proliferation of new high schools in the early eighties caused much adverse comment, some of which was summed up in these words from a political address given at

---

1 W. Rolleston, 'On National Education', New Zealand Schoolmaster, February, 1886, p.99.

2 P.D., 1886, Vol.54, p.605.

South Dunedin by Mr. Larnach, and described by the editor of the Otago Daily Times as being full of 'good sense'.<sup>1</sup>

If things go on as at present, we shall have more secondary schools scattered over the face of the land than there are scholars to fill them. People have little idea of the large amount of public lands of the Colony locked up in reserves for secondary education or public money spent in secondary school buildings. It is a class education and the Colony cannot afford it.... Because only the wealthy are able to send their children to these schools the Colony is devoting an extravagant sum of money annually in rearing up a race of mental weeds fit for neither the counting house, the workshops or the land - a race of dudes and mashers....<sup>2</sup>

Because most of the endowed schools were in the larger towns, they incurred the antipathy of the country settlers. Not only could few small farmers afford to board their children at the schools or in the towns; to many people it seemed rank injustice to be spending the colony's money on secondary education when the compulsion clauses were not being enforced and rural education was in a sorry state.<sup>3</sup> 'The secondary schools are simply for the benefit of the children living in towns,' said a speaker during an 1884 debate on education, 'and it is unfair to require the unfortunate people in the country districts to pay through general taxation towards the maintenance of such schools....'<sup>4</sup>

---

1 Otago Daily Times, 13 May, 1884.

2 Ibid., 10 May, 1884.

3 P.D., 1882, Vol.42, p.259.

4 P.D., 1884, Vol.49, p.234.

Stout admitted that the country children were at a disadvantage. 'If they are not to be denied the advantages of a first class education,' he said, 'well-qualified teachers will have to be found for country schools so that instruction can be given in secondary subjects as in the parish schools of Scotland.'<sup>1</sup>

Curiously enough, amid all this condemnation and criticism of secondary education, the voice of organised labour was hardly heard. For two reasons it lacked spokesmen in the General Assembly who could have argued for a widening of educational opportunity for the children of the workers: first, because until 1889 the franchise was based on the ownership of property and owners of large properties enjoyed a plural vote which enabled them to elect one another to the House of Representatives; and secondly, because although most adult males could have qualified to vote after the electoral reform of 1884, many workmen were often too apathetic to exercise their right.<sup>2</sup> Working class leaders deplored this apathy. A pamphlet which circulated among members of trades and labour councils exhorted the workers to be more active in political matters and to make their parliamentary representatives do their bidding. In particular the writer of the pamphlet adjured his readers to

---

1 P.D., 1886, Vol.54, pp.606-7.

2 D.G. Herron, 'The Franchise and New Zealand Politics', Political Science, March, 1960, pp.28-44.

take note of the class nature of educational legislation and its implications for the future:

...in matters educational, how do these legislators of ours provide for themselves, and us? For themselves they provide a high class education...with public money for they are fully sensible of the advantages of education at least for themselves, and also of the advantages of allowing us to pay for it.... Us they leave to revel in our ignorance.... True, they are providing for us public schools, but take care to limit the standard of education. And why? Because a high standard would enable us to compete with them in those professions which they have reserved for themselves, and which are worth to them or to their children, which is the same thing,...three, four or five hundred pounds a year and often as many thousands.... Us they condemn to work at the tail of the plough, at the rate of one shilling per day.... No wonder they are at no pains to provide for us a high class education. 1

In spite of such pamphlets a demand for the opening up of the high schools to the children of all social classes did not appear as a plank in the political platforms of the Trades and Labour Councils during the eighties. These were mainly concerned with immediate and urgent issues relating to ownership and taxation of land, curtailment of immigration and the securing of improved working conditions, although there was usually a request that technical education should

---

1 J.L. Hance, 'Our Social Privileges, or Address to the World's Workers.' Atlas Series of Australian Pamphlets, May, 1882, pp.40-41.



be added to the existing system.<sup>1</sup>

By 1885, working men were convinced that the parting of the ways had been reached; they could either accept the established social order and starve or they could seek by 'wise and judicious legislation to secure to everyone a home and a competency.'<sup>2</sup> The Trades and Labour Congress of that year sought to organise the workers into an effective political force and gave as one of its main objectives the abolition of all iniquitous monopolies which enabled one class to prey upon another.<sup>3</sup> Although throughout the eighties the wealthy were frequently accused of monopolising secondary education, the delegates at the 1885 Trades and Labour Congress apparently did not number this among the iniquitous monopolies which had to be destroyed. Their only educational request was the usual one that the State should add technical education to the existing system.<sup>4</sup>

---

1 The full political programme adopted by the Otago Trades and Labour Council on 26 October, 1881, was as follows: (1) Crown lands to be leased, not sold. (2) Land already sold to be taxed. (3) Local industries to be encouraged. (4) Eight hours system to be legalised. (5) No further immigration. (6) Technical education to be added to the present system. (7) Employers' Liability Act to be passed. (8) Trades not to be taught in prisons. (9) Local option and the abolition of bottle licenses. (10) Law reform. Otago Daily Times, 27 October, 1881. Similar programmes were put forward in other centres.

2 J.D.Salmond, History of New Zealand Labour Movement (Doctoral thesis, University of Otago), p.143.

3 Otago Daily Times, 9, 10, 12 January, 1885.

4 Ibid.

Concern with educational matters was no more prominent in the programme of a United States labour organization, the Knights of Labour, which flourished in New Zealand during the nineties, than it was in that of the Trades Congresses of 1885 and 1886. The Preamble and Declaration of Principles of the Knights of Labour, published and circulated among the workers, did not specifically mention education although it drew together into one consolidated platform almost all the demands that had been evolved by the New Zealand working class since 1840 and more especially since 1870.<sup>1</sup> But its demand, in Article 9, for the prohibition by law of the employment of children under the age of fifteen years, suggests that the New Zealand theorists might have intended to spell out the educational programme more exactly and fully had the political fortunes of the Knights not changed so dramatically within two or three years. At one time in the nineties fourteen members of the Order were in the General Assembly<sup>2</sup>; of these a number were outspoken critics of the continued exclusiveness of some of the high schools. The initial indifference to secondary education among the Knights was not surprising. The New Zealand branches took over almost unchanged the political,

---

1 For the Knights' programme in New Zealand see: L. Pozzi, Modern Slavery and Civilisation (Christchurch, 1883) p.13.

2 John Ballance, (Premier), and John McKenzie, (Minister of Lands), were both Knights.

social and economic programme of the original American Order which, because it represented largely the interests of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, supported elementary education but was opposed to the high school 'craze' of the post-Civil War period.<sup>1</sup>

Although the labour movements in the eighties seem to have had little realisation of the importance to their cause of extended educational opportunities, it is not too fanciful to suppose a gradual dawning of awareness in this matter. As a result of the harrowing experiences they underwent in this decade, the workers began to look beyond the immediate issues that had been their principal concern earlier; they came to question the basic tenets of society itself. Indicative of this new mood and illustrative of the changed outlook of some at least of the working class leaders on education was the 1892 political platform of the Otago Trades and Labour Council. Five educational reforms were sought:

First, free and secular education from primary school to university; secondly, compulsory education up to the age of fourteen, pupils passing standard six before attaining that age to be excepted; thirdly, the opening of the high schools only to those who pass the sixth standard and to holders of junior scholarships, said scholarships to be increased; fourthly, the placing of all educational endowments under the control of the Minister of Education and finally the adoption of one

---

<sup>1</sup> J.S.Brubacher, op.cit., p.92; S.E.Morison and H.S.Commager, The Growth of the American Republic (New York, 1942), i, pp.154-7.

universal set of standards and one set of school books for the colony, such books to be issued at cost price and printed in the Government Printing Office or in any private office working under trades union rules. 1

A comparison of this detailed and quite specific educational programme with that put forward only eleven years earlier<sup>2</sup> by the same organisation indicates how successful first Stout, and then Reeves, had been in 'educating' the working classes to appreciate the potential value to them of the high schools. The secondary schools were still unpopular with the workers but the reason for their unpopularity had altered. They were no longer seen as wasteful luxuries which should be swept away but as institutions which held one of the keys to the wonderful future promised by Edward Bellamy, Henry George and the Knights of Labour; their unpopularity now lay solely in the high cost of the education they gave.

None of the labour leaders, however, seems to have thought of education as a panacea for the troubles of the labouring classes. For those who had suffered and starved through the eighties, economic and industrial reform took precedence over all else: social, political and educational reform could follow in due course.

1 Otago Daily Times, 19 December, 1892.

2 Above, p.212. More perceptive supporters of the cause of the working classes had, of course, been advocating such a programme for many years. As early as 1883 the editor of the North Otago Times had described those who wanted to destroy state-aided secondary schools as being 'possessed with the demon of sans-culotism, red-rag radicalism and not with the genial genius of democracy.... The remedy for the abuses complained of... lies not in revolution but in reformation.... Educated efficiency (should) be the only passport to the obtainment of secondary education.' North Otago Times (Oamaru), 26 April, 1883.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

The champions of the secondary schools, although they came from all walks of life and were men of widely differing political affiliations, had one thing in common: an appreciation and an awareness of the importance of education beyond the rudiments. In an electioneering address of 'exceeding eloquence and...wondrous, magnificent vagueness',<sup>1</sup> Sir George Grey urged the opening of the secondary schools and university colleges to all who could benefit from higher education. Three years earlier the Lyttelton Times had reported a country Liberal candidate as saying, less grandiloquently but just as earnestly, 'I would let a boy have Greek and Latin if he aspires to these things. I am an illiterate man myself, can just scribble my name, but it is the principle of the thing I stand up for.'<sup>2</sup>

It was 'the principle of the thing' which inspired much of the opposition to the mass slaughter of state-assisted secondary schools which from time to time was mooted by an

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 9 May, 1884.

2 Ibid., 15 October, 1881.

unnatural alliance of the working classes and the landed gentry. The former, despairing of ever being able to avail themselves of the facilities provided, were prepared to sacrifice them in order to preserve the primary system; the latter, well able and often willing to pay for their children's education, could see no point in fostering a level of education which they genuinely believed was not only unnecessary for the lower orders but potentially dangerous for the body politic.<sup>1</sup>

The arguments used in the first half of the eighties for the preservation of the endowed secondary schools and for easier access to them by the children of the working classes were of two kinds - those which appealed to working class aspirations and interests and those designed to allay the fears and suspicions of the colonial gentry.

Probably the most commonly used argument in the first category was that secondary education afforded 'an opportunity to the children of poor persons to raise themselves on the social scale.'<sup>2</sup> State withdrawal of support from the secondary schools, it was argued, was tantamount to denying the children of the poor a chance to gain entry to the

---

1 New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly,  
6 October, 1883, p.3.

2 Lyttelton Times, 19 November, 1881.

learned professions. Closure of the secondary schools would not do more than inconvenience the wealthy; already many of them preferred to send their sons to private secondary schools<sup>1</sup> rather than to local endowed high schools. Robert Stout knew that if the state-supported schools were closed the working classes would, in the long run, be the chief sufferers.<sup>2</sup> He was determined, therefore, to protect the educational ladder from the retrencher's axe. 'Is this Parliament prepared to say', Stout asked, 'that those children whose parents have not the means to give them a secondary education are to be condemned to a mere primary education?'<sup>3</sup> It was a rhetorical question: no elected member in 1885 dared to give public utterance to the non-democratic sentiments not unknown in the Lower House fifteen years before.

#### Greater Awareness of the Value of Secondary Education

In the early eighties, before hunger and unemployment had sharpened the political perception of the working classes, their more astute leaders had already become conscious of a widening gulf between the rulers and the ruled, the haves and the have-

---

1 Timaru High School in its infancy suffered from this snobbishness; Christ's College was the favoured school.

2 P.D., 1885, Vol.52, p.121.

3 Ibid., p.120.

nots in New Zealand society. The curse of the 'two Englands' from which so many had sought refuge in the Antipodes seemed also to have migrated. Wealth and power threatened to become concentrated in the hands of a small, self-perpetuating elite. To prevent such a stratification of colonial society, labour leaders urged the workers to encourage their children to take full advantage of the high schools. 'Only by educating all deserving children can the colony hope,' ran the preamble to the political platform of the Timaru Political Union and Labour League, 'to avoid domination of its society by an oligarchy which holds all the important public positions. Such positions must be open to competition and not for the reception of the friends of those who have "influence".'<sup>1</sup> Five years later Stout in his Educational Statement to the House<sup>2</sup> pleaded the cause of secondary education on similar grounds: 'If we wish to see true equality maintained... secondary schools and university colleges must be established and carefully nurtured.... Without it [higher education] class distinctions and bitterness will arise....'<sup>3</sup>

During the worst of the slump years the political champions

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 14 November, 1881.

2 Described by the editor of the New Zealand Schoolmaster, July, 1886, p.185 as 'the beau ideal of an Education Statement.'

3 P.D., 1886, Vol.54, p.608.



of the depressed classes repeatedly called upon them to hold fast to the educational advantages already gained. At the same time, they tried to ensure at least the neutrality of those who opposed state aid to secondary education by appealing to their patriotic pride, business instincts or political forebodings.

The appeal to patriotism was not ill-timed. Though recent immigrants still referred to themselves as Englishmen or Scotchmen<sup>1</sup> the term 'New Zealander' was in common use among the older settlers and, of course, those born in the colony. William Pember Reeves echoed the sentiments of most of his fellow-New Zealanders when he wrote:

. . . . .  
Gone is my England, long ago,  
Leaving me tender joys,  
Sweet unforgotten fragrance, names  
Of wrinkled men and grey-haired dames,  
To me still boys and girls.

. . . . .  
Here am I rooted. Firm and fast  
We men take root who face the blast,  
When to the desert come,  
We stand where none before have stood  
And braving tempest, drought and flood,  
Fight Nature for a home. 2

---

1 The term 'Scotsmen' was not current in the eighties.

2 W.P.Reeves, 'A Colonist in His Garden', in R.Chapman and J.Bennett (eds.), New Zealand Verse (London, 1956), p.3.

That Reeves himself did not, in the end, stay 'rooted, firm and fast,' is beside the point. Most of his fellow-settlers did. Those who were unable or unwilling to fight, not 'Nature', but economic forces for a home, quit the country in the great exodus of the eighties, leaving behind the men and women who by choice or sheer necessity were to make New Zealand their homeland. A few more perceptive politicians began deliberately to appeal to this nascent nationalism. W.C. Walker, a future Minister of Education, urged pride in the nation as a reason for maintaining and extending the educational system. After pointing out that the Germans were ousting the British as the leading traders of the world largely because of their superior education, Walker went on to say: 'If our Colony is to take a high position among...the countries of the world, its sons must have every opportunity to acquire the first elements of success - education.... Her sons are the Colony's future, and if we are to grow genius and intellectual brilliancy on our own soil, we must provide... the atmosphere in which these can be nourished, viz, the means of higher education.'<sup>1</sup> 'Without secondary schools', said a working man's candidate at Akaroa in the same year, 'we will never be a great and good country.'<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 4 August, 1887

2 Ibid., 29 July, 1887.

Such lofty appeals to national pride merged easily into less lofty but possibly more widely appreciated appeals to the business community to support secondary education because it was to their economic advantage to do so. 'The brain power of a country is part of its capital, and should be carefully cultivated,'<sup>1</sup> one speaker said as early as 1881. The following year the Hon. Mr. Oliver, speaking at the Dunedin Girls' High School prize-giving ceremony, criticised the short-sighted people who saw no good in providing secondary schooling for able children whose parents could not afford to keep them on at fee-charging schools.

Some folk say that our education system will fill the country with clerks, with shopmen, with sewing-machine girls, and with pretenders to gentility, and will rob the staple industries of that labour which is necessary and to which they are entitled.... I do not believe for a single moment that this will be the case.... Having been an employer of labour for a good many years I have been best served in every capacity by those who have known most, and those who have had the best Education. 2

In a decade which saw the emergence of organised labour as a political force it was natural that the men who usually held the reins of office should become apprehensive about impending political changes. More particularly they were concerned about the future of the social class they represented

---

1 Ibid., 7 November, 1881.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, March, 1882, p.131.

when the principle of 'one man, one vote' was finally adopted.

Where Demos overfed

Allows no gulf, respects no height<sup>1</sup>

what would be their fate? An historical precedent was not difficult to find; the triumph of Jacksonianism over Jeffersonianism in the United States of America was an obvious illustration of what happened when the people won political hegemony. The 'one set of men...and the one set of families (who had) for a long time occupied almost all positions of power in New Zealand'<sup>2</sup> did not relish the thought of what would happen to them when the home-spun version of Jacksonianism was triumphant. Shrewdly, therefore, the proponents of secondary schooling for the poorer children played upon these fears: only if the future electors had the advantage of a sound and extended education, they argued, would they be able to exercise their voting rights intelligently. 'Now that every man in the Colony has the privilege of the franchise,' wrote one newspaper correspondent, 'continued education is essential.'<sup>3</sup>

---

1 W.P. Reeves, 'A Colonist in His Garden', R.Chapman and J.Bennett (eds.), op.cit., p.34.

2 A remark made by Sir George Grey and reported in the Lyttelton Times, 8 May, 1884.

3 Lyttelton Times, 10 July, 1884.

From within the Conservatives' own ranks came the same advice. Commenting on the 'considerable controversy' that had arisen as to whether the secondary schools should be maintained out of public funds, Rolleston wrote:

The Republic of Letters knows no class distinction. A free State pressing forward in the race of self-improvement does not dole out so much of instruction as it thinks is a sufficient equipment for the less fortunate in the race for wealth. It offers equally to all its members facilities to mount from the lowest to the highest step on the ladder of knowledge.... It is said we cannot afford the expense of our system of high school and university education. I reply we cannot afford to do without it. 1

In the 1887 elections, for both personal and political reasons, Stout made 'diffusion of education' one of the three major planks in his electoral programme - the other two were distribution of property and distribution of land - but was defeated by the Conservatives led by Atkinson. The Conservative threat to slash the education vote, as has been shown<sup>2</sup>, was not put into effect by the new government. Neither Atkinson nor Fisher offered any violence to the secondary schools. Nor did their Liberal opponents in the House of Representatives urge them to do so. By the late eighties both Conservative and Liberal politicians had come round to accepting, in whole or in part, the view that the

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, February, 1886, p.99.

2 Above, p.178.

State should assist in the education of the brightest youngsters from 'the A.B.C. to the highest University degree.'<sup>1</sup> Reeves adjured electors not 'to be led away by bunkum to the effect that the secondary schools are maintained by the taxpayers for the benefit of the rich.'<sup>2</sup> The 'poor scholars' as they were sometimes called, had proved themselves both in the secondary schools and in the university colleges.<sup>3</sup> More and more the politicians and the public generally were looking for ways and means of making the high schools more open to children of ability.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the decade the continued institutional existence of the endowed schools was assured; Thomas Hislop, Fisher's successor as Minister of Education, said frankly that he thought the New Zealand system of education was not complete without a proper system of high schools.<sup>5</sup>

But what was the function of the high schools in the New Zealand society of the eighties? It was agreed by the end of the decade that secondary schools must be state-supported but there was no unanimity about what their role in colonial society should be. There was a small group who believed that the high schools should seek 'to raise the tone of

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 29 July, 1887.

2 Ibid., 9 August, 1887.

3 P.D., 1887, Vol.59, p.893.

4 Lyttelton Times, 26 July, 1887.

5 P.D., 1889, Vol.66, p.170.

society not so much intellectually as morally and socially.<sup>1</sup> Such men thought of the secondary schools as institutions which equipped the children of the well-to-do to become the colony's political and social leaders. One of the first governors of Waitaki High School, Sir Henry Miller, himself an Old Etonian, had something of this conception, but it was savagely attacked during the prolonged controversy which disturbed the early years of that school's existence.<sup>2</sup> Laudable as Miller's Public School ideals were, they were not appropriate for a state-supported colonial high school; in the end it was the ideals of Miller's chief opponent, the Rev. Dr. James Macgregor of Oamaru's Columba Presbyterian Church which prevailed, not only at Waitaki but throughout the state secondary system. Macgregor saw the secondary school as affording a means by which the ablest children of the primary schools could make their way at very little expense into the university colleges and from there into the highest positions in the land. Anything which hinted at class privilege he deplored. This view of the role of the secondary school was entirely in keeping with that expressed from time to time by Liberal journals and Liberal politicians.

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, October, 1883, p.38.

2 K.C. McDonald, History of Waitaki Boys' High School, 1883-1933 (Christchurch, 1934), p.92.

Some years before the Waitaki crisis<sup>1</sup> reached its climax, the editor of the Lyttelton Times had taken up substantially the same stand as the Rev. Dr. Macgregor. He contended that the proper function of a high school was to give a further education to those children who showed great ability in the primary schools. State high schools, in his opinion, should admit all children who reached a certain standard of attainment in their primary schools and should not cater for any other children. 'Unfortunately' he complained, 'under the present system such children are carefully worked out, and others are carefully worked in.'<sup>2</sup>

Sir George Grey as early as 1884 stressed the need to preserve the education ladder if only to ensure that when in more prosperous times there was an expansion of the Civil Service the children of the workers would be able to ascend 'the pathway to all the public distinctions of the Colony.'<sup>3</sup>

It is doubtful if, in 1884, anyone took Grey's advice seriously. The Civil Service Act of 1866 required cadets entering the Civil Service to pass certain non-competitive examinations but the standard of these was deliberately kept low so as not to penalise country children.<sup>4</sup> And in any case,

---

1 Below, pp. 255-257.

2 Lyttelton Times, 23 November, 1881.

3 Ibid., 9 May, 1884.

4 P.D., 1886, Vol.66, p.551.



the Ministers or permanent Heads of Departments who made the appointments set little store by examinations. As a result, there emerged 'a Civil Service caste drawn from a limited number of well-to-do families.'<sup>1</sup> But in 1886 Stout, in an attempt to defeat nepotism in the Civil Service, succeeded in having a Civil Service Reform Act passed which made entry into the Civil Service dependent upon success in competitive examinations.<sup>2</sup> Grey's advice of 1884 now took on a new significance.

Seddon, who had been bitterly opposed to the patronage practised in the matter of Civil Service appointments in 1883, urged in 1887 the need for easier access to the secondary schools for the children of workers so that they might qualify for Civil Service appointments. In a debate on educational retrenchment Seddon accused the Atkinson government of wanting to restrict the provision of free education so that it and its supporters could 'keep the Civil Service and the professions to themselves.'<sup>3</sup> This was the real reason,<sup>4</sup> Seddon alleged, for the government's refusal of capitation to any child who had passed standard six and for the suggestion that free education should stop at standard four. 'It is clearly the

---

1 R.M.Burdon, King Dick (Christchurch, 1955), p.138.

2 Ibid., p.139.

3 P.D., 1887, Vol.59, p.889.

4 Ibid.

government's intention,' he declared, 'to keep the poorer classes down as hewers of wood and drawers of water.'<sup>1</sup>

The education debates in late 1887 showed plainly that other members shared Seddon's view of the high schools. Admittedly many of them were still unabashedly class schools, attended by large numbers of children who should have been in the primary schools. But most of the Liberals in the Lower House had come to realise that if, because of a lack of State assistance, these schools were forced to close down the poorer children would be the only ones who suffered.<sup>2</sup> 'Let the system be looked into and reformed,' said one speaker in the Committee of Supply debate on secondary education, 'but let it not be killed.'<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the eighties, although criticism was more often destructive than constructive, some enlightened suggestions for the reform of the secondary schools were made. One of the most thoughtful single statements of this period was the paper read by W.G. Mehaffey to the Southland Education Conference in July, 1883. In this he advanced four

---

1 Ibid. Fuel to Seddon's fire had just been added by the Government's passing of an amending act (The Civil Service Reform Act Amendment Act) giving Ministers unconditional right to make temporary appointments in their departments.

2 Ibid., pp.921-3.

3 Ibid., p.921.

propositions all of which, in whole or part, eventually became law. These were:

1. That all pupils who pass creditably through the primary school course should have free admission to the secondary school.
2. That no boy or girl be admitted to a secondary school who has not passed the third standard of the primary school or an equivalent examination....
3. That secondary schools be placed on the same platform as primary schools in respect of annual examinations, and that, as pupils in the primary schools are required to pass year by year from standard to standard authoritatively specified, so those in the secondary schools should be required to rise similarly from grade to grade specifically and authoritatively arranged for secondary education.
4. That classification be made as necessary for teachers of secondary schools as for those of the primary schools. <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Mehaffey's paper was well-received, not only among his colleagues, but by newspaper editors throughout Otago and Southland. Encouraged by the enthusiasm he had evoked, Mr. Mehaffey amplified his earlier remarks when he addressed the September meeting of the Southland Education Institute. Looking to the future, he prophesied that a truly national system of education would be created which would allow the 'lad of requisite mental stamina' to advance without the constant application of 'the golden key'. 'Higher education

---

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly,  
4 August, 1833, p.21.

must not be surrounded with barriers; it must be readily accessible to all who have an earnest desire for it,<sup>1</sup> he said. Mehaffey argued that entry to secondary school depended too much on the equipment of the pocket and not enough on that of the mind; academic, not financial ability, should determine who was given higher education. He was also in favour - as were most primary school teachers of the eighties - of curbing the independence of the endowed secondary schools by requiring them to submit to regular inspection.<sup>2</sup>

But the reforms and improvements sought by Mehaffey and others could not be achieved while secondary education overlapped rather than supplemented primary education.<sup>3</sup> Stout described<sup>4</sup> this lack of proper gradation between primary and secondary schools as one of three serious weaknesses of the New Zealand education system - the other two being an over-emphasis of the classics and a refusal to admit the importance of technical instruction - but he could not suggest a remedy as long as the population remained small and demand for secondary education was limited and while secondary

---

1 Ibid., 6 October, 1883, p.3.

2 Ibid.

3 A.J.H.R., 1887, Session II, I-8, p.52.

4 P.D., 1885, Vol.52, p.113.

teachers insisted that children must begin the study of the classics and modern languages before they reached the age of twelve.<sup>1</sup>

These hindrances to the creation of an orderly and integrated education system had not been unforeseen. In 1882 the prescient Henry Hill, Inspector of Schools for Hawkes Bay, founder, and at the time, editor, of the New Zealand Schoolmaster, had predicted difficulties ahead if Boards of Education and Boards of Governors were allowed to go their own ways unchecked. 'No co-operation can be expected between them,' he wrote, 'for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans'.<sup>2</sup> Stout conceded on numerous occasions that pedagogically and socially the existence of junior departments in high schools was not defensible. But he pointed out that because the schools were so dependent upon the fees they got from the younger children no firm action could be taken against the preparatory departments unless the State was prepared to make more generous grants to the high schools.<sup>3</sup> Not everyone was convinced by Stout's reasoning and he was accused by one correspondent of the New Zealand Schoolmaster in 1889 of having failed when he had

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, August, 1885, p.9.

2 Ibid., December, 1882, p.270.

3 Ibid., April, 1889, pp.166-7.

the chance to grapple with 'essentials'. 'It is not money but reorganisation which is wanted' commented 'X'. 'There is no high school system properly so called in this country; and it would be folly to attempt to build a scheme upon the educational anomalies which exist and are known as High Schools.... At present the High School "system"...has no co-ordination with the Primary schools below it, or with the University Colleges above it....'<sup>1</sup>

The lack of co-ordination and articulation between the primary and secondary schools attracted much more attention in the last two or three years of the decade than it had in the first. George Fisher, the Minister of Education, was urged by W.C.Walker to 'bring down to the House a system which will save all overlapping, and enable every link in the chain to be well welded and to do its work efficiently.'<sup>2</sup> Fisher, although pressed by many political and personal difficulties, did try to meet Walker's request. In his Public Schools Bill of 1889, prepared with the help of the Inspector-General and introduced from time to time as a private bill after his dismissal from office, Fisher attacked the problem of co-ordination obliquely. He proposed to award not less than 200

---

1 Ibid., July, 1889, p.223.

2 P.D., 1887, Vol.59, p.896.

scholarships annually to pupils who had been in continuous attendance 'at a public school or public schools...for at least six months in a class or classes in course of preparation for the sixth standard.'<sup>1</sup> Fisher's measure, if it had been passed, would have removed at least one source of popular discontent, the eligibility for scholarships of children attending the lower divisions of the high schools. But more significantly, by requiring scholarship winners to be under the age of fourteen, the Bill indicated an important change in official thinking about the most appropriate age for beginning secondary studies. The O'Rorke Commissioners had stressed the need for an early beginning to secondary studies and all informed speakers on the subject since had agreed. Indeed Stout in 1889 was still suggesting that secondary schooling should be begun after passing standard three.<sup>2</sup>

But Fisher and Habens preferred to heed the advice of the practitioners rather than the theorists. 'Nothing could be more incongruous', Henry Hill wrote in an editorial in his teachers' journal, 'than a scheme which admits of children

---

1 Bills and Private Bills, 1889, No.108, Section 76. Fisher's scholarships offer was not a particularly generous one: the Education Boards between them were already offering as many awards.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, April, 1889, pp.166-7.

beginning to mentalise [sic] their Latin and Greek grammars long before the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic have been even fairly mastered.<sup>1</sup> In 1882 such comment was verging on the heretical; five years later Inspector-General Habens was not so sure. Giving evidence before the 1887 Select Committee on Education, he said that in the past few years his views on the best time to begin secondary work had changed as a result of the outstanding successes attained by the Education Board scholars. He was not, therefore, prepared to recommend that secondary schooling should begin as early as was commonly suggested.<sup>2</sup> When he and Fisher went into retreat at Rotorua to draft the Education Bill that was to eliminate all the anomalies and weaknesses which ten years' operation of the Education Act had revealed, he was not willing to attempt a 'tidying-up' of the system which would have made it necessary for children going on to secondary school to do so at the end of their standard four year. In the matter of primary-secondary articulation, as in others, the draft bill reflected its authors' indecision and their reluctance to fly in the face of accepted practice. It did not formulate a workable scheme for welding together every link in the

---

1 Ibid., December, 1882, p.271.

2 A.J.H.R., 1887, Session II, I-8, p.6.



educational chain.

### Half Measures

By the mid-eighties it was clear that closer liaison between the primary and secondary schools was essential. George Hogben, a secondary school man and D. Petrie, an Otago Education Board inspector, had argued for this at the first New Zealand Education Institute conference.<sup>1</sup> When successive Ministers of Education failed to provide the links necessary to complete the educational chain most Education Boards and a few boards of governors made their own arrangements. The schoolmen, left to their own devices, and little concerned with either political or theoretical arguments about achieving primary-secondary liaison, accepted the muddle that existed, agreed that a child going on to secondary school should have passed either standard five or six - Seddon and Hogben<sup>2</sup> were still trying to decide on this point in 1903 - and designed their regulations accordingly.

Teachers as well as administrators were concerned with making the transition from primary to secondary schools smoother for the pupils. At the annual conference of the New Zealand

---

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, January, 1884, pp.83-4.

2 In 1903, Minister of Education and Inspector-General respectively.

Educational Institute at Nelson in 1888, a special Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. C.E. Bevan-Brown, Headmaster of Christchurch Boys' High School, investigated and reported upon the question. Its two main findings were that:

1. It is the duty of the Government to make more liberal provision for imparting secondary education to all children of primary schools who are qualified to pass an entrance examination equal to the requirements of the sixth standard.
2. Free education for four years at secondary schools should be given:
  - (a) To all pupils who being under the age of twelve have passed the fifth standard, or who being under the age of thirteen have passed the sixth standard, arrangements being made for this purpose by the Government with Boards of Governors.
  - (b) To all candidates at the scholarship examinations held by the District Boards of Education who coming next to scholarship winners obtain at least half of the total of possible marks. 1

The report's recommendations were not revolutionary; they were based on practices already current in different parts of the colony. The Auckland secondary schools had, since 1881, given free tuition to children who had failed to win scholarships but had gained 'Certificates of Proficiency' from the examiners.<sup>2</sup> In 1885 the Governors of the Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools reported that there were fifty-five pupils attending their two schools on a similar basis;<sup>3</sup> in 1887 free tuition was offered able non-scholarship winners

1 New Zealand Schoolmaster, February, 1888, p.112.

2 A.J.H.R., 1881, E-1, p.19; 1882, E-1, p.59.

3 A.J.H.R., 1885, E-2, p.32.

at Timaru High School.<sup>1</sup> Scholarship regulations were relaxed in Southland in 1889 so that fifteen became the maximum age for scholarship candidates<sup>2</sup> and in Hawkes Bay increasing revenue from the secondary school reserves enabled the School Commissioners to offer fifteen entrance scholarships of their own for competition.<sup>3</sup>

By the late eighties scholarships were being awarded by a number of agencies. George Fisher, not to be outdone in resourcefulness by his minions, proposed a special scholarship designed to assist the bright children whose parents could not afford to send them to high school. Such children, he suggested, should be kept on in their primary schools as pupil-teachers whether or not they intended to go into teaching.<sup>4</sup> Ministerial ingenuity - which led nowhere - and the originality of some boards of governors in drawing up scholarship schemes were not surprising. But what was surprising, was the difference in the scholarship regulations of the twelve Education Boards. These variations, the Minister of Education explained in his annual report in 1884, resulted from the very general character of departmental regulations respecting scholarships which left each Board 'to

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 31 August, 1887.

2 A.J.H.R., 1890, E-1, p.65.

3 Ibid., p.85.

4 P.D., 1887, Vol.59, p.878.

make its own rules, subject to the approval of the Minister.'<sup>1</sup>

Increasing the number of scholarships was at best only a half-measure: many able but poor primary children were still denied an opportunity to continue their schooling. 'The benefits of the secondary system should be open to all alike, even the poorest,' said a member of the House of Representatives, 'which they certainly are not now.'<sup>2</sup> But neither of the Ministers of Education in Atkinson's 1887-90 ministry did anything constructive towards co-ordinating primary and secondary education. In spite of much discussion, this educational dilemma remained unresolved when, with the triumph of the Liberal-Labour party, the colony entered upon a decade outstanding for political, economic, industrial and social, but still not for educational, reform.

#### Grounds for Dissatisfaction

The futility of attempting to carry out any major reorganisation of the school system in the eighties was made very clear by the reaction of the governors and headmasters of the high schools to a minor administrative reform which the Secretary of the Education Department attempted in 1887. He proposed that the high schools should co-operate in the

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1884, Session I, E-1, p.xv.

2 P.D., 1887, Vol.59, p.878.

designing of a national examination to be taken by senior pupils throughout New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> The headmasters were to be the examiners, the Education Department's only function being to provide administrative machinery. So lukewarm was the response of the high schools and so diverse were the opinions expressed that the Secretary was forced to concede that there was no use trying to evolve an examination acceptable to all the high schools.<sup>2</sup> The secondary school headmasters declined to co-operate with the Department<sup>3</sup> because they suspected that its proposals resulted from pressure put upon it by the New Zealand Education Institute among whose members there was, as Stout put it, 'a sort of jealousy of... higher education.'<sup>4</sup> The secondary schools' unwillingness to co-operate in 1887-8 cannot have surprised Inspector-General Habens. It was consistent with their cool reaction in 1885 to an attempt made by the Secretary of the Education Department, John Hislop, at Stout's direction, to persuade the high schools to pay more attention to technical and scientific subjects. 'If the secondary schools have become in any respect unpopular in any parts of the country,' Hislop

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1887, E-9, pp.6-7.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, July, 1887, p.189.

3 A.J.H.R., 1887, E-1, p.xxii.

4 New Zealand Schoolmaster, February, 1890, p.127.

wrote in his circular letter of 19 January, 1885, 'it may be because the people have not seen results flow from them. Were attention paid to technical education as well as to ordinary studies in secondary schools, the objections now urged against the endowing of high and grammar schools would probably not be heard.'<sup>1</sup>

Hislop and Stout were by no means the first to point out to the high schools the error of their ways in curriculum matters. Witnesses at O'Rorke Commission hearings had complained of the unsuitability of the classical curriculum for New Zealand conditions. A correspondent of the New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly wrote bluntly:

Too much attention is paid to the old disused tools of the mind, i.e., the ancient languages. Considered as mental food, our usual educational programme contains too many husks and too little wholesome grain, too much thin water and too little nourishing meat. <sup>2</sup>

At the first New Zealand Education Institute conference in 1884 delegates had criticised the classical bias of the high schools. The champion of the high schools on this occasion was George Hogben who defended the concentration upon the classics on the grounds that study of Latin led to a better command of English.<sup>3</sup>

1 A.J.H.R., 1885, E-1, p.117.

2 A.W. Tyndall, 'Educational Superfluities', New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly, September, 1883, p.3.

3 New Zealand Schoolmaster, January, 1884, pp.83-4.

Hogben's faith in the value and utility of the classics was shared by the majority of his high school colleagues. Predictably, therefore, the immediate response to Hislop's letter was disappointing and the permanent results almost negligible. Stout, although irritated and frustrated by the response of the high schools, was very restrained in his public comments on the rebuff the high schools had given him. He only expressed regret that the New Zealand schools seemed to have inherited the old world idea of what a high class education should be and in consequence did not appreciate that science was able to 'afford a mental gymnastic equal in value with that which is supplied by the study of any classical language.'<sup>1</sup> Some time later when he was no longer a member of the House of Representatives Stout gave vent to his real feelings in an article published in the New Zealand Schoolmaster. He wrote:

It is plain that we have a middle-aged [sic] system of Education dominating all our High Schools. No doubt such schools have a modern side; but whoever heard of a pupil in the modern side being dux of the school? Too often the modern side is the refuge of the unfortunate.... We still think a liberal education must include a knowledge of Latin and Greek. The classical rules us. 2

Public antipathy towards the high schools, Stout pointed out,<sup>3</sup> was sustained by their slavish adherence to the English

---

1 P.D., 1885, Vol.52, p.113.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, April, 1889, p.166.

3 Ibid., p.167.

grammar school tradition. The colonial grammar schools were 'far too pretentious and too exclusively modelled on the English public school instead of the American, or German,'<sup>1</sup> another critic complained. The Otago Education Board, replying to a circular sent out by the 1887 Select Committee on Education, urged the adoption in New Zealand of a scheme of instruction up to the eighth standard 'not based upon what England does or upon what Victoria would like to do, but upon what we ourselves ought to do under varying conditions of life in New Zealand.'<sup>2</sup>

What many thoughtful people believed the high schools should do was to include 'in the programme of the secondary schools as much instruction as possible in subjects that have a direct bearing upon the technical arts of modern life.'<sup>3</sup> Not only would this prepare youngsters for the realities of colonial life, but it would also, one early enthusiast for technical education claimed, 'prove a by no means insignificant element in defeating the rise or spreading of social classes upon false bases.... Manual labour is fast becoming an unlovely thing in the eyes of young New Zealanders. To become a skilled artisan is to lose caste; to toil at a desk is to

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1887, Session II, I-8, p.52.

2 Ibid., p.42.

3 A.J.H.R., 1885, E-1, p.xxxii.



gain, or at least preserve it.<sup>1</sup>

With two or three exceptions<sup>2</sup> the high school authorities ignored pleas for a broadening of their curricula. They remained silent and aloof while the Premier, the Secretary of the Education Department, school inspectors, the New Zealand Education Institute and innumerable private citizens begged them to make at least some concessions to popular demand.

The obduracy of the high schools seemed to suggest that they were confident of their ability to weather all storms, that they had no need to take cognisance of what the public or even the Minister of Education said. They were, by virtue of the special legislation needed to establish each secondary school, above and beyond the national system of education. Even the jealously guarded secular provisions of the 1877 Education Act did not apply to the high schools which seemed surrounded by an aura of self-sufficiency.

---

1 New Zealand Magazine, April 1887, pp.155, 165-6.

2 Thames High School in particular earned the encomium of the Inspector-General who wrote: 'The school is of a more modern type than most of our high schools... (Its) modern science department is well adapted to the wants of the locality, practical chemistry being taught in a laboratory, with all appliances necessary for assaying.' A.J.H.R., 1886, E-9, p.24. See also J. Nicol, The Technical Schools of New Zealand (Wellington, 1940), p.7.

Behind the Facade

But behind the imposing facade the high school structure was anything but solid. The years between 1885 and 1888, when public criticism of the high schools and their ways was at its height, were also particularly harrowing years financially for the endowed schools. For this reason as much as for any other, headmasters and boards of governors refused to be either cajoled or stampeded into offering new courses which would require additional staff and expensive equipment. It was all very well for the Minister and Secretary of the Education Department to urge the introduction of technical education on the grounds that 'endowments and other public aid have been bestowed on grammar and high schools to enable them to supply to all classes, and not to the professional classes only, a course of study preparatory to the more direct and immediate training for special careers'<sup>1</sup> when the cold truth was that these endowments were proving inadequate to support the very limited literary curriculum already taught. The governors of Otago Boys' High School agreed that there was a need for technical education but declined to attempt it at the Boys' High School because they had no money to spare.

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1885, E-1, p.117.

Income from endowments had dropped sharply. 'In consequence of the serious depreciation in the value of wool and all descriptions of farm produce,' the board of governors reported, 'its tenants...have experienced the greatest difficulty in paying their rents and instalments of purchase money.'<sup>1</sup>

The financial position of schools not as well endowed as the Otago High Schools and therefore largely dependent upon income from fees became desperate when enrolments decreased after 1885. At Southland Boys' High School in 1888, the attendance had fallen off so sharply that only the principal master retained his position.<sup>2</sup> The depression, not the curriculum, was to blame. A former pupil, reminiscing about the early days, wrote: 'In Southland from 1885 to 1889 we had the worst slump ever experienced here.... Many boys who, in other circumstances, would have attended the High School had, as soon as they passed the fifth or sixth standard, to start work to help in the support of the home.'<sup>3</sup> The difficulties confronting Southland Boys' High School were not peculiar to that institution: throughout New Zealand secondary school enrolments dropped alarmingly as the depression deepened.

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1886, E-9, p.39.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, April, 1889, p.168.

3 J. Carswell (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.13.

The New Plymouth and Nelson College Boards of Governors reported decreased enrolments.<sup>1</sup> Whangarei High School closed in 1885 when the monthly average attendance had fallen to only 7.3.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the colony the high schools were struggling to survive. In December, 1885, there were 2,578 pupils enrolled; a year later the numbers had dwindled to 2,358 and in December, 1887, the total secondary school enrolments for New Zealand were only 2,093.<sup>3</sup>

Schools without extensive endowments were the worst hit. In 1885 the Commissioners of Education Reserves had to come to the rescue of the poorly-endowed Auckland Girls' High School<sup>4</sup> by making in a special grant of £500<sup>5</sup> but this merely postponed the inevitable. In 1887 high schools accustomed to receive grants from Parliament were warned 'that aid in this form is no longer to be expected.'<sup>6</sup> The Secretary of the Nelson College Council of Governors begged the government to reconsider its decision as his Council could not 'see their way to carry on the Girls' College without the assistance of the full subsidy hitherto granted by the Government, namely £500 per annum.'<sup>7</sup>

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1886, E-9, pp.25-6, 30.

2 A.J.H.R., 1885, E-9, p.17.

3 A.J.H.R., 1888, E-1, p.xxi.

4 Stout predicted continued trouble ahead for inadequately endowed secondary schools. P.D., 1885, Vol.53, p.42.

5 New Zealand Schoolmaster, November, 1885, p.59.

6 A.J.H.R., 1888, E-1, p.xxii.

7 Secretary, Nelson College to Secretary, Education Department, 11 February, 1888. Letter Book, Nelson College Council of Governors.

But the government was unrelenting; Nelson College for Girls did manage to survive, Auckland Girls' High School did not. It closed at the end of August, 1888 and some of the girls transferred to a girls' division opened in September by Auckland College and Grammar School.<sup>1</sup>

The difficulties experienced by girls' schools at this time resulted entirely from lack of money and not from any antipathy to higher education for girls. The O'Rorke Commissioners had been convinced by the witnesses they heard that girls' secondary education was keenly sought after by parents and had made recommendations accordingly.<sup>2</sup> In 1883 examiners reporting on girls' schools or co-educational schools had been most laudatory in their comments on the academic achievements of the 'young ladies'.<sup>3</sup> By 1883, one major recommendation at least of the O'Rorke Commission had borne fruit and provision for girls' secondary education was fairly widespread. In towns where conditions did not permit the establishment of separate girls' high schools, boards of governors had daringly introduced co-education. Cautiously the New Plymouth High School governors reported that 'the

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1889, E-9, p.5.

2 Above, p.111.

3 A.J.H.R., 1884, E-9.

experiment, so far, has been very successful, the applications for admission being in excess of the accommodation.<sup>1</sup> The Timaru High School Board also opened its school to girls after taking the precaution to have a lofty fence built across the playing area and up to the front door of the school. The Thames High School authorities alone interpreted co-education in a literal sense. Thames High School, reported the Inspector-General in 1887, is the 'only secondary school in New Zealand in which boys and girls are taught in the same classes. I do not see any defect in discipline due to this cause, nor do I hear of any difficulty arising from it.'<sup>2</sup> Co-education was regarded by most boards of governors, however, as a temporary expedient forced upon them by the financial exigencies of the decade. As soon as endowment revenues increased, boards divided their combined schools into separate boys' and girls' institutions.

#### The District High Schools

The fortunes and misfortunes of the district high schools, the country cousins, ran a parallel course to those of the endowed schools in the depression eighties. After an initial

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1886, E-9, p.25.

2 A.J.H.R., 1887, E-9, p.15.

burst of enthusiasm following the passage of the 1877 Education Act, there succeeded a period of despondency and frustration. Not until the mid-nineties did the district high schools begin to regain some of their former popularity among country settlers.

Although it was the existence of the Otago grammar schools which had made necessary sections 55 and 56 of the 1877 Act<sup>1</sup> the O'Rorke Commissioners' inquiries in Dunedin indicated that by 1880 district high schools were not highly regarded by local educationists.<sup>2</sup> In his annual report the inspector of schools in Otago complained that the district high schools were unsuccessfully mixing primary and secondary work. 'A district high school is a mongrel institution,' he wrote.... 'Their present constitution and organisation are at variance with their pretentious designation, and are manifestly of a temporary and makeshift nature.'<sup>3</sup>

School inspectors in other parts of the colony, and especially in the North Island, openly opposed the creation of district high schools. 'Any attempt to tack secondary education on to primary will prove a failure,'<sup>4</sup> Robert Lee warned the Wellington Education Board in 1881. The teaching

---

1 These were the sections which authorised Education Boards to establish district high schools and determined curriculum and fees.

2 Above, p.107.

3 A.J.H.R., 1880, H-1I, p.36.

4 A.J.H.R., 1881, E-1B, p.10.

of secondary subjects in the primary school, Lee and many of his contemporaries believed, would lead inevitably to a neglect of the work of the primary school by the headmaster and senior teachers whose energies would be devoted to the instruction of the senior pupils. A South Canterbury correspondent of the Lyttelton Times expressed similar misgivings when the opening of district high schools at Waimate and Temuka was mooted:

No person who has had any practical acquaintance with the working of public schools can honestly declare that the usefulness of a primary school is not weakened by an admixture of secondary work, or that secondary work so introduced is worth the time devoted to it. The two must be taught in separate schools. 1

Objection to the district high schools came from another quarter as well. Supporters of the endowed secondary schools argued that the existence of the district high schools militated against the success of the endowed schools by keeping potential pupils from them. Supporters of the homogeneous primary and secondary schools were united in their belief that district high schools, 'those bastard institutions',<sup>2</sup> as one politician described them, would be unnecessary if there were more free tuition scholarships tenable at the endowed schools available.

This argument, while superficially plausible, ignored what had always been the real purpose of the Otago grammar

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 13 May, 1884.

2 Ibid.



and district high schools, the provision of secondary education in country areas. Free tuition scholarships at the endowed high schools were not substitutes for secondary schooling at a small charge per subject in a child's home district. Attendance at a town high school, as witness after witness had stressed to the O'Rorke Commissioners,<sup>1</sup> inevitably involved parents in expenses for board and transport, expenses which in the eighties few could afford. Having a district high school in a rural community also served to make the local people more aware of the value of secondary education and its possibilities for their children and to break down prejudices and remove misconceptions. 'A Government High School,' the New Zealand correspondent of the Victorian Review reported, 'is regarded, as an individual of the...bucolic type of mental organisation remarked to me lately, as a "hinstitooshun as taxes the poor man for the rich man".'<sup>2</sup> The district high school, suggested this writer, could do much to break down the prejudice attaching to secondary education; to the country settler the district high would be but an extension of the primary school and would therefore be less likely to incur his animosity than a separate secondary school.<sup>3</sup>

---

1 Above, p. 104.

2 Victorian Review (Melbourne), 2 July, 1883, p. 239.

3 Ibid.

It was the need to take secondary education to the people and the failure of the endowed high schools to achieve anything very worthwhile in this direction that won renewed support for the district high school cause at a time when most of the district high schools already established were 'languishing'.<sup>1</sup> Rolleston, who in 1878 had argued for 'separate secondary schools distinct from primary',<sup>2</sup> and who was described in 1881 as being 'quite opposed' to district high schools<sup>3</sup> had by 1884 changed his mind. 'It is ridiculous to pretend that we are nationally making provision for secondary education if we have only a few classical schools in places like Christchurch, Dunedin and Auckland,' he wrote to Henry Hill. Endowed high schools set up in smaller centres were not succeeding because they were under badly qualified University men with no training in the art of teaching. Children who stayed on at their primary schools and did secondary work under well-trained certificated masters would, Rolleston conceded, get a better education than those who went to separate secondary schools where the teaching was inept.<sup>4</sup>

Rolleston's revised opinion was not shared by the Auckland, Wanganui and Wellington Education Boards; by the mid-eighties

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1885, E-1, pp.xvi-xvii. This was the description the Auckland Education Board applied to its Hamilton and Cambridge ventures.

2 P.D., 1878, Vol.29, p.348.

3 P.D., 1881, Vol.40, p.625.

4 W.Rolleston to H.Hill, 17 May, 1884. Rolleston Papers, Letter Book Number 5.

they had disrated<sup>1</sup> the district high schools at Cambridge, Hamilton, Patea, Wanganui and Masterton. South Canterbury, Otago and Southland, however, persevered with their secondary tops. 'We are persuaded,' the South Canterbury Education Board stated in its 1884 report to the Minister of Education, 'that the extension of the district high school system would be a great boon to the public, diffusing much more widely the benefits of higher education, and diminishing the expense involved in sending children long distances to, and compelling them to board out at, the ordinary high schools.'<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with this view the South Canterbury Education Board added secondary departments to the Waimate and Temuka district schools. After the initial indifference had worn off, support for the district high schools in these two localities became quite whole-hearted although not uncritical.<sup>3</sup> It was the curriculum, not the institution, which came under fire in South Canterbury, and which kept roll numbers down. Local feeling was summed up by the South Canterbury correspondent of the New Zealand Schoolmaster in these terms:

The community...want something better than Latin, Greek and mathematics. A scientific and commercial course would have been popular.... A little Latin, Greek and some scraps of Mathematics...won't pass muster now-a-days. Something more practical, something more in accord with the progressive spirit of the age is now needed. 4

---

1 When a district high school was 'disrated' it reverted to its original status of district primary school.

2 A.J.H.R., 1884, Session I, E-1, p.81.

3 New Zealand Schoolmaster, June, 1887, p.175.

4 Ibid., November, 1885, p.54.

Unfortunately most district high school teachers, (James Reid, Rector of Tokomairiro District High School was a notable exception),<sup>1</sup> were content to present to their pupils nothing better than watered-down versions of the classical courses of the endowed high schools. Consequently when a separate secondary school was established in the vicinity of an already existing district high school the latter became redundant and was disrated by the local Education Board.<sup>2</sup> But when the Otago Education Board, following the opening of Waitaki High School, proposed to disrate Oamaru District High School it found itself confronted by a local opposition of considerable strength and solidarity which for four years fought to retain the district high school. This vocal and determined faction only lapsed into a grumbling acceptance of the inevitable after a two-man parliamentary commission had reported that, provided a local girls' secondary school was opened, it could see no reason to continue the district high school.<sup>3</sup>

The leading defenders of the Oamaru District High School were not inspired by dedication to the district high school cause. Their motives differed and were often obscure even to their contemporaries.

---

1 G.H.Scholefield, History of Tokomairiro District High School (Wellington, 1931), pp.18-20.

2 A.J.H.R., 1881, E-1B, p.40.

3 A.J.H.R., 1887, E-9A, p.2.

John McKenzie, the champion of

The landless man and the No Man's man,  
 The man that lacked and the man unlearned  
 The man that lived but as he earned, 1

characteristically chose to believe that the disrating of the district high school was a calculated attack upon the rights of the workers<sup>2</sup> who would not be able to pay the 'prohibitive' fees charged by the high school. There was also a widespread belief in Oamaru that the site on the outskirts of the town had been chosen for personal reasons, that certain wealthy landowners were trying to appropriate the public endowments to their own advantage or to enhance the value of their land.<sup>3</sup> The real reason, or reasons, for the prolonged hostility to Waitaki High School by Dr. McGregor and his followers have never been satisfactorily explained.<sup>4</sup> Quite clearly they did not stem from any fervid belief in the virtues of district high schools. Stout probably came closest to the truth when he hinted in the House of Representatives that in this affair as in other educational matters in Otago, religious differences had something to do with the question. Without attempting to conceal his impatience he declared:

---

1 Jessie Mackay, 'The Burial of Sir John McKenzie' in R. Chapman and J. Bennett (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.25.  
 2 P.D., 1884, Vol.50, p.425; P.D., 1886, Vol.54, p.269.  
 3 North Otago Times, 2 June, 1881.  
 4 K.C. McDonald, *op.cit.*, pp.71-93, deals exhaustively with this issue.

I cannot see the good of this prolonged agitation....  
 If the people of Waitaki will spend in trying to help  
 the Waitaki High School as much energy as they have  
 devoted towards this agitation, they will do more for  
 education than they can hope to accomplish if they  
 persevere in their present course of action. 1

Outside the Waitaki County and Oamaru the district high  
 schools which had survived the worst of the depression  
 continued, unpublicised, their unremarkable existence.  
 Towards the end of the decade roll numbers began to rise and  
 new schools were established on the 'frontiers' at Gisborne<sup>2</sup>  
 and Grey.<sup>3</sup> At last, after many years of indifference, public  
 appreciation of the value of secondary education was, by 1890,  
 becoming more widespread.

---

1 P.D., 1886, Vol.55, p.270.

2 A.J.H.R., 1888, E-1, p.xxiv.

3 Ibid., E-1B, p.30. Fisher and Habens took  
 cognisance of the revival of interest in the district high  
 schools in clauses 62-63 of their Public Schools Bill, 1889,  
 by proposing that public schools should teach 'higher subjects'  
 at a shilling a subject per week, provided 'the ordinary course  
 of public school instruction will not be allowed to suffer any  
 neglect in consequence thereof.'

## CHAPTER NINE

### FIRST THINGS FIRST

By whom were our women enfranchised?  
Who shields from life's pitfall the young?  
Who has rendered usury toothless?  
And battered the head of King Bung?  
Whose hand has writ Liberal land laws,  
To broad acres opened the way? 1

The new decade began with Atkinson's conservatives still the government and with rumours abroad of further retrenchment especially in education.<sup>2</sup> But the old order was about to yield to the new. The nature of New Zealand politics had been sharply changed by the new social grievances spawned by the depression. No longer were the 'industrial classes'<sup>3</sup> of New Zealand prepared to accept without demur the conditions under which they worked. The 'Sweating Commission' of 1890,<sup>4</sup> 'an outcome of the fruitful alliance of trade unionism and humanitarianism';<sup>5</sup> had awakened in the social conscience a growing belief that the incredible hardships revealed in the evidence before the Commission were neither the fault nor the inevitable lot of the sufferers, and that the cure was not

---

1 Quoted from the Temuka Leader (Temuka), by the Lyttelton Times, 8 October, 1896.

2 P.D., 1890, Vol.67, pp.560-1.

3 A term commonly used in the nineties.

4 Above, p.179.

5 W.H. Oliver, op.cit., p.138

through charity, not through revolution, but through legislation.

In country districts the dead hand of conservatism rested equally heavily upon the manual workers. Men looked enviously at the broad acres to which they were denied access. 'The hills of North Canterbury, the central plains and the beautiful downs in the southern part of the Province', spoke out W.W. Tanner, a Labour candidate in the election of 1890, 'want something more than an occasional shepherd and his dog, or a rabbiter and his gun.'<sup>1</sup>

Atkinson, although a man of undoubted humanity, was not prepared to take any bold and imaginative measures to improve the condition of the working classes while the colony's finances were still in a precarious state. But discontent grew apace. Men everywhere feared that the colony was about to reproduce the horrors and degradation of the Old World. In half a century of European settlement poverty, slums, sweated labour, unemployment and land monopoly had all made their appearance; their presence in the New World sent a shiver down the spine of every colonist who had cast himself adrift from the mother country in the expectation that he was leaving behind him the rankling cruelty of an Old World society.

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 8 October, 1890.



To combat the threatening social evils labour organised; in 1889 the Maritime Council was formed. To this union were affiliated wharf labourers, seamen, firemen, trimmers, cooks, stewards, carters, grain carriers, railwaymen and coal miners. In 1890 a representative of the American Knights of Labour toured New Zealand 'explaining, exhorting, arranging and founding.'<sup>1</sup> Inexorably labour and capital moved along a collision course. 'Wealth and place shall give way to integrity or merit'<sup>2</sup> became the workers' slogan. The Lyttelton Times commented editorially:

Throughout the Colony labour is surging. The railway men everywhere, the bakers in Christchurch, tramway men in Wellington, the mates of all the steamers, tailoresses, workers in wool, casual labour at wharves, cabmen, all these represent thousands of souls and all are in agitation. The agitation is organized, everywhere it sees clearly what it wants, and goes straight for it. 3

A showdown was inevitable. After a preliminary skirmish with Whitcombe and Tombs the Maritime Council engaged the Union Steam Ship Company. The strike which followed was an expression of general social discontent and of the growing solidarity of the trade union movement.<sup>4</sup> Public sympathy was not with the strikers in the beginning but when the Union Steam Ship Company, confident of final victory, refused to agree to

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 4 March, 1890.

2 Ibid., 19 April, 1890.

3 Ibid., 11 June, 1890.

4 C.H.B.E., Vol.VII, Part 2, p.177.

arbitration 'sympathy which at first had been widely felt for the attacked masters was...transferred to the defeated men.'<sup>1</sup>

Strike action having failed, working class men turned to political action to redress their grievances. Sympathy for the trade unionists made possible an alliance between rural Liberal and urban Labour politicians. As election day approached, the manifestos of political associations up and down the colony rolled off the presses in an ever-increasing stream. 'This is the hour of platforms, programmes and policies',<sup>2</sup> wrote the editor of the Lyttelton Times. Whatever the source, the political creeds were alike in demanding changes in fiscal policy, in taxation and land laws and in the composition of the Legislative Council. Most of them also urged the preservation of technical instruction and, perhaps oddly, the issue by the government of a uniform set of school textbooks printed either by the Government Printer or by a printer who employed only union labour.<sup>3</sup>

Educational issues received but passing notice in the campaign addresses of candidates. Liberal-Labour speakers concentrated upon a monotonous but politically effective appeal to the emotions by urging 'land for the people'. Conservatives, with an unfortunate record to justify and no

---

1 W.Pember Reeves, State Experiments (London, 1902), ii, p.96.

2 Lyttelton Times, 14 October, 1890.

3 Ibid., 15 August, 1890; New Zealand Times, 4 October, 1890.

attractive programme for the future to offer, still talked of retrenchment and balancing the budget. A remark by a prominent Conservative in Auckland, E. Michelson, that a cut-back in teachers' salaries might be necessary, called down upon the heads of the Conservatives the wrath of the editor of the Lyttelton Times. 'The Conservatives plan', he wrote, 'to meddle with the education system so that the children of the poor will go to school later and leave it earlier and while there will be taught by poorly paid and inferior teachers.'<sup>1</sup> Liberal candidates occasionally complained of the misuse of endowments for secondary education by 'those who are well able to help themselves.'<sup>2</sup> A number spoke of completing the educational ladder by making more scholarships available to children who had finished their primary school course but only two or three gave any indication that they realised the immense importance of the part education could play in creating and maintaining a new social order. W.W. Tanner, a close friend of W. Pember Reeves, was one of the few. 'The advance in education,' he said, 'gives clearer perceptions to the working classes, and...all the wisdom and moderation men possess will

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 11 November, 1890. The editor in 1890 was W. Pember Reeves.

2 Ibid., 27 November, 1890.

be necessary to carry out the aims and desires of the people without doing injustice to any class or causing friction in the body politic.<sup>1</sup>

It was, however, a statement by William Rolleston, standing once again as a Conservative, that Editor Reeves of the Lyttelton Times quoted at length to illustrate the political significance of education. The future welfare of the Colony depended upon education, Rolleston was reported as saying:

Education not only tends to increase the efficiency of labour...but it also raises the labourers socially and morally, and it diminishes crime, pauperism and drunkenness. It levels class distinctions and destroys class antagonism of which...there is now a good deal needing removal. 2

But in New Zealand's first 'one man, one vote' election most of those who flocked to the polls to vote Liberal

For the cause that lacks assistance,  
For the wrongs that need resistance,  
For the future in the distance  
And the good that we can do<sup>3</sup>

wanted class distinctions levelled by means more drastic and speedy than education could offer. The election campaign, 'the greatest organised effort the Liberals have ever put

1 Ibid., 28 October, 1890.

2 Lyttelton Times, 25 October, 1890.

3 Ibid., 1 December, 1890. The secretary of the Canterbury Trades and Labour Council was responsible for this exhortation.

forth', as Ballance called it<sup>1</sup>, put the Liberal-Labour coalition into office with a majority of twenty in the House of Representatives. The die was cast; the colony was now about to embark upon a political adventure from which there was no turning back. 'I hope you will be able to construct a strong cabinet of real good men who will not flinch at reforms,' wrote one well-wisher to Ballance, 'and give us New Zealanders some hope, which latter has almost been crushed out of us these past few years.'<sup>2</sup>

#### Early Attempts At Legislation

Premier Ballance received plenty of advice from supporters as to what his government should do. Educational reform was not overlooked. A resident of Wanganui, Ballance's home district, urged a widening of educational opportunity because it was the duty of 'the grown public to see to it that the minds and brains of the after comers are neither warped nor dwarfed in the gristle.'<sup>3</sup> Another correspondent was more specific in his recommendations. 'The Fifth and Sixth Standards and also what is called here the Higher Education might be provided by the State and be accompanied by technical

---

1 John Ballance to Robert Stout, 17 November, 1890. Stout Papers (Manuscript, Turnbull Library.)

2 Private letter, (signature illegible), to John Ballance, 24 January, 1891. Ballance Papers (Manuscript, Turnbull Library).

3 William Montgomery to John Ballance, 1 June 1891, Ballance Papers.

training,' he suggested. 'If these cannot be made free to all, it could be free to some who had distinguished themselves in the schools up to the Fourth Standard.'<sup>1</sup>

Educational reform was not, however, high on the list of Ballance's legislative priorities. W. Pember Reeves, his Minister of Education, in his retiring address as president of the North Canterbury Education Institute, spoke of the administration's educational intentions. These were very limited being mainly promises not to retrench but to defend the existing system at all points. There was no mention at all of further provision for secondary education.<sup>2</sup>

That Pember Reeves failed to provide his 1891 audience with a blueprint for intended educational development was not surprising. Besides the portfolios of Education and Justice he also held that of Labour and it was the responsibilities entailed by the latter which prevented him from giving fuller attention to educational issues. In Pember Reeves's view labour and industrial legislation took precedence over all else<sup>3</sup> and it was to the drafting and passing of this that he devoted most of his very considerable energies and talent.

---

1 G. Tolhurst to John Ballance, 3 March, 1891, Ballance Papers.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, April 1891, pp.171-5.

3 Lyttelton Times, 20 June, 1893.

But it was one thing to draft legislation and quite another matter in a bicameral legislature to have it made law. In June, 1893, Pember Reeves listed the bills for which he was responsible which were then awaiting the approval of the Legislative Council as including the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, a Shop Hours Bill, a Workmen's Wages Bill, an Eight Hours Bill, a measure to outlaw unfair sweating contracts, a bill to regulate the relations between masters and apprentices, a Shipping and Seamen Bill, and a Friendly Societies Bill.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the 1893 session only the Workmen's Wages Bill had been passed; the heart of the labour problem remained untouched.

Almost equally unsuccessful were John McKenzie's attacks on land aggregation and absentee ownership. Both Ballance and his Minister of Lands regarded the locking up of the land in the interests of a few as a great evil which had to be overcome if the colony were to prosper<sup>2</sup> but the Legislative

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 20 June, 1893.

2 The 'land monopoly' was very real in the mid-nineties. In 1894, in Hawkes Bay, forty-three men held 994,092 acres of land. (P.D., 1894, Vol.84, p.193.) At about the same time, for the colony as a whole, statistics of landholdings show that 17 million acres were controlled by 1,600 individuals, four of whom owned 600,000 acres between them. This left 17,000 families to 'grub along as best they may on a paltry 300,000 acres.' (A. Withy, 'How to Revive Trade: The Old Finance and the New', Westminster Review, CXLIII, June, 1895, p.630.)

Council, dominated as it was by the run-holders, frustrated McKenzie's attempts to pass the legislation necessary to permit closer settlement. As a result of the obstructionist attitude of the Legislative Council much of the first Liberal-Labour Ministry's time was taken up in constitutional controversy. Real progress in Liberal legislation only became possible after a seven year tenure of office had been substituted for life tenure on the Legislative Council and the Liberal Government, led now by Richard Seddon, had been returned to power with an increased majority in the 1893 elections.<sup>1</sup>

The sweeping majority gained by the Liberals in the first election at which women had had the vote allayed the fears of many Liberals that the women would vote Conservative. Prohibitionists and advocates of religious instruction in schools also found that the women, despite assiduous wooing,

---

<sup>1</sup> The state of the parties after the 1893 election was: Liberals, 52 seats; Conservatives, 15; Independents, 3.



did not necessarily vote as men had expected they would.<sup>1</sup>

The 1893 election showed clearly that most New Zealanders subscribed to the Liberal belief that through corporate action it was possible to construct a near-perfect society and that the common man could be liberated from his distress and freed to pursue the goal of a full and happy life. Any legislation which seemed likely to lead to the attainment of that goal was therefore assured of public support.<sup>2</sup>

The following year, 1894, has been called 'the annus mirabilis of New Zealand legislation.'<sup>3</sup> Land, labour and welfare measures rejected in the previous session passed

1 The fear that women might succumb to the blandishments of the Roman Catholics, the Episcopalians, or the Bible-in-Schools party was a very real one among those who wanted the secular system maintained intact. If this system were destroyed, one anguished Otago correspondent wrote, 'it will have received its quietus at the hands of the present and future mothers of the colony, who will have to answer to the rising generation for the wilful destruction of the most precious heritage a race could possess.' (Otago Daily Times, 17 October, 1893.)

For similar comments see: Evening Post, 6 November, 1893; Poverty Bay Herald (Gisborne), 17 November, 1893; Lyttelton Times, 9 November, 1893.

Some Liberals also took exception to the 'undemocratic' nature of certain passages in the 'Irish Textbook', the religious manual favoured by most advocates of religion in schools. e.g., 'It is thus that God by making some rich and some poor lays the foundation of interchange of sympathy and benevolence in the rich, and gratitude on the part of the poor.' (Lyttelton Times, 18 November, 1896.)

2 T.L.Buick, 'The New Zealand Parliamentary Labour Party,' Review of Reviews (Australian Edition), viii, August, 1896, p.137.

3 C.H.B.E., Vol.VII, Part 2, p.178.

triumphantly into law. The promised 'legislation for human beings'<sup>1</sup> had finally become a reality and the new New Zealand came in as on a flood-tide.

Secondary Education, 1890-95.

While the adult New Zealander's world was being transformed, it was not surprising that the child's should be neglected. But the neglect was not complete. In the factory legislation as finally passed in 1894, children under the age of fourteen could not be employed in factories, and various restrictions were placed upon their employment between fourteen and sixteen.<sup>2</sup> The elimination of child labour, at least in the towns, was a necessary step towards educational opportunity for all, but few, if any politicians foresaw the educational implications of this law. Many children who could previously have left school at thirteen and gone to work in a factory were no longer able to do so, and stayed on for another year at school. In his 1892 Education Report Pember Reeves remarked that 'the proportion of the number of pupils in the classes above the class preparing for the Third Standard to the number in the lower classes continues to increase.'<sup>3</sup> By 1895 ministerial

---

1 P.D., 1892, Vol.76, p.420.

2 A.J.H.R., 1895, H-6, pp.3-4.

3 A.J.H.R., 1892, E-1, p.iv.

attention was focussed on the considerable increase in the number of children enrolled in classes higher than the fourth standard.<sup>1</sup> It was not coincidence that public interest in securing easier access to the secondary schools increased as the number of children staying on to the sixth standard and beyond grew.

During Pember Reeves's term of office as Minister of Education his colleagues in the House of Representatives gave him little practical assistance in easing access to the secondary schools.<sup>2</sup> On the hustings, understandably, more concern was shown. Robert Stout, as always, stressed the need to afford equality of educational opportunity to all;<sup>3</sup> Dr. Newman, another prominent Wellington Liberal, spoke of 'completing the educational ladder by the establishment of bursaries which will enable poor children of ability to proceed to the higher standards of education.'<sup>4</sup> Similar unexceptionable sentiments were uttered by Liberal candidates from Invercargill to Auckland but no one, anywhere, spoke as irate Liberals had done in the previous decade, of 'bursting-up'<sup>5</sup> the secondary schools. In 1893 the Liberals with the

1 A.J.H.R., 1895, E-1, p.iii.

2 e.g., in 1895 the Minister of Railways declined to grant free rail travel to children who, having passed standard six, had to travel by train to the nearest high school. (P.D., 1895, Vol.90, p.583).

3 P.D., 1895, Vol.89, pp.337-340.

4 Evening Post, 20 October, 1893.

5 New Zealand Times, 1 November, 1893.

exciting prospect before them of being able, instead, to 'burst-up' the great estates were not really interested in educational matters. 'Our policy is simplicity itself for it commences with the settlement of the people on the land and it ends with it,'<sup>1</sup> said Richard John Seddon, the new Premier.

Contemporary feeling about education was well summed up by the editor of the Temuka Leader who wrote: 'The Education Question may be dismissed with half-a-dozen words. All that is necessary on that point is to say that one is in favour of the present system and against any changes: that is, if one has no change to suggest.'<sup>2</sup> 'New Zealand has the best education system in the world,' a Nelson Liberal assured his audience. 'The standard reached in the primary schools is sufficiently high for any child who has passed through the schools to enter a merchant's or a lawyer's office, to become a farmer or to enter business.'<sup>3</sup>

It is against this background of indifference and complacency about educational matters that Pember Reeves's attempts to make secondary education more easily available to all children must be seen. Within Cabinet itself there was

---

1 The Colonist, 15 November, 1893.  
 2 Temuka Leader, 7 November, 1893.  
 3 The Colonist, 14 November, 1893.

little enthusiasm for educational measures. John McKenzie made it quite clear in the course of a debate on the Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill in 1894 that he had no sympathy with education beyond the rudiments.<sup>1</sup> Pember Reeves was forced to admit in the House that he was unable on occasions to get Cabinet to consider educational matters adequately because 'the pressure of work during the Session has been so great.'<sup>2</sup> By the end of 1896 the Conservatives were claiming that the Liberals were opposed to any form of higher education, an accusation more heatedly than convincingly denied by Seddon in a campaign address at Hokitika.<sup>3</sup>

In his promotion of the 1893 and 1895 Endowed Schools Bills Pember Reeves had to contend with this lack of interest among his colleagues rather than with active opposition. The two Bills were substantially alike. Each was entitled 'An Act to provide for Free Tuition in Endowed Schools'<sup>4</sup> and called upon the governing bodies of endowed schools to provide 'free education to one scholar for every fifty pounds of the annual income derived by the school from endowments.'<sup>5</sup> The 1895 Bill was somewhat more permissive than the 1893 Bill in that

---

1 P.D., 1894, Vol.84, pp.109-133.

2 P.D., 1895, Vol.91, p.845.

3 Lyttelton Times, 20 November, 1896.

4 Bills and Private Bills, 1893, i, No.93: Ibid., 1895, i, No.116. (For the complete 1893 Bill see Appendix B.)

5 Endowed Schools Bill, 1893, The 1895 Bill referred to 'the net annual income' (See Appendix B.)

it allowed governing bodies to substitute scholarships according to a fixed scale in lieu of free places. Selection of free place and scholarship holders was in both Bills left in the hands of the governing bodies. Both Bills contained an identical clause relating to right of inspection:

The Inspector-General of Schools, and such deputy or deputies as he with the consent of the Minister of Education may appoint, shall have free access at all times to all endowed schools, and shall have authority to observe the conduct of the schools while the classes are under instruction, and to examine the classes viva voce or by means of written papers. 1

By means of this clause Pember Reeves hoped to succeed where Stout had failed in 1887<sup>2</sup> and at the same time to satisfy a frequently expressed wish of many people that 'secondary schools be inspected annually in the same way as district schools'<sup>3</sup> and brought thoroughly under the control of a central authority.<sup>4</sup>

Pember Reeves's handling of his 1893 Bill in the House seems curiously lackadaisical. It was given its first reading on 7 July, 1893, and was not heard of again until mid-August when Sir John Hall asked on behalf of the governors of Christ's College why they had been given no foreknowledge

1 Endowed Schools Bill, 1895, clause 8.

2 Above, p.240. Pember Reeves was probably also aware of the attitude adopted by Nelson and Christ's Colleges when Habens had sought permission for the Royal Commission of 1879-80 to inspect those institutions.

3 P.D., 1891, Vol.72, p.249.

4 Otago Daily Times, 13 October, 1893.

of the Bill.<sup>1</sup> Pember Reeves's answer suggested that either he had no real confidence in the Bill he was promoting or that his Cabinet colleagues had declined to give him any support. 'Had I intended to push the Bill on immediately after its introduction', he said, 'Christ's College would have been warned. There has, however, been no undue haste in pushing it on and I will be quite satisfied if the Bill comes up and is dealt with in the ordinary course.'<sup>2</sup>

In fact, the Bill was never discussed any further in the House and was discharged on 6 September. Why Pember Reeves allowed his Bill to suffer such an ignominious fate can now be only a matter of conjecture. It could well have been that, knowing himself to be without allies in Cabinet, and with most of his labour legislation still held up by the Legislative Council, he decided not to fight the enraged governing bodies of the endowed schools, many of whose members were also Legislative Councillors.

The Christ's College governors spearheaded the attack on the Endowed Schools Bill by sending a telegram to each board of governors asking it to protest to the Minister of Education. The telegram to the Nelson College Council read:

---

1 P.D., 1893, Vol.81, p.166.

2 Ibid.

Governing body Christ's College are protesting against Endowed Schools Bill. Will you also protest without delay? Believe object of bill already attained by existing Board of Education Scholarships and Exhibitions given by various schools. 1

The threatened infringement of their autonomy spurred the Nelson College Council into action. At a special meeting of the governors the day after the wire from Christ's College had been received they resolved to send a telegram of protest to the Minister, twenty-five copies of the College Report and Balance Sheet for 1892 to their fellow-governor, J.W. Barnicoat, who was also a Legislative Councillor, and a 'Governors will co-operate' reply to Christ's College.<sup>2</sup>

These immediate tasks fulfilled, the governors then sat down to compose a dignified and, they hoped, crushing rejoinder to Pember Reeves's proposed Bill. They pointed out that they were already providing out of endowment income as many scholarships as they could afford and then, warming to their task, the governors wrote:

The Endowed Schools Bill is in principle and in fact a confiscation of a part of the endowments of this and other similar Institutions and as such in our opinion, is not reasonable nor, at least in the case of Nelson College, is it necessary.... Section 6 referring to approval by a Government Official both of the work done and of the actual manner of doing it, is in our opinion wrong in principle and would, it is believed, be so offensive in practice as to be unworkable. The Council of Governors

---

1 Nelson College, Minutes (Special Meeting), 17 August, 1893.

2 Ibid.



of Nelson College, therefore,...with the greatest respect but with the utmost emphasis beg to protest both upon principle and in its actual details against the Endowed Schools Bill. 1

The anxieties of the governors were somewhat relieved by the hopeful and cheering note struck in a letter to their secretary from a fellow-governor who was also a Member of the House of Representatives:

I have endeavoured amongst Members to work up an opposition against the Bill's provisions. There is some hostility to the measure, and I have no doubt it will be strongly opposed. 2

Just in case any loopholes still remained, the governors engaged H.D. Bell of Bell, Gully and Company, a leading Wellington legal firm, to look after their interests.<sup>3</sup>

The governors of Canterbury College, whose duties included responsibility for the Christchurch Boys' and Girls' High Schools, the Library and the Museum as well as the University College, took much less umbrage at the Bill's provisions than their Nelson counterparts. They asked the Headmaster of the Boys' High School to comment on the possible effects of the Bill upon his school if it became law. In his reply he dwelt mainly upon matters of finance, staffing and accommodation. If the organisation and character of secondary education were to be preserved, he reported, his school and

---

1 Secretary, Nelson College, to Hon. W.P.Reeves, 22 August, 1893. Minutes, Nelson College.

2 J.G.Harkness, M.H.R., to Secretary, Nelson College, 24 August, 1893. Minutes, Nelson College.

3 H.D. Bell to Secretary, Nelson College, 7 September, 1893. Minutes, Nelson College.

others with whose headmasters he had discussed the Bill must continue to receive the full endowment income as well as fees. The 1893 Bill, if carried, would mean a loss of £170 per annum to the Boys' High School. There was also the added danger that 'the lower school of the High School might be deprived of pupils who would be sent to public schools to win free places.' An influx of free place pupils would necessitate the engagement of another teacher and the building of an <sup>x</sup>extra classroom.<sup>1</sup>

The governors were convinced by their Headmaster's report that unless the government was prepared to pay a capitation allowance of at least £3.15. 0 on all free place pupils joining the school the Board could not accept the Bill's provisions. The Registrar was therefore instructed to explain the Board's decision in a letter to the 'governors in Wellington.'<sup>2</sup>

It can only be concluded that Pember Reeves was not prepared to fight for his Bill against a union of boards of governors with numerous friends in high places. Even the reasonable reply of the Canterbury College governors could have given him little encouragement at a time when the country's economy was still depressed, the provision of

---

<sup>1</sup> C.E. Bevan-Brown to Canterbury College Board of Governors, 12 July 1893. Letter File, Canterbury College, No.6244.

<sup>2</sup> Registrar to Governors, 19 August 1893. Letter File, Canterbury College, No.6244. There were six governors in Wellington: four were M.L.C.'s and two M.H.R.'s.

primary education in country districts was by no means adequate, the compulsory clause of the 1877 Education Act was not being enforced<sup>1</sup> and primary school enrolments were growing<sup>2</sup> while those of secondary schools were declining. The average secondary school attendance in 1893, Inspector-General Habens reported, was less by eighty than it had been in 1886.<sup>3</sup> It was, as a Liberal candidate said later in the year, to Pember Reeves's credit that he had tried to pass a Bill to enable a certain number of primary children to gain free places in the secondary schools,<sup>4</sup> but the times were not ripe for such legislation. First things had to come first and the only practical outcome of the Minister of Education's efforts to open up the high schools was the inclusion in the Gisborne High School Act, 1885, Amendment Bill of 1893 of a clause which read:

"The Board" may out of revenue set apart a sum in any one year...for the grant of scholarships to children who have been educated at any Government School in the County of Cook or Borough of Gisborne. 5

Pember Reeves did not completely abandon his free place

---

1 'It must be a matter of notoriety that in New Zealand, up to this period, the compulsory character of the 1877 Act has been completely ignored.' J. Izett, Signs and Portents, Being the Labour Question from an Australian Point of View (Christchurch, 1893), p.34.

2 P.D., 1895, Vol.89, pp.337-40.

3 A.J.H.R., 1894, E-9, p.6.

4 Lyttelton Times, 16 November, 1893.

5 Bills and Private Bills, 1893, i, No.102.

plans but simply bowed to political and economic necessity and shelved them. In the following year, replying to a question in the House about the advisability of bringing about greater uniformity in Board of Education scholarship regulations, he said that he proposed to deal with this question shortly in connection with the secondary schools.<sup>1</sup> The Governor's speech at the beginning of the 1895 parliamentary session reminded members of Pember Reeves's intention. 'You will be invited', the Governor said, 'to pass Bills dealing with...matters concerned with secondary education.'<sup>2</sup>

On 3 July, 1895, a new Endowed Schools Bill was given its first and only reading. It was withdrawn on 2 October, 1895. Outside the General Assembly there was equal indifference to it. The Nelson College Council of Governors who had gone to so much trouble to throttle the earlier version took no notice whatsoever of the 1895 Bill in their monthly deliberations. The Canterbury College Board of Governors laid the draft of the Bill on the table but no discussion of its provisions followed.<sup>3</sup> The governors had no correspondence about it with any other endowed school. The only appreciation of Pember Reeves's efforts by a governing body was that expressed in a resolution

---

1 P.D., 1894, Vol.86, p.119.

2 P.D., 1895, Vol.87, p.3.

3 Canterbury College Board of Governors, (College Committee), Minutes, 7 October, 1895, p.375.

of the Board of Governors of Timaru High School which read:

...the Board regrets the dropping of the Endowed Schools Bill, and expresses the earnest hope that the Department will not lose sight of the expediency of making some provision for the Annual Examination of High Schools. 1

It is very likely that the Timaru governors were not as well informed of impending political developments as their city counterparts who had ignored the Bill so completely. Those with an ear to the political ground - and the Nelson and Canterbury College governors certainly had this - knew that Pember Reeves no longer enjoyed the support of his Cabinet colleagues, that his relations with Seddon were strained to the breaking-point. The editor of the Auckland Star wrote of a rumoured serious divergence of opinion between Seddon and Pember Reeves. 'If such a difference exists', he went on, 'it will be so much the worse for Mr. Reeves. There is no doubt that he is a source of weakness to the Ministry, while it is just as certain that the Premier is its backbone and chief source of strength.'<sup>2</sup>

By 1895, 'the once radiant sun of Reeves was unmistakably setting';<sup>3</sup> his mana had gone and people were suspicious of him and his intentions.<sup>4</sup> There was criticism of Pember Reeves's

1 Secretary, Timaru High School to Secretary, Department of Education, Minutes, Timaru High School, 1 November, 1895.

2 Auckland Star (Auckland), 20 February, 1895.

3 Chapman, R. and Sinclair, K., Studies in a Small Democracy (Hamilton, 1963), p.140.

4 A suspicion heightened by injudicious remarks made in Melbourne but reported in New Zealand. He had declared himself to be an 'out and out Socialist' who had taken office to carry out his ideas. New Zealand Times, 25 February, 1895.

theoretical and experimental legislation and of his tendency to legislate 'ahead of public requirements.'<sup>1</sup> Pember Reeves either did not understand or was not prepared to accept the mood of the times although lesser men had already sensed it.

'The pursuit of material wealth occupies the attention of nearly all the adult male population', wrote one contemporary, 'and experimental legislation is received with indifference.'<sup>2</sup>

There was no place for a man of Pember Reeves's outlook in a political party which by the mid-nineties and increasingly thereafter owed its success to its concern with immediate and obvious matters and whose members never wandered 'in search of misty ideals, only obtainable on the day of the millenium.'<sup>3</sup>

1 Auckland Star, 28 January, 1895, p.4.

2 A. Sanderson, ABC of New Zealand Politics (Masterton, 1894).

3 T.L. Buick, 'The New Zealand Parliamentary Labour Party', Review of Reviews, (Australian Edition), viii, August, 1896, p.137. Oliver Duff's comment on New Zealanders in New Zealand Now (Wellington, 1940), p.33, helps to explain Pember Reeves's failure to win support in the nineties. 'We follow our instincts, trust our emotions, mistrust theory. So we mistrust, and even fear, men who march to strange music.'

A contemporary of Pember Reeves indirectly explained why it was possible for Seddon to oust the brilliant Minister of Education, Labour and Justice when he wrote:

'...only a very small minority of human beings...is greatly interested in pure theories. The few, indeed, can grow enthusiastic about abstract questions of right, and indignant about abstract wrongs; but although it may be contended that they are the salt of the earth and of society, they are not, it must be admitted, a very influential or popular condiment. The vast majority want to know what is to be gained by practically recognizing the right demanded, or by remedying the wrong complained of.' (Hugh Lusk, 'Woman's Enfranchisement in New Zealand', Forum, April, 1897, p.174.)

By the middle of 1895 Pember Reeves's position in the Ministry was becoming untenable. The bad odour into which he had fallen as Minister of Labour inevitably diminished his effectiveness as Minister of Education. His 1895 Endowed Schools Bill, therefore, among those who knew about Cabinet relationships, did not engender any alarm. Pember Reeves struggled on in the Cabinet until 10 January, 1896, when he resigned his portfolios and immediately left for London to become Agent-General.

Pember Reeves's unpopularity had stemmed largely from his pre-occupation as Minister of Labour with legislation for which many of the country Liberals elected in 1893 had little taste. 'I am getting sick and tired of so much labour legislation',<sup>1</sup> said one of the country Liberals in 1895. It was also contributed to, among his fellow-Canterbury Liberals, by his failure, as Minister of Education, to take any action to change the constitution of the Canterbury College Board of Governors, an august body generally regarded by the more radical Liberals as dedicated to the task of preserving the social and educational privileges of the wealthy. A more representative Board elected on a popular basis was strongly desired in Canterbury, a Legislative Councillor asserted<sup>2</sup> but Reeves evaded the issue.

---

1 P.D., 1895, Vol.89, p.390. The character of the Liberal government was considerably altered by the 1893 elections when five city seats were lost but many country ones gained. This meant a marked weakening of the Liberal left wing.

2 P.D., 1894, Vol.83, pp.447-8.

R. Meredith, Member for Ashley and a consistent champion of educational reform, said that he had repeatedly asked Pember Reeves 'to introduce a Bill giving effect to the wishes of the people but, somehow or other, though he promised to do so, the fulfilment of that promise was deferred.'<sup>1</sup>

With Pember Reeves out of the way the Liberal M.H.R. for Riccarton, 'Rickety' Russell, took the matter into his own hands and introduced a Private Member's Bill<sup>2</sup> designed to do away with life membership of the Canterbury College Board of Governors and to widen the number and variety of interests represented on the Board. He proposed that in order 'to provide a point of union' between the primary and secondary systems, School Committees should be empowered to elect a number of governors.<sup>3</sup>

Russell's efforts to give the public a greater share in the management of the affairs of the Canterbury College Board of Governors were openly opposed by C.C. Bowen. 'If the setting up of a standard of higher education is put in the hands of those who have not had the opportunity of acquiring it, a terrible blow will be struck at our University', he said. 'I hope, in the interests of democracy itself, that the management of the universities and colleges of this country will not be subjected directly to the popular vote.'<sup>4</sup> But such Jeffersonian sentiments

---

1 P.D., 1896, Vol.92, p.579.

2 Bills and Private Bills, 1896, i, Nos. 34-36.

3 P.D., 1896, Vol.92, p.578.

4 P.D., 1896, Vol.95, pp.34-5.



were sadly out of place in a Jacksonian age. Russell's Bill was merged with a similar measure sponsored by W.C. Walker, Pember Reeves's successor as Minister of Education and himself a governor of Canterbury College. This, after much delay and alteration in the Legislative Council, was finally allowed to pass. Although a number of Christchurch Liberals did not think the Canterbury College and Canterbury Agricultural College Act, 1896, went far enough in destroying privilege and improving the accessibility of the high schools<sup>1</sup> it was hailed in the Lyttelton Times as marking 'a tremendous advance in the cause of secondary education.'<sup>2</sup>

The victory which the Christchurch Liberals had won over the Canterbury College Conservatives was of only limited local consequence. It did not really justify the exultation displayed by the editor of the Lyttelton Times. But the prolonged controversy which preceded the passage of the Canterbury College and Canterbury Agricultural College Act was in itself significant. It reflected an antipathy towards the endowed schools which had been quiescent since the late eighties. The steadfast opposition of the governors of Canterbury College

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 30 October, 1896. W.W. Tanner complained that the Legislative Council had killed a Bill passed almost unanimously by the House of Representatives and had replaced it by a Bill 'which gave the scantiest and most meagre concessions to popular opinion ever sanctioned by the New Zealand Parliament', P.D., 1896, Vol.96, p.337.

2 Lyttelton Times, 20 October, 1896.

to any reform of their constitution had revived old feelings of hostility to secondary schools in general. By 1896 many Liberals were once again choosing to regard the richly endowed and well-established secondary schools as bastions of privilege and exclusiveness which had either to be destroyed or captured. Pember Reeves had tried to breach their defences with his Endowed Schools Bills and to dictate certain conditions to them. He had been thoroughly routed. But his departure for England did not mean that the governors could relax their vigilance for there yet remained their implacable enemy, John McKenzie, Minister of Lands.

McKenzie made no pretence of being a friend of secondary schools or university colleges.<sup>1</sup> In particular he objected to their possession of vast land endowments which locked up much good agricultural land at a time when land hungry settlers were clamouring for it<sup>2</sup> or in desperation were leaving the colony.<sup>3</sup> In his first year in office McKenzie tried to pass an Educational Endowments and Reserves Management and Exchange Bill which would have given the management of the education reserves to the Land Boards of the colony. McKenzie wanted then, and always, to take the management of the education reserves away from the School

---

1 P.D., 1894, Vol.84, pp.109-133.

2 P.D., 1891, Vol.74, pp.826-31: 1896, Vol.92, p.601.

3 P.D., 1891, Vol.72, p.124.

Commissioners who, he said were not only incompetent, but 'delight in giving a few thousand acres more to someone who has about 30,000 acres already.'<sup>1</sup> Each year McKenzie tried to take over the education reserves but each time he was rebuffed. As a colleague had observed in 1891, 'the honourable gentlemen in the other place have a great antipathy to in any way disturb the existing state of affairs in connection with education reserves.'<sup>2</sup> Finally, in 1895, McKenzie admitted that 'until there was a radical change somewhere else,' it was no use persevering with Bills on Endowment and Educational Reserves.<sup>3</sup> McKenzie had never disguised his intentions. He wanted to dispossess the secondary schools of their land endowments.<sup>4</sup> That by so doing he would virtually destroy secondary education in New Zealand did not cause him any concern. Only the dogged resistance of the Legislative Council, the home both before and after its reform of so many school governors, frustrated him.

---

1 P.D., 1895, Vol.89, p.287.

2 P.D., 1891, Vol.74, p.945.

3 P.D., 1895, Vol.89, p.287. In 1896, in reply to a Taranaki M.H.R.'s request for a Bill vesting all educational reserves in primary education, John McKenzie said: 'I lack the audacity to introduce a Bill to take away all secondary and university reserves.... That is, I fear, a task which even my broad shoulders will not be able to carry out.' - P.D., 1896, Vol.96, p.38.

4 P.D., 1895, Vol.89, p.287. In a letter to the Secretary of the Nelson College Council, a local M.H.R. warned of 'another very mischievous Bill...the Endowment and Educational Reserves which you will see proposes to appropriate "Endowments and Reserves" of all kinds, and place them under the control of the Waste Lands Boards of the Districts.' - J.G.Harkness to O. Curtis, 24 August, 1893. Minutes, Nelson College.

By the beginning of 1896 the secondary schools seemed to have once again successfully asserted their independence. They had withstood major assaults by Pember Reeves and McKenzie, both of whom were now no longer in the field, and the new Minister of Education was fairly certain not to have too radical reforming notions. However, they were still subject to almost continuous sniping fire from lesser enemies, fire which, in the long run, was to prove more effective in overcoming their resistance than direct assaults. Up and down the country the old cry of 'privilege', so common in the eighties, was once again heard.<sup>1</sup> Poor men's children, it was reiterated, rarely went beyond standard four<sup>2</sup> so that the 'proletariat who contributed five-sixths of the colony's taxation'<sup>3</sup> were in effect subsidising the education of the children of the wealthy who could afford to keep their children at school. Even more galling to many Liberals was the continuing practice in most secondary schools of admitting children at a very early age. 'This practice', contended C. de Lautour, a consistent critic of the endowed schools, 'highlights the class nature of such schools. These young children are in the endowed schools because their parents have

---

1 Kumara Times (Kumara), 10 November, 1893; Lyttelton Times, 14 October, 1893.

2 The Colonist, 21 November, 1893.

3 New Zealand Herald, 30 October, 1893. (Correspondence).

ideas that their children must not be contaminated by mixing with the children of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

Attacks on the practice of endowed schools of admitting primary school age children were not, of course, anything new. What was new was the vigour and persistence with which the critics pressed home their attacks. The secondary school men defended their lower schools on the familiar grounds that only by beginning the study of classics and mathematics early could pupils derive full benefit from the upper school course. Their opponents were unimpressed and unconvinced; doubt as to the suitability of the traditional secondary school curriculum was much more widespread than it had been a few years earlier when Stout and Hislop had tried to persuade headmasters to pay more attention to technical and scientific studies.<sup>2</sup> A Liberal candidate won the acclaim of his audience during an election campaign address in 1893 by decrying the impractical nature of the classical curriculum and the continued slavish adherence of most high schools to it. 'The system tends...in the direction of making the young people look down upon handiwork', he declared, 'and causes some of them to believe that your lawyer or your quill-driver is your only genteel

---

1 Poverty Bay Herald, 31 October, 1893. De Lautour claimed that half the children attending endowed secondary schools in 1893 were of primary school age.

2 Above, p.241.

person. But -

When Adam delved and Eve span  
Who was then the gentleman?

Bodily labour that is honest is noble; intelligent and honest handiwork is kingly.<sup>1</sup>

Political capital was not, however, easily made out of discussions about curriculum: the politicians preferred to concentrate their attacks upon the demonstrable class nature of the lower schools. McKenzie's annual Educational Endowments and Reserves Bill were replaced by almost equally frequent orders of the House of Representatives seeking returns from the secondary schools giving details of endowment income, enrolments and, in particular, exact information about the educational attainments of any pupils unable to pass standard six.<sup>2</sup> A return in 1895 showed precisely what the anti-secondary school faction wanted it to show: that at all secondary schools other than Otago and Southland Boys' there were still, as in 1893, large numbers of pupils enrolled who were below the sixth standard level.<sup>3</sup>

---

1 The Press, 1 November, 1893. A candidate speaking at Sydenham said education should be adapted to a country, not city, life. Children should think of employment on the land. Education could help in this respect. 'How to get the land for them seems hardly to be a question in a democracy,' he added. In the same issue of the Lyttelton Times (10 November, 1893), as this speech was reported, the Railways Department was advertising excursion railway fares to the Cheviot Estate sale.

2 e.g., P.D., 1895, Vol.87, p.591.

3 A.J.H.R., 1895, E-13, pp.1-6. The Principal of Nelson College refused to furnish details of ages and attainments. He said that the questions asked had relevance only for district high schools.

In Retrospect

The first five years of Liberal rule had brought about no major changes in the organisation of secondary education. There had been too many other pressing matters to be dealt with first. But there had been indications that in their enthusiasm for striking down privilege wherever it was to be found the crusading Liberals would not allow the endowed schools their favoured status for much longer. Only the would-be reformers' lack of efficient leadership after Pember Reeves's departure for England postponed the inevitable.

## CHAPTER TEN

### STAGNATION

The secondary school reform movement came to a halt with the departure of Pember Reeves. The efforts made during his term of office as Minister of Education to extend opportunities for secondary schooling had largely been personal; they did not represent the considered and continuing policy of a strong department.

For the weakness of the Education Department Pember Reeves was himself largely responsible. He had deliberately not strengthened it because he believed that 'until public opinion and the House decided that it should be otherwise'<sup>1</sup> real power in education should rest with the Education Boards. But Education Boards had no power to force reforms upon boards of governors and Inspector-General W.J. Habens was, by 1896, not the man to take the initiative on his own account. Further attempts to open up the endowed schools could only be initiated by Pember Reeves's successor, W.C. Walker, one of the Liberal Ministry's early appointments to the Upper House.

No such initiative was forthcoming. Walker's reforming zeal had disappeared with advancing years, a disappearance

---

1 P.D., 1893, Vol.82, p.472.



hastened perhaps by membership of the Legislative Council and the Canterbury College Board of Governors. Less than a year after Pember Reeves had left New Zealand his friend Mark Cohen, editor of Dunedin's Evening Star, wrote to him:

Educationally we have stagnated. I sadly miss you there. Walker is a well-meaning old gentleman but he's afraid to make even a little step in advance. 1

Reeves's Wellington correspondents were less charitable in their appraisals of his successor. Edward Tregear, Secretary of Labour and a great admirer of Pember Reeves, took a certain malicious pleasure in describing Walker's efforts on the hustings:

They put Walker up to speak at Napier and Pahiatua but he made the most doleful mess of it. 2

But Walker's ineptitude as a politician was not of any great consequence. What was more significant was the unhappy state of affairs within the Education Department alluded to in another letter from Wellington:

The reverend gentleman [Rev. W.J. Habens] regards Walker as 'miserably weak'. I think Walker regards the Doctor as a fully-charged torpedo which may go off at any moment. 3

Walker's ineffectiveness as a Minister of Education was not

1 Mark Cohen to W.P. Reeves, 9 October, 1896. Reeves's Papers (Photostat of British Museum Originals, Turnbull Library).

2 Edward Tregear to W.P. Reeves, 8 December, 1896. Reeves's Papers.

3 F. Waldegrave to W.P. Reeves, 3 July, 1897. Reeves's Papers. (Waldegrave was Chief Clerk in the Justice Department).

entirely due to personal incompetence. It was caused in large part by his not being a Member of the House of Representatives. The educational spokesman in the Lower House was the rather inarticulate W. Hall-Jones, Minister of Public Works and Member for Timaru. Under these circumstances educational stagnation was hardly to be avoided.<sup>1</sup> Even the newly introduced technical education suffered from the general malaise; the Technical Education Act passed with a flourish in 1895 had had few positive results. 'There has been plenty of talk - far too much of it - but we are not a step "forader" than we were in 1895,' wrote Mark Cohen, 'whilst as a matter of fact our Technical Schools are languishing for want of funds. Yet Seddon boasts of a surplus of half a million on the year's transactions.'<sup>2</sup>

The prevailing educational lassitude stemmed in a large measure from the widely-held belief that the 1877 Education Act had given New Zealand an almost perfect education system and that the Act itself was therefore sacrosanct.<sup>3</sup> Walker recognised the potential dangers inherent in this attitude.

---

1 A.G. Butchers's eulogy of W.C. Walker - 'Mr. Walker was, indeed, one of the best Ministers of Education New Zealand has ever had' - is difficult to understand. However, the explanation may lie in the remainder of the sentence quoted: '...his death in 1903...was the occasion of many genuine expressions of regret.' - A.G. Butchers, Education in New Zealand (Dunedin, 1930), p.161. It would appear that Dr. Butchers equated obituaries with truth.

2 Mark Cohen to W.P. Reeves, 6 May, 1899, Reeves's Papers.

3 P.D., 1896, Vol.95, pp.33-34.

'No one values the good work done by that Act more than I do,' he said. 'On the other hand I refuse to take up the position of one who thinks that no reform is ever necessary. If a reform is necessary...I shall never be found opposing it simply because it is a reform, and I trust the Council will agree with me in that attitude even with regard to the Education Act.'<sup>1</sup>

Walker's professed willingness to carry out any education reforms considered necessary was not put to the test in 1896. The absence of the Minister of Education from the House of Representatives militated against worthwhile debate on educational matters in that chamber. Stout's practice when Minister of Education of giving a detailed analysis of the working of the school system when he presented the estimates, a practice revived by Pember Reeves, once again fell into desuetude. Hall-Jones did no more than answer specific questions. Discussion of the estimates, however, afforded members from rural North Island electorates an opportunity to plead for more money for education in their districts. The Member for Egmont claimed that there were thousands of children in the bush districts who were suffering from want of school accommodation.<sup>2</sup> He and other Taranaki members argued that the Government should concentrate its efforts on

---

1 P.D., 1897, Vol.99, p.398.

2 P.D., 1896, Vol.95, p.228.

providing education for all up to the sixth standard. Secondary education was, in their opinion, a private matter; revenue from educational reserves should be devoted exclusively to primary education. 'The system of educational reserves for secondary education is an outrage on society,'<sup>1</sup> E.M. Smith of New Plymouth ejaculated.<sup>3</sup>

It was true that in the 'frontier' districts of Taranaki, Wanganui and the newly opened up King's Country, where families were carving dairy farms out of the bush, schools were few and far between. But this, as anyone knew who read the school inspectors' reports in the Appendices to the Journals,<sup>2</sup> was not the complete explanation for the educational backwardness of the children in the 'bush districts'. The root cause was overwork, one visitor to Midhirst in Taranaki reported.

I find Education here more backward than I like, we have so many difficulties to contend with. As you know the industry of this part of the Colony depends largely on the help of children without which it would not pay. By the time their work is finished, the little peoples [sic] are physically exhausted and fit only for bed that they may be able to renew their work early the following morning. The settlers themselves are in much the same state by the evening and even if they had the intelligence cannot command the energy to direct the study of next day's lessons.... It is a case of early to bed and early to rise without making wise. Teachers and taught need lots of sympathy under circumstances like these. 3

The sympathy of South Island members, still a majority in

---

1 Ibid., p.229.

2 A.J.H.R., 1897, E-1B, p.18; 1898, E-1B, p.18; 1899, E-1B, p.24; 1901, E-1B, p.14.

3 J. Mackay to W.P. Reeves, 24 November, 1895. Reeves's Papers.

the House, did not extend to a willingness to 'colonialise' the secondary education reserves. A recommendation that all reserves should be vested in the Crown and administered by the Waste Lands Board provoked a number of sharp interchanges between North and South, with party lines temporarily forgotten. 'Only a man who belongs to that class of socialists,' cried one Conservative,

' "Who has yearnings  
For equal division of unequal earnings:  
Be he idler or bungler - or both - he is willing  
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling,"

would dare to suggest taking away educational endowments set aside by the thrift and providence of the people in the South.<sup>1</sup>

W.C. Buchanan, Member for Wairarapa, made fun of what he called the Southerners' 'self-laudation on the statesmanlike foresight in the past of which these endowments are the proof.' He pointed out that the money which had been used to buy the land from the Maoris had belonged to the colony as a whole and not to the South alone, and that it had been easy in the South to make endowments.<sup>2</sup>

The debate led nowhere; neither ridicule nor reason could alter the determination of most of the South Island members to hold onto their endowments.

---

1 P.D., 1896, Vol.95, p.228.

2 P.D., 1896, Vol.96, pp.335-6.

The extent to which the children from all sections of the community shared in the benefits accruing from the possession of secondary school endowments differed from place to place. In Dunedin as early as 1883 the Board of Governors of the Boys' and Girls' High Schools decided 'to grant free education at the High Schools to all boys and girls who, in the examination for the Education Board's senior scholarships make fifty per cent of the total attainable marks.'<sup>1</sup> As a result of this policy, Otago Boys' High School by 1894 was one of the few city secondary schools without a large preparatory division. Habens reported that the former first, second and lower third forms no longer existed, most pupils coming on to the High School after they had passed standard six in a district school. Their 'position in the school', as he phrased it, was decided by their ability in English or arithmetic.<sup>2</sup>

As the numbers of children staying at primary school to and beyond standard six steadily increased after the passage of the Factory Act, 1894, Education Boards became alarmed. The Auckland Board complained in their 1895 report to the Minister that six hundred pupils a year were passing standard

---

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly, 9 June, 1883, p.16.

<sup>2</sup> A.J.H.R., 1894, E-9A, p.2.

six, and many were remaining at school to do standard six work over again - sometimes three or four times - in class X.<sup>1</sup>

Boards of governors responded in different ways to this new trend. The Thames High School governors opened their doors to all who had passed standard six. Habens was delighted with the result and commented most favourably on 'the excellence of tone and work' at Thames High School.<sup>2</sup> A falling-off in the revenue from the Thames High School endowment, however, forced the governors to abandon their free tuition scheme.<sup>3</sup> In Ashburton a deputation of parents asked the governors of the local high school to abolish fees for children who had passed standard six. The governors declined unless the government was prepared to pay secondary schools a capitation allowance 'in respect of pupils admitted from primary schools at specially reduced fees.' But in the end, bowing to popular pressure, the governors created eleven scholarships and made a small reduction in the fees.<sup>4</sup>

This growing demand for education beyond standard six was remarked upon in almost every Education Board's annual report in 1895 and 1896. In Southland the number of

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1895, E-1, p.60.

2 A.J.H.R., 1894, E-9, p.5.

3 A.J.H.R., 1895, E-9, p.7.

4 Ibid., E-19, p.19.

scholarship candidates doubled in one year.<sup>1</sup> In Otago the Board observed that 'the number of young persons of both sexes who are applicants for the position of pupil-teacher continues to be out of all proportion to the number of vacancies to be filled.'<sup>2</sup>

Everywhere throughout the colony more and more people were becoming aware that the day of the exclusive secondary school was past. 'The whole question of secondary education ...requires reconsideration',<sup>3</sup> the Marlborough inspector of schools wrote. But as yet most grievances about secondary education were of a local and varied nature with apparently little national significance: neither Habens nor Walker seems to have realised the great change in secondary education portended by all the local bickering and name-calling.

Yet Walker could not have been unaware of the growing conviction in Christchurch that secondary schools existed to cater for those children who had successfully completed the primary school stage. The correspondence columns of the Lyttelton Times during 1896 frequently contained letters attacking the Canterbury College Board of Governors for allowing their secondary schools to be used as 'preparatory schools for the little children of the upper classes' instead

---

1 Ibid., E-1, p.92.

2 A.J.H.R., 1896, E-1, p.82.

3 Ibid., p.71.



of for their 'legitimate purpose' of affording education beyond the primary school to those children who had the ability to benefit from it.<sup>1</sup>

Disgruntled Christchurch parents did not complain only through the columns of the newspapers. The Women's Political Association and the Riccarton Householders' Association joined forces and wrote directly to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. They made three specific complaints:

1. That the High Schools contain great numbers of very young children, of low educational attainments, and that the presence of such children is detrimental to the best interests of a High School.
2. That the finances of the school are unduly taxed by the admission to it of children unable to avail themselves fully of its advantages and that their presence involves a waste of public money.
3. That the curriculum of a High School ought to begin where that of the Primary Schools leaves off, for that otherwise there is overlapping of work and an unnecessary duplication of expenditure of public money. 2

The Chairman sent copies of the letter to the Lady Principal, Miss E.S. Foster, and the Headmaster, C.E. Bevan-Brown, and asked for their comments.

In their replies defending the status quo the two principals between them rehearsed most of the arguments to be

1 e.g. Lyttelton Times, 29 December, 1896.

2 Copy of statements made in a joint letter from the Women's Political Association and Riccarton Householders' Association to the Canterbury College Board of Governors as repeated in a letter from the Lady Principal, Girls' High School to Chairman of Board of Governors, 5 June, 1896. Letter File, Canterbury College.

used during the next few years by all who resisted the free place movement.

The Girls' High School, it appeared, did not have 'great numbers of very young children.' Only nine out of a total roll of 135 girls were under twelve. The standard reached by the younger girls in arithmetic and reading was, the Lady Principal admitted, somewhat lower than that attained by girls of an equivalent age in the primary schools, but this was because of the time given in the High School to French, Latin, Elementary Science and English Literature. These subjects many girls found much more congenial than the arithmetic and grammar which dominated the primary school curriculum.

Turning away briefly from educational to financial considerations, but hastening to show that the two were inter-related, the Lady Principal pointed out that the finances of the school benefited by the presence of a considerable number of girls in the lower classes. Their fees more than paid the salaries of their teachers because they could be taught in classes of twenty or thirty at a time. Profit made on the lower school helped to pay the salaries of special teachers in cooking and 'dress-cutting' employed for the upper school.

Perhaps a little ashamed of having dwelt at such length on money matters, Miss Foster ended on a strong educational note:

Briefly then: - Pupils should enter a High School at an age not later than twelve years if they are to profit thoroughly by its training. Many children of ten are quite fit for it.

A school should contain pupils, the greater number of whom remain in it for five or six years at least, if it is to be a school with a lofty character, with honourable traditions and with a good record of well-trained pupils; a school whose pupils and teachers alike have the esprit de corps that can only come from the intimacy of years. 1

Bevan-Brown conceded that the reference to 'great numbers of very young children of low educational attainments' probably referred to his school where there were forty-three boys aged from eight years nine months to fourteen years three months doing fourth and fifth standard work. This, he considered, was exactly as it should be. The appropriate time to begin secondary work was after passing standard three. 'And any way', he went on, 'why should parents, if they are prepared to pay the fees, not have the benefit of a superior class of schooling?'<sup>2</sup>

Bevan-Brown did not understand the temper of the times or he would not have ventured this remark. To most people by 1896 it seemed illogical and undemocratic that state-endowed secondary schools should be teaching children of primary school age and level while all over the colony class X's and seventh standards proliferated. If the children in the lower

---

1 Lady Principal, Girls' High School, to Chairman of the Board of Governors, 5 June, 1896. Letter File, Canterbury College.

2 Headmaster, Boys' High School to Chairman of Board of Governors, 8 July, 1896. Letter File, Canterbury College.

departments of the secondary schools were sent to where they belonged - the district schools - more places would become available in the secondary departments for those who had passed standard six. So ran the popular argument: those who defended the lower schools' existence on educational or financial grounds were either ignored or were accused of wanting to perpetuate class education. In 1896, as in 1895, an order of the House of Representatives sought information from the governing bodies of the endowed schools as to the numbers of children enrolled in their schools who had not reached the standard six level of attainment.<sup>1</sup> This, however, was the only action taken at the parliamentary level: a general election was approaching and it seemed that in 1896 little political capital could be made out of education. Electors, it was believed, wanted to be promised something more tangible than improved educational opportunities for their children. Only Stout cried out against the government's short-sightedness.

Education is of more importance even than roads, bridges or railways.... It is of far more importance in a democracy.... We do not want merely primary schools; we must have higher education for that alone will benefit the democracy and save the people. 2

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1897, E-9A. The total was 1,438, 55% of all secondary pupils. Nelson College, which had refused to answer the previous year's request for information, this time complied. Its return was revealing: sixty-one of its ninety-one boys had not passed standard six in the primary schools. It had currently enrolled, however, only six boys under twelve. (Secretary, Nelson College, to Secretary, Education Department, 27 February, 1897. Letter Book, Nelson College.

2 P.D., 1896, Vol.96, p.837.

Stout's plea went unanswered. Like Pember Reeves he was suspected of being something of a visionary, a man who marched to strange music, alliance with whom could be dangerous for any ambitious Liberal politician. Three years earlier a Liberal candidate speaking in Nelson had said, 'I look upon Sir Robert Stout's views on education as beyond the realm of practical politics.'<sup>1</sup> Many other Liberals probably thought the same: in any case, in 1896 Stout's political star was no longer in the ascendant. He had jostled for the premiership with Richard Seddon and had lost; Seddon was now the man to follow and Seddon had had little to say either inside or outside the House on education except to claim that the 1877 Education Act was as it was because of the efforts of the then Liberal opposition. In this claim the editor of the Lyttelton Times supported Seddon:

The facts show that the Bill introduced by Mr. Bowen was a very different measure from the one that finally passed through the House of Representatives, and that the amendments which gave the colony a system of free, secular education were all introduced and carried through by a strong Liberal Opposition. 2

The election campaign of 1896 was a lack-lustre affair with the result a foregone conclusion. But as an episode in New Zealand's evolution as a welfare state, the Liberals' 1896

---

1 The Colonist, 7 November, 1893.

2 Lyttelton Times, 21 November, 1896.

victory had great significance. It marked the end of a period of state socialist innovation and the beginning of a decade of humanitarian legislation of which towards the end of his life Seddon declared:

All the legislation I have brought to bear on the human side of life is the legislation which counts most with me; there is much talk of men being Radicals, Conservatives, Socialists, and Liberals. I am none of these. I am a humanist. I desire to improve the conditions of the people, to inspire them with hope, to provide for their comfort, and to improve them socially, morally, and politically. 1

It was the needs of the old, not the young, which mainly attracted Seddon's attention in 1897 and while he fought to have his Old Age Pensions Bill passed, other social legislation languished. His fellow-Ministers showed little initiative in promoting legislation of their own. What was to be described seven years later as 'the govt. [sic] of Richard Seddon by Richard Seddon for Richard Seddon'<sup>2</sup> was already beginning to take shape. 'Thompson and Walker and Hall-Jones are running to him all day like little boys about this and that till he is really doing the work of all the Departments - he is the Ministry,'<sup>3</sup> Tregear reported to Pember Reeves.

Seddon had had no time in 1896 to give much thought to

1 Evening Post, 1 May, 1906.

2 F. Waldegrave to W.P. Reeves, 31 October, 1904.  
Reeves's Papers.

3 Edward Tregear to W.P. Reeves, 17 January, 1897.  
Reeves's Papers.

the state of education in New Zealand: he had been fully occupied with matters relating to his own portfolios and with preparing for his trip to England as New Zealand's representative at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. On his return Seddon became conscious of a growing dissatisfaction throughout the colony with the educational system and the opportunities it offered intelligent children of working class parentage. Failing to see where the root of the trouble really lay, Seddon turned briefly from what he regarded as issues of greater urgency to sponsor the Victoria University College Bill and a new Technical Education Bill.<sup>1</sup>

Seddon seems to have thought that it was easier access to the university colleges that people were agitating for. 'We should insist,' he said, 'on an opportunity being given to the sons and daughters of poor people to obtain a university education. They do not get it now.'<sup>2</sup> In his

---

1 It was characteristic of Seddon that although he was not always well-informed about the colony's social and educational short-comings, when once he was made aware of their existence he took positive, if occasionally misdirected, action. For example, when Seddon became Minister of Labour Tregear reported to Reeves that the new Minister 'didn't even know that there were hundreds of girls working for dressmakers for nothing.... He does now.' (E. Tregear to W.P. Reeves, 22 April, 1896. Reeves's Papers) Corrective legislation followed in the form of the Employment of Boys and Girls Without Payment Prevention Act, 1899.

2 P.D., 1897, Vol.97, p.168.

Victoria University College Bill Seddon proposed to give this opportunity by means of Queen's Scholarships tenable for two years at secondary school and three years at Victoria University College.<sup>1</sup> By this means, the House was assured, students whose parents were not well-to-do would be guaranteed a chance of university education.<sup>2</sup>

Certain members of the House were astonished to hear Seddon say, 'It does not require me to tell honourable members of the great advantage there is to any country seeing to its higher education,'<sup>3</sup> for he had long been regarded as second only to John McKenzie as an opponent of it. His arch-critic, Scobie Mackenzie, rose in astonishment to say: 'The less the right honourable gentleman ever says on the subject of education in this House the better. I sat in this House for eight or nine years with the Premier, and during all that time...I never heard him before he entered upon office say a solitary word on behalf of education.'<sup>4</sup> Mackenzie dismissed the Victoria University College Bill's special provision for working-class children as 'a piece of canting, snuffling hypocrisy'.<sup>5</sup> Another critic cynically suggested that the conferment upon

---

1 Ibid., Vol. 100, p.542.  
 2 P.D., 1897, Vol.98, p.3.  
 3 Ibid., Vol.100, p.541.  
 4 Ibid., Vol.98, p.95.  
 5 Ibid., p.94.



Seddon of an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of Cambridge had probably converted him to the cause of higher education, a suggestion promptly denied by the Premier.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition surprise at the Premier's change of heart was in no way lessened by his choice of his Minister of Lands to second the Bill. McKenzie, however, remained reasonably true to form: he included in his speech a stinging attack on the mismanagement of the University of Otago and Canterbury University College reserves.<sup>2</sup>

That the scholarship provisions in the Bill were clearly unworkable was of little concern to Seddon. He had succeeded in showing himself to be a friend of education. Pressing home this advantage, he introduced in early December the Technical Education Bill. 'There is a general consensus of opinion throughout the colony,' the Premier said, 'that there is an absolute necessity for a measure such as that which is now before honourable members.'<sup>3</sup> There was no disagreement on this point and the Bill looked fairly certain to have an easy passage through the House. But Stout, looking at the Bill's clauses with an experienced legal eye, detected a weakness. 'The Bill,' he said, 'will...empower the Minister

---

1 Ibid., Vol.100, p.546.

2 Ibid., pp.543-4.

3 Ibid., p.287.

to give aid to denominational schools.<sup>1</sup> With those words Stout gained a personal victory over the Premier but at the same time destroyed a Bill which proposed many developments he had himself often advocated. Seddon withdrew his Bill.<sup>2</sup>

Seddon, after his brief dalliance with education returned to his first love, the Old Age Pensions Bill. Educational initiative was once more left to Habens and Walker. But neither was the man to provide it. Habens was known to be 'very adverse to changes in a scheme which he considered almost perfect.'<sup>3</sup> Walker, an outspoken Labour member, T.E. Taylor, said, 'is held in almost as great contempt as the Minister of Defence,<sup>4</sup> and that is saying a great deal.'<sup>5</sup> Continuing his attack, Taylor turned on the Education Department itself. 'This is a department that is not being administered. It is being slummed; it is being allowed to run riot; and the teaching fraternity feel it; they feel they are being neglected.... The schoolmasters of the colony have an utter contempt for the administration of the Government.'<sup>6</sup>

1 Ibid., p.296.

2 For a detailed account of the political manoeuvrings which ensued after Stout dropped his bombshell see J. Nicol, Technical Schools of New Zealand (Wellington, 1940), pp.50-51.

3 P.D., 1899, Vol.107, p.115.

4 Hon. Thomas Thompson. Seddon shortly afterwards added this portfolio to his already impressive collection.

5 P.D., 1898, Vol.103, p.623.

6 Ibid.

The chief sufferers from this continuing inertia in high places were the children seeking secondary education. Everywhere seventh standards were getting larger;<sup>1</sup> competition for Education Board and boards of governors' scholarships was increasing; district high schools were being requested;<sup>2</sup> technical and manual instruction under the Act of 1895 was, in the night school classes in smaller centres, becoming general education, English and arithmetic.<sup>3</sup> Enthusiasm for further education had never been greater<sup>4</sup> but still Habens and Walker did nothing to allow greater numbers of children access to the facilities possessed and seldom fully used by the endowed secondary schools.

Early in 1898, Richard Meredith asked when the Minister of Education intended to introduce a measure dealing with secondary schools which provided for efficient examination and inspection, for greater economy in the spending of revenue derived from endowments, for more popular administration by elective governing bodies and which also required that all pupils admitted should have passed the sixth standard in the

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1899, E-1B, p.36.

2 At Kumara, Blenheim, and Stratford.

3 A.J.H.R., 1895, E-5, p.27. The Waiwera Manual and Technical Association formed in May, 1897 offered painting - 12 pupils; book-keeping - 16 pupils; general education, English and arithmetic - 18 pupils.

4 A.J.H.R., 1898, E-11, pp.1-24. Almost without exception, secondary schools reported cheerfully on the increases in their enrolments. Even Whangarei and Akaroa High Schools, long threatened with extinction, numbered 25 and 16 pupils respectively.

public primary schools.<sup>1</sup>

Hall-Jones made a stumbling and evasive reply which ended on exactly the same note as had a reply given the previous year to a request for state inspection and examination of all secondary schools: 'It is too late now to do anything; the matter will be considered later.'<sup>2</sup>

When it became apparent that the Habens-Walker administration was not likely to evolve a comprehensive national policy on secondary education, Education Boards, inspectors, boards of governors and even individual headmasters began to suggest ways and means of removing the bottleneck which had developed.

The Otago Education Board suggested that seventh standards - of which Otago had eighty-eight in 1899 - should be subsidised in the same way as the district high schools. 'We want classes above standard six...., but with the thing we must have the means with which to make it efficiently perform its functions,' the Otago inspectors wrote.<sup>3</sup>

At a conference of representatives of Education Boards held in Wellington in July, 1899, it was unanimously agreed

---

1 P.D., 1898, Vol.103, pp.460-1.

2 P.D., 1897, Vol.99, p.441; P.D., 1898, Vol.103, p.461

3 A.J.H.R., 1900, E-1B, p.40.

that Education Boards should be empowered 'to establish one or more central higher-grade schools in the larger towns.'<sup>1</sup>

Only men who despaired of strong government action against the endowed schools could have approved of such a proposal. If put into effect it would have given the colony two grades of secondary education both paid for out of the public purse but one socially very much more desirable than the other. It was fear of the growth of a two-track system of education that prompted the editor of the Wairarapa Star to write:

The sooner we forsake the English Institutions, that we so much cherished...the better for the prosperity of the colony. The starting point will be the eradication of private schools and the bringing under the State of all classes of education. 2

Individual boards of governors, yielding to public pressure, increased the numbers of free tuition scholarships they offered.<sup>3</sup> Auckland Girls' High School in 1898 began to use endowment revenue to give special scholarships for girls from the public primary schools.<sup>4</sup> The Nelson College Council of Governors, between 1896 and 1898, increased the number of free tuition scholarships they awarded by four for boys and

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1899, E-1C, p.7.

2 Wairarapa Star (Masterton), 24 November, 1900.

3 A.J.H.R., 1900, E-1, p.xiv.

4 A.J.H.R., 1899, E-1, p.64.

two for girls.<sup>1</sup> Only the Timaru High School governors, however, appear to have tried to devise a scholarship scheme peculiarly suited to local conditions.<sup>2</sup> The scheme as finally presented by the 'Committee on Scholarships' owed much to the advice the Committee had received from the headmaster, George Hogben. At his insistence the two-year awards were to be made in such a way as to create for children 'a "ladder" of scholarships from the age of thirteen until they could enter the University.'<sup>3</sup>

In Nelson, where the 'exclusiveness' of the Colleges, in particular the Boys' College with its preponderance of boarders, was resented, the governors' action in increasing the number of free tuition awards did not satisfy the demands of those who wanted the tuition fees reduced. Their discontent was reflected in the setting up by the Nelson Education Board - at the insistence of a minority of its members - of a sub-committee to inquire into the possibility of establishing a district high school in Nelson City so that 'all could obtain the higher education to which all had a

---

1 J.G. McKay, Miscellaneous Notes (Manuscript, Nelson College Council Office).

2 Timaru High School Board of Governors, Minutes, 28 June, 1897.

3 *Ibid.*, 2 May, 1898. Hogben had earlier expressed concern at the withdrawal of promising Education Board scholars from the High School because their scholarships had expired. 'When the highest honours seem to be coming almost within their grasp, the career is suddenly checked', he wrote. (G. Hogben to Chairman of Board of Governors, 17 June, 1895, Letter Book, Timaru High School, p.37).

right.<sup>1</sup> The sub-committee - its members were by no means impartial - recommended that the Education Board open such a school and direct to it all holders of Education Board and School Commissioners' scholarships. An annual tuition fee of five guineas was suggested.<sup>2</sup>

Many Board members were not convinced of either the educational advisability or the financial feasibility of the sub-committee's scheme. A letter from the Westport School Committee further dampened any initial enthusiasm. The Westport Committee, which had been seeking the Nelson Education Board's sanction for a district high school for some time, warned its parent Board that persistence with its plans for a Nelson District High School would force the Westport Committee to petition the government to reject the proposal.<sup>3</sup> No one on the Education Board had any illusions about the result of such a petition to a government headed by the Member for Kumara. But in the meantime the School Commissioners<sup>4</sup>

1 Reply of Council of Governors to Nelson Education Board, Draft No.3, 14 April, 1897. Miscellaneous Papers (Manuscript, Nelson College Council Office).

2 Nelson Evening Mail (Nelson), 30 March, 1897.

3 Ibid. Seddon was personally interested in the creation of a district high school at Westport. In characteristic fashion he intervened to ensure that in the translation of the primary school to district high school status, the head primary teacher, a friend of his, would not be put in a subordinate position to the man appointed to take charge of secondary subjects. (P.D., 1897, Vol.105, pp.766-7).

4 Above, p.81.

for Nelson, apparently unaware of the political and personal intrigue involved in the proposal to set up a local district high school, had written to the College Council of Governors to tell them that they had resolved:

That, in view of the Establishment of District High Schools in the Nelson Education District, the resolutions in respect of the payment of the subsidies to the Governors of Nelson College be rescinded. 1

The governors were indignant; the College secretary was instructed to write to the secretary of the Board of School Commissioners at once pointing out that the Commissioners had undertaken, when sponsoring the Girls' College in 1882, to pay to the Council of Governors of Nelson College 'such future income as they may from time to time have at their disposal for providing Secondary Education in the Nelson Educational District.' A letter was then drafted to be sent to the Education Board and the School Commissioners explaining the difficult financial position of the Nelson Colleges, schools already open 'to pupils of all classes and ranks of society' and complaining of the 'very serious attacks upon the general conduct of the affairs of the Colleges...recently...made not only in the Public Press but also by certain members of the Education Board.' The letter ended on a conciliatory note:

---

1 Secretary, School Commissioners to Secretary, Nelson College, 10 February, 1897. Miscellaneous Papers (Manuscript, Nelson College Council Office.)



The Governors desire to say they keenly recognise the desirability of making the College in the fullest sense a popular institution; it has been and is their constant aim, and they will heartily welcome any rational and practical suggestion having this object in view. 1

The whole controversy was an artificially created one stirred up by two or three Education Board members only. One of them admitted that he wanted to use the district high school proposal to bring pressure to bear on the College Governors to reduce their fees.<sup>2</sup> The Nelson Education Board soon forgot about a local district high school, the Westport School Committee got theirs, and the School Commissioners agreed that they must honour their obligations to the Girls' College, but the Council of Governors remained on tenterhooks. The incident, minor and local as it was, had nevertheless brought the governors face to face with the reality that their Colleges no longer catered for the only people who really mattered. Seven years of Liberal-Labour government, the return of economic prosperity, the opening up for settlement of millions of acres of Maori land in the North Island had all contributed to the transformation of the New Zealand social order. The country was beginning to enjoy a period of unprecedented prosperity.<sup>3</sup> 'Farmers are coining

---

1 Reply of Council of Governors to Nelson Education Board, Draft No.3, 14 April, 1897. Miscellaneous Papers (Manuscript, Nelson College Council Office).

2 Nelson Evening Mail, 30 March, 1897.

3 The Leader, (Hokitika), 31 December, 1902.

money...tradesmen of all classes are in the greatest demand, all classes of labour are more than fully employed,' wrote one of Pember Reeves's regular correspondents.<sup>1</sup> These were the people who could now decide New Zealand's political future, whose representatives had captured not only the House of Representatives but also the Legislative Council. The leisured, landed class for the education of whose sons and daughters the Nelson Colleges had largely been founded still existed, but it had been stripped of its political power. Not surprisingly, the Nelson College Council of Governors faced the future with considerable foreboding.

Such fears were warranted. Pressure for the provision of free secondary schooling had been building up gradually but steadily for some time. The Trades and Labour Councils which grew up out of the operation of the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1894, although primarily interested in the betterment of working conditions, also paid considerable attention to social issues, including

---

1 F. Waldegrave to W.P.Reeves, 25 March, 1901. Reeves's Papers. But full employment did not necessarily mean that parents who wanted their children to go to high school could afford to send them. Fees of from ten to fifteen guineas a year were too much for a borough council employee to pay who had a family of five and earned 27/6 per week with deductions for wet weather or an agricultural labourer who earned 30/- per week. (Lyttelton Times, 8 and 12 November, 1902.)

educational.<sup>1</sup> In the same period the Progressive Liberal Association was campaigning throughout the colony for the raising of the school leaving age to fourteen, better facilities for technical instruction and free secondary and university education for all who could qualify.<sup>2</sup> Women's organisations were making the same plea. The National Council for the Women of New Zealand resolved at their 1898 annual conference that 'the Secondary Schools be concurrent with the Primary Schools.' The substance of this resolution was repeated in 1899.<sup>3</sup> Although it was fashionable in certain newspapers<sup>4</sup> to ridicule or disparage the National Council for the Women of New Zealand, no politician could afford to ignore indefinitely the opinions expressed by women's organisations in a country which had universal suffrage.

1 D.W. Crowley, The New Zealand Labour Movement (M.A. thesis, University of Otago), pp.45-46.

2 Progressive Liberal Association, Manifesto, 1899. (In A.W. Hogg's Scrapbook, No.30, p.168, Turnbull Library.)

3 National Council of the Women of New Zealand, Annual Report, 1899, pp. 5, 21, 52, 74.

4 Edward Tregear to W.P. Reeves, 22 April, 1896. Reeves's Papers. He wrote: '...their very "advanced" programme was a red rag to the bull of Capitalistic newspapers throughout the colony. Of course jeers and ridicule have been poured on them, but I think that they were a noble lot of women trying in singleness of heart to redress wrongs.... Their programme was too ambitious...but largeness of view and of attempt is a noble fault and they will do better next time.'

The editor of the Timaru Herald (1 April, 1897) took a different view: '...the title of this pretentious body is a misnomer. These ladies are not a council of the women of New Zealand.... They represent themselves and a few more....'

A demand for free secondary education came also from the farming communities, hitherto rather antipathetic towards it. As a political candidate had predicted in 1890, the farmers towards the end of the decade 'had sons and daughters growing up whom they scarcely knew what to do with.'<sup>1</sup> The Civil Service, which had increased greatly in size in the nineties,<sup>2</sup> offered what was popularly accepted as an honourable career to young men who did not like farming, and wanted to get into the towns, who looked down upon 'trade' and who could not enter the professions.<sup>3</sup> The editor of the Eketahuna Express complained that inadequate facilities for secondary education in rural areas prevented country children from reaching the entrance standard required for the higher branches of the Civil Service.<sup>4</sup>

The clash with the Nelson Education Board had made the Nelson College Council of Governors very aware of the many and varied forces which were working to bring about educational

1 Lyttelton Times, 20 November, 1890.

2 P.D., 1900, Vol.111, p.576.

3 J.E. le Rossignol and W. Downie Stewart, State Socialism in New Zealand (London, c.1910), p.208. By the mid-nineties the Civil Service was no longer a male preserve. The faithful Tregear reported to W.P.Reeves, 22 November, 1896 that 'slowly and surely girls are creeping into the Civil Service.... There are now several young girls to be seen about the corridors of the Government Buildings.'

4 Eketahuna Express (Eketahuna), 19 June, 1895. Certain branches of the Civil Service were open to those who had passed standard four.

change. It was apparent that the government would soon have to provide free secondary education for all who had passed either standard five or standard six. When this happened it was equally clear that the Nelson Colleges would have to admit such children: the governors could not hope to repeat their 1893 success.<sup>1</sup>

The governors of the endowed secondary schools had frustrated Pember Reeves's 1893 attempt to make them less exclusive because they were united; because he did not force the issue, his fellow-Ministers were more interested in other legislation, and the Legislative Council was a staunch defender of the rights of boards of governors; and most important of all, because there was little general demand for the reform proposed.

But by the end of the nineties the conditions no longer existed which in 1893 had helped the boards of governors to resist successfully the attempted encroachment upon their autonomy. The schools themselves were no longer agreed upon a number of fundamental points; the government was looking for new legislation to sponsor instead of avoiding it;<sup>2</sup> the Legislative Council was an uncertain ally, and public

---

1 In 1899 the Council of Governors reduced the tuition fees. Minutes, 20 October, 1899, Nelson College.

2 R. Chapman (ed.), Ends and Means in New Zealand Politics (Auckland, 1963), p.11.

interest in and demand for free secondary education was mounting. All that was needed to transform the educational scene, to bring it into harmony with the changes that had taken place in New Zealand society, was the appointment of a dynamic Minister or Inspector-General.

The death of the Rev. W. J. Habens made way for a new Inspector-General and George Hogben, Headmaster of Timaru High School, was appointed. The choice was not unanimously approved. The Christchurch Press three years later described Hogben's appointment as 'one of the grossest political jobs ever perpetrated in this colony.... He woke up one morning and found himself, thanks to the friendship of Mr. Hall-Jones, pitchforked over the heads of all the ablest School Inspectors in the colony, and placed in charge of one of the most important departments of the Government service.'<sup>1</sup>

Those more qualified than the editor of a conservative newspaper to assess Hogben's competence for his new position

---

1 The Press, 14 August, 1902. This comment was consistent with the same journal's reaction to news of Hogben's appointment as Inspector-General: 'Mr. Hogben has his good points no doubt.... His knowledge of earthquakes...is extensive and peculiar. We are utterly at a loss, however, to understand why the Government has selected him to the important position of Inspector-General of Schools.... It is rumoured that Mr. Hall-Jones is responsible.... If so the mystery is solved. It is just the kind of appointment that Mr. Hall-Jones would be likely to make.' (2 March, 1899.)

judged him differently. 'From all accounts he is a very good man and his appointment is very creditable to this wicked and corrupt Government,' Waldegrave wrote to Pember Reeves.<sup>1</sup> In the House of Representatives, Seddon, nettled by criticism of the new Inspector-General and the manner of his appointment, defended Hogben by quoting from an editorial in the New Zealand Schoolmaster:<sup>2</sup>

In Mr. Hogben the education system will have for its head a gentleman who is not only a scholar of considerable reputation, but one who has had practical acquaintance with the work of the teacher.... With the appointment of Mr. Hogben teachers may fairly expect a new era in the history of the educational system of the colony.... There will also be plenty of opportunity for the new permanent head of the Education Department to distinguish himself by inaugurating a scheme of technical education and by introducing some system into secondary education.<sup>3</sup>

The New Zealand education system was at the crossroads; it had marked time far too long and an advance was considerably overdue. In the absence of a strong Minister of Education the direction and depth of the advance could be determined only by the permanent head of the Education Department.

---

1 F. Waldegrave to W.P. Reeves, 9 March, 1899. Reeves' Papers.

2 New Zealand Schoolmaster, March, 1899.

3 P.D., 1899, Vol.107, p.115.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

## TIME TO ADVANCE

King Richard will rule in this free land  
 And make it first gem of the sea,  
 And nations will envy New Zealand,  
 Her progress, her grand destiny. 1

When Hogben became Inspector-General in 1899 the secondary stage of the education system was still in many ways more provincial than national in character. A number of high schools continued to maintain large preparatory classes long after the growth of an efficient national primary school system had made them unnecessary. By the nineties such schools were providing an alternative form of primary education, a 'second track', as well as secondary education. 'They do not stand in line with the higher and lower systems,' one critic wrote, 'but are practically schools for the use of people who do not care to send their

---

1 Quoted from the Temuka Leader by the Lyttelton Times, 8 October, 1896.

But compare Rolleston's remark three years later: 'Not Parliament, not the people through their representatives who are ruling, but Seddon - tricking, cajoling, dodging, manipulating, intimidating but not governing. Introducing Tammany terrorism.' Speech Notes, (undated but c. 1899), for address on 'The Condition of the Country' in Rolleston Papers.



children to the public primary schools.<sup>1</sup>

By 1899 it had become quite clear that the government would have to compel the secondary schools to 'stand in line' and devote their resources exclusively to providing secondary education for all qualified children. The expansion and enrichment of public education at the primary level<sup>2</sup> was making inevitable its extension upwards.<sup>3</sup> Only, as Rolleston phrased it, 'a too tender regard for the traditions of the past'<sup>4</sup> was delaying the necessary advance.

The over-respect for tradition in the Education Department passed away with the Rev. W.J. Habens. His successor, George Hogben, looked to the future. 'The time appears to have come for a decided advance',<sup>5</sup> he wrote in his first

1 F.B. Hutchinson, Secondary Education (New Plymouth, 1891), p.2.

A return to an order of the House of Representatives of 26 July, 1899, asking for details of the numbers of children at high schools who had not passed standard four showed that there were many such children in certain high schools. (A.J.H.R., 1899, E-12A.)

2 By the end of the nineteenth century New Zealanders were a well-schooled, if not well-educated, people. 'In 1876 the number who signed the marriage register with marks was 66 in every 1,000 married, in 1886 it was 24, while in 1899 it had dropped to 5 only.' (R.F.Irvine and O.T.J.Alpers,) The Progress of New Zealand in the Century (Edinburgh, 1902), p.434.

3 An exactly similar situation had come about earlier in the U.S.A. See N.Edwards and H.Richey, Education in the American Social Order, 2 ed. (Boston, 1963), p.356.

4 W.Rolleston, Speech Notes, 17 May, 1899, Rolleston Papers. In speech notes for an electioneering address later in 1899 Rolleston commented: 'Business of State to remove obstacles to men rising on stepping stones to higher things. Privilege - (day of is done).'

5 Quoted by A.G.Butchers, Education in New Zealand, p.150.

departmental report upon technical and secondary education.

Hogben had been strengthened in this belief during his first year as Inspector-General by comments made in both chambers of the General Assembly. The introduction of the Marlborough High School Bill early in the 1899 session gave members of the Lower House one of their rare opportunities to discuss secondary education.<sup>1</sup>

While no one opposed the establishment of a secondary school at Blenheim, the novelty of three of the clauses of the Marlborough High School Bill excited considerable discussion. The Government, no doubt influenced by memories of earlier, seldom successful encounters with well-entrenched boards of governors, provided that the governors of Marlborough High School were to be the members of the local Education Board, the same physical persons but different legal entities. By this device it was hoped both to prevent management of the High School from falling into the hands of the local landed gentry as had happened elsewhere, and to ensure that primary

---

1 The few chances given Representatives to debate educational issues displeased many of them, especially two former Ministers of Education, W. Rolleston (P.D., 1899, Vol.109, p.572.) and G. Fisher, who commented: '...in former days the Minister of Education was not a subsidiary Minister but one of the foremost Ministers in any Administration.' (Ibid., p.576.)

and secondary education were co-ordinated in Marlborough.

The second controversial clause of the Bill also had its origins in past difficulties between boards of governors and the Government, in particular the Minister of Lands. The seventeenth clause of the Marlborough High School Bill, instead of making the customary endowment of land, provided for an annual grant of £400 from Treasury to the Board of Governors.<sup>1</sup> Seddon said that the Government had chosen to finance the new school this way because so often secondary school reserves had either impeded settlement or had been grossly mismanaged. It had been for this reason, and this reason only, Seddon insisted, that the Government had at times been critical of secondary schools. The Government was not opposed to secondary education and fully appreciated the need for making it more widely available. Thirteen years as chairman of a school committee and membership of the Westland Education Board for a lengthy period had made Seddon fully aware of the many highly intelligent children who did not go on with their education. 'If the education system had been

---

<sup>1</sup> A number of members whose genuine interest in secondary education was not in question, notably R. McNab, W. Rolleston and A. W. Hogg, argued that a land endowment was preferable to a direct grant because the value of land kept pace with inflationary tendencies.

complete,' the Premier said, 'they would have attained to the highest positions in the professions.'<sup>1</sup>

The third novelty in the Marlborough High School Bill was the Inspector-General's response to the challenge issued by the Government's indefatigable critic, Fred Pirani, Member for Palmerston North. Pirani called upon the Government to take the opportunity offered by this Bill to insist that Marlborough and all secondary schools it subsidised should be free.<sup>2</sup> Seddon ignored Pirani's suggestion but in a later discussion on the Marlborough High School Bill he indicated that the point had not gone entirely unnoticed. 'The Inspector-General of Schools has recommended', Seddon told the House, 'that the following condition should be included in the Bill, and in every Bill dealing with secondary education:

"The Board shall provide free education in particular subjects of instruction taught within school hours for no less than one quarter of the pupils on the roll of such school or schools."<sup>3</sup>

---

1 P.D., 1898, Vol.107, pp.438-9.

2 P.D., 1899, Vol.107, p.222. One suspects that Pirani was more interested in embarrassing Seddon than in genuinely seeking wider provision of secondary education. Pirani was for a number of years chairman of the Board of Governors of Wanganui Girls' College, a school which did not accept free pupils until forced to do so by the Education Act, 1914.

3 P.D., 1899, Vol.107, p.444.

In Committee, Seddon, who had taken charge of the Marlborough High School Bill, added a new clause based on Hogben's recommendation:

The Board (of Governors) shall, as far as practicable, provide free education for as many pupils as its funds will permit, and the selection of such free pupils shall be determined by the said Board from time to time. 1

The Minister of Education, when introducing the Bill in the Legislative Council, said that he proposed to bring down a clause directing in a more explicit manner how many free scholars the school should support because the clause added by Seddon was too wide as it stood.<sup>2</sup> Some time later he introduced the amended clause which read:

The Board shall yearly and every year afford free education by giving a free place for the year in the said High School or schools to one scholar for every fifty pounds of its net annual income, exclusive of school fees. 3

No explanation was given of the reasons for deciding to make one free place available for every fifty pounds of net annual income. One can only assume, as the editor of the Lyttelton Times did, that the similar clause in 'Mr. W.P. Reeves's proposal to place the advantages of secondary

---

1 Ibid., p.446.

2 P.D., 1899, Vol.110, p.176.

3 Marlborough High School Act, 1899. (Clause Eighteen)

education within the reach of the poorer classes'<sup>1</sup> had influenced the Minister of Education. But undoubtedly the chief advocate of the free place system in 1899 was Hogben:<sup>2</sup> the Marlborough High School Bill gave him the chance to experiment on a small scale with a method for opening up the secondary schools to boys and girls who had proved themselves worthy of an extended schooling. As a result, Marlborough High School, when it opened in 1900, enjoyed the distinction of being the first secondary school in New Zealand to offer what were called locally, 'Statutory Free Places'.<sup>3</sup>

An important result of the discussions which led to the passing of the Marlborough High School Act was that Seddon emerged as the Government's educational tactician and spokesman. Members on both sides of the House had made it quite clear that they were unhappy about the administration of the Education Department. Seddon, astute politician that he was, realised that his Ministry would have to adopt a more positive approach to educational questions in the impending elections than it had in 1896. Accordingly, the Liberal Party's 1899

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 30 October, 1899.

2 In 1887 when giving evidence before the Select Committee on Education Hogben had suggested free places or 'open scholarships'. '...the secondary schools might be required to provide open scholarships for pupils from primary schools out of the funds at their disposal.' (A.J.H.R., 1887, I-8, p.27.)

3 Marlborough College Register, 1900-1950 (Blenheim, 1950), pp.9-25.

platform included as one of its planks the placing of primary, secondary, technical and university education within the reach of all.<sup>1</sup> Seddon interpreted this as meaning that 'the State should step in to see that the poor children who are endowed by Nature with brains have an equal chance of using them to advantage with the children of the rich.'<sup>2</sup>

Lesser Liberals, taking their cue from the Premier, paid considerable attention to secondary education in their campaign addresses. All took exception, as they or their predecessors had done many times before, to the overlapping of the work of primary and secondary schools and called for legislation to stop what they alleged was misuse of revenue from endowments, 'the people's properties.'<sup>3</sup> High schools, they urged, should be open only to children who had passed standard six;<sup>4</sup> all expressed the pious wish that before long secondary education would be free<sup>5</sup> and that children of parents in poor circumstances would be able, as Seddon put it, 'to go on to the High Schools and Universities and to enter the Civil Service.'<sup>6</sup>

Seddon's educational promises were not criticised by the Conservative opposition led by Captain Russell. He and his

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 10 October, 1899.

2 Ibid., 18 December, 1899.

3 Ibid., 1 November, 1899.

4 Ibid., 31 October, 1899.

5 Ibid., 8 November, 1899.

6 Ibid., 11 November, 1899.

followers regarded education as a non-party matter in which there could be no looking back, no standing still.<sup>1</sup> The Conservatives preferred to concentrate their attack upon Seddon's administration of the colony's affairs and upon Seddon personally. Even Rolleston, usually more restrained and courteous than his colleagues, described one of Seddon's speeches as 'a powerful discourse, flowing in its periods, eloquent in its language but with not enough Gospel in it to save a tomtit.'<sup>2</sup>

But neither criticism of his administration nor personal abuse affected the electors' confidence in Seddon; the Liberals were again returned to power with an overwhelming majority.<sup>3</sup>

Gleefully C.A. de Lautour wrote to Henry Hill:

New Zealand has said to Seddon: we trust you to run the show. See you do it and keep your hands as clean as you can - but at any rate bang the other crowd. 4

And 'banging' the other crowd included for de Lautour the elimination of the preparatory divisions of the Napier Boys' and Girls' High Schools. 'It is time,' he continued, 'we were done with these class nurseries where babes stumble through

1 Speech Notes, 17 May, 1899, Rolleston Papers.

2 Ibid., c. October - December, 1899.

3 The composition of House of Representatives after the 1899 elections was: Liberals, 50 seats; Conservatives, 16.

4 C. de Lautour to H.T. Hill, 16 December, 1899.

H.T. Hill Papers.



mensa and such sugar candy.<sup>1</sup>

### The Way Ahead

It was appropriate that in the first Parliament of the new century, with the elderly provided for by the old age pensions scheme, many of the legislators should have directed their attention to the welfare and well-being of children. The climate of public opinion was favourable for the initiation of legislation designed to protect the young. That children in the dairying industry were being exploited was well-known;<sup>2</sup> the Stoke Orphanage disclosures in 1900 scandalized the country.<sup>3</sup> As a result legislation was introduced and discussed which would never have been given serious consideration at other times. W.C. Walker made persistent and sustained efforts from 1897 to 1902 to have a Young Persons' Protection Bill passed but each time it lapsed in the House of Representatives.<sup>4</sup> The Attorney-General, the Hon. Colonel Pitt, who after Seddon's assumption of the Education portfolio handled much of the

---

1 Ibid. De Lautour had at different stages of his life been a journalist, a Liberal M.H.R., and a lawyer. When he wrote this letter to H.Hill he was a member of the Gisborne High School Board of Governors, a school which did not enrol pupils who had not passed standard six.

2 Above, p.295.

3 A.J.H.R., E-3B, 1900.

4 e.g. Bills and Private Bills, 1899, Nos.295-7.

ministerial work connected with the Education Department, alarmed at the increase in smoking among children, sponsored a Juvenile Smoking Suppression Bill<sup>1</sup> which became law in a modified form in 1903.<sup>2</sup> More commonplace, but of much greater importance than concurrent grandmotherly legislation, was the School Attendance Bill of 1901. This Bill, which was passed only after prolonged discussion and many alterations, made primary school attendance compulsory, subject to the usual grounds of exemption, for all children between seven and fourteen.<sup>3</sup>

Hogben's first moves to open up the secondary schools, to make more general the free place provisions of the Marlborough High School Act, were made at this propitious time. At first Seddon tended to be sceptical of the Inspector-General's proposals: 'Hogben used to tell his sons that the hardest task of his career was to convince the Premier of the need for free secondary education. Once convinced, however, Seddon

---

1 Ibid., 1901, Nos. 1519 and 1521.

2 The Juvenile Smoking Suppression Act, 1903. In its original form the Bill provided that anyone under seventeen years of age convicted three times of smoking was to be whipped; this was subsequently changed to a 10/- fine. No one in this rather 'silly season' for legislation took up an earlier request that the Government, 'because of the high accident rate at football...introduce a Bill to put a stop to that game.' (P.D., 1891, Vol.74, p.332.)

3 For the difficulties the Government had in framing a generally acceptable Act see Bills and Private Bills, 1901, Nos. 1323, 1325, 1327, 1333, 1339, 1345, 1349.

showed all the zeal of a new convert.<sup>1</sup> It is very likely that Seddon's enthusiasm for a free place scheme stemmed largely from political rather than educational motives. When once he had grasped the political implications of the scheme he wanted its immediate implementation.<sup>2</sup> It was then Hogben's turn to hold back, and to hold the Premier back, by pointing out the practical difficulties involved in providing buildings, equipment and staff.<sup>3</sup>

Instead of making the all-out frontal attack on the endowed schools favoured by Seddon, Hogben elected to attempt an enveloping movement by encouraging the growth of district high schools. In 1900 such a move was not only educationally sound, but as Seddon no doubt realised, it was also politically astute.

During the 1899 election campaign Seddon had been accused, sometimes by his own followers, of neglecting rural interests, particularly educational.<sup>4</sup> New Zealand politicians have

1 H.Roth, George Hogben, a Biography (Wellington, 1952), p.111. Roth married Hogben's elder grand-daughter in 1946.

2 This was a very typical reaction. During his last ill-fated Australian visit Seddon described his method of correcting faults in New Zealand society thus: 'As soon as we find anything wrong in the colony we put a big square foot down upon it, and do not rest until that wrong is made right.' (The Argus (Melbourne), 9 June, 1906).

3 J.H. Murdoch, The High Schools of New Zealand (Wellington, 1943), p.47.

4 Lyttelton Times, 1 November, 1899.

always been sensitive to the demands of the rural voters and Seddon was no exception. In any case the 1899 election results showed how dependent the Liberal Government had become upon the country vote, boosted as it was by the 'country quota'.<sup>1</sup> Hogben's scheme to create district high schools wherever there was a reasonable need for them was therefore certain to be favourably received by the Premier who was being constantly reminded throughout the first session of Parliament in 1900 by rural Representatives of the educational handicaps suffered by country children. One member claimed that admission to the Civil Service was denied country children because the optional subjects for the Junior Civil Service examinations were not taught in the 'back country primary schools'.<sup>2</sup> Another quoted at length from a speech by the Rev. P.B. Fraser, a candidate for election to the Otago Education Board, to show that city children gained a disproportionate number of Education Board scholarships. 'One scholarship goes to every fifty-seven Dunedin children, one to every two hundred and fifty-eight children in the country,' Fraser had said.<sup>3</sup>

---

1 W.H. Oliver, *op. cit.*, pp.141, 160-1.

2 P.D., 1900, Vol.113, p.133.

3 P.D., 1900, Vol.111, p.527.

Aware that it had become politically, as well as educationally, advisable to eliminate these gross inequalities the Minister of Education let it be known that he was contemplating a District High School Bill. 'The proposal of the Minister,' a newspaper reporter wrote, 'is to support these high schools in the same way in which the primary schools are supported - by means of capitation allowances - and in this way to make the intermediate schools between the primary schools and the universities absolutely free.'<sup>1</sup>

In fact, no Bill was forthcoming. Instead, Hogben, early in January, 1901, sent a memorandum to all Education Boards in which he set out the nine conditions governing the payment to them of capitation allowances for pupils enrolled in district high schools.<sup>2</sup>

Education Boards responded enthusiastically to the government's offer of financial assistance in the setting up of more district high schools. The number of such schools open rose from thirteen in December, 1900, to twenty-nine a year later with eight more sanctioned. So rapid was the growth of district high schools and so favourable their

---

1 A.W.Hogg, Scrapbook, No.30, p.205. (late 1900).

2 A.J.H.R., 1901, E-1, p.109, See Appendix, pp. 401-2.

reception by country parents that the Minister of Education claimed in his annual report for 1902, 'the problem of providing some degree of free secondary education to boys and girls in a large number of country districts is practically solved.'<sup>1</sup> The editor of the Lyttelton Times was of the same opinion. He wrote:

The District High School movement has spread rapidly in the colony and there is little doubt that, with a liberal interpretation of the regulations every country district could establish at least useful continuation classes.... In eighteen months the number of District High Schools in the colony has been nearly trebled, so that the popularity of the movement is beyond doubt. 2

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1902, E-1, p.xv. On page xvi the following list of district high schools attended in all by 988 pupils was given:

AUCKLAND: Coromandel, Waihi, Opotiki, Paeroa, Aratapu.  
 TARANAKI: Stratford, Eltham.  
 WANGANUI: Marton, Hawera, Feilding, Wanganui Boys',  
 College Street (Palmerston North), Patea.  
 WELLINGTON: Masterton.  
 HAWKES BAY: Gisborne, Dannevirke.  
 NELSON: Westport, Motueka, Reefton.  
 GREY: Greymouth.  
 WESTLAND: Hokitika.  
 NORTH CANTERBURY: Akaroa.  
 SOUTH CANTERBURY: Temuka, Waimate, Geraldine.  
 OTAGO: Balclutha, Lawrence, Palmerston, Port Chalmers,  
 Tokomairiro, Tapanui, Mosgiel, Hampden, Naseby.  
 SOUTHLAND: Riverton, Winton, Gore.

2 Lyttelton Times, 24 December, 1902. For a detailed account of the spread of the District High School movement in the Auckland Education Board's district see I. Cumming, Glorious Enterprise (Christchurch, 1959), pp.331-7.

Speaking at the opening of the Masterton District High School in March, 1902, A.W. Hogg, the Member for Masterton, described the district high schools as the means by which a truly national system of secondary education could be provided. 'In such schools', he said, 'there is no golden key to exclude the attendance of children of parents who are not in favourable circumstances.'<sup>1</sup>

Hogg's view that the educational millenium was about to dawn was not shared by Hogben. His enthusiasm for the district high schools was tempered by the realisation that in solving one difficulty the Education Department had created two more: what to teach in the district high schools and how to give equal educational opportunities to city children who could not gain entry to the local endowed secondary schools.

Hogben doubted if district high schools could, or for that matter should, teach the conventional secondary school curriculum. He questioned the wisdom of their trying to imitate fully-staffed high schools by modelling their programmes on an implied but false assumption that the majority of district high school pupils intended to go on to university. 'Is a little Latin and Greek and a nodding acquaintance with

---

<sup>1</sup> Wairarapa Star, 5 March, 1902. Hogg was considered in southern North Island political circles to be in line for the portfolio of either Education or Lands.

algebraical symbols adequate additional education?' he asked at the 1901 Conference of Inspectors.<sup>1</sup>

Hogben's more considered views on district high school curricula found expression in the ministerial statement on education at the end of the following year:

It may be safely laid down that the secondary instruction given in these schools should have a bearing on the future life of the pupils.... There is too much tendency at present in the district high schools to give to secondary pupils a little Latin or French and a little elementary algebra or Euclid, and to avoid science and manual and commercial training. The aim in view in establishing district high schools will probably be gained if these schools give the pupils a good taste for standard English literature, a thorough training in ordinary English composition and in arithmetic and mensuration, and such knowledge of history and geography as will enable them to understand better their duties as citizens of the Empire; adding thereto a course in elementary science in which the observations and experiments are carried out by every pupil for himself, and a suitable course of manual or of commercial work where local conditions demand it.... There is no reason why any of our district high schools or indeed any of our secondary schools, should take as their model the lower forms of an old English grammar school. 2

Some cognisance of the Inspector-General's wishes was taken by the Otago Education Board in its district high school regulations. These described the function of the district high school as being first, 'to deepen and extend the work begun in the primary schools', and secondly, 'to

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1901, E-1C, p.3.

2 A.J.H.R., 1902, E-1, p.xvi.



prepare pupils for the Board's Senior Scholarships Examination, the Civil Service Examination and the Matriculation Examination.<sup>1</sup> In practice it was preparation for the outside examinations which soon came to dominate the work of the district high schools. Latin still took pride of place;<sup>2</sup> most teachers were either unwilling or unable to give their pupils that form of education that would have enabled them, as Hogben put it, "to travel throughout life by day instead of by night".<sup>3</sup> The district high schools proved unable to resist what one newspaper correspondent called 'the old time flummery'.<sup>4</sup>

Arguments about curriculum took second place, in many people's opinion, to the other problem created by the proliferation of rural district high schools, that of finding a way of affording city children similar educational opportunities. Thomas Sidey, Member for Caversham, raised the matter in the House of Representatives by quoting from the Otago Education Board Inspectors' Report for 1901:

1 Ibid., p.94.

2 I. Cumming, op.cit., p.337, writes: 'At Pukekohe, Flavell gave his pupils  $6\frac{1}{2}$  hours of Latin and only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours of English; those who did not study Latin spent the  $6\frac{1}{2}$  hours on extra arithmetic.'

3 A.J.H.R., 1902, E-1, p.xvi.

4 Newspaper cutting (mid-January, 1903) in A.W.Hogg's Scrapbook, No.33, p.9.

We have increased the number of district high schools, and made them all free. In every village in which an average attendance of not less than twelve ex-standard six pupils can be maintained we have made provision for free higher primary and free secondary education; but, oddly enough, we have done nothing to provide similar free education for centres where scores, or even hundreds, of such pupils have equal claims to it. <sup>1</sup>

Hogben had anticipated this complaint. At the 1901 Conference of Inspectors he had asked:

...are district high schools to be established in towns where fully-equipped high schools exist? Or is secondary work to be done in standard seven? Or are more scholarships or free places to be made in high schools? <sup>2</sup>

After suggesting these alternative means for giving more children some form of secondary education Hogben allowed the initiative to pass to the critics of the endowed secondary schools thereby, in a very real sense, throwing the schools to the wolves.

In Dunedin the proposal that secondary work should be done in seventh standards won some support<sup>3</sup> but in other centres, where the boards of governors of endowed secondary schools had been reluctant to open their schools to talent, the creation of competing district high schools was favoured. The governors of the Nelson Colleges with the 1897 incident still fresh in their memories<sup>4</sup> moved quickly to forestall

---

1 P.D., 1902, Vol.120, p.23.

2 A.J.H.R., 1901, E-1C, p.3.

3 A.J.H.R., 1901, E-1B, p.39.

4 Above, pp. 313-316.

those who were again agitating for the creation of a rival district high school.<sup>1</sup> A deputation was sent to Wellington to offer the Minister of Education 'the whole benefits of education' for twenty-five boys and twenty-five girls at the Nelson Colleges for half fees.<sup>2</sup> The deputation reported back that their proposal had been favourably received.<sup>3</sup>

The governors of the Timaru High Schools found themselves in a similar predicament when a group of local townspeople made representations to the South Canterbury Education Board for the raising of the Timaru Main School to district high school status on the grounds that a number of standard six and standard seven children were being deprived of secondary education because their parents could not afford the Timaru High School fees. The Education Board declined to act 'in the meantime'.<sup>4</sup>

The governors took advantage of the breathing spell thus afforded to decide their course of action. After lengthy discussion at a special board meeting it was resolved that:

This Board begs to inform the Department that it is prepared to receive pupils from the primary schools on such terms as obtain at present in regard to district high schools as between the Education Department and the Board. 5

---

1 Nelson College, Minutes, 26 June and 5 July, 1901.

2 The Colonist, 30 July, 1901.

3 Nelson College, Minutes, 31 July, 1901.

4 Timaru High School, Minutes, 15 April, 1901.

5 Ibid.

As to what those terms were there seemed to be some confusion among the governors. Some of them expected that the Department would pay ten pounds per pupil but others doubted this. One governor, who was also a member of the Education Board, said that the Board was being paid only six pounds for each pupil in attendance at its two district high schools.<sup>1</sup> The governors did not, however, consider retracting their offer which had been very favourably received in Timaru.<sup>2</sup>

The willingness of the Timaru governors to open the doors of their schools to all qualified children must have heartened Hogben who had, after his inspection of the secondary schools of the colony in the first half of 1901, quite clearly decided in favour of a free place scheme. In his subsequent report to the Minister of Education he pointed out the undesirability of creating city district high schools but stressed that to ensure equal educational opportunity as between country and city children it would be necessary 'either to extend the present system of scholarships or to offer an increased number of free places in secondary schools to qualified candidates from primary schools, the latter being the less expensive

---

1 Timaru High School, Minutes, 17 June, 1901.

2 Ibid.

method.' To prove his point Hogben included in his report detailed and carefully worked out proposals for a free place system based on his original Timaru arrangements and a Paris scheme of municipal bursaries.<sup>1</sup>

But Hogben still did not try to force the pace. The fate that had befallen Pember Reeves's Endowed Schools Bills was sufficient warning of the dangers inherent in running ahead of public understanding and demand. After the publication of his report on the secondary schools Hogben took no immediate action to implement the free place scheme he had outlined. Having aroused public interest in his plan he was content to wait for what he must have been confident would be a demand for its introduction. He knew that most Members of the House of Representatives favoured 'the bringing of the whole of the education system into line.'<sup>2</sup> The debates on Fisher's Public Schools Bill in 1900, ('a very old friend; its author called it<sup>3</sup>), had shown that most Members wanted closer liaison between the branches of the education system so that, as one speaker said, using the now familiar turn of phrase, 'a child can mount logically onward and upward until he reaches the highest rung of the educational ladder.'<sup>4</sup> Newspaper correspondents and editors also kept the matter

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1901, E-12.  
 2 P.D., 1900, Vol.111, p.515.  
 3 P.D., 1900, Vol.111, p.509.  
 4 Ibid., p.516.

before the notice of the public although not always in a way flattering to Hogben and his Minister of Education. 'The Hon. W.P. Reeves when he was Minister of Education', scolded the editor of the Lyttelton Times, 'did propose to deal with this question on progressive lines, and we believe that if he had remained in the colony secondary education would now be practically free to all children of more than ordinary ability whose parents wished them to receive it. But the Education Department has been allowed to fall woefully behind the times in ideas and methods and the sooner it is placed in charge of a member of the Representative Chamber the better it will be for the children of the colony.'<sup>1</sup>

Hogben, who had earlier resisted Seddon's urgings to introduce a free place scheme, was not the man to be stampeded into precipitate action by politicians and editors at a time when, by playing his cards correctly, he could ensure complete success for his plans for opening up the endowed secondary schools. Agitation for easier access to these schools had gone on for two decades: it suited Hogben's purpose to let it continue for another year, especially an election year. Accordingly, late in 1901 all boards of governors received the following memorandum:<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 7 November, 1901.

2 The copy sent to Nelson College is preserved in a folder marked General History, Nelson College at the office of the Nelson College Council of Governors.

Education Department,  
Wellington.

24 December, 1901.

The Registrar, \_\_\_\_\_.

The proposal either to establish a District High School at \_\_\_\_\_ or to give free education at \_\_\_\_\_ to a certain number of pupils that have passed Standard VI has been under the Minister's consideration, together with applications of the same kind from other places similarly situated. I am now directed to inform you that the magnitude of the interests involved has led the Minister to the conclusion that decision with regard to these questions must be postponed until the next session of the General Assembly.

G. Hogben,

Secretary for Education

Marking Time, 1902

The 1902 parliamentary session was highlighted, not by the passage of progressive educational legislation, but by acrimonious discussion of the shortcomings of the Education Department and its principal officers. The earlier plea that the Minister of Education should be in the Lower House was revived and given particular emphasis by the adoption during a Committee of Supply debate of a Government Member's motion to reduce the Education vote by one pound.<sup>1</sup> This vote of

---

<sup>1</sup> P.D., 1902, Vol.121, p.269.

censure, which the editor of the Nelson Evening Mail said would have caused the Minister or permanent head of department to resign in any 'British constitutionally self-governed country' other than New Zealand,<sup>1</sup> came as the climax to mounting dissatisfaction with the government's administration of education. 'The system of education is suffering for want of a competent and controlling head,'<sup>2</sup> George Fisher said. Editorial comment was even blunter. 'The plain truth is that the Minister of Education is grossly incompetent,' wrote the editor of The Press. 'He never touches anything which can by any possibility be left over for a more convenient season.'<sup>3</sup>

The way in which questions relating to secondary education were handled in the Lower House did nothing to increase public confidence in the administration of the Education Department. In the absence of Seddon, who was settling the affairs of Empire in South Africa and England, C.H. Mills, Commissioner of Trade and Customs, acted as the Ministry's educational spokesman in the House of Representatives. Mills was no more effective or convincing than Hall-Jones had been. A request for a Joint Committee of both Houses to consider and report on the

---

1 Nelson Evening Mail, 18 August, 1902.

2 P.D., 1902, Vol.121, p.271.

3 The Press, 14 August, 1902.



educational advances needed was turned down by Mills rather lamely on the grounds that Cabinet did not think it necessary.<sup>1</sup> An Auckland member's request for a royal commission on secondary and university education was treated similarly. Mills said that because the secondary schools had shown an 'inclination to keep abreast of the times' the Government would not entertain the idea of a royal commission.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Members of the House of Representatives from Whangarei to Invercargill were urging the Government to abolish secondary school fees, (which in 1901 had yielded only £24,792), and to make secondary education free for all children who had passed standard six.<sup>3</sup> 'The time has arrived when the people of the colony should insist upon the high schools being made more democratic,' pleaded Josiah Hanan, Member for Invercargill. 'Every child...that has capacity should have the opportunity to develop that capacity.'<sup>4</sup> A.R. Barclay, Member for City of Dunedin, made similar representations and added: 'The Minister must understand that these suggestions are not my personal views merely, but those of a considerable section of the community.'<sup>5</sup> Mills was

---

1 P.D., 1902, Vol.121, pp.156-7.

2 P.D., 1902, Vol.122, p.420.

3 P.D., 1902, Vol.120, p.272.

4 P.D., 1902, Vol.121, p.159.

5 P.D., 1902, Vol.120, p.369.

unmoved: his standard reply on the free secondary education issue was either, 'The Minister of Education and the Education Department are considering the matter,'<sup>1</sup> or, 'A scheme for free secondary education is with the Minister of Education and is shortly to go before Cabinet.'<sup>2</sup>

The dilatoriness of the government had, by the middle of 1902, begun to exasperate not only the parliamentarians but also many of the colonists. 'Public interest is fairly aroused on the subject',<sup>3</sup> reported the Hawkes Bay Herald in July, and by November the editor of the Nelson Evening Mail was commenting on the 'popular outcry for free secondary... education at the present time.'<sup>4</sup>

In the 1902 election, an election devoid of any major issues,<sup>5</sup> the Government's alleged indifference to education gave its critics a stick with which to belabour it. So many candidates, Liberal as well as Conservative, accused the Ministry of having 'let education drift'<sup>6</sup> that the Lyttelton Times thought it necessary to devote an editorial to pointing out the educational achievements of 1899-1902. 'The last Parliament,' the editor recounted, 'reformed the method of

1 Ibid., p.272.

2 P.D., 1902, Vol.121, p.159.

3 Hawkes Bay Herald (Napier), 16 July, 1902.

4 Nelson Evening Mail, 19 November, 1902. The New Zealand Education Institute had given the Inspector-General's scheme for free places its blessing at its January conference. See Report of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the N.Z.E.I., (Wellington, 1902), p.18.

5 Nelson Evening Mail, 17 October, 1902.

6 Lyttelton Times, 17 November, 1902.

electing Education Boards, increased the capitation grant, carried the Public School Teachers' Salaries Act, passed the Manual and Technical Instruction Act and reformed the constitution of the University Senate.<sup>1</sup>

These were, indeed, real educational achievements but they were not enough. The senior Liberal Member for Christchurch, W.W. Collins, expressed the feelings of many of his colleagues and fellow-citizens when he said: 'The cultivation of intellect will prove as valuable an asset to the State as the cultivation of the hitherto untilled lands, and a complete education ought to be the birthright of every child born in the colony.'<sup>2</sup> Speaking at Invercargill, J.A. Hanan repeated the appeal he had made in the House of Representatives for free secondary schooling. 'By making the High Schools more democratic the Government will give effect to public opinion and confer a great blessing on a large number of children who by force of circumstances are debarred from the advantages of advanced learning and scholarships,' he said amidst applause.<sup>3</sup>

In Dunedin and Christchurch parliamentary candidates were left in no doubt as to what certain sections of the

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 25 November, 1902.

2 Lyttelton Times, 10 November, 1902.

3 Southland Times, (Invercargill), 20 November, 1902.

public wanted with regard to secondary education. The School Committees' Associations in both cities circularised all local candidates asking them if they were in favour of education being made free from the primary schools to the university and if they would pledge themselves to urge the Government to introduce the necessary legislation at once.<sup>1</sup> The Canterbury Women's Institute also quizzed the local candidates. Questions about the status and privileges of women made up most of the twelve that were posed but question four asked: 'Are you in favour of the extension of free secondary education?'<sup>2</sup> Candidates were asked similar questions in polls conducted by a Socialist Society<sup>3</sup> and the Canterbury Trades and Labour Council.<sup>4</sup> Conservatives, Liberals and Independents alike replied in the affirmative.

Such unanimity, so rare among politicians, did not go unnoticed in Ministerial circles. On the eve of the elections the Hon. W. Hall-Jones told a Timaru audience that he personally favoured the placing of secondary schools under the control of the Education Boards and the opening of them free to all who had passed standard six. 'I believe a scheme will be brought

---

1 Lyttelton Times, 23 October, 1902.

2 Ibid., 12 November, 1902.

3 Ibid., 8 November, 1902.

4 Ibid., 10 November, 1902.

forward at an early date,' he added, 'which will enable people who cannot pay fees to send their clever boys and girls to the secondary schools and pass them forward.'<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Timaru Herald, 25 November, 1902. Hogben had already warned the Nelson College Council of Governors that such a scheme was impending. Nelson College, Minutes, 29 October, 1902.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### ACTION AND REACTION

Three weeks after the elections of 25 November, 1902, had once again returned Seddon and his followers to office with an overwhelming majority, the Minister of Education gazetted the long promised free place regulations. As a Timaru High School governor had predicted, these offered the endowed schools grants of £6 a head for pupils admitted without payment of tuition fees, provided that one free place was already given for each £50 of the net annual income derived from endowments.<sup>1</sup>

The regulations were not unexpected, as a correspondent of the Southland Times pointed out. 'At the recent election,' he wrote, 'candidates who referred to educational matters, and these constituted a majority, were almost unanimous in upholding the principle that education should be free to those who desired it from the primary school to the university.' He congratulated the Department on its adoption of 'a policy of advance' and concluded: 'It is highly improbable that there

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1903, E-1, p.xxxiii.

will be any cessation of the principle of according free access to the High Schools to all deserving pupils in primary schools.' <sup>1</sup>

The editor of the Lyttelton Times was not nearly so congratulatory in his comments nor so hopeful that further educational advances would follow. He described the scheme as 'markedly crude, restricted and immature...a poor imitation of Mr. Reeves's proposal,' and predicted that it would not be acceptable to governing bodies because of the unrealistically low Government subsidy offered. <sup>2</sup>

But such editorial gloom was not wholly warranted. By May, 1903, fifteen out of the twenty-three state-endowed secondary schools had accepted the conditions offered by the Education Department and 588 pupils were receiving free tuition in these schools, 400 of them paid for by the government at £6 per head. <sup>3</sup> The Nelson College Council was unique in that it accepted the government's terms without reservation or quibble; <sup>4</sup> other governing bodies drew the attention of the Minister of Education to what they

---

1 Southland Times, 14 February, 1903.

2 Lyttelton Times, 16 December, 1902.

3 A.J.H.R., 1903, E-12, p.5.

4 Nelson College, Minutes, 18 December, 1902.

The cheerful acceptance by the Nelson College Council of the free place regulations may have been due to its belief that the scheme had stemmed from its offer to take fifty pupils from the state schools at reduced fees. 'The Governors... believe themselves to be entitled to some credit for the efforts now being made...to bring the advantages of Secondary Education more easily within the reach of all classes.' (Report of the Governors of Nelson College, 31 December, 1902.)

considered to be deficiencies and anomalies in the regulations. Dissatisfaction with the amount of the government subsidy and with the rigid application of the age limit was widespread. Secondary schools with preparatory divisions were unhappy about the ineligibility for free places of junior pupils moving up into the senior departments.<sup>1</sup> But these scruples were overcome by the very real fear many boards of governors had that continued resistance would lead to the creation of competing district high schools. Accordingly, although with some misgivings, the accepting boards decided 'to give the experiment a fair trial,'<sup>2</sup> 'to make a leap in the dark'.<sup>3</sup> The Napier governors consoled themselves that, if the worst came to the worst, they could 'hand over to the Government.'<sup>4</sup>

Not all governing bodies surrendered so easily to the Education Department. In Auckland, Wellington, Wanganui and Christchurch, the local boards of governors declined to co-operate; each pleaded financial difficulties and lack of accommodation.<sup>5</sup>

In Christchurch, the Canterbury College Board of Governors asked the Headmaster and Lady Principal to assess the likely

1 Timaru High School, Minutes, 31 January, 1903.

2 Ibid.

3 Southland Times, 13 January, 1903; Timaru Herald, 16 December, 1902.

4 New Zealand Times, 15 January, 1903.

5 A.J.H.R., 1903, E-12, p.11.



consequences of the regulations for their respective schools. The reply of the Lady Principal, Miss Gibson, was guarded. She expressed doubt as to the need for the wider provision of secondary education but said that she would be pleased to take all comers if the Board thought it financially possible and additional classrooms could be provided.<sup>1</sup>

The Headmaster, C.E. Bevan-Brown, was, predictably, less accommodating. He apparently saw no reason to change the opinions he had expressed in 1899 when the exclusiveness of his school had been trenchantly criticised by local citizens. He once again argued that 'the words primary and secondary' denoted not successive steps but different kinds of education and that it was therefore nonsense to complain of the work of the high schools overlapping that of the primary schools. To open up the Boys' High School to all who had passed standard six would reduce it to the equivalent of an English higher grade primary school. 'Quality is better than quantity,' he urged. In his view entrance to secondary school should be restricted to those who had passed standard five before they were twelve. To

---

<sup>1</sup> Lady Principal, (Miss M. Gibson), to Chairman, Canterbury College Board of Governors, 9 January, 1903. Letter File, Canterbury College.

such boys the Governors could grant their own free places on the same basis as that proposed by the Education Department, one free place for each £50 of net income from endowments. If the Government wanted more free places still, it should be made to pay the full fee of ten guineas: to accept less would invite financial embarrassment.<sup>1</sup>

The 'rather striking unanimity'<sup>2</sup> underlying the two letters was not reproduced on the Board where a strong liberal, nonconformist minority was trying to force the conservative, Anglican majority to accept the government offer. Dr. Erwin, the spokesman for the minority, warned that if the Board did not accept its hand would be forced. 'In its new scheme the Government has gauged public opinion very well. The idea is to bridge the gap at present left between the age at which most children pass the sixth standard and the age at which the law allows them to go to work. The regulations may be faulty in details but they are admirable in intention.'<sup>3</sup> Though Erwin's eloquence did not convince the majority, they agreed to send Bevan-Brown's memorandum to Hogben for his comments and to hold a special meeting to discuss the free place regulations again.

---

1 'Memorandum: The Government Proposals for Free Places in Secondary Schools.' C.E. Bevan-Brown to Chairman, Canterbury College Board of Governors, 27 December, 1902. Letter File, Canterbury College.

2 Lyttelton Times, 15 January, 1903.

3 Ibid.

Hogben replied promptly to Bevan-Brown's memorandum. He countered point by point all the educational objections Bevan-Brown had raised but omitted any reference to the adequacy or otherwise of the £6 capitation grant.<sup>1</sup> Bevan-Brown's distinction between primary and secondary education Hogben described as 'unreal'. 'There should not be,' he wrote, 'such a wide break in character between the schools.'<sup>2</sup> He conceded the point that the cleverer children would benefit by entry to secondary schools after standard five<sup>3</sup> and endorsed Bevan-Brown's suggestion that schools could use their own free places as scholarships to cater for such pupils. Most children, however, entered secondary school after they had passed standard six and it was the willingness or ability of the parents to pay fees, not educational qualifications, which largely determined who should go to high school. The December regulations would allow all who qualified educationally to go. 'I am unable to see,' Hogben

---

1 G. Hogben to Chairman, Canterbury College Board of Governors. 'Memorandum. Rough notes on Mr. Bevan-Brown's criticism of the Regulations for Free Secondary Education.' 24 January, 1903. Letter File, Canterbury College.

2 Ibid., p.2. In 1895, while he was still Headmaster of Timaru High School, Hogben had referred to 'the great necessity for the proper co-ordination of the two classes of schools.' G. Hogben to W.J.Habens, 2 August, 1895. Letter Book, Timaru High School.

3 Hogben had himself a few years before recommended that children who intended to go to secondary school should not be kept to pass standard six, which was 'not a natural link with secondary work.' G. Hogben to Chairman, Board of Governors, Timaru High School, 5 November, 1896. Letter Book, Timaru High School.

wrote, 'how this will lower the educational standard.'<sup>1</sup> He also disposed neatly of the plea made by both the Lady Principal and Headmaster that their schools could not accommodate the numbers of children likely to take advantage of the free place regulations. 'If the younger children now admitted were excluded,' he innocently observed, 'there would be more room, and I believe the rest of the school would gain in efficiency.'<sup>2</sup>

The conservative majority on the Board was not convinced by Hogben's lengthy and persuasive memorandum.<sup>3</sup> Its view was still that expressed by one of its members, A.E. Rhodes, in 1899. 'It is not financially possible,' he had said, 'to give free secondary education.'<sup>4</sup>

'The public will not be put off with paltry excuses,' exploded the editor of the Lyttelton Times. 'If the Board should come into conflict with the government...and the public... the result will hardly be soothing to the self-esteem of the members.'<sup>5</sup> 'Reform will have to come,' wrote one Times correspondent. 'The Board will have to give the children of all classes access to their own property....'<sup>6</sup>

1 G. Hogben, 'Memorandum', p.2.

2 Ibid., p.3.

3 Lyttelton Times, 27 January, 1903.

4 Ibid., 31 October, 1899.

5 Lyttelton Times, 27 January, 1903.

6 Ibid., 4 February, 1903.

'The Board is working in the interests of the minority, not the majority,'<sup>1</sup> charged another.

The assistant-secretary of the Canterbury Trades and Labour Council in his letter to the Canterbury College governors protesting at their continued refusal to admit free place pupils, took a line similar to that already adopted by the editor of the Lyttelton Times.

We regret the opposition of the Board to the suggested regulations made by the Education Department in re the High Schools under your contrroll, [sic] and respectfully submit that your action is opposed to the interests of the workers by debarring their children from the increased facilities of higher education provided by the proposed regulations and would venture to suggest that if the proposals made do not meet with your approval, an earnest effort should be made to amend them in such a way as to provide more opportunity for children from primary schools to obtain tuition in a High or secondary school, after passing the sixth standard which they often do several years before they are old enough to take up a trade or calling. 2

At a meeting of the East Christchurch School Committee the opinion was expressed 'pretty strongly'<sup>3</sup> that 'the Board did not wish sons or daughters of the workers at the High Schools at all and catered only for the wealthy.'<sup>4</sup> A resolution passed by the meeting was forwarded to the Board of Governors urging them 'to accept the offer of the Government

1 Ibid., 12 February, 1903.

2 W. Newton to Chairman and Gentlemen, Canterbury College Board of Governors, 28 February, 1903. Letter File, Canterbury College.

3 Lyttelton Times, 7 February, 1903.

4 Ibid.

for the establishment of the scheme of free secondary education, the Committee being of opinion that the present endowments of the Board were sufficient, with the Government subsidy, to meet all the necessary expenses in connection with the scheme.<sup>1</sup>

Similar resolutions were passed by the School Committees' Association<sup>2</sup> and the Canterbury Women's Institute,<sup>3</sup> while in Wellington Seddon took the opportunity, when he opened the new Terrace School, to criticise those who did not agree that the secondary schools should be open to all.<sup>4</sup> 'There is no difference between the Premier and the Minister of Education on this question,' remarked the editor of the New Zealand Times. 'The Premier has set the ideal before his colleague who is, with his officers, endeavouring to give practical expression to it.'<sup>5</sup>

A week later recalcitrant boards of governors were the targets of a stinging, unsigned article in the New Zealand Times. Some boards of governors, the writer alleged, were trying to 'burke' the government's scheme to widen educational opportunities. In so doing they were acting very unwisely

1 N.L. Aiken, Hon. Sect. to Chairman, Canterbury College Board of Governors, 10 February, 1903. Letter File, Canterbury College.

2 Lyttelton Times, 7 February, 1903.

3 Ibid., 18 February, 1903.

4 Evening Post, (Wellington), 29 January, 1903.

5 New Zealand Times, 29 January, 1903.

for the institutions they represented because the scheme would be carried through. In particular, 'the searchlight of public opinion' would be turned on the governors' management of revenue from state endowments to show that, in fact, the boards they represented had ample funds to allow them to accept children at £6 per head. Scorn was poured upon the Wellington College Board of Governors' claim that its school could not accommodate more children. Room for free place pupils could be found by closing down the preparatory division. Only 'false sentiment and vulgar pride' encouraged parents to send to the College boys who should have been in primary schools. 'Parents who have notions with regard to the culture of their children and the contaminating character of the State school ought to be prevented from taking advantage of the State's endowments, as expressed in the higher schools of the country,' the writer concluded.<sup>1</sup>

Three days later Seddon made very similar accusations in a speech at Levin. He said:

The high schools of the colony are occupied by the children of parents who can afford three times the fees. Our high schools are simply class schools and the high

---

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Times, 7 February, 1903. The same newspaper had on 8 January, 1903, carried a contributed article on the same theme. This had been referred to in the following issue of the Evening Post as 'that inspired article'.

school governors say they have no room for the free scholars proposed by the Education Department. Out should go the children of tender years now attending these high schools - the children of parents who look down upon those who send their children to the public schools. A Royal Commission will be formed to investigate each of these high schools.... A conference of those controlling the high schools and those controlling the public schools will be called to study the findings and the whole question will then be referred to Parliament. Secondary education will be placed in such a position that we will be able to claim that New Zealand is in advance of any part of the British Empire.<sup>1</sup>

Seddon's enthusiasm for educational reform was growing. He sent Pember Reeves copies of the free place regulations and the National Scholarships Act, remarking that he thought educational matters were progressing satisfactorily, and closing: 'I shall be very glad to hear from you at any time on this question and to give favourable consideration to any suggestions you may make on this important matter.'<sup>2</sup>

Seddon seems to have been convinced that the boards of governors which declined to accept the free place regulations did so because they wanted to use their endowment income for the benefit of a restricted class of pupils. The continued refusal of the Canterbury College Board of Governors to accept free place scholars even after the Inspector-General had himself appeared before the Board to plead the Education

---

1 Evening Post, 11 February, 1903.

2 R.J. Seddon to W.P. Reeves, 3 February, 1903. Reeves's Papers.



Department's case, added further fuel to the fires of Seddon's indignation.<sup>1</sup> In a speech at Gore he questioned the competence of School Commissioners to administer the secondary school endowments properly. 'The Commissioners,' he said, 'have a decreasing revenue and a discontented tenantry, but the Government, in its dealings with the State tenants has an increasing revenue and successful results all round.'<sup>2</sup> A few days later at Waimate Seddon attacked the use to which endowment income was put in a speech reminiscent of that made at Levin.

I have seen schools called high schools where there were children of eight, ten and eleven who could not pass Standard Three. Their parents are paying fees and that makes it [sic] a class school. But these schools are endowed with public funds or the fees would have to be larger. Therefore these parents are having their children educated in part at the public expense. If I had the power I would go to these schools and turn out every pupil who could not pass Standard Six or its equivalent. (Applause)... All children should go through the primary schools, and then if there are any whose parents cannot pay the high school fees, the fees - and even, if necessary, their board and lodging - can be paid out of the endowments. The highest education must be brought within the reach of all so that all the brightest intellects may be highly educated for the benefit of the whole country. 3

But while it was easy for the Premier to make speeches condemning recalcitrant boards of governors, the Education Department was not finding the overcoming of their resistance

---

1 A motion that the Canterbury College Board of Governors 'accept the scheme tentatively' was lost by six to five at the April meeting of the Board. Minutes, (College), 21 April, 1903, pp.101-2.

2 New Zealand Times, 8 April, 1903.

3 Timaru Herald, 11 April, 1903.

a simple matter. Their refusal to yield to Education Department pressure and persuasion highlighted the need for a Minister of Education more forceful than Walker, who could give added weight to his department's attempts at reform. Mark Cohen, a very astute observer of the political and educational scene, predicted to Pember Reeves that Walker's days as a member of Cabinet were numbered.

'No, Dick don't [sic] intend to scrap any of his colleagues under pressure unless it be Walker who is notoriously weak as Education', he wrote in April, 1903. 'He is led too much by the nose by Hogben who has all the Boards up in arms and is not reliable nowadays as leader of the Council.... There's discontent on all sides with educational management, and a strong demand that Education shall come downstairs again.'<sup>1</sup>

Although Cohen thought that Hall-Jones's appointment as Minister of Education was imminent, Seddon continued to be the chief government spokesman on educational affairs - as indeed he was on almost any matter of consequence, - and it was to Seddon that a deputation of Christchurch citizens went to urge that the government force the local board of governors to adopt the free place scheme.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Cohen to W.P. Reeves, 18 April, 1903. Reeves's Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Lyttelton Times, 8 June, 1903.

In his reply to the deputation's plea Seddon was blunt and to the point. He said that he realised that the existing regulations did not go far enough. They would therefore be made compulsory but on amended lines. It was also intended to fix a given standard and a minimum age at which children should be admitted to secondary school. The minimum age had not yet been decided but the standard had been fixed at not less than a fifth standard pass. All children who could not pass that standard would be excluded from the secondary schools.<sup>1</sup>

The editor of the Lyttelton Times was delighted with the Premier's forthrightness. The critics of the Canterbury College Board of Governors had, in his view, won a major victory. 'The attitude of the Board of Governors has estranged the sympathies of both the Government and the public,' he wrote. 'Now it will have to acquiesce with what grace it can muster.'<sup>2</sup> And with that prophetic comment the editor sat back to await the reconvening of the General Assembly at the end of the month.

### The Last Act

Any hopes the unco-operative endowed schools might have had of gaining a further reprieve were dashed when Seddon took

---

1 The Colonist, 17 June, 1903.  
2 Lyttelton Times, 11 June, 1903.

over the portfolios of Education and Immigration from Walker who resigned 'on account of ill-health'.

Almost immediately the new Minister of Education was asked in the House of Representatives to appoint a Royal Commission on Education but he declined, saying that although this had been the Government's intention as late as April, it had now decided instead to set up a Select Committee with comprehensive terms of reference.<sup>1</sup>

The more radical Christchurch Liberals were not satisfied. 'Inquiry into all aspects of education will not do Christchurch's particular difficulty any good,' T.E. Taylor, Member for Christchurch City, said. 'The Government must break the deadlock between the Board of Governors of Canterbury College and the parents. It is no use waiting years for a Committee to report. Secondary education must be dealt with first and separately.'<sup>2</sup> 'Legislation must be brought down to make the Governors throw the Girls' High School and Boys' High School absolutely open to all,'<sup>3</sup> declared another Christchurch member.

Seddon agreed the matter was urgent and said that it was the Government's intention to introduce legislation to compel boards of governors to carry out the wishes of Parliament in

---

1 P.D., 1903, Vol.123, p.763. The Select Committee was required 'to inquire into and report on: (1) Primary education, especially curriculum: (2) Secondary education, the subjects taught, standard of proficiency, age-limit for admission: (3) Higher education: (4) Technical education: (5) Training colleges: (6) Native schools: (7) Bills relating to education.' (A.J.H.R., 1903, I-13.)

2 P.D., 1903, Vol.124, pp.133-4.

3 Ibid., p.134.

regard to secondary education.<sup>1</sup> He added that, while he wanted the newly-created Education Committee to give the best advice possible on the matter of secondary education, he would not allow it to delay the necessary legislation.<sup>2</sup> The final form taken by the Secondary Schools Act, 1903, was, however, largely the work of the Education Committee because at Seddon's request members of the Lower House agreed not to debate the Bill but to submit it after a second reading pro forma to the expert consideration of the Select Committee.

While the draft Bill was before the Committee a mild sensation was caused by the publication of its provisions, first in the New Zealand Times<sup>3</sup>, and then in the Lyttelton Times.<sup>4</sup> Although the New Zealand Times was fined by a Parliamentary Privileges Committee<sup>5</sup> it was the comment by the editor of the Lyttelton Times which caused the greatest controversy. He interpreted the inclusion of Christ's College and Wanganui Collegiate School in the schedule of schools to be grant-aided as indicating the Government's intention to support denominational secondary education. 'Such a measure', one member said, 'will frustrate the people's

1 The Colonist, 27 July and 1 August, 1903.

2 P.D., 1903, Vol.124, p.141.

3 New Zealand Times, 5 and 7 September, 1903.

4 Lyttelton Times, 8 September, 1903.

5 P.D., 1903, Vol.125, pp.693-4.

repeatedly expressed determination that no denominational or private schools shall receive State aid.<sup>1</sup> T.E. Taylor reminded the House that, had it not been detected by Rolleston and Stout, the 1898 Technical School Bill, a piece of legislation with which Seddon had also been closely associated, would have contained such a 'dangerous clause.'<sup>2</sup>

As Taylor, an implacable opponent of Seddon had expected, his innuendo went home. Seddon rose indignantly to deny that he or his Government had any intention of aiding denominational schools. They were being pre-judged on a draft bill sent to the Committee by the Education Department. This preliminary draft had included the two Church of England schools in its schedule of schools to be grant-aided simply because they were 'two of the very best secondary schools in the country.'<sup>3</sup> However, Taylor and the editor of the Lyttelton Times had achieved their purpose; Christ's College and Wanganui Collegiate School were omitted from the final schedule of schools to be given government subsidies.<sup>4</sup>

The omission of these two schools was a sop the Select

1 P.D., 1903, Vol.125, p.439.

2 Ibid., p.442.

3 Ibid., p.445.

4 Compare the rather misleading statement in A.G. Butchers, Education in New Zealand, p.194: 'The two great Church of England schools...succeeded in holding aloof and were not included in the list of schools affected by the Act of 1903.'

Committee was prepared to offer to public opinion in order to win general acceptance of its bill. It was but one of many concessions the Committee had been forced to make in the course of its deliberations; from its elephantine labours the mountain at last brought forth its mouse, a bill which in a number of ways treated the endowed secondary schools with greater consideration than had the regulations of December, 1902. The resistance of the five boards of governors to the free place regulations had not been in vain.

The essential difference between the 1902 regulations and the Secondary Schools Act, 1903, was that whereas the former called upon the endowed schools to give a free place for every £50 of their net revenue from endowments and after that to take all the qualified pupils who presented themselves at £6 a head, the latter substituted 'or' for 'and'. Schools had either to accept Government free place scholars or provide scholarships of their own to the annual value of one-fifth of their annual endowment income.

The chairman of the Canterbury College Board of Governors, Charles Lewis, Conservative Member for City of Christchurch, claimed that it was largely the courage displayed by his Board in resisting the December regulations in the face of 'the severest criticism and all sorts of abuse' that had led to 'this improved legislation'. The substitution of a fifth

standard for a sixth standard pass as a prerequisite for scholarships or free places and the removal of the ban on their award to children not attending State schools he also attributed to the efforts of his Board. 'The attitude of the Canterbury College Board of Governors has been justified in all developments since last December,' he said, 'and has been endorsed in effect by the Education Department, the Education Committee and the 1903 Bill.'<sup>1</sup>

The last line of the last clause of the Act<sup>2</sup> which forbade the support of junior departments out of endowment income was, however, a major set-back for the Canterbury College Board of Governors, which Lewis conveniently omitted to mention. His Board had consistently supported its headmaster in his claim that junior departments were integral parts of secondary schools but the public and Seddon himself were so averse to these 'class nurseries' that their complete extinction seemed inevitable. That this did not occur, that yet another compromise was effected, owed nothing to the protestations of Bevan-Brown; it was due solely to

---

1 P.D., 1903, Vol.127, pp.678-9.

2 3 Edw.VII,1903, No.73. 'An Act to Make Better Provision for Secondary Schools'. Clause 17 (2). 'The revenues derived from reserves set apart for secondary education shall be handed over by the Commissioners to the governing bodies of secondary schools in the provincial district, in proportion to the number of pupils in average attendance at the several secondary schools, exclusive of the pupils in any preparatory department.'



government sympathy for the particular difficulties of Nelson College whose deed of foundation required it to accept pupils from the age of nine. A deputation of Nelson Governors visited Wellington and 'stated their views on the subject of Secondary Education to the Education Committee of the House of Representatives and saw Hogben re the Colleges' right to receive young pupils.'<sup>1</sup> In the end this particular problem was solved by providing that such children could be admitted if they were taught separately and were not a charge on the secondary endowments.<sup>2</sup>

The net income from endowments differed greatly from school to school.<sup>3</sup> In 1903, for example, Thames High School

1 Nelson College, Minutes, 29 October, 1903.

2 P.D., 1903, Vol.127, p.848.

3 A return laid before Parliament in August, 1903, and published in The Colonist, 20 August, 1903, showed that the net income from endowments for every pupil attending different secondary schools was as follows:

Thames High School . . . . .	fraction under	£16.10.0
Timaru . . . . .	fraction over	£15. 0.0
Ashburton . . . . .		£13.16.0
Christchurch Boys' High School . . . . .		£13. 0.0
Christ's College . . . . .		£12.15.0
New Plymouth High Schools . . . . .		£11.14.6
Napier " " . . . . .		£ 9.10.0
Otago " " . . . . .		£ 8. 8.0
Waitaki High School . . . . .		£ 7. 7.0
Southland High Schools . . . . .		£ 7. 6.0
Marlborough High School . . . . .		£ 6.15.0
Wellington Colleges . . . . .		£ 6. 9.0
Wanganui Girls' College . . . . .		£ 5. 0.0
Wanganui Collegiate School . . . . .		£ 4.12.0
Whangarei High School . . . . .		£ 4.10.0
Auckland . . . . .		£ 3.19.0
Rangiora High School . . . . .		£ 3.18.0
Christchurch Girls' High School . . . . .		£ 3.16.0
Nelson Colleges . . . . .		£ 3.12.0

received £16. 10. 0 for every pupil while the Nelson Colleges got only £3. 12. 0. To overcome such obvious inequalities the Education Committee devised a sliding scale of grants to schools which provided free places. 'We propose', explained Seddon, 'to give an amount relative to the amount that is received from the endowments.'<sup>1</sup> By this device the Government hoped to overcome the widespread dissatisfaction of most boards of governors with the meagreness of the £6 capitation grant while at the same time avoiding the politically dangerous step of having to pool provincial endowments.

#### Politics Win Out

The Secondary Schools Bill as it was finally passed did not 'burst up' the endowed schools in the thorough-going manner many Liberals had long advocated. By 1903 educational and political issues had become too closely interwoven to allow the passage of a sweeping reform measure. Instead, the Select Committee produced a bill which reflected their political acumen as much as their educational prescience.

The eighth section of the Act detailing the composition of boards of governors for new secondary schools provided an

---

1 P.D., 1903, Vol.125, p.75.

excellent illustration of the political manoeuvring which must have gone on behind the scenes during the drafting of the bill. Contrary to what was generally expected, control of secondary schools was to remain the responsibility of independent boards of governors.<sup>1</sup> No explanation was ever given by Seddon or Hogben for the retention of boards of governors; their survival was very likely an incidental outcome of the bitter feud which was then raging between the Education Department and the Education Boards<sup>2</sup> at whose expense the Department had, between 1899 and 1903, made some substantial gains.<sup>3</sup> Hogben was no doubt reluctant to strengthen his adversaries by allowing the secondary schools and their endowments to pass into their hands.

Because of his experiences with certain conservative boards of governors over the December, 1902, free place

---

1 Education Board control of secondary schools was considered likely. This belief arose from the provision in the Marlborough High School Act, 1899, for Education Board members to double as governors and from remarks made by leading Liberal politicians. (Above, p.351.) New governing bodies would, however, be much more responsive to public pressure than the original boards had proved to be.

2 One M.H.R. said that Education Boards had the impression the Inspector-General was thirsting for power, that he desired absolutism, and wanted particularly to get rid of the Boards. (P.D., 1901, Vol.119, p.260.)

3 e.g. in the institution of a colonial scale of salaries. (Public School Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901.)

regulations, Hogben would not have been eager to advance educational arguments in support of the creation of provincial secondary school authorities to replace the much-criticised separate governing bodies. Such an administrative reorganisation would have meant the fostering of potentially more redoubtable opponents than most of the individual boards had proved to be. To Hogben in 1903 'divide and rule' must have seemed a very sound maxim.

Hogben's reluctance to see the boards superseded would also have been shared by political hopefuls throughout the colony for whom membership of boards of governors afforded a convenient means of bringing themselves before the notice of the voting public.<sup>1</sup>

So intent were the members of the Select Committee and their advisers on balancing conflicting political interests that they omitted to provide in their Bill for some oversight by the Education Department of what was actually taught in the secondary schools. The Inspector-General was given the right to inspect all secondary schools and, if he chose, to examine their pupils but significantly, either by accident or design, the Department was not given the power which it

---

<sup>1</sup> Full reports of the monthly meetings of the boards of governors appeared in the local newspapers.

had in respect of the primary schools of prescribing by regulations the syllabus of instruction.

Full realisation of the deleterious effects the lack of this authority was to have upon secondary education in New Zealand was yet to come. In the meantime Seddon prided himself on having made a major educational advance. 'The operation of the Act will mean extra expenditure on education', he predicted, 'but...as Colonial Treasurer I can only say that any moneys required...will be cheerfully supplied and I know when expended they will be of great benefit to the youths of our colony and will provide what those who are well-wishers of the youth of New Zealand have considered to be a long-felt want.'<sup>1</sup> Seddon was confident that he had put the colony's educational house in order and that he could now safely leave its future management to George Hogben. 'With respect to secondary education the wants of the colony have been fairly met,'<sup>2</sup> he said. In his view, the passing of the 1903 Secondary Schools Act removed education from the realm of party politics; social justice in an educational sense had been achieved; future developments would be mainly the concern of educators and only incidentally of the politicians instead of, as had so often been the case since 1877, the other way round.

---

1 P.D., 1903, Vol.127, p.678.

2 Ibid.

## Epilogue

Hogben had predicted in his 1901 report on the secondary schools that if a free place scheme were introduced only a small number of primary school children each year would take advantage of it.<sup>1</sup> 'Neither Hogben nor Seddon thought', the Director of Education, J. Caughley, said in 1925, 'that the people of New Zealand would avail themselves to any great extent of this new privilege.'<sup>2</sup>

Events soon proved how mistaken both men were. Because the conditions on which the free places were granted were more generous than Hogben had intended and because the eagerness of parents to give their children further schooling was as genuine as some of the politicians had been insisting it was, secondary school enrolments in 1903 and 1904 were far in excess of Hogben's estimate of 350 a year. In 1904 there were 3523 children from primary schools receiving free tuition in either secondary schools or district high schools compared with a meagre 963 at the end of 1901. In 1905 the number had grown to 4273. 'In Otago', said a Dunedin Member of the House of Representatives, 'so many are taking advantage of the free secondary education that the school accommodation is inadequate and must be extended.'<sup>3</sup>

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1901, E-12.

2 'Notes for an Address, 12 November, 1925' (Typescript, Nelson College Council Office), p.3.

3 P.D., 1903, Vol.124, p.194.

Some schools almost doubled their enrolments.<sup>1</sup> The Southland Boys' and Girls' High Schools, with a total enrolment of 101 in 1902 admitted 106 new pupils in 1903.<sup>2</sup> The governors of the Nelson Colleges reported that no additional pupils could be received 'owing to the crowded nature of the Colleges.'<sup>3</sup> So acute had the accommodation shortage become that Josiah Hanan, the Member for Invercargill, claimed that a number of eligible and deserving children were being denied the privileges of higher education.<sup>4</sup>

Government expenditure on secondary education soared and it was indeed fortunate that the Colonial Treasurer, Premier, and the Minister of Education were one and the same person. Once having set his hand to the plough Seddon could not turn back. More by accident than intent<sup>5</sup> New Zealand found herself committed to the principle of free secondary education not only for the very able, as Hogben had first intended, but for the average as well.

The cost of introducing a free secondary education scheme into New Zealand had to be reckoned in human as well as monetary terms. The health of both the principal promoters

1 Rangiora High School's roll rose from 40 in 1902 to 70 in 1903. (P.D., 1903, Vol.126, p.404).

2 Southland Times, 29 January, 1903.

3 Nelson College, Minutes, 29 July, 1903.

4 P.D., 1903, Vol.127, p.680.

5 This is H. Roth's judgement. See H. Roth, George Hogben: A Biography, p.116.

suffered as a result of the enormous amount of work entailed in implementing the 1903 Secondary Schools Act. 'Seddon has broken down completely,' wrote Mark Cohen to Pember Reeves. '...in his desire to make the system free from the primary to the University, for that was his intention when he succeeded poor Walker, he never reckoned on the cost nor the amount of labor [sic] that is involved in implementing a task of that magnitude. Instead of proceeding by very gradual steps, and calculating most carefully the cost of each forward move, he has rushed things to such a degree that none of us know exactly "where 'e ar." The strain is not alone felt by Seddon, but it "knocked out" Hogben, who is many removes from Habens as a constructor.... The policy of rush inaugurated by Hogben will inevitably bring in its train a crop of evils the consequences of which make the judicious grieve.' Cohen added that so badly had Seddon's health been undermined by the 'Herculean task' he had undertaken in education that he had been forced to go into seclusion in Pelorus Sound, ostensibly because of his wife's ill-health, but really because it was feared that with any further strain 'his mind might give way.' Cohen ended his letter with a prophetic remark: 'Honestly, I believe he would sooner die Premier of New Zealand, with the knowledge that with his last breath he was King Dick with full sway over the destinies of his party, than be



even temporarily superseded.<sup>1</sup>

Life was not made any easier for Seddon and Hogben by the refusal of Auckland Grammar School, the two Wellington Colleges, Wanganui Girls' College and Christchurch Boys' High School to accept free place pupils. Financial difficulties forced the governors of Auckland Grammar School to fall into line in 1904 although their chairman, Sir Maurice O'Rorke, claimed that by so doing they were becoming subordinate to the Education Department in Wellington with a consequent undermining of that 'free control and management of the school granted by Parliament throughout many years.'<sup>2</sup> The Wellington and Christchurch schools persisted longer in their refusal to co-operate. Only increasing competition from city district high schools convinced their governors of the futility of further resistance. Wanganui Girls' College never conceded defeat by the 1903 Secondary Schools Act; it did not enrol free place pupils until compelled to do so by the 1914 Education Act.

But the continued existence of these unco-operative schools detracted little from the claim made by Seddon while on his Australian visit in 1906 that it was possible in God's Own Country for any man's child to go from the primary school

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Cohen to W. Pember Reeves, 16 May, 1904. Reeves's Papers.

<sup>2</sup> A.J.H.R., 1904, E-12, p.10.

to the university.<sup>1</sup> Two years earlier Frank Tate, the Director of Education in Victoria, after examining the likely consequences for New Zealand of the free place system, had concluded that through its adoption New Zealand had "accepted the consequences of democracy" in her educational system....<sup>2</sup>

Educational change had caught up with social change: it was for posterity to ensure that they remained in harmony.

---

1 The Argus (Melbourne), 5 June, 1906.

2 A.J.H.R., 1904, E-14, p.13.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### CONCLUSION

In nineteenth century New Zealand changes in attitude towards secondary education and the high schools which provided it reflected, although somewhat tardily, changes in the contemporary social order wrought by economic and political forces. In a real sense, public interest in secondary education during New Zealand's first sixty years may be regarded as a measure of the speed at which an egalitarian society evolved in this country.

With perhaps the exception of Presbyterian Otago there was nothing egalitarian about early New Zealand society. Each colonist from the moment he set foot on board an immigrant ship, knew exactly what his initial status was to be in colonial society. And for as long as they could, many of the settlers who sailed 'cabin class' tried to preserve intact the social gradations of shipboard life.<sup>1</sup>

Until the late seventies the majority of the small

---

<sup>1</sup> For the greater part of the provincial period the Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages of the Waimea West Church of England shows that the vicars of that church divided their flock into the 'settlers' and the 'pheasants'. [sic] Dr. David Monro, (later Speaker of the House of Representatives,) caused much gossip in Nelson 'society' by marrying 'beneath him'. His wife had not been a 'cabin class' immigrant.

farmers, artisans, mechanics and labourers seem not to have been overtly antagonistic towards their well-to-do fellow colonists. They accepted their social and political leadership without demur and, except in Otago, seem not to have thought it an injustice that admission to the secondary schools of the colony was very largely restricted to the sons of the gentry. That there was no outcry against the obvious privileges enjoyed by the members of the leisured class is not surprising: most of the settlers were too engrossed in eking out a living to concern themselves with such a mysterious and impractical subject as secondary education. \*

The gentry, on the other hand, were anxious that their sons should have at least the beginnings of a traditional grammar school education. This desire stemmed from two main causes: one was the belief that a knowledge of the classics was an essential part of the equipment of a gentleman and the other was the reluctance of most of the colonial gentry to sever their ties with the old world. Many fathers hoped that their sons would be able to go from their colonial high schools to English public or endowed grammar schools and then on to Cambridge, London, or Oxford University to complete their education.

Because only a very small proportion of the settlers had these aspirations, such secondary schools as existed were patronised almost entirely by the sons of the well-to-do.

The majority of settlers were satisfied during the provincial period if their children gained a third or fourth standard pass before leaving school. As a result the development of a two-track system of schooling in New Zealand was quite a natural one. All the provincial Boards of Education, however, tried to link the two tracks, to blur the class lines, by means of scholarships. Most of the secondary schools themselves also offered exhibitions to very able primary school children. The competition for these awards was not at first great; it was only after Bowen's Education Act of 1877 had created an effective national system of primary education and increasing numbers of children were staying on in the primary schools to complete the six standards that the demand for easier access to the secondary schools began to be heard.

Although Bowen refused to make extensive provision for secondary education in the 1877 Act, the government in its accompanying Education Reserves Act set aside large tracts of land for the endowment of secondary schools.

Almost immediately the politicians' apathy towards secondary education disappeared and in the next few years sixteen new high schools were incorporated.<sup>1</sup> But it soon became apparent

---

1 A.J.H.R., 1899, E-1, p.xx.

that it was anxiety to win votes rather than an eagerness to advance the cause of higher education which impelled the politicians to introduce their high school bills. It was the land endowments which could be obtained for a local high school which really excited the interest of the Members of the House of Representatives. No politician worthy of his salt - or his electors' votes - could afford to miss an opportunity to present his district with a slice of the educational endowments cake. As a result, authority was given in a number of cases by Act of Parliament for high schools to be established in towns where there was neither a need nor a demand for them.<sup>1</sup>

What little chance many of these new secondary schools had of being successful was destroyed by the onset of the depression. Paradoxically, public interest in the secondary schools, hitherto slight, increased as their enrolments decreased and as the grip of the depression tightened. To many, the endowed schools became symbolic of the privileges enjoyed by the affluent; working-class Liberal politicians soon learned that they could win the acclaim of their audiences by promising to strip the secondary schools of their endowments. In fact, this promise was without substance for the Liberal leaders had no such intentions. Pember Reeves, the acknowledged spokesman for the Liberals on education, made it clear in 1887

---

<sup>1</sup> e.g., Rangiora, Akaroa, Whangarei, Waimate, Gisborne, Greymouth and Hokitika.

and again in 1890 that when the Liberals became the government they would not destroy the secondary schools but would devise means of opening them up to greater numbers of able children who had passed through the primary schools.

W. Pember Reeves alone among the Liberal leaders tried to honour this promise after his party's victory in the elections of 1890. But his attempts to pass legislation which would have compelled the endowed schools to use a proportion of their income to provide 'free places' were frustrated by lack of support from his fellow-ministers. 'Let us do away with the educational privileges of the rich' had been a convenient political rallying cry when in opposition: once firmly seated on the Treasury benches most of the Liberals lost interest in this particular political scapegoat when there were so many urgent political, economic, industrial and social ills which needed attention. Education had served its purpose as a means of winning votes; once in power the Liberals were content to push it to one side while they got on with what they believed to be the real business of the government.

Neither Pember Reeves nor Robert Stout was willing to accept this majority verdict. Both men believed that through a widening of educational opportunities New Zealand could develop more fully her greatest asset, her people. Had either man become Premier after John Ballance's death in 1893, the reform of the secondary schools would no doubt have soon

ensued. Seddon's accession to the leadership of the Liberals, however, precluded any likelihood of an early opening-up of the endowed schools. Unlike his rivals Seddon was not a thinker or a visionary; he was a man of action who grappled with problems and difficulties as they arose or as he became aware of them. Because in the mid-nineties there seemed to be general satisfaction with existing educational arrangements Seddon saw no reason to concern himself with education. The appointment of a Legislative Councillor, W.C. Walker, as Minister of Education in 1896 indicated both the unconcern Seddon felt for education and his lack of foresight.

Seddon failed to grasp the implications for education of the changes which had taken place in New Zealand during the first five years of Liberal rule. By the end of 1895 New Zealand had finally shaken herself free of the shackles of depression; the whole community was beginning to enjoy unprecedented prosperity. This sense of material well-being had a direct effect on the schools. More and more parents found they could afford to keep their children at school to the sixth standard and beyond. Once again, as in the eighties, but for quite different reasons, working men looked critically at the secondary schools and the purpose they served. They no longer wanted to destroy them but to use them.

This growing need for easier access to secondary education was highlighted and emphasised in each Education Board



inspector's report to the Education Department from 1895 on. All wrote of large numbers of children staying on at school beyond the sixth standard, many of them repeating the work of that standard not once, but twice, and sometimes three times. But neither the well-meaning but incompetent Walker, nor his complacent and elderly Inspector-General, Habens, grasped the implications of this trend. A number of governing bodies of endowed schools did, and reduced tuition fees or waived them altogether, finding room for the resulting influx of senior primary school children by closing their own lower schools. By so doing these schools paved the way for an articulated national system of primary and secondary education and destroyed the two track system blessed by the O'Rourke Commissioners. A few boards of governors, however, would make no concessions.

It was against these institutions that the full fury of the people's wrath was directed at the beginning of the new century. And in the recently-appointed Inspector-General, Hogben, they found a sympathetic and shrewd ally. The people's mood was reflected in the sharp criticism levelled at the administration of the Education Department by many Members of the House of Representatives.

\* Finally, mounting public pressure and a well-timed report by Hogben on the state of secondary education in New Zealand with suggestions for its extension brought results in

the form of the Free Place Regulations of December, 1902.

The majority of the endowed schools accepted the regulations but, predictably, an influential minority did not. Hogben's pleas and widely expressed public annoyance did not move the recalcitrant boards. Only at this point, when defiance of the wishes of the government had become so blatant, did Seddon descend from his Olympian heights and take the matter in hand. The ailing Walker resigned, Seddon added the Education portfolio to his already impressive collection, and breathing fire and fury, embarked upon a crusade against all who presumed to thwart the will of the people and Richard John Seddon. The preparation of a Secondary Schools Bill was entrusted to a Select Committee of the House with instructions not to waste any time.

The result was a compromise measure which neatly balanced a variety of conflicting interests but which equally neatly side-stepped certain fundamental educational issues. It was an apt summation of the importance which politicians had placed upon education in the political scheme of things in the first twenty-five years of national government and in this respect was a sorry augury for the future. In the Secondary Schools Act of 1903 Seddon belatedly acknowledged what the more prescient Pember Reeves and Stout had always stressed, the need for educational change to keep pace with political and social change. The nineties had been a great

watershed in New Zealand's history. In all ways, except educationally, New Zealand in 1900 was a very different country from what it had been in 1890. The Secondary Schools Act in spite of its limitations effectively brought the education system more into accord with the new social order. At last free secondary education was available for all able children, whatever their background.

APPENDICES

A. EDUCATION RESERVES ACT, 1877 (Extracts)

B. DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE  
FREE PLACE SYSTEM OF 1903:

- (i) Endowed Schools Bill, 1893.
- (ii) Endowed Schools Bill, 1895. (Extract)
- (iii) Marlborough High School Act, 1899. (Extracts)
- (iv) Circular Memorandum re District High  
Schools, 1901.
- (v) Free Place Regulations, 1902.
- (vi) Secondary Schools Act, 1903.

(A) EDUCATION RESERVES ACT, 1877

An Act to make provision for the apportionment of Education Reserves for the purposes of Primary and Secondary Education, and for setting apart Education Reserves, and for the control and management thereof.

(29th November, 1877.)

. . . . .

4. One-fourth part of all education reserves which have heretofore been made in and for any province or provincial district, and vested in any Education Board or other body, and of all other such reserves heretofore made in and for any province or provincial district, but which have not been granted to or vested in the Superintendent of any province under "The Public Reserves Act, 1854," or otherwise granted to or vested in any such Board or other body, shall be set apart specially as an endowment for secondary education within the provincial district for which such reserves and lands were originally made and set apart, and the remainder of such reserves and lands shall be set apart specially as an endowment for primary education within such district

. . . . .

9. Nothing in this Act contained shall affect any lands granted to or vested in any Education Board, body corporate, or trustees by any Act of the General Assembly, or by any provincial Ordinance or Act now in force, for any special educational purpose, or for or on behalf of any particular school or schools, or reserved or set apart in a similar way for any of the purposes aforesaid.

. . . . .

11. For every provincial district there shall be five School Commissioners....

12. Any person may be appointed a Commissioner who under the said Act would be eligible to be a member of an Education Board for the district in respect of which he is appointed....

13. The Commissioners shall keep full and true accounts of all moneys received by them by virtue of this Act....

14. The School Commissioners...may let for any period not exceeding twenty-one years any lands vested in them...at such rents and on such terms and conditions as may be thought fit.

. . . . .

19. The Governor may from time to time, by Proclamation, provisionally reserve any waste lands of the Crown...as endowments for primary and for secondary education within the

provincial district in which such lands are....

20. In order to provide an endowment for primary education in the North Island, at least five per centum of the waste lands in each district therein open for sale on the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight, and a like percentage out of all land over which the Native title may thereafter be extinguished in each such district, and which shall from time to time be acquired or purchased by or on behalf of the Crown, shall be reserved and set apart as an endowment for the maintenance of primary education within the education district in which such land is situated....

21. All revenues derived by the School Commissioners from the reserves vested in them shall...be disposed of as follows:-

- (1) The revenues derived from reserves set apart for primary education shall be handed over to the Education Board or Boards of the provincial district in proportion to the population in each education district as determined from time to time by the census....
- (2) The revenues derived from reserves set apart for secondary education shall be appropriated by the Commissioners for the exclusive advancement of secondary education in the several educational districts wholly or partially included in the

provincial districts in proportion to the population in each such education district or part of a district....

Provided always that no school shall be entitled to any grant unless it be a public school under the Education Act passed or to be passed in the present session of Parliament, or a school established or governed under any Act of the Assembly, or a school established under the Canterbury College in the Provincial District of Canterbury.

Source: Statutes of New Zealand, 1877.



(B) EVOLUTION OF THE FREE PLACE SYSTEM

## (i) ENDOWED SCHOOLS BILL, 1893

## A BILL INTITULED

An Act to provide for Free Tuition in Endowed Schools  
 BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in  
 Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same,  
 as follows:-

1. The Short Title of this Act is "The Endowed Schools  
 Act, 1893."

2. In this Act, if not inconsistent with the context, -

"Endowed school" means any school or college wholly or partly maintained by the income arising from any land or money granted or secured to the governing body of the school out of the public estate of the colony, or of any former province thereof, or out of the estates of the former New Zealand Company, or the Canterbury Association, or out of the Nelson Trust Funds; but does not include any institution affiliated to the University of New Zealand, or any school maintained chiefly for the benefit of the Maoris:

"Inspector-General of Schools" means the officer for the time being bearing that title and appointed by the Governor under the seventh section of "The Education Act, 1877."

3. Subject to the provisions of this Act, every endowed

school shall afford free education to one scholar for every fifty pounds of the annual income derived by the school from endowments, including contributions made by School Commissioners acting under "The Education Reserves Act, 1877."

4. The power of selection to the free places instituted in any endowed school as aforesaid shall be in the hands of the governing body of the school, and shall be exercised in accordance with regulations to be made from time to time by such governing body, and approved by the Minister of Education. Such regulations shall prescribe tests of fitness, and the governing body shall not be required to select a candidate who is not eligible according to such tests; but when all the candidates so eligible have been selected, if any free places remain vacant, the governing body may in their discretion select other candidates thereto.

5. The regulations made under this Act shall specify the term during which a free place may be held by a duly-selected candidate, but such term shall in no case exceed three years.

6. The Inspector-General of Schools, and such deputy or deputies as he with the express consent of the Minister of Education may appoint, shall have free access at all times to all endowed schools, and shall have authority to observe the conduct of the schools while the classes are under instruction,

and to examine the classes viva voce or by means of written papers.

Source: Bills and Private Bills, 1893.

## (ii) ENDOWED SCHOOLS BILL, 1895

(Extract)

. . . . .

4 (1) In lieu of free places as aforesaid the governing body may, in its discretion, substitute scholarships according to the following scale, that is to say, -

(a) Two scholarships, each of an annual sum equal to half the ordinary school-fees of one scholar for the year, in lieu of one free place for the year:

(b) One scholarship, of an annual sum equal to the ordinary school-fees of one, two, three, or four scholars respectively for the year:

Provided that no scholarship in lieu of three <sup>or</sup> of four free places shall be granted except to a scholar whose home is so remote from the school as to prevent him from living at home whilst attending the school.

. . . . .

Source: Bills and Private Bills,

1895.

## (iii) MARLBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL ACT, 1899

(Extracts)

. . . . .

3. The members for the time being of the Education Board of the District of Marlborough, incorporated under the provisions of "The Education Act, 1877," shall be and constitute the Board of Governors....

. . . . .

17. The Colonial Treasurer, without further appropriation than this Act, shall, out of the Consolidated Fund, annually pay to the Board,...the sum of four hundred pounds....

18. The Board shall yearly and every year afford free education by giving a free place for the year in the said High School or schools to one scholar for every fifty pounds of its net annual income, exclusive of fees.

Source: Statutes of New Zealand, 1899.

## (iv) DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS

(Circular Memorandum to Secretaries of Education Boards.)

Education Department, Wellington,

8th January, 1901.

I am directed to inform you that the vote of £550 (one quarter) for district high schools will be distributed on the following conditions:-

1. That the secondary subjects be taught in separate classes and by a teacher or teachers specially qualified to teach secondary subjects.
2. That the rest of the school be fully staffed as for any other public school with the same average attendance.
3. That the secondary pupils take arithmetic to a standard at least as high as that of the arithmetic for Standard VI.
4. That English be taken by all secondary pupils, and include the study of a work or works of some standard author, not less than 800 lines of poetry or 200 pages of prose.
5. That in addition to the statutory capitation, there be paid £2 per annum for each pupil who has passed Standard VI and is taking three or more of the following subjects, or 10s. per annum for each such pupil taking one subject or £1 per annum for each such pupil taking two subjects:-

- |                 |                          |                                |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Latin        | 6.* Elementary Mechanics | 11. Book-keeping               |
| 2. French       | 7.* Physics              | 12. Shorthand                  |
| 3. Euclid       | 8.* Chemistry            | 13.* Agricultural<br>Chemistry |
| 4. Algebra      | 9.* Botany               | 14.* Physiology                |
| 5. Trigonometry | 10.* Mechanical Drawing  |                                |

\* The work for these subjects must show an advance beyond what is offered or required for Standard VI if the same subject is taken in Standard VI.

6. That, further, £4 per annum be paid on account of each free pupil who has passed Standard VI and is attending not less than three secondary classes in addition to English and arithmetic.

7. That, in addition to the extra capitation already named, £30 per annum be paid to each district high school having not less than 12 pupils who have passed Standard VI and are taking three or more secondary classes in addition to English and arithmetic.

8. That these allowances be paid quarterly to the Boards.

9. That the whole of such allowances be paid as salaries to the secondary school teachers or as additions to the salaries of the other teachers as the Board may determine.

It is proposed that the first payments shall be made early in April next - i.e., as soon as possible after returns based upon the quarter ending 31 March, 1901, have been received.

George Hogben, Secretary.

## (v) FREE PLACE REGULATIONS, (DECEMBER), 1902

1. Subject to these regulations, £6 per annum will be paid to the governing body of any public secondary school on account of each free place provided, that is, on account of each pupil admitted without payment of fees, for tuition in excess of those referred to in Clauses 2 and 3 hereof.

2.(a) Before receiving the amount named in Clause 1, the governing body of a secondary school shall be required to provide, on such conditions as may seem fit to it, and are approved by the Minister, one free place for each £50 of its net income derived from endowments...; (b) further, the secondary school shall be required to admit to free places all pupils of good character who satisfy the conditions of Clause 4, and wish to attend secondary schools; (c) the secondary schools shall give to each holder of a free place granted under these regulations instruction in arithmetic and English of a standard higher than that required for Standard VI of the public schools syllabus.... (d) The programme of each pupil admitted to a free place...shall be determined by the principal of the secondary school after consultation with the parent or guardian of the pupil, provided that no such pupil shall be compelled to take Latin or to take more than one language besides English.

3. No payment shall be made on account of any pupil holding one of the free places named in Clause 2,(a).



4. To be entitled to hold one of the free places granted under these regulations, a pupil must, before entering a secondary school, have obtained a 'certificate of proficiency'... and must not be over fourteen years of age on Dec. 31 preceding the date of his admission to a secondary school as a holder of such free place.

5. Payments shall be made quarterly, but payments on account of any pupil shall cease after two years from Dec. 31 preceding the date of his admission, unless he is entitled to a free place under Clause 6.

6. Payment of £6 per annum on account of any holder of a free place under the foregoing clauses may be continued for two years longer, provided that he satisfies such tests as may be required by the Inspector-General of Schools, and is granted a free place in a secondary school....

7. If...it shall appear to the Minister that the attendance, conduct, diligence or progress of any pupil is not satisfactory, payment on account of such pupil shall cease....

8....These free places are open to boys and girls alike.

10. These free places are not tenable with any other free places or with any scholarships, except in cases approved by the Minister....

11. A free place under these regulations cannot be held by any pupil who is on the books of a secondary school for any part of the year 1902.

12. These regulations shall come into force on Jan 1, 1903.

(VI) AN ACT TO MAKE BETTER PROVISION FOR  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS. (23RD NOVEMBER, 1903.)

BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

1. The Short Title of this Act is "The Secondary Schools Act, 1903"; and it shall form part of and be read together with "The Education Act, 1877."

2. In this Act, if not inconsistent with the context, -

"District high school" means a district high school established in accordance with the principal Act:

"Endowed secondary school" means any secondary school named in the Second Schedule hereto:

"Endowments" means endowments derived from a grant or grants from the public revenue, or from a grant or grants of land made at any time by the Governor or otherwise:

"Free place" means tuition given without payment of fees to one pupil in accordance with regulations made under this Act:

"Net annual income derived from endowments" means the average during the three years ending the thirty-first day of December preceding of the total annual income derived from endowments, from the School Commissioners, from all investments of moneys derived from endowments

(including mortgages and bank deposits) available for the general purposes of the secondary schools, less expenditure upon such endowments and investments, and less expenditure upon buildings and the maintenance and repairs of buildings, and less mortgage and bank charges in respect of lands and buildings:

"Secondary school" means an endowed secondary school or a high school established under this Act.

3. No pupil shall, after the passing of this Act, be admitted to a secondary school until he has obtained a certificate of competency in the subjects of Standard V., or a higher standard, of the public-school syllabus:

Provided that pupils that have not obtained such a certificate may be admitted to a lower department of such secondary school if they are taught in a separate building or class-room, and if it can be shown to the satisfaction of the Minister that no part of the actual cost of their instruction is met out of the endowments of the secondary school.

4. (1) Every endowed secondary school shall, after the passing of this Act, unless it provides free places in accordance with the next succeeding section, offer scholarships of a total annual value equal to one-fifth of the net annual income derived from endowments, or such greater amount as the governing body from time to time determines.

(2) The values of the several scholarships and the

conditions under which they are offered shall be approved by the Minister.

(3) Where no secondary school is maintained by the governing body of an endowed secondary school the income of such endowed secondary school shall, if the Minister thinks fit, be devoted in whole or in part to the maintenance of another school in the locality, either a high school under section six hereof or a district high school, as the Minister directs.

5. To every secondary school that provides free places in accordance with regulations annual grants shall be paid according to the scale set out in the First Schedule hereto.

6. (1) The Minister may, on the application of the Board, establish a high school in any place where there are not less than sixty pupils who have obtained a certificate of proficiency under the regulations of the public-school syllabus, and whose parents have expressed in writing their intention of enrolling them at such high school:

Provided that no such high school shall be established in any place where there is a district high school or a secondary school giving free places as referred to in section five hereof, unless there are at least thirty thousand inhabitants within five miles of such district high school or secondary school.

(2) Every high school established under this section shall give free education to those qualified under the regulations

referred to in section five hereof.

7. Every high school established under section six of this Act shall be deemed to be included in Part I. of the First Schedule of "The Manual and Technical Instruction Act, 1900."

8. (1) Every high school established under the last preceding section shall be controlled, in accordance with a scheme approved by the Minister, by nine governors, of whom a group of three shall be appointed by the Governor, a group of three by the Board, and a group of three shall be elected, in the manner prescribed by such scheme, by the parents of the pupils.

(2) Such governors shall be a body corporate, and shall hold office for three years, or until the appointment or election of their successors.

(3) One out of each group of governors shall retire at the end of each year.

(4) Every such scheme shall provide for the election and retirement of the governors, for the management of the property of the school, shall define its curriculum and the respective powers of the governing body and the headmaster, shall prescribe the fees to be charged to such pupils as are not holders of scholarships or free places, and shall state the provision (if any) made for pupils living away from home, and the provision made for the periodic examination of the pupils.

9. (1) Every endowed secondary school shall, on or before the first day of June, one thousand nine hundred and four, forward to the Minister a copy of the scheme or regulations

defining its curriculum and the respective powers of the governing body and the headmaster, and stating the provision (if any) made for pupils living away from home, and the provision made for the periodic examination of the pupils of such school.

(2) If such scheme is not approved by the Minister, or if the governing body fails to forward any scheme as aforesaid, the Minister may give notice to the governing body to draw up and forward a scheme to him within three months.

(3) If the scheme forwarded as last mentioned is not approved by the Minister, or if the governing body fails to comply with such notice, the Minister may refer the matter to a Commission consisting of the Chancellor of the University of New Zealand, the Inspector-General of Schools, and a person appointed in that behalf by the governing body; and such Commission shall thereupon draw up a scheme, which, when placed before the Minister, shall be the scheme for the management of such school.

10. (1) Every secondary school and district high school shall be open at all times to inspection by the Inspector-General of Schools, or by any other person directed by the Minister to inspect such school.

(2) Such inspection may include examination of the pupils in the subjects of instruction taught in such school.

11. Every secondary school shall, on or before the first day

of April in every year, forward to the Minister a return in the form prescribed by regulations of all scholarships and free places held at the school.

12. The Minister may from time to time, out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, make grants in aid of the erection, acquisition, or equipment of buildings for secondary schools.

13. In respect of all voluntary contributions received by any Board on account of any district high school, or by the governing body of any secondary school, and available for the general purposes of any such school, there shall be payable out of the Consolidated Fund, without further appropriation than this Act, subsidies as follows:-

(a) For every one pound bequeathed, a subsidy of ten shillings: Provided that in no case shall the subsidy in respect of any one bequest exceed five hundred pounds:

(b) For every one pound of voluntary contributions (other than bequests) from any person not being a Board, School Commissioners, or the governing body of an endowed secondary school, a subsidy of one pound.

14. Notwithstanding anything in the principal Act, the Minister may, if he sees fit, -

(a) Disestablish any district high school in which there

are less than twelve pupils holding a certificate of proficiency, and may also, on the request of the Board, disestablish any district high school with a view to establish a high school under section six hereof;

- (b) Disestablish any high school established under section six hereof in which there are less than forty pupils holding a certificate of proficiency;
- (c) Disestablish any such last-mentioned high school if there is in the same district an endowed secondary school giving free places as provided in section five hereof.

15. Where any high school is disestablished as aforesaid the property belonging to it shall vest in the Board for the purposes of a district high school, and the income arising therefrom shall be applied to the maintenance of such district high school:

Provided that if there is no district high school in the locality such property and the income therefrom shall be applied to such purposes of secondary education as the Minister directs.

16. The Governor may from time to time, by Order in Council gazetted, make regulations -

- (a) Regarding the annual grants payable under this Act; and
- (b) Generally for effectually carrying out the purposes of this Act.



17. Section twenty-one of "The Education Reserves Act, 1877" (providing for the application of revenues by School Commissioners) is hereby amended by repealing subsection two thereof, and substituting in lieu thereof the following subsection:-

"(2) The revenues derived from reserves set apart for secondary education shall be handed over by the Commissioners to the governing bodies of secondary schools in the provincial district, in proportion to the number of pupils in average attendance at the several secondary schools, exclusive of the pupils in any preparatory department."

### SCHEDULES

#### First Schedule

#### Scale of Grants

Net Annual Income from Endowments per Head of Total Roll.	£	Grant payable on each Free Pupil.	£	s.	d.
Over	16		4.	0.	0
"	15		4.	5.	0
"	14		4.	10.	0
"	13		4.	15.	0
"	12		5.	0.	0
"	11		5.	5.	0
"	10		5.	10.	0
"	9		5.	15.	0
"	8		6.	0.	0
"	7		6.	10.	0
"	6		7.	0.	0
"	5		7.	10.	0
"	4		8.	0.	0
"	3		8.	10.	0
"	2		9.	5.	0
"	1		10.	0.	0
Not over	1		10.	15.	0

But the grants payable under section 5 shall in no case be less than £6 per head of such free places as are given in excess of the free places required to be given under section 4.

The total roll for the purpose of this Schedule shall be the total number of pupils attending the school, exclusive of the pupils in any preparatory department.

### Second Schedule

#### Existing Endowed Secondary Schools

Auckland Grammar School	Greymouth High School
Auckland Girls' High School	Hokitika High School
Whangarei High School	Christchurch Boys' High School
Thames High School	Christchurch Girls' High School
Gisborne High School	Rangiora High School
Napier High Schools	Akaroa High School
New Plymouth High School	Ashburton High School
Wanganui Girls' College	Timaru High Schools
Wellington College	Waimate High School
Wellington Girls' High School	Waitaki High Schools
Marlborough High School	Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools
Nelson College	Southland Boys' and Girls' High Schools

Source: Statutes of New Zealand, 1903.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The story of secondary education in New Zealand beyond the Crown Colony period is surprisingly well-documented in the official reports of the Education Departments of the various Provincial Governments and after their abolition, in the reports of the central Department of Education presented to the House of Representatives. But little indication of the prevailing climate of opinion about secondary education, its availability and accessibility, is to be found in such sources. For this insight it is necessary to turn - particularly in the first three decades of settlement - to the letters and journals of the more literate and education-conscious pioneers and to the editorial and correspondence columns of the contemporary newspapers.

Until the end of the seventies the iceberg of the New Zealand social structure showed only a tip above the surface of the deeps and it is with that tip that the historian of secondary education is most concerned, up to the election of a Liberal Government in 1879. Thereafter the social and political climate of New Zealand underwent a marked change and the educational historian is compelled increasingly to turn his attention to the great mass of the iceberg which had hitherto lain almost unnoticed beneath the surface. Working men began to interest themselves in secondary education,

particularly in its availability to the able children of working-class parents.

The great diversity of opinions expressed by representatives of all classes of society on educational matters in the last two decades of the nineteenth century is recorded in the newspapers, pamphlets and Hansard. These read in conjunction throw light from different angles on the motives, diverse ideals, deeply-rooted prejudices and feelings of individuals whose decisions largely determined the pattern of educational growth in New Zealand.

There are, however, regrettable gaps in our educational records of the nineteenth century. Neither W.J. Habens nor G. Hogben appear to have left any significant collections of papers. Hogben certainly wrote profusely but usually about earthquakes and not about education. Whatever papers of these two men may have been on file in the Education Department have disappeared along with practically all records relating to secondary education. Ministers of Education, with the exception of Robert Stout, were almost as reluctant as their Inspectors-General to commit their thoughts on education to paper. William Rolleston's large set of private papers and letters contain little on education and Richard Seddon's references to education in the few papers of his which are extant are almost non-existent.

Almost alone among the men most intimately connected with

the making of educational policy in the revolutionary nineties, W. Pember Reeves committed his views to paper. As editor of the Lyttelton Times he wrote frequently about the 'secondary schools question'. No doubt after he had been 'kicked upstairs' by Seddon in 1896 to be Agent-General in London, Pember Reeves continued to interest himself in educational developments in New Zealand. Photostats held by the Turnbull Library of some of the correspondence Pember Reeves received from New Zealand after 1896 suggest that this was the case. But unfortunately, as the originals of this correspondence and most of Pember Reeves's other papers are in the British Museum, I have been unable to explore this source adequately.

The Bibliography is divided into three sections:

Part I consists of unpublished sources - New Zealand Company despatches; the records of the governing bodies of secondary schools in Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Timaru; private letters, journals and reminiscences.

Part II consists of published primary sources - official publications (provincial and national); letters, journals and reminiscences; pamphlets, handbooks and lectures; newspapers and periodicals; writings of theorists; reports and proceedings; scrapbooks.

Part III consists of secondary works including, in a separate section, unpublished theses.

PART I: PRIMARY SOURCES: UNPUBLISHED(A) Archives of the New Zealand Company: Wellington Office

Despatches from the Secretary, London, August 1839 -  
December, 1850; 29 vols. (National Archives,  
Wellington).

Despatches from the Resident Agent, Nelson, November, 1841 -  
October, 1850; 8 vols. (National Archives, Wellington).

(B) Records of Governing Bodies of Secondary Schools

Minutes of the Wellington College Board of Governors, 1899 -  
1908 (Office of the Secretary, Wellington).

Minutes and Letter Books of the Nelson College Council  
of Governors, 1856-1905 (College Office, Nelson).

Minutes and Headmasters' Letter Books, Timaru High School,  
1889 - 1904 (Office of the Secretary, High School  
Governors, Timaru).

Minute Books and Inwards Correspondence of the Canterbury  
College Board of Governors, 1890-1906 (Archives,  
University of Canterbury, Christchurch).

(C) Private Letters, Journals and Reminiscences

Aldred, J. (Rev.) Journal, 1832-1865 (Typescript, Turnbull  
Library).

Allan, Ruth. Correspondence with J.G.McKay, 1958 (MS.,  
Turnbull Library).

Arnold, Thomas. Letters from New Zealand and Tasmania,  
1847-1850 (MS., Turnbull Library).

- Ballance, John. Letter Books, February, 1891 - April, 1893  
(MS., Turnbull Library).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Papers, 1876-93 (MS., Turnbull Library).
- (Canterbury Association) Letters of Canterbury Association,  
1848-1851 (Typescript, Turnbull Library).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Letter Book (Microfilm, Turnbull Library).
- Chapman, Henry Samuel. Letters to his Father, 1843-51  
(Typescript, Turnbull Library).
- Daniell, H.H. Letters (MS., Bett Collection in the Turnbull  
Library).
- Dillon, Constantine. The Dillon Letters (Typescript,  
Turnbull Library).
- Farnall, H.W. Correspondence with Sir George Grey, 1890  
(MS., Grey Collection, Public Library, Auckland).
- George, Henry. Correspondence with Sir George Grey, 1880-92  
(MS., Grey Collection, Public Library, Auckland).
- Greenwood, John. Diary, 1850-52 (MS., Turnbull Library).
- Hadfield, Octavius. Letters to the Church Missionary Society,  
1838-68 (Typescript, Turnbull Library).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Miscellaneous Papers (MS., Turnbull Library).
- Hall, John. Letters and Letter Books (MS., General Assembly  
Library).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Papers (Microfilm, General Assembly Library).
- Higgins, Sarah. Autobiography of Sarah Higgins (Typescript,  
Turnbull Library).
- Hill, H.T. Miscellaneous Papers, 1893-1928 (MS., Turnbull  
Library).
- Holloway, C. Journal of a Visit to New Zealand, 1873-1875  
(Typescript, Turnbull Library; 2 vols.).
- Kerr, Alexander. Reminiscences (MS., Turnbull Library).

- Lee, Robert. Log (MS., General Assembly Library).
- Monro, David. Diaries, 1868-1876 (MS., Nelson Historical Society).
- Nicholls, C.H.S. Journal, 1853-56. (Typescript, Turnbull Library).
- Reeves, William Pember. Correspondence 1896-1904 (Photostats of originals in British Museum, Turnbull Library).
- Rolleston, William. Letters and Collected Papers, 1869-1903 (MS., and newspaper clipping, General Assembly Library).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Letters, 1857-1880 (Microfilm, General Assembly Library).
- Saxton, J. Diary, 1841-49 (Typescript, Bett Collection in the Turnbull Library).
- Seddon, R.J. Notes for Parliamentary Speeches, 1883(?) (MS., National Archives, Series 2:26).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Outwards Correspondence, 1902 (MS., National Archives, Series 2:37).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Miscellaneous Letters to R.J. Seddon, 1903-4 (MS., National Archives, Series 2:40).
- Selwyn, George Augustus. Diaries, 1839; 1840; 1841-44; 1848-9 (Microfilm, Turnbull Library).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Letters from Bishop Selwyn and others, 1842-1867 (MS., Turnbull Library).
- Sewell, Henry. Journal of Henry Sewell, 1852-1857 (Typescript, Turnbull Library).
- Smith, T. Henry. Letters, 1845-50 (Typescript, Turnbull Library).
- Stephens, Samuel. Letters and Journals of Samuel Stephens, 1842-1855 (Typescript, Turnbull Library; 3 vols.).
- Stout, Robert. Diaries, 1865-67 (MS., Turnbull Library; 3 vols.).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Papers, 1870-1904 (MS., Turnbull Library).
- Webb, S. and B. Impressions of a Tour of New Zealand in 1898 (Microfilm, General Assembly Library).



Whitely, J. (Rev.) Wesleyan Missionary Society Reports,  
New Plymouth Circuit (MS., Turnbull Library).

PART II: PRIMARY SOURCES: PUBLISHED(A) Official Publications

## (i) Provincial

Acts and Proceedings of the Auckland Provincial Council,  
1853-75. Auckland.

Acts and Proceedings of the Provincial Council of Wellington,  
1853-75. Wellington.

Votes and Proceedings of the Provincial Council, 1853-75.  
Nelson.

Journal of Proceedings of the Provincial Council, 1853-75.  
Christchurch.

Votes and Proceedings of the Provincial Council, 1853-75.  
Dunedin.

Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, New Munster,  
1849. Wellington.

## (ii) National

Journal of the Legislative Council, 1870-1905.

Journal of the House of Representatives, 1870-1905.

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives,  
1869-1905.

Parliamentary Debates, 1869-1904.

Statutes of the General Assembly of New Zealand. Auckland,  
1854-64; Wellington, 1864-1904.

Bills and Private Bills, 1877-1904. (General Assembly Library).

New Zealand Government Gazette, 1877-1904.

Statistical View of Fifty Years' Progress in New Zealand, 1855-  
1904 (Wellington, 1905).

New Zealand Official Yearbook, 1892-1905; 1947-49.

(B) Published Letters, Journals and Reminiscences

- Alpers, O.T.J. Cheerful Yesterdays. (London, 1928).
- Andrews, E. Eventful Years (Christchurch, 1958).
- Arnold, Thomas. Passages in a Wandering Life (London, 1900).
- Davidson, W. A Sketch of His Life (Edinburgh, 1930).
- Godley, Charlotte. Letters from Early New Zealand (Christchurch, 1951).
- Harper, H.W. Letters from New Zealand, 1857-1911 (London, 1914).
- Jones, Edgar. Autobiography of an Early Settler in New Zealand (Wellington, 1933).
- Maxwell, E. Recollections and Reflections (Dunedin, 1935).
- Saunders, A. Tales of a Pioneer (Christchurch, 1927).
- Webb, S. & B. Visit to New Zealand in 1898 (Wellington, 1959).

(C) Pamphlets, Handbooks and Lectures

- Adam, J. Emigrant Life in the South of New Zealand (Edinburgh, 1874).
- Anon. Our State System of Education and its Shortcomings Considered (Christchurch, 1881).
- Ballance, J. Speech to the Electors of Wanganui (Wanganui, 1887).
- Baume, F.E. An Address on Education (Dunedin, c.1903).
- Bowden, T.A. A Memorial Upon Colonial Education: Address to William Fox, Esq., M.A., M.H.R. (Wellington, 1868).
- Bowen, C.C. Address to the North Canterbury Educational Institute (Christchurch, 1894).

- Bradshaw, J. New Zealand as It Is (2 ed., London, 1883).  
 (Canterbury Association) Letter to Members (London, 1850).  
 \_\_\_\_\_. Scheme for the Establishment of a College (1850).  
 \_\_\_\_\_. Provisional Regulations for the Management of the  
 Boys' and Girls' Day and Sunday Schools (Lyttelton, 1852).
- Chaplin, E.A. Our First Quarter-Century, 1901-1926. A  
 Retrospect of the Women Teachers' Associations of New  
 Zealand (Christchurch, 1926).
- Cohen, M. A Few Thoughts on Education (Dunedin, 1897).
- Grant, J.G.C. Classical Education (Dunedin, 1870).
- Hance, J.L. Our Social Privileges, or Address to the World's  
 Workers (Sydney, 1882).
- Howard, C.S. Retrenchment in Primary Education (Christchurch,  
 1887).
- Hutchinson, F.B. Secondary Education (New Plymouth, 1891).
- Irvine, R.F. and Alpers, O.T.J. The Progress of New Zealand  
 in the Century (London, 1902).
- Izett, J. Signs and Portents, Being the Labour Question from  
 an Australasian Point of View (Christchurch, 1893).
- Jellicoe, E.G. The Education Question (Wellington, 1890).
- Laishley, R. Education and Educators (Auckland, 1883).
- Lohse, J. Mistaken Views on the Education of Girls  
 (Christchurch, 1884).
- Lyttelton, Lord. Two Lectures on a Visit to the Canterbury  
 Colony in 1867-8 (London, 1868).
- McNab, R. The Outlook of Our Secondary Schools (Invercargill,  
 1893).
- Park, J.B. Education Institute of Otago; Inaugural Address  
 (Dunedin, 1882).

- Pearson, C.H. Report on the State of Public Education in Victoria (Melbourne, 1878).
- Pozzi, L. Modern Slavery and Civilisation (Christchurch, 1883).
- Richardson, J.L.C. Thoughts on Female Education; with special reference to the Otago Educational Movement (Dunedin, 1870).
- Rolleston, W. Addresses on our System of Education (Christchurch, 1887).
- Sanderson, A. ABC of New Zealand Politics (Masterton, 1894).
- Sealey, H.J. Are We to Stay Here? (Lyttelton, 1881).
- Stout, R. State Education (Dunedin, 1870).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Address on Education (Wellington 1879).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Public Education in New Zealand; a Speech in the House of Representatives (Wellington, 1885).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Technical Education (Auckland, 1885).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Public Education in New Zealand; a Speech in the House of Representatives (Wellington, 1886).
- Taylor, W. The Education of the People (Auckland, 1870). (Teachers' Association, Auckland). Report of the Formation of the New Zealand Education Institute (Auckland, 1883).
- Verral, J.M. The Stockwhip, Slash the Fourth (Christchurch, 1887).

(D) Newspapers and Periodicals

(i) Newspapers

- Auckland. The New Zealand Herald, 1870-1905; and the Auckland Star, 1890-1904.
- Napier. The Daily Telegraph, 1884; and the Hawkes Bay Herald, 1899-1903.

- Wellington. The New Zealand Advertiser, 1867; the Evening Post, 1879-1903; and the New Zealand Times, 1890-1905;
- Nelson. The Nelson Examiner, 1842-57; the Colonist, 1879, 1881, 1884, 1887-1904; and the Nelson Evening Mail, 1887, 1890, 1893-1902.
- Christchurch. The Lyttelton Times, 1877-1904; the Press, 1879, 1881, 1884, 1887, 1890-1903; and the Christchurch Star, 1884, 1887, 1890.
- Dunedin. The Otago Witness, 1851-1878; the Otago Daily Times, 1870-1904; and the Evening Star, 1879-1887.
- Elsewhere. The Poverty Bay Herald (Gisborne), 1884, 1887-1890; the Eketahuna Express (Eketahuna), 1899; the Woodville Examiner (Woodville), 1902-3; Rangitikei Advocate, (Marton), October-November, 1881; the Wanganui Herald (Wanganui), 1887; the Kumara Times (Kumara), 1889, 1893; the Temuka Leader (Temuka), 1893, 1896, 1899-1902; the Timaru Herald (Timaru), 1881-1903; the North Otago Times (Oamaru), 1880-1890; the Bruce Herald (Milton), 1865-1876; the Southland Times (Invercargill), 1884-1904; The Argus (Melbourne), May-June, 1906; and the Hobart Mercury (Hobart), 1894-95.

## (ii) Periodicals

- Canterbury Presbyterian (Christchurch), April 1873-July 1874.
- New Zealand Magazine (Dunedin), January 1876 - October 1877.
- New Zealand Schoolmaster (Napier and Christchurch), August 1881 - July 1891.
- New Zealand Educational and Literary Monthly (Dunedin), June 1883 - May 1885.
- Victorian Review (Melbourne), July 1883.
- New Zealand Country Journal (Christchurch), July 1889.
- National Review (London), July 1892.
- The Citizen (Wellington), September 1895 - April 1896.

Westminster Review (London), June 1895.

Review of Reviews (London), August 1896.

The Forum (New York), April 1897.

Twentieth Century Magazine (Boston), March 1910.

(E) Writings of Theorists

Bellamy, E. Looking Backward, 2000-1887 (New York, 1951).

George, H. Progress and Poverty (London, 1906).

Pharos (W. Pember Reeves). Some Historical Articles on Communism and Socialism: their Dreams, their Experiments, their Aims, their Influence (Christchurch, 1890).

Wakefield, E.G. The Art of Colonisation (Oxford, 1914).

(F) Reports and Proceedings

New Zealand Company: Tenth Report (London, 1844).

Minutes of Proceedings of the Senate of the University of New Zealand, 1871-1907.

Annual Conferences of the New Zealand Education Institute, 1884-1904.

Women's Christian Temperance Union, Annual Reports, 1886-1904.

National Council of the Women of New Zealand, Annual Reports, 1896 - 1904.

Proceedings of the Diocesan Synod of Wellington, 1944.

Annual Reports of the Governors of Nelson College, 1880 - 1905.

(G) Scrapbooks

Hogben, G. Scrapbook, 1861-1904 (Newspaper Clippings,  
Turnbull Library).

Hogg, A.W. Scrapbooks of Newspaper Cuttings, 1880-1912  
(Turnbull Library; 40 vols.).

Stout R. The Election of 1893 (Newspaper Clippings,  
Turnbull Library; 3 vols.).



PART III: SECONDARY WORKS(A) Books

- Adamson, J.W. English Education, 1789-1902 (Cambridge, 1964).
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Short History of Education (Cambridge, 1930).
- Ault, H.F. The Nelson Narrative (Nelson, 1958).
- Austin, A.G. Australian Education, 1788-1900 (Melbourne, 1961).
- Barr, Janet. Within Sound of the Bell (Christchurch, 1953).
- Beaglehole, J.C. The University of New Zealand (Wellington, 1937).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Victoria University College; an essay towards a history (Wellington, 1949).
- Beeby, C.E. The Education of the Adolescent in New Zealand (Wellington, 1937).
- Bell, K. and Morrell, W.P. Select Documents on British Colonial Policy, 1830-1860 (Oxford, 1928).
- Brubacher, J.S. A History of the Problems of Education (New York, 1947).
- Bruce, S. The Earliest Days of Canterbury (Christchurch, 1932).
- Bryce, J. Modern Democracies, Vol.II. (London, 1921).
- Burdon, R.M. Scholar Errant: a Biography of Professor A.W. Bickerton (Christchurch, 1956).
- \_\_\_\_\_. King Dick (Christchurch, 1955).
- Butchers, A.G. Young New Zealand (Dunedin, 1929).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Education in New Zealand (Dunedin, 1930).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Centennial History of Canterbury (Christchurch, 1953).
- Campbell, A.E. Educating New Zealand (Wellington, 1941).

- Carswell, J.T. and Pearce, T.D., eds. Southland Boys' High School Jubilee Record, 1880-1930 (Invercargill, 1930).
- Chapman, R., ed. Ends and Means in New Zealand Politics (2 ed., Auckland, 1963).
- Chapman, R. and Bennett, J., eds. An Anthology of New Zealand Verse (London, 1956).
- Chapman, R. and Sinclair, K., eds. Studies in a Small Democracy (Auckland, 1963).
- (Church of England). Hymns Ancient and Modern (London, 1909).
- Commager, H.S. The American Mind (New Haven, 1950).
- Commager, H.S. and Morison, S. The Growth of the American Republic, Vol.I. (New York, 1942).
- Condliffe, J.B. New Zealand in the Making (London, 1930).
- Cremin, L. Transformation of the School (New York, 1961).
- Cumming, I. Glorious Enterprise (Auckland, 1959).
- Curteis, G.H. Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand and Lichfield (London, 1889).
- (Cyclopedia of New Zealand Company) Wellington Provincial District (Wellington, 1897).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Canterbury Provincial District (Christchurch, 1903).
- Davey, I. ed. Fifty Years of National Education in New Zealand (Auckland, 1928).
- Dickson, J. History of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand (Dunedin, 1899).
- Davis, J.K. History of St. John's College (Auckland, 1911).
- Drummond, J. Life and Work of R.J. Seddon (London, 1907).
- Duff, O. New Zealand Now (Wellington, 1940).
- Dunn, W.H. and Richardson, I. Sir Robert Stout (Wellington, 1961).

- Edwards, N. and Richey, H. The School in the American Social Order (2 ed., Boston, 1963).
- Elliot, J.S. Firth of Wellington (Auckland, 1937).
- Ewing, J. Origins of the Primary School Curriculum, 1840-78 (Wellington, 1960).  
(Golden Jubilee Celebrations Committee). Marlborough College Register, 1900-1950 (Blenheim, 1950).
- Hahn, R.O. and Bidna, D.B. Secondary Education: Origins and Directions (New York, 1965).
- Hight, J. and Candy, A.M.F. History of Canterbury College (Christchurch, 1927).
- Horsman, E.A. The Diary of Alfred Domett, 1872-1885 (London, 1953).
- King, E. World Perspectives in Education (London, 1962).
- Leckie, F.M. The Early History of Wellington College, New Zealand, from 1876 to 1883 (Auckland, 1934).
- Le Rossignol, J.E. and Stewart, W.D. State Socialism in New Zealand (London, c.1910).
- Lipson, L. The Politics of Equality (Chicago, 1948).
- Lloyd, H.D., Newest England (London, 1910).
- Lusk, H.H. Social Welfare in New Zealand (London, 1913).
- Maclure, J.S. Educational Documents: England and Wales, 1816-1963 (London, 1965).
- MacMorran, G. Some Schools and Schoolmasters of Early Wellington (Wellington, 1900).
- Marais, J.S. The Colonisation of New Zealand (Oxford, 1927).
- McDonald, K.C. History of Waitaki Boys' High School, 1883-1933 (Auckland, 1934).
- McLintock, A.H. Crown Colony Government in New Zealand (Wellington, 1958).

- \_\_\_\_\_. The History of Otago (Dunedin, 1949).
- Merrington, E.N. A Great Coloniser: the Rev. Dr. Thomas Burns (Dunedin, 1929).
- Mills, C.B., ed. Nelson College for Girls, 1883-1933 (Nelson, 1933).
- Miller, John Early Victorian New Zealand (London, 1958).
- Miller, J. McK. The Otago Education Board, 1856-1956 (Dunedin, 1957).
- Morley, W. The History of Methodism in New Zealand (Wellington, 1900).
- Morrell, W.P. The Provincial System of New Zealand (London, 1932).
- Murdoch, J.H. The High Schools of New Zealand (Wellington, 1943).
- Newton, A.P., Benians, E.A. and Holland Rose, J., eds. The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol.VII, Part 2: New Zealand (Cambridge, 1933).
- Nicol, J. The Technical Schools of New Zealand (Wellington, 1940).
- Oliver, W.H. The Story of New Zealand (London, 1960).
- Parkinson, H.A. The New Zealand Education Institute, a Sketch of its History (Wellington, 1929).
- Parkyn, G. W. ed. The Administration of Education in New Zealand (Wellington, 1954).
- Parr, S. Canterbury Pilgrimage (Christchurch, 1951).
- Parsons, F. The Story of New Zealand (Philadelphia, 1904).
- Paul, J.T. Humanism in Politics (Wellington, 1946).
- Purchas, H.T. A History of the English Church in New Zealand (Christchurch, 1914).
- Reeves, W. Pember, Land of the Long White Cloud (London, 1898).
- \_\_\_\_\_. State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand, Vol.II (London, 1902).

- Ross, C.S. Education and Educationists in Otago (Dunedin, 1890).
- Roth, H. George Hogben: a Biography (Wellington, 1952).
- Rutherford, J. Sir George Grey (London, 1961).
- Scholefield, G.H. ed. A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography; 2 Vols. (Wellington, 1940).
- \_\_\_\_\_. New Zealand in Evolution (London, 1909).
- \_\_\_\_\_. History of Tokomairiro District High School (Wellington, 1931).
- Siegfried, A. (trans. E.V.Burns) Democracy in New Zealand (London, 1914).
- Simkin, W.J. The College of St. John the Evangelist, Auckland, New Zealand. (Wellington, 1938).
- Simpson, Helen. The Women of New Zealand (2 ed., Auckland, 1962).
- Sinclair, K. A History of New Zealand (Harmondsworth, 1959).
- Stewart, W.D. William Rolleston (Christchurch, 1940).
- Sutch, W.B. The Quest for Security in New Zealand (London, 1942).
- Thom, A.H. The District High Schools of New Zealand (Wellington, 1950).
- Thompson, G.E. History of Otago University, 1869-1919 (Dunedin, 1921).
- Tucker, H.W. Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn, D.D., Bishop of New Zealand, 1841-1869, Vol.I. (London, 1879).
- Turnbull, M. and McLaren, I.A. The Land of New Zealand (London, 1964).
- Watson, J.E., Intermediate Schooling in New Zealand (Wellington, 1964).
- Webb, L. The Control of Education in New Zealand (Wellington, 1937).

- Weston, F.W. Diamond Jubilee, Thames Goldfields (Thames, 1927).
- Wilson, J.J. The Church in New Zealand (Dunedin, 1900).
- Wilson, T.G. The Rise of the Liberal Party (Auckland, 1956).
- Wright-St.Clair, R.E., Doctors Monro: A Medical Saga (London, 1964).

(B) Theses and Unpublished Histories

(Unless stated otherwise the following are theses for the degree of Master of Arts.)

- Allan, Ruth History of Nelson to 1877 (Manuscript, Turnbull Library).
- Anderson, M. C.C.Bowen and Elementary Education in New Zealand (Canterbury, 1962).
- Betteridge, M. The Church of England and Education in Canterbury, 1849-1918. (Canterbury, 1948).
- Bruce, K.H. Taranaki Education in the Provincial Period (Wellington, 1965).
- Chapman-Cohen, G. An Historical Survey of the District High School System in Otago. (Dip. Ed. essay, 1932, in the McNab Collection, Public Library, Dunedin).
- Cocks, Pamela. Early Canterbury in the Light of Henry Sewell's Journal, 1853-56. (Canterbury, 1948).
- Coleman, P.J. New Zealand: the Evolution of a Social Democracy (Ph.D., University of Texas, 1953, in the Turnbull Library).
- Corner, F.H. The Training of Teachers in New Zealand During the Nineteenth Century (Wellington, 1941).
- Crowley, D. The New Zealand Labour Movement (Dunedin, 1946).
- Cumming, A. Per Angusta. The Foundation of the Auckland Grammar School 1850-1885 (Auckland, 1963).

- Durning, F. Education in Nelson, 1850-1880. (Wellington 1941).
- Fowler, R.J.M. Nelson Trust Fund (Wellington, 1931, in the Bett Collection, Turnbull Library).
- Hamlin, R.H.J. Sir Robert Stout, his Early Life, Ministry and Character. (Canterbury, 1931).
- Lundy, J. Nelson Provincial Education, 1842-1878 (Wellington, 1963).
- McKay, J.G. History of Nelson College (MS., Nelson College Office).
- McKenzie, J.D.S. Education in the Cook Straits Settlements, 1844-1856 (Wellington, 1963).
- McLaren, I.A. Evolution of the Secondary Modern School (Chicago, 1958).
- Mann, S.C.M. Frederick Giles Gibbs; his Influence on the Social History of Nelson (Wellington, 1954).
- Moore, A.C. Church and State in Education in Wellington, 1860-1900 (Wellington, 1948).
- Murdoch, I.A. John Hislop, Educationist (Otago, 1961).
- Oxford, Enid. A History of Education in the Province of Canterbury to 1876 (Canterbury, 1929).
- Richards, K.H. The Seddon Ministry (Canterbury, 1946).
- Robinson, D.L. Some Aspects of Education in Wellington, 1853-1876 (Wellington, 1955).
- Robinson, K.W. A History of the Political Labour Movement in New Zealand, 1850-1913 (Canterbury, 1937).
- Salmond, J.D. The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement from the Settlement to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act (Otago, Ross Fellowship Thesis, 1924).
- Street, I.E. The History of Education in the Nelson Province (Canterbury, 1931).
- Turnbull, M. The Colonization of New Zealand by the New Zealand Company, 1839-1843 (Unpublished thesis in the possession of Michael Turnbull).

Watson, L.E. Education in Canterbury, 1851-1857  
(Canterbury, 1961).

(C) Periodicals

Comparative Education (Oxford), March 1965.

Political Science (Wellington), March 1960.