

1883.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION.

WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND WELLINGTON GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL (CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO).

[In Continuation of E.—8, 1883.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The CHAIRMAN of the BOARD of GOVERNORS to the Hon. the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

SIR,—

Wellington College, Wellington, 16th May, 1882.

The Governors of the Wellington College have the honour to report, for the information of the Government, that at the beginning of last year, finding that from various causes the attendance of scholars had very considerably fallen off, they determined upon a thorough reorganization of the teaching staff, and therefore gave notice to the Principal and other officers that their services would be dispensed with on the 30th June last. Applications were invited for a headmaster, and the choice fell upon Mr. J. Mackay, then assistant-master of Nelson College, who entered upon his duties on the 1st July. At that time the number of scholars was but 58, including 7 boarders. The number now on the roll is 145, of whom 50 are boarders, a number exceeding by 15 the largest number ever on the roll; and, as the headmaster has received applications for admission of other scholars, both as day-boys and as boarders, it is anticipated that the numbers will further increase.

As will be seen by a report from the headmaster, attached hereto, the accommodation in the present building for the increased and increasing attendance of scholars is now inadequate, and it has become the duty of the Board of Governors to endeavour to provide additions to the school buildings. The Board, having no available funds with which to make these necessary additions, are compelled to appeal to the Government to assist them; and they trust that what has been done for other cities may be likewise done for Wellington, and funds provided, so that the College may be placed in a position to carry on its work effectively.

With the increased number of scholars the Governors will be able to meet the ordinary expenses of the institution; but the interest which they have to pay upon £5,000 borrowed for the existing buildings, and for which they are compelled to pay interest after the rate of 10 per cent. per annum for the next two years, is a great drag upon their funds. Besides the reserves in the City of Wellington, the institution has two blocks of land, one in the Rangitumau, consisting of 5,150 acres, and the other at Paraekaretu, comprising 4,070 acres; but, as there are no roads to either of them, they are at present unavailable for either letting or selling.

From the foregoing the Government will see that the Governors have carried out what they undertook at previous interviews to do, namely, to place the institution upon such a basis as to make it unnecessary for them to appeal so constantly for help to meet current expenditure; but at the same time the very effect of the improved organization has been to increase the attendance at the school to such an extent that it is impossible for the Governors to carry out their trust properly without additional buildings. What is required is a new wing to correspond with the one already erected, and this, with the necessary furniture and appliances, will require a sum of £5,000.

The Governors would further bring under the notice of the Government that Wellington is behind other cities in not having any institution for affording higher education to girls. In 1878 an Act was passed with the intention of enabling the Governors of the College to establish a girls' high school, and under the provisions of that Act certain lands—namely, 2,974 acres in the Mangaone Block—were set apart and vested in the Governors for that purpose. But these lands are so situated that many years will elapse before they can produce any revenue; and, though the Governors were authorized by the said Act to borrow moneys upon the security of these lands, yet the Act provided that the maximum of interest paid should be 7 per cent., and that in any mortgage given there should be no power of sale. The Governors, therefore, have been precluded from taking advantage of the power given to them, and have up to the present time been unable to do anything towards the establishment of a girls' high school. They did endeavour to meet the want of such an institution by having classes for girls at the College, but it was found that the staff could not manage such classes in addition to the other work of the College, and so they were discontinued.

I have, &c.,

A. DE B. BRANDON,

Chairman of the Board of Governors.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Mr. J. MACKAY to the SECRETARY to the College.

Sir,—

Wellington College, Wellington, 10th May, 1882.

In compliance with the request of the Board of Governors I have the honour to forward the following memorandum on the present numbers and accommodation at the College:—

When I took charge, some nine months ago, there were 58 boys in attendance, 7 of whom were boarders; at present there are 145 on the roll, 50 of whom are boarders. To meet the increasing demand for boarding accommodation at the beginning of the year, I converted, with the consent of the Governors, the room that was formerly used as a museum into a dormitory. Notwithstanding this increase of accommodation, I have been compelled from want of room to refuse admission to several applicants as boarders; and at this moment I have a list of six applicants for admission in July next if possible. As applications for admission are not usually received so early, there is little doubt the list will be considerably enlarged by the beginning of next quarter. There has also been a proportionate increase in the number of day-boys, and there will be a further increase in July, as several parents have already spoken to me about sending their children there. There is thus every reason for supposing the limit of attendance of both boarders and day-boys has by no means been reached; indeed, taking into consideration the population of the city and surrounding country districts, it seems to me not unreasonable to expect, by-and-by, an attendance at the College of from 200 to 250 boys.

Should my estimate of the future prospects of the College be correct, the present accommodation will soon be quite inadequate; even now we are very much cramped for room, as the following facts will show: (a.) It has been found possible, I am glad to say, during the present quarter to form a small class for the systematic study of natural science—the subjects being mechanics and heat. As every available class-room is already occupied, there is really no room, no proper accommodation, for the teaching of such a class. The class is therefore taught in the front recess of the large class-room, in which there are two masters with two large divisions constantly at work. It is easy to see that such circumstances are not favourable either to the teachers or to the taught. (b.) A good many boys learn instrumental music; for the successful teaching of this branch a separate comfortable small room is required. There is no such room available; the music-lessons are consequently given in the large dining-room. (c.) There is no common room for the masters, and, though they have generously refrained from making any complaint to me, they undoubtedly suffer considerable inconvenience from the want of such a room.

On these and on other grounds I cannot help thinking that, were a wing quite as large as the present west wing added to the College, the extra accommodation would soon be all required. In estimating the cost of such an addition the Governors will do well to bear in mind that a good deal of the present furniture of the College is not fit for use, and ought to be replaced as soon as possible.

The Secretary, Wellington College, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

J. MACKAY.

No. 2.

The SECRETARY, Wellington College, to the Hon. the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

Wellington College, Secretary's Office, 14th July, 1883.

THE Board of Governors of Wellington College have the honour to report, for the information of the Hon. the Minister of Education, that since the reorganization of the institution in the middle of the year 1881, described in a previous report dated the 16th May, 1882, it has largely increased in numbers and efficiency. At that time the number of scholars was but 58; in the last quarter of 1882, as shown by the return already laid before Parliament, the number on the roll was 149, including 52 boarders; and with this year there has been a further increase, there being now 177 pupils attending the College. Of these, 121 are in the upper school, and are taught English grammar, geography, history, mathematics, French, Latin, and Greek, or science, and the remaining 56 are in the lower school learning grammar, history, geography, Latin, and mathematics. In May, 1882, the Board represented to Government that, in consequence of the increase in the numbers, it was necessary to increase the accommodation, and Government agreed to put on the estimates a sum of £3,000. This was voted by Parliament, and a wing has been added to the College providing the additional rooms needed, and allowing room for the school to expand to upwards of 250 pupils. There are now twelve class-rooms, containing 8,052 superficial and 111,734 cubic feet, besides masters' rooms, &c. The increase in the number of pupils necessitated an increase of the staff, and the Board, being still hampered by having to pay annually a sum of £500, interest on moneys borrowed for the erection of the College buildings, had to ask Government to assist them with £500, to enable them to put the staff upon a satisfactory and efficient footing. The loan on which this burden of interest is payable falls due in May, 1884, and the Governors hope then to be relieved of a portion of their burden by replacing the money at a less rate of interest, unless they can be relieved of the burden altogether, which they urge should be done by a vote of Parliament, this being the only high school in the colony which has to pay interest on money borrowed for school buildings.

The Governors would also urge the Government to take into consideration at as early a date as possible the establishment of a University College in Wellington, the buildings for which should, in their opinion, be erected on a portion of the College Reserve.

CHAS. P. POWLES,

Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

No. 3.

The SECRETARY, Wellington College, to the Hon. the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

Wellington Girls' High School, Secretary's Office, 14th July, 1883.

THE Board of Governors of Wellington College have the honour to report, for the information of the Hon. the Minister of Education, that, having obtained assistance from Government by a vote of £675, passed in the session of 1882, they were enabled to open the Girls' High School at the beginning of this year. Miss Hamilton, lately assistant-teacher at the Girls' High School, Christchurch, was appointed lady principal, and Mr. Innes, M.A. of the New Zealand University, and Miss M. Richmond, of Newnham Hall College, assistants; and the school opened with sixty pupils. Such an immediate success, which was far beyond the expectations of the Board, has proved that the school supplies a want which was greatly felt. The numbers have since increased; there are now eighty-three pupils on the roll, and the Governors have found it necessary to appoint an additional teacher. Under these circumstances the Board feel it their duty to report that the work of the school is at present carried on, under great difficulties, in temporary premises, which were rented for the purpose, under the impression that there would not be more than forty to fifty pupils. The building, the only one at all suitable which the Board could obtain, and in adapting which the Board had to spend £250, contains but four class-rooms, having a superficial area of 1,433 feet, and cubic contents of 18,632 feet, and two small rooms, each 12 feet by 8 feet, one the teachers' room, the other used as a music-room. Such accommodation, it will be seen, is inadequate, being less than what is considered necessary for maintaining health and energy in both pupils and teachers, and makes it difficult and unsatisfactory for the Governors to meet the applications, which are constantly coming in, to receive more pupils; and steps should be taken at once to erect suitable buildings. From experience in other places, it would be desirable to erect accommodation for boarders in the vicinity of such new buildings, so as to provide for scholars from the country districts. For such a work as this the Governors have no funds, the only reserve set apart for the Girls' High School being at present unproductive, as it will probably be for some years to come, consisting as it does of bush land in the Mangaone Block; and, as pointed out in a report sent in by the Board, dated the 16th May, 1882, the Governors, though given by the Act which authorized the setting-apart of this reserve the power to mortgage the land for the purpose of erecting a building, are precluded from doing so by the restrictions put upon them by the same Act. The only site which the Governors are aware of as available for the Girls' High School is a portion of the College Reserve, but it might perhaps be necessary to make it quite clear whether the Governors have power so to use the reserve.

Of the 83 pupils at present attending the school, the whole are taught English grammar, history, geography, and arithmetic, and in other subjects the following numbers are taught; French, 77; Latin, 40; German, 3; algebra, 20; Euclid, 14; science, 60; drawing, 15; instrumental music, 25; class-singing, 81.

CHARLES P. POWLES,
Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

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