

1887.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# EDUCATION: THE WAITAKI HIGH SCHOOL

(REPORT OF COMMISSION ON).

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

## COMMISSION.

WM. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS, Governor.

To all to whom these presents shall come, and to the Honourable JOSEPH SHEPHARD, member of the Legislative Council, and WILLIAM MONTGOMERY, Esquire, member of the House of Representatives: Greeting.

WHEREAS it is expedient that a Commission should be appointed to examine into the state of the secondary education in the District of North Otago, and, in the event of the same being in the opinion of the Commissioners unsatisfactory, to consider what measures (if any) are required to put such education on a satisfactory basis, having regard to the condition of secondary education in other districts of the colony of similar importance:

Now, therefore, I, William Francis Drummond Jervois, the Governor of the Colony of New Zealand, by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council of the said colony, having full confidence in your knowledge and ability, do hereby appoint you, the said Joseph Shephard and William Montgomery, to be Commissioners for the purpose aforesaid; and in furtherance of such inquiry to take evidence upon oath or otherwise as to you shall seem meet, and to report upon the same. And I do hereby, by and with the advice and consent aforesaid, require you, before the first day of March next, or as much sooner as the same can be done, using all diligence, to certify to me under your hands and seals your several proceedings and your opinion touching the premises; and, with the like consent and advice, I do hereby declare that this Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, the said Commissioners, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof at such place or places, and at such times, as you shall judge convenient, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment.

Given under the hand of His Excellency Sir William Francis Drummond Jervois, Lieutenant-General in Her Majesty's Army, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Her Majesty's Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same; and issued under the Seal of the said Colony, at Wellington, this seventeenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six.

Approved in Council.

ROBERT STOUT.

FORSTER GORING,  
Clerk of the Executive Council.

## REPORT.

To His Excellency the Governor.

WE, the Commissioners appointed by your Excellency "to examine into the state of secondary education in the District of North Otago, and, in the event of the same being in 'our' opinion unsatisfactory, to consider what measures (if any) are required to put such education on a satisfactory basis, having regard to the condition of secondary education in other districts of the colony of similar importance," have the honour to submit the following report to your Excellency:—

In obedience to your Excellency's instruction we proceeded to Oamaru, public notification having been given in the local newspapers some time previous of the duties assigned to us, as well as the place where and the date when our inquiry would commence, and opened the Commission on Wednesday, the 12th January. On that and the two following days evidence bearing on the subject of our inquiry was received from a number of residents in the district. This evidence is appended to this report.

Further, we personally inspected with great care the Waitaki High School buildings and grounds, the District High School buildings, and the building now occupied as a customhouse, the use of which it is understood the Government is prepared to grant for a term of years for the

purpose of a girls' high school, in the event of arrangements being made for the establishment of such an institution.

The Waitaki High School was founded under the provisions of "The Waitaki High School Act, 1878." By this Act an endowment of 2,420 acres 1 rood 39 perches of land was given as a provision "for the establishment and management of a high school at Oamaru or in the County of Waitaki." In exercise of the authority thus conferred, the Board of Governors, appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Act, proceeded to erect school buildings on a portion of the land granted as an endowment. These buildings were completed so far as to permit the opening of the school in May, 1883. They are substantial and well adapted for school purposes, and are in a healthy situation. A Headmaster's residence and other offices complete form part of the buildings, wherein there is accommodation for forty boarders. The class-rooms have ample space for a hundred pupils, and are provided with all necessary fittings for the number attending the school. The buildings, fittings, fencing and planting the grounds, and purchase of tenant's interest in lease of 150 acres, cost £6,184 9s. 3d. Part of the money to meet this expenditure was derived from the sale of a portion of the endowment. Land to the value of £1,514 14s. was sold; £1,170 5s. 3d was taken from the current revenue; the balance, amounting to £3,500, is still owing, and is secured by mortgage.

The Waitaki High School, wherein provision is made for boys only, was opened in May, 1883. The number of pupils in 1886 was sixty, of whom fourteen were boarders and forty-six day scholars. Instruction is given in the usual branches of secondary education by three duly-qualified resident teachers, two of whom are University graduates. There are also visiting teachers of French, and singing, and a drill instructor. The evidence shows that the parents of the pupils are thoroughly satisfied with the results of the teaching. The school was not at work when we visited Oamaru. The Rector, who was absent, has since informed us by letter that "boys are prepared for matriculation," and that those "who have been at the school since it was opened will be able to compete for junior University scholarships." He remarks that, as "the school was opened so recently as May, 1883, with only nineteen boys, it will be understood that time will be needed before many boys can compete;" and, further, that "the work done in some of the subjects is in advance of the matriculation standard." It was stated in evidence that two of the boys went up for matriculation last year, but the result was not known at the time the evidence was given; and it was further stated that "some boys are preparing to compete for junior scholarships." A list of the books in use, showing the subjects taught, and the extent to which instruction in them is given, was furnished by the Rector, and is appended.

The building is distant from the town boundary of Oamaru about one mile and a quarter, and from the post office a little more than two miles. Had the building been placed one mile nearer Oamaru it would have been much more conveniently situated for pupils resident in the town and in the southern suburbs. It appears from the evidence that the Board was influenced in the choice of site by the expectation, then considered reasonable, that the town would extend northward, and that a tramway (then proposed) would be constructed from Oamaru to run past the school grounds. Though the school building is at a somewhat inconvenient distance from the town, yet, taking into consideration that it is a very substantial building, well adapted for school purposes, erected at great cost, and situated on a healthy site, we recommend that it be retained as a high school for boys. If the Board of Governors could, in accordance with suggestions made at the time of the inquiry, make arrangements by which a tram could be run from Oamaru to the school every morning, the convenience of many pupils would be consulted, and probably increased numbers would attend the school.

In the District High School, established by the Otago Education Board, the number of pupils receiving secondary education last year was twenty-four, of whom four were boys and twenty girls. The ages of these pupils ranged from ten to twenty-one. This school has been in existence on its present footing for ten years. During that period none of the ordinary pupils has matriculated without first receiving instruction in some other school. The subjects taught are, "higher English, Latin, French, mathematics, and book-keeping." The teachers are Mr. Robert Peattie, M.A., and two of his assistants. The Board of Education has decided that this school shall cease to be a district high school on the 17th April, 1887.

With respect to secondary education in the North Otago District as compared with "the condition of secondary education in other districts of the colony of similar importance," the main difference is that there is not now satisfactory provision for the secondary education of girls, and, after the 17th April, 1887, when the District High School is to be closed, there will be none. Our decided opinion, therefore, is, that adequate provision for the secondary education of girls should be immediately made. There is nothing in the Waitaki High School Act to show that Parliament intended to provide for giving secondary education to boys exclusively. The terms of the Act are general, and a reasonable presumption is that the endowment was granted for the benefit of young persons of both sexes. Members of the High School Board, who gave evidence, assigned, as a reason for their omission to provide for the secondary education of girls, the want of sufficient funds. Application was made to the Government last year to grant the use of some public building in Oamaru that might, with a slight outlay, be adapted for the purpose of a girls' high school. This resulted in the offer of the customhouse for a term of years, accommodation to be provided for the officers of that department in the post office buildings.

We carefully inspected the building now used as a customhouse, and our opinion is that a moderate amount expended in alterations and fittings would render it suitable for a girls' high school for day scholars.

In this position of affairs, and bearing in mind the urgent need of a school in the district wherein secondary education could be obtained by girls, we feel bound to recommend that Parliament should be asked to grant some assistance for a time in aid of the establishment and maintenance of such a school.

nance of such a school. It appears from the evidence that there is not sufficient revenue to defray the annual expenditure of the present high school for boys, and therefore for the maintenance of a girls' high school aid must for the present be obtained from other sources. It is anticipated that the rent of some of the endowment reserves will at an early date increase considerably; that the interest on loan of £3,500 will be reduced; that there will be a larger attendance at the boys' high school, and consequently additional revenue from school fees, while there will be no corresponding increase of cost for teaching. If these expectations be realised, and strict economy be practised, there should be an annual surplus, which the Governors could devote in aid of the maintenance of the girls' high school, but such surplus will not be available for that purpose immediately.

January, 1887.

(L.S.) JOSEPH SHEPHERD.  
- (L.S.) WM. MONTGOMERY.

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