

Having occasion recently to find fault with the tone of certain passages in the last number, I was surprised to learn that, though a member of my staff, he claimed the right of criticising any school institution, and of commenting on any point in my management of the College, whether his views were in agreement with mine or not, and regardless of any implied reflection upon the Governing Body or myself. . . . He appears, in fact, to take up the position that the *Nelsonian* is a public print, edited (if not owned) by an independent outsider, and exercising a benevolent supervision over the affairs of the College.<sup>34</sup>



*Nelson College in the 1890s: the original wooden building, which was destroyed by the fire of 1904. Photo Neg. 119 (10x8).*

Behind the pointed irony here lay an immediate background of both personal and professional disharmony. Milner had been a close contestant for the headship and doubtless as Littlejohn's 'right-hand man' did desire to maintain in any way open to him the admired letter and spirit of the latter's regime. Fowler's letter continued:

He added, it is true, that he would use his discretion in such matters (i.e. 'editorially'), but seeing that his intemperate criticism, in a recent number, of the judges' decision in our last gymnastic competition with Wellington College had led directly to the cessation of all matches between Wellington and ourselves, I am not inclined to rely absolutely upon his judgment or good taste.

And the moral in a worldly-wise man's manner is pointed up:

Had he in the proper way reserved his objections for me, I could have discussed the appointment of judges with Mr Firth, and no doubt have made some arrangement satisfactory to both parties.

Firth was the Principal of Wellington College. Fowler ends by asking approval of certain 'principles' that would have ensured his right of control of the College magazine's policy and contents.

The Council of Governors, aware that Milner had just been appointed as Waitaki's rector and tendered his resignation, did not