

WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL.

1. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

THE Governors of the Wellington College and Girls' High School have the satisfaction of reporting that the institutions under their charge still keep up their reputation for good work. At the recent University examinations the Wellington College, in the junior scholarship examination, passed three pupils with credit, and five others passed, while eight passed the matriculation examination and one the medical preliminary. Of the Girls' High School, in the junior scholarship examination, one passed with credit, and three others passed, while sixteen passed the matriculation examination.

The Governors must again refer to the burden which they have to bear in consequence of their having been compelled to borrow moneys for buildings, both in the case of the College and the Girls' High School, and they must state at some length the circumstances and their present position, in the hope that the Government will take steps to relieve them and to put the schools on a sound footing.

In the case of the Wellington College, the buildings were erected by moneys partly subscribed by the public, partly voted by the late Provincial Council and by the Legislature of the colony, and the balance, namely a sum of £5,000, was borrowed under authority of "The Wellington College Loan Act, 1873." The interest on this has been a great burden on the resources of the College: at first the rate was $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; then, when the first mortgage fell in, the Governors were unable to borrow at less than 10 per cent., and this rate they had to pay for five years, when they obtained funds to pay off the then expiring mortgage at 7 per cent. per annum, the rate they now pay. This is a heavy sum to find out of their limited income, and takes from them money which is much needed for the proper and efficient working of the institution.

With regard to the Girls' High School, the Governors have to say that the institution was set on foot in 1882, and on the 17th June in that year the Government was informed that a suitable building could be rented in which to open the school, and that certain expenditure would be required, to meet which the Government was asked for a vote of £1,000; and that, as to the future, "the Governors think that the school, if established, will require assistance for a few years, until the endowments and fees render such assistance unnecessary." A vote of £675 was obtained, and, the necessary alterations having been made to the buildings, the school was opened in the beginning of 1883. In April of that year the Government was reminded of the letter of the 17th June, 1882, and asked for a vote of £750. A sum of £500 only was obtained. In July of the same year the Governors reported that the school, which opened with sixty pupils, had increased to eighty-three, and that the accommodation was very inadequate, and that suitable buildings should be erected, but that the Governors, though empowered to borrow money for the purpose on security of rents of reserves, were precluded from doing so by the fact that the reserves could not be let. In July, 1883, the Governors had an interview with the Minister of Education, pointing out the difficulties under which they laboured, being precluded from going into the open market for the necessary funds, and asked that £3,000 should be lent by Government on security of the reserves, consisting of 2,974 acres in the Mangaone Block. And again, in August, 1883, the matter was urged on Government, the overcrowding of the building then in use being a source of grave concern to the Board. Matters went on until 1886, when, the number of pupils having increased to 121, it became absolutely necessary to make other provision for their accommodation.

Government was interviewed, and, the present site of the school having been in the meantime vested in the Board for the purpose, designs were prepared, tenders called for, and that of Messrs. Scoullar and Archibald accepted, with this arrangement: that they were to erect the building, the Governors executing a mortgage over the rents of the Mangaone Reserve to the extent of the cost of the building, the contractors to be paid 7 per cent. per annum thereon. This arrangement was under "The Wellington College Acts Amendment Act, 1873," and before being ratified was submitted to Sir R. Stout, then Premier and Minister of Education, and approved by him—he indorsing such approval on the mortgage-deed, and promising that Government would assist the Board either by direct vote of money or by advances from Government funds at a low rate of interest. Without such approval and such a promise (as often pointed out at subsequent interviews with Ministers and in letters) the Board would never have entered upon the work. The amount upon which the Board has thus to pay interest is £5,118, the yearly charge being £358 5s. 4d. The promises of Sir R. Stout have never been fulfilled.

The reserve thus pledged—2,974 acres in the Forty-mile Bush—did not produce any revenue until November, 1887, when a small piece was let at a rental of £16 17s. Other portions have from time to time been disposed of, but even now, when an area of 2,169 acres is let, the revenue is only £119 2s. 4d. The whole revenue derived from reserves belonging to the College and Girls' High School amounts to £1,585 13s. 11d. per annum, and, after providing for interest on loans contracted for buildings (£708 5s. 4d.), there is only a sum of £877 8s. 7d. available for the work of carrying on the schools in conjunction with the tuition fees.

The Governors hope that some steps may be taken by Government to place the Wellington College and Girls' High School in a satisfactory position financially; Wellington is entitled to be so placed on a good footing as to its higher education, as a step towards that which it ought to have—a university college. The Governors understand that when the training colleges were closed it was on the distinct understanding that the moneys so saved (in Wellington some £2,000 a year) were to be applied to higher education. The Board would further call attention to the question of reserves for secondary education. "The Education Reserves Act, 1877," provides that the Governor may from time to time reserve lands as endowments for primary and secondary education. As far as the Governors are aware, no reserves have been set apart for secondary education in the Wellington Provincial District since the first apportionment under the Act in May, 1878, when a block of 6,000 acres was reserved. From this reserve, however, no revenue is available for secondary education, as