

THE OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL.

THE Otago Girls' High School has the honour, we believe, of being the first public High School for girls established in the Australasian colonies, if not south of the line. Credit for the first suggestion to establish a High School for girls in Dunedin is due to the *Otago Daily Times*. The Boys' High School was opened on August 3rd, 1863, and a few days later a leader appeared in the *Times* advocating the founding of a similar school for girls. In the Provincial Council, on November 4th, 1864, Major Richardson moved a resolution, of which previous notice had been given by Mr W. H. Reynolds:—(1) 'That it is expedient to give encouragement to the education of girls beyond that afforded by the ordinary district schools; (2) that the Government be requested to submit to the House during the next session some scheme by which this result could be attained. Nothing further, however, was done in the matter until June, 1869, when on the motion of Mr J. L. Gillies it was resolved by the Provincial Council: 'That the Government be requested

but in the beginning of 1873 it was found advisable to discontinue this arrangement, and transfer the services of Mr Pope (now Inspector of Native Schools) wholly to the girls' school. In 1874 the attendance had increased to 155, and the Board was obliged to make considerable additions to the building.

In 1876, owing to the large increase in the numbers of the school, Mrs Burn, finding the combined duties of principal of the school and head of the boarding establishment too great a strain upon her strength, asked the Board to relieve her of the boarding house so that she might give all her energies to superintendence of the school. Mrs Burn accordingly ceased to reside on the school premises, and Mrs Martin was put in charge of the boarding school. This arrangement lasted for two years, but in 1878 Mrs Burn resumed her place as the head of the boarding establishment.

In 1877, under the 'High Schools Act,' the two Dunedin High Schools received considerable land endowments and were removed from the control of the Education Board and placed under the charge of a board of governors, consisting of seven members—two nominated

annually by the Government, two by the Otago University Council, two by the Education Board, whilst the seventh should be the Mayor of Dunedin for the time being. The Reverend Donald McNaughton Stuart was elected first chairman of the new board, and was reappointed every year till his death early in 1894. Dr. Stuart, who had taken an active part in its inception, was the warmest friend of the school, and never ceased to manifest, even when prostrated by mortal sickness, his warm interest in its welfare. Another consistently kind and helpful friend of the Girls' High School was Mr John Hislop, L.L.D.—first the able Secretary of the Otago Education Board, and subsequently the equally able Secretary of Education in Wellington. Dr. Hislop in his official capacity as secretary of the Board of Education had a considerable part in establishing the school. His connection with the Otago Girls' High School was temporarily severed when the school ceased to be governed by the Education Board, and when Dr. Hislop himself was transferred to a more honourable and onerous position in Wellington; but on his retirement from public life and return to Dunedin he again for some years did the school service as a member of the governing body. Two other names ought also to be honourably mentioned in connection with the government of this school—those of Dr. Macgregor, now Inspector-General of Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, and of Professor John Shand, L.L.D., Professor of Physics in the Otago University. Both of these gentlemen as members of the governing body were distinguished by their large and liberal views on Secondary Education, and by their enthusiasm in the service of the High Schools. The Hon. W. H. Reynolds and the late Mr James Fulton were also for many years members of the governing body and were active in the interests of the schools.

In 1883 Miss J. J. McKean was appointed at Home as vice-principal and mistress of mathematics to assist Mrs Burn, whose strength was beginning to feel the strain of her weighty and responsible duties, to the performance of which she brought so much capable energy and zeal. Miss McKean continued to occupy this position on the staff of the school till the end of last year, when, to the regret of all concerned with the school, she retired. On receiving her letter of resignation the Board of Governors passed a resolution affirming its recognition of the great value of Miss McKean's services.

In 1884 Mrs Burn found herself obliged, from the state of her health, to resign her position as principal and the Board of Governors invited Mr Alex. Wilson, M.A., to accept the rectorship of the school. Mr Wilson, before becoming rector of the Girls' High School, had been for some years English master in the Boys' High School, and had acted as rector in that school during the temporary absence of Dr. Macdonald in 1884. At the same time Miss K. C. Bathgate was put in charge of the boarding establishment, which position



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to appoint an honorary Commission to determine the best scheme and site 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.' The commission consisted of the following members:—The Rev. Dr. Stuart (chairman), Mr Justice Ward, the Hon. F. D. Bell, and the following members of the provincial Council:—Messrs Reynolds, Turnbull, McIndoe, McLean, Reid, Haggitt, Duncan, Gillies, and Moust. The committee was assisted in its deliberations by the recommendations of a committee of ladies who took an interest in the matter, of which committee the late Mrs E. B. Cargill was president and Miss Dalrymple secretary. The Commission recommended that the rector's residence at the boarding establishment of the Boys' High School should be removed elsewhere, and that the rooms vacated, together with whatever additional accommodation might be found necessary, should be assigned as a High School and boarding-house for girls.

Accordingly at the end of 1870 the school was opened under the able management of Mrs M. Gordon Burn, who had been appointed to the position of principal. Mrs Burn had already distinguished herself as a teacher, having, before her appointment to the Dunedin High School, occupied the position of Lady Superintendent of the Geelong Girls' College. Mrs Burn continued to manage the school with great ability and success for fifteen years, retaining during that time the entire confidence of the governing body.

The school was opened at the beginning of 1871 with a roll of 78 pupils. By the end of the quarter there were 102 in attendance. At the end of the year there were 130 on the roll, including 16 boarders, and it was found necessary to provide further class-room and boarding-house accommodation.

At first the masters of the Boys' High School gave lessons to the senior classes of the Girls' High School;



UPPER SIXTH FORM.

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