

the *Manawatu Herald* rather than by the *Standard*.²⁸ (Pirani was unsuccessful, though Ballance did take his Liberal party to power.) But after the elections, for reasons which remain unclear, McMinn decided to sell up his business and leave Palmerston North. He became sub-editor of the *Wairarapa Daily Times* in Masterton, and Fred Pirani took over as proprietor and editor of the *Manawatu Standard*.

The issues of the *Standard* themselves for the first surviving years reveal certain continuing anxieties concerning the business, notably insecurity of capital and difficulties in retaining staff, which made necessary a heavy emphasis on advertising, and meant McMinn never delegated the burdens of running the paper.

The press used for the first months of issue was an old Albion handpress from the *Wanganui Herald*, capable of producing 250 sheets an hour, and since McMinn could only afford a small lease, it was located in the upper storey of a wooden building in the Square, to the trepidation of the confectioner, Mrs Eng, underneath.²⁹ By 1883 McMinn had acquired a larger Wharfedale stop-cylinder press, which ran on steam power and could print 1300 sheets an hour, and he had taken over the whole building,³⁰ though after a few months the front half of the lower storey was to let again. The *Standard* had also earned sufficient to buy some land, for grazing in its paddocks was offered in the advertising columns.³¹

McMinn must have been frequenting secondhand sales of printing equipment, too, for according to the knowledgeable R. Coupland Harding, his small pica type had originally belonged to William Colenso.³² The paper on which it was printed was double royal in size, and varied considerably in quality—an indication that McMinn was saving money, at least in the short term, by buying it in small lots. On one occasion he was caught out, and had to 'beg wrapping paper from a friendly grocer and paste pieces together to obtain sheets of the necessary size.'³³

Finding long-term staff was another perennial problem—a letter in March 1881 soliciting staff speaks of having 'had 3 or 4 amateurs, but I am tired of them and am determined to have a good man or none at all'.³⁴ The *Standard* began with Henry Lyes and Edward Roe (son of Charles Roe, the Wellington printer, and scarcely an 'amateur'), and at various times thereafter employed N.H. Nash, who later worked on the *Times*, Frank Knowles from Kaikoura, and Fred Pirani; in addition there were usually two or three apprentices at a time. McMinn's son Archibald became a compositor, while another son 'Tiny' worked on a Carterton paper in the 1900s. There were also tenuous partnerships; Henry Lyes was registered as printer, publisher and co-proprietor of the *Standard* when it was first issued, though McMinn took over all three roles