

its pages of these incongruous and extraneous puffs.²⁸ Apart from a comprehensive survey of school activities, and an occasional article on national affairs or a literary essay (the dearth of such contributions is 'managerially' deplored), special and ample attention is paid to Old Boys news. Milner was, until the Waitaki appointment, an energetic secretary of the Old Boys Association. The chronicling of the activities and achievements of former pupils, especially of honours and distinctions gained, was to him a vital contribution towards fostering a sense of identity, prestige and tradition that was to him, even in these early years, the supreme need of a school worthy of its name in a young colonial society. Significantly, one of the first things done by the newly appointed Rector of Waitaki in 1906 was to establish a school magazine, the *Waitakian*, very much at the outset along the lines of the *Nelsonian*, and to reorganise and put life into the Old Boys Association.

There was criticism, sometimes, as mentioned in the 'Managerial Notes', from 'influential quarters':

We are accused of degenerating editorially into a pernicious latinised style of literary composition. We must say that we hardly expected to have a projectile of this quality hurled at us. But this is an age of irresponsible criticism, and we must strive to survive the blow and meekly learn. We recognise that there are mental digestions inured to milksop Anglo-Saxon diet which are upset by the sonorous virility of a few polysyllabics. Still we can't promise to pare our expression down to jejune aridity to accommodate the mangelwurzelish mental standard of each and every clamant bucolic. But we must in all contrition of soul keep a watchful eye on this misguided tendency of ours towards polysyllabic ponderosity, and consider the tender susceptibilities of our critics.²⁹

The 'tendency', and the bantering tone of the shrug-off relying upon verbal display, was characteristic: variations on the theme continued to amuse Waitakians at morning assembly and Old Waitakians at countless dinners and social functions.

In view of its consequences, and of the insight it offers into the Business Manager's nature, one must put on record briefly the great gymnastics controversy. Nelson College and Wellington College had athletic engagements, including football, dating back to 1875. Gymnastics were added later, and on 19–20 December 1904 the second contest was held in Wellington. The judges, one from Wellington Training School and the other an Army instructor from Wellington, awarded the victory to the Wellington team by a narrow margin: 1247½ points to Nelson's 1228½. The detailed report, unsigned, in the *Nelsonian* sets out reasons or viewpoints, based on a running analysis of the comparative qualities of the teams in the various disciplines, for the uncompromising conclusion:

We must refuse, and do in most emphatic measure refuse, to acknowledge a defeat. This experience has made us think that judges connected in any way with the