

New Plymouth Central School Jubilee Celebrations

May 20th to May 26th

1934



1884 — 1934

“Backward, turn backward, O Time in your flight,
make me a child again, just for to-night.”

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 30.

"Whites"

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This well-known drapery firm has been catering for nearly the five full decades to every succeeding generation of pupils of the Central School—and the other schools of New Plymouth and district of Taranaki.

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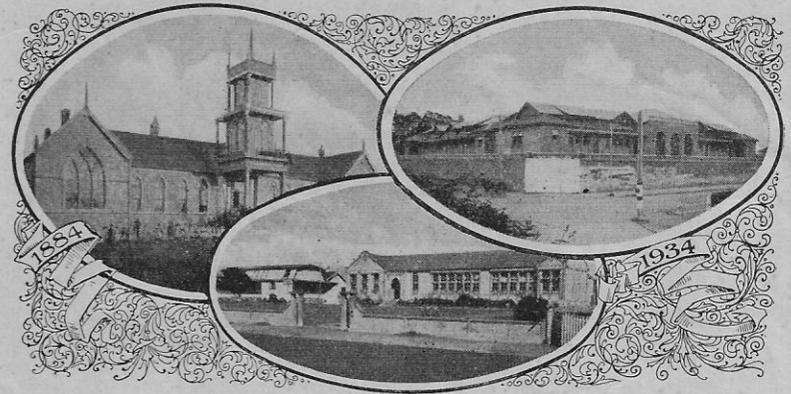
It looks forward to supplying succeeding generations of pupils and ex-pupils.

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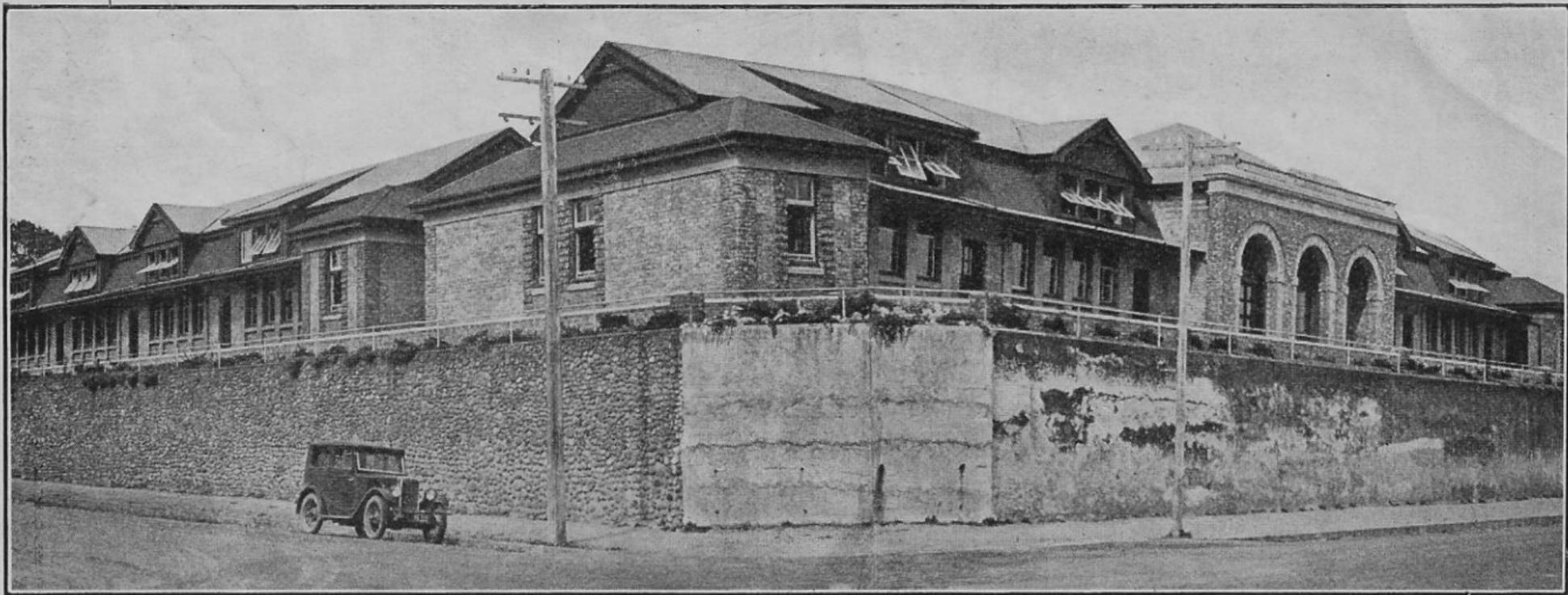
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1884 — 1934

"Backward, turn backward, O Time in your flight,
make me a child again, just for to-night."



CENTRAL SCHOOL, LEMON STREET, FOR STANDARDS I to VI. BUILT 1931.

Replacing old original School.

PROGRAMME



Sunday, 20th May :

Jubilee Church Service, 2.30 p.m., at Agricultural Hall.

All Ex-Pupils meet at Central School at 1.30 p.m. and march to the Agricultural Hall. Collection. Hymn Sheets provided.

Monday, 21st May :

Jubilee Official Opening by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon.

G. W. Forbes, and Signing of the Roll 7.30 p.m.,

Agricultural Hall. Admission 1/-

Tuesday, 22nd May :

Old Girls' Social, 7.30 p.m. Agricultural Hall.

Gents 2/- Ladies 1/- 1931-32 Ex-Pupils 1/-

Wednesday, 23rd May :

Entertainment of Visiting Old Girls, 2.30 p.m.,

Agricultural Hall. Admission Free.

Old Boys' Re-union, 8 p.m., Agricultural Hall,

Subscription 4/-

Thursday, 24th May :

Grand Jubilee Ball, 8. p.m., Agricultural Hall.

Double 5/- Gents 3/- Ladies 2/6

Friday, 25th, May :

Entertainment of Present-day Pupils and 1933 Ex-Pupils.

Afternoon—Sports, etc., 1.30 p.m.; Evening—Children's Tea

and Plain and Fancy Dress Ball, Agricultural Hall.

Children Free. Onlookers 1/-.

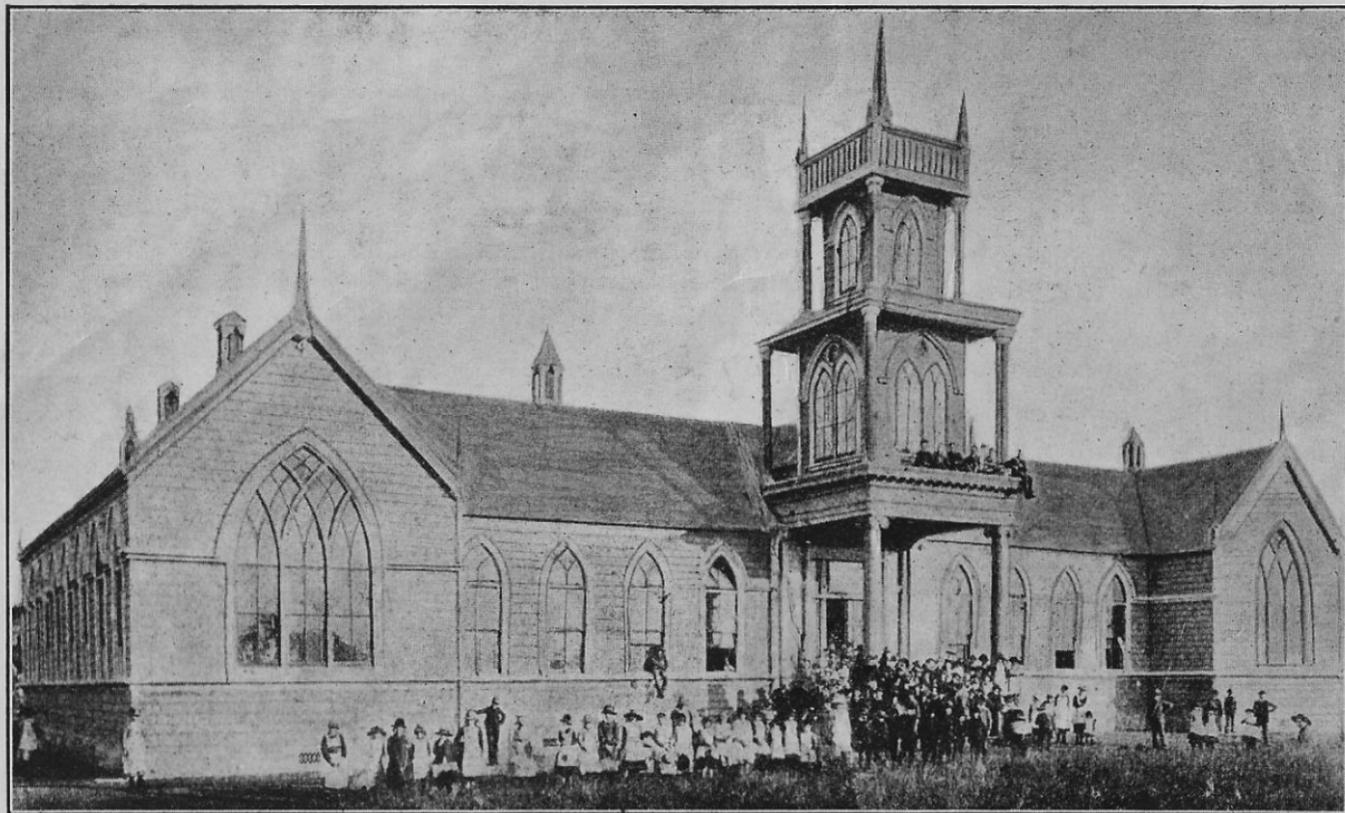
Saturday, 26th May :

Final Monster Jubilee and Band Carnival and Cutting

of Jubilee Cake, 8 p.m., Agricultural Hall.

Gents 1/6 Ladies 1/-

Family tickets are procurable at 2/6 each, which will be issued up till Monday night, 21st inst., and will admit families to Official Opening, Children's Ball (as onlookers), and to the Saturday Night Carnival.



ORIGINAL SCHOOL BUILT AND OPENED ON 26th MAY, 1884.

Partially destroyed by fire, 1930.

CHAIRMEN

1884 - 1892	Mr. JAMES BELLRINGER
1893 -	Mr. E. DOCKRILL
1894 - 1906	Mr. W. A. COLLIS
1907 - 1915	Mr. F. P. CORKILL
1916 - 1928	Mr. S. G. SMITH
1929 - 1934	Mr. F. A. COLEMAN

SECRETARIES

1884	(No Record.)
1892	Mr. HEMPTON
1895 - 1906	Mr. A. B. R. FOOKES
1907 - 1916	Mr. C. F. MILLS
1917 - 1928	Mr. F. A. COLEMAN
1929	Mr. H. J. GODFREY
1930 - 1934	Mr. A. FEAKINS

COLOURS

1st DECADE	1884 - 1893	GOLD
2nd DECADE	1894 - 1903	SKY BLUE
3rd DECADE	1904 - 1913	HELIOTROPE
4th DECADE	1914 - 1923	SCARLET
5th DECADE	1924 - 1934	WHITE

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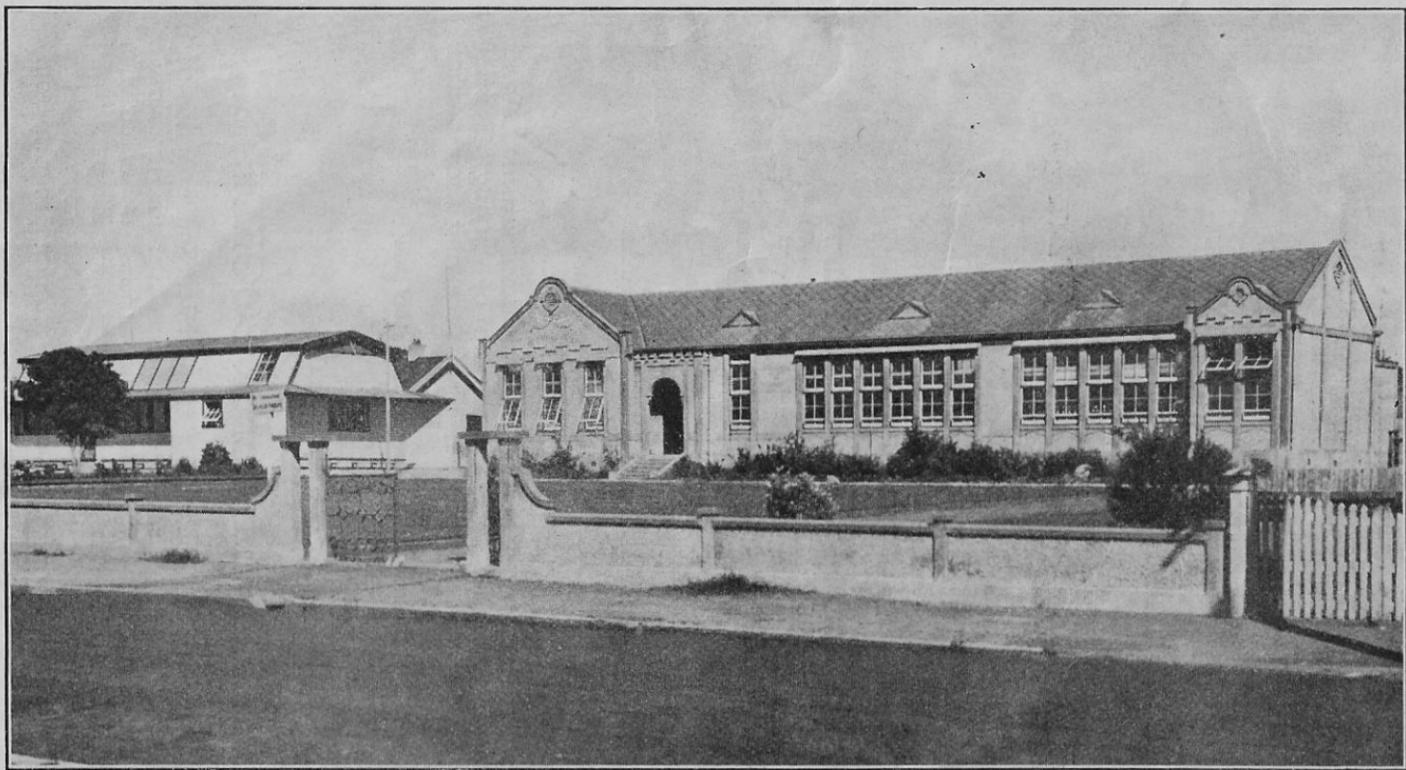
JUBILEE CAKE

Weighing $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton, will be cut at the Carnival on Saturday night. Tickets are available at 1/- each and by buying a ticket beforehand purchasers are assured of receiving their portion of cake.

**“The sweetest thing in fifty years and
worth its weight in gold.”**

JUBILEE SOUVENIR BOOKLETS

Orders are now been booked for the Jubilee Souvenir Booklet containing history of the Central School and descriptive matter and reports of the various celebrations connected with the Jubilee. This will be printed on a superior paper and fully illustrated and will be sold at 1/6 per copy. It is necessary to book your copy as it is intended to print only the number required.



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We extend our congratulations on the attainment of the School Jubilee, and look forward with the new generation of pupils to the next fifty years of increased growth and progress.

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History of the School

PART I.

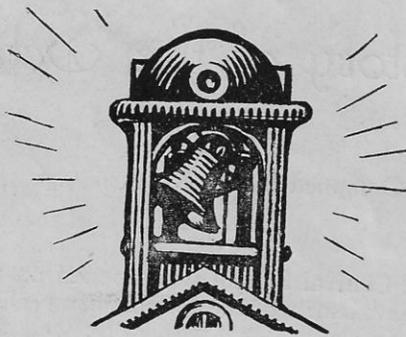
Compiled by E. M. Armitage.

WHEN the Central School was opened on the 26th May, 1884, it absorbed the pupils of a number of long existing schools so it would be well to go back as briefly as possible to the beginning of things educational in Taranaki.

"In the early days of the settlement, the education of the young was sadly neglected," writes Mr. Wells, in his "History of Taranaki," "no provision was made for general instruction by the Plymouth nor the New Zealand Company, nor by the Government of the Colony; the district was too sparsely populated, and the people were generally too poor for private teachers to hope for support in pursuance of their avocations."

In 1857 the Provincial Council passed the Education Commission Ordinance, a commission of enquiry only, and in 1868 an ordinance for making provision for the establishment and maintenance of schools in the Province. The result of this legislation was that a few schools were established, but as the funds at the disposal of the Provincial Government were so small, the system of education inaugurated by it was very imperfect.

In 1874 His Honor the Superintendent of the Province held meetings in the various districts surrounding New Plymouth, for the purpose of testing public opinion respecting a projected provincial measure for placing public education on a sound basis by the levying of a household rate of £1 per annum for its support. Notwithstanding very great opposition to the scheme, the Council passed an Educational Ordinance dividing the province into two districts, constituting Boards and levying a household rate. The members of the Boards were elected by the people, the first members of the New Plymouth District being A. Standish, H. A. Atkinson, B. Wells, H. M. Richmond, C. W. Hursthouse, H. (Archdeacon) Govett, and W. N. Syme. Mr. B. Wells was chosen chairman (a position he held until his death), Mr. W. Northcroft, secretary, and Mr. W. M. Crompton, inspector.



50 YEARS of Educational Service

... are credited to The Central School, and Jubilee Celebrations punctuate the splendid record of achievements which it possesses.

During the latter portion of this period, the "Economic" has endeavoured to perform its own duties in the training of worth-while citizens, by teaching scholars through consistent quality the lesson of thrift and appreciation of true value.

The "Economic" will continue to give the same unequalled service by supplying the best in School Wear at thrifty prices.

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H. L. AUTRIDGE, Proprietor.

The funds of the Boards—Patea, then the largest centre of population in South Taranaki, being the headquarters of the South Board—consisted of the household rate, the rents of lands set apart for educational purposes, and grants from the Provincial Government. The first meeting of the Board was held in June, 1874. The town schools which came under its administration were the West, in Powderham Street, near Mt. Edgecombe Street, a boys' school, roll number 61; the East, in Cameron Street, also a boys' school, roll number 45; Gill Street, a girls' school, with a roll of 51; and Kawau Pa at the end of Gill and Currie Streets, an infant mixed school, with a roll of 53. Schools in those days were known by the names of their teachers. The West was McKee's, and afterwards Tobin's, and the East O'Connell's; Gill Street, Miss Reeve's, and Kawau Pa, Miss Shaw's. Of these the best building was undoubtedly the East School, probably built under the Provincial Ordinance of 1868. It consisted of a class room with a teacher's residence attached. The class room would be considered quite a good one even in these days. It was spacious, well lighted and with cross ventilation, in fact a free air room of an early type. There was no playground, some vacant sections close at hand and the street served that purpose, playgrounds were not considered essential in the 60's of last century. There was no water supply, a bucketful was drawn from the household well on a Monday morning and deposited together with a pannikin on a form in the room, the water remaining at the end of the week thrown out into the road on Friday afternoon. The room was also swept up by the boys on Friday afternoons of each week. There were no sanitary conveniences and the East School was by no means singular in that respect, nor in the want of a playground. The Kawau or Kawau Pa School at the end of Gill and Currie Streets, was built on what was possibly the strong place of the old Pa, for there were the remains of earthworks on the land side of it; towards the Huatoki Stream and the sea it was a high bank and at high tide it became a peninsula. It was built as a chapel for the Natives of the town, through the instrumentality of the great missionary, Revd. John Whiteley, soon after he was transferred from Kawhia to New Plymouth at the urgent request of the Colonial Government in 1856. When the Maori War broke out in 1860 it and the Pa were purchased by the Government and the building became a hospital for the Maoris. At the conclusion of the war it became a school. Its site would be partly on that covered by Burgess and Fraser's warehouse and partly in Gill Street itself. In a photograph of New Plymouth in 1880, or earlier, in the Museum, it is quite prominent, a veritable Church with a chimney in, and an iron chimney at that. The hill on which it stood seems to have been a Harbour Board endow-

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ment, for when the little estuary of the Huatoki was reclaimed some years later, the building was removed to a site in Gill Street a little higher up the street than the Foresters' Hall, and enlarged. It still retained its name Kawau Pa, though it was known to the world at large as either "Miss Shaw's" or "the school on the sand hills," for in those days there was a great deal of sand in that locality. The old site was levelled and the surplus soil used in filling in the reclamation. The school in the Baptist Chapel appears to have been closed, and its pupils transferred to the Girls' School in Courtenay Street.

Besides the schools mentioned that came under the Education Board there were some private educational establishments, for it must not be thought that a roll of 201 was the total number of children receiving instruction in New Plymouth in 1874. Mr. Crompton's, for instance, at the corner of Fulford and Dawson Streets closed when that gentleman was appointed inspector. "Beach House Academy" (the name was better than the building, which is still standing in St. Aubyn Street—opposite the Devonport Flats—an old dilapidated place now, with a flat iron roof.) The education given there until the school was closed about 1877 was of the very best, under the able direction of the proprietor, Mr. J. C. Adams, an Oxford University Graduate. The Wesleyan School in Liardet Street, opened in December 1862, is still standing and looks, and probably is, as good as new. It had quite a long record as a day school. The first teacher was Mr. Scholefield, well known to some of the older generation; he was followed by Mr. W. Collis, who afterwards became a teacher under the Education Board. It was closed for a time and afterwards re-opened as a private school by Mr. Thos. Ellis, a first-class certificated teacher from England, or rather Wales, and his ability was equal to his certificate. Later, Mr. Ellis was joined by Mr. R. H. Gibson, a London University Graduate, and a secondary school education was given. It was closed when the New Plymouth High School was opened, but was later leased by the Taranaki Education Board as a day school and was one of those closed when the Central School was opened. There was also a Roman Catholic day school, Mr. M. Guerin being the teacher.

The Taranaki Education Board as an organisation under the Taranaki Provincial Council, began to function in June, 1874. The immediate cash balance at its disposal was an advance from the Council of £609/11/2. The system of education established by it was neither free, secular nor compulsory, and as the curriculum varied with each teacher there was no co-ordination. The school fee was very low, 26/- per annum paid quarterly. The highest annual salary paid to teachers in New Plymouth was £40 plus school fees

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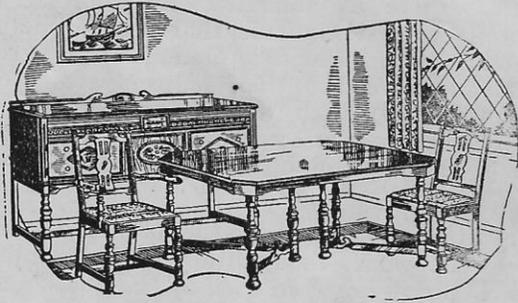
DEVON STREET, NEW PLYMOUTH
AND AT FITZROY.

in most instances. There did not seem to be any provision to meet the cost of cleaning the schools, and a few years later there was quite an animated discussion at a Board meeting over a suggestion made that the teachers should sweep up the school and keep the diminutive playgrounds of those days clean of weeds. The matter became one of a newspaper controversy; some ribald person suggested a new suffrage for teachers in the Litany to read "From dock and thistle cutting, from all sweeping and dusting, Good Lord deliver us."

The matter was referred to the teachers who rightly refused to do the work, though they had no objection to "warm" the children—the word used by the Board's secretary is ambiguous, it meant to lay and light fires when the cold weather made fires a necessity, and had no reference to corporal punishment.

The Board was at once inundated with requests for school buildings, as soon as it began to function, and with the limited funds at its disposal it did wonderfully well. Teachers' applications for increases in salaries met with but little success. There was no great increase of attendances in the town schools at any rate; even the small school fees seemed to be a deterrent. In 1878 the New Zealand Education Act, introducing the free secular and compulsory system together with the standards, which were practically neglected until 1884, was passed. The compulsory clause does not seem to have been put into force at first for there was no immediate increase of attendance of any note in the Taranaki schools. The number on the rolls of the schools in Taranaki under the Education Board, at the end of 1879, was 1,269; the annual average daily attendance of the 31 schools being 976. The system had begun to "take hold" in New Plymouth, for in January, 1880, the Board passed a resolution recognising "the necessity of erecting in New Plymouth a Central Schoolhouse for boys and girls respectively. The inspector advised that schools would shortly be required at Stratford, Midhirst, Opunake, and Sentry Hill. In February the Board's architect was instructed to prepare plans for a Girl's Central School and the secretary to arrange an exchange of sections in Gill Street for a site in Courtenay Street, and also to search for a suitable site for a Boys' Central School. The urgency of the erection of a Girls' School was stressed "as the present building was a hired one." A teacher's residence was also required at West School. Incidentally School Committees were not popular with the Board, they were "either apathetic or extravagant." The Board also stated their policy to be "separate schools in large, and mixed schools in small, districts." Even in 1880 we had the unemployed difficulty

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and a number of people were sent from Wellington and quartered in Marsland Hill Barracks, and a temporary school for their children under Miss McLaughlan was opened at the Barracks in April.

In May 1880, the architect was authorised to prepare plans for a Boys' school at New Plymouth to accommodate 120. In June, tenders were accepted for the erection of a Girls' Central School in Courtenay Street, the price being £636, and the East School, £496. These schools were completed and occupied at the beginning of the school year 1881, Miss Brooking was appointed mistress of the Girl's School. A dispute with the contractor over the amount charged for extras at the Boy's School resulted in a law case which the Board lost. The old East schoolroom was fitted up with a gallery and made into an infant school, the head teacher being Mrs. Lissaman. In June of this year the half time school which had been opened at Stratford was closed on the recommendation of the inspector as the daily attendance was sometimes as low as 2 and Midhirst was made a full time school. Naturally a protest was received from Stratford, and a request for the school to be re-opened as soon as possible, as an attendance of 52 could be secured and the school was reinstated some months later. Such laxity of attendance was common in all schools in the district, so that Inspector Crompton in one of his reports estimated the average attendance of each pupil as not more than two days per week. Many were in the habit of arriving at the school an hour or more late and leaving at any time in the afternoon that suited, and as some of them were eighteen or so, and outsizes at that, nothing could be done. It is true that the legal holidays were only a fortnight at Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anniversary of Province and the Queen's birthday, but with the many illegal ones the pupils of those days did quite as well in the matter of holidays as the present day ones. But this irregularity of attendance coupled with the non observance of the regulations laid down for the annual standard examinations had a bad effect on the progress of the schools and when the examinations were at length carried out it revealed pupils of thirteen and fourteen years of age unable to pass the second standard.

In April of 1882 the secretary of the Board was instructed to procure a site in the vicinity of "Poverty Flat"—why the square—St. Michael's—a Military Reserve, was so nicknamed, is "wrop in mystery"; probably it was taken from a novel of the California gold mining period. Another motion dealing with the congestion then existing was shelved and the next month the Wesleyan Sunday School was rented as a day school. A little later the site on Poverty Flat where the school now stands was secured. In April of 1883 it was

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NEW PLYMOUTH

decided that the proposed building should face Lemon Street and the architect was instructed to make plans for a building to accommodate 250, the East School known as O'Connell's to be worked into the plan. In July, tenders for the erection of a boys' central school were advertised, and on August 27th the seven tenders received were opened, that of Mr. Geo. Cliff for £1,794 was accepted, the other six ranged from £1,879 to £2,360. At the same meeting the sale by auction of the West School was authorised. Just before this time, in June, Inspector Crompton resigned, owing to age and increasing infirmity, the resignation to take effect from the end of the year, and in October Mr. W. Murray was appointed to fill the vacancy; at the same meeting a notice of motion "that a school to accommodate 120 pupils be erected on the west side of New Plymouth" was tabled and on November 26th the acting chairman was "empowered to treat for purchase of part of a rural allotment in the Town Belt." In December the purchase was completed the price being £175. A contract for the erection of the school (the West End School) on this site was let to Mofflin and Dingle in February following, the price being £382 9s 0d.

The contractor had evidently underestimated the cost of the Central School job, for in February, 1884, he found he could not carry on and his bondsmen had to complete the building. The Town School Committee recognising that the school would not be large enough, waited on the Board early in March, asking that the west end of the school, whose completion was to be held over, be finished, and offered £50 out of their capitation grant towards the work. The Board would not accept anything less than £70, which after consideration the committee agreed to pay. A contract was consequently let, Mr. J. C. George being the successful tenderer, the amount being £203. The total cost of extras was under £10 and the building was taken over by the Board on May 22nd. During the dismantling of the East School building, or just before, one room was destroyed by fire, the remainder was incorporated in the Central School building (the West School had been closed and the place sold previously). The pupils of both schools were accommodated in the Marsland Hill Barracks under the headmastership of Mr. Robert Foulis.

The Central School was taken over by the Board on May 22nd, 1884. The schools closed on its completion were Mrs. Hogarth's (Wesleyan Sunday School), Mrs. Lissaman's (East Infants), Miss Shaw's (Kawau Pa) and Mr. O'Connell's. The official opening by the Mayor and Mayoress took place on Monday, May 26th. A procession of children headed by the Town Band marched through the town to the school. The Mayor and party were met at the school by Mr. Robert

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Foulis, the recently appointed headmaster, and previous Inspector of Schools, under the Wanganui Education Board. After inspecting the infant class room in the rear of the buildings, a party accompanied by members of the Board, Town School Committee, staff and others, passed on to the east wing where the ceremony took place. Mr. Foulis, after welcoming the Mayor and Mayoress, touched on some of the problems confronting schools, principally that of classification in the district generally. With regard to the present year he was very doubtful as to how many should go up for examination, and he was afraid that few would pass it. In conclusion, Mr. Foulis said he was sure there were among the boys in the school who would rise to be future Mayors of New Plymouth, and among the girls would be future Mayoresses. Mrs. Bayly, the Mayoress, was then presented with a handsome bouquet, on behalf of the school, by one of the girl pupils.

Mr. E. Veale, Chairman of the Taranaki Education Board, said it became his duty to hand over the building to the Town School Committee. Adverse comment had been made on the money spent in embellishing the building, but he thought that beside utility some attention should be given to beauty and design. The Board has been under great difficulties hitherto, the district was thinly populated and country schools had to be built and carried on at a loss. Town schools had now been combined, personally he was not in favour of mixed schools, and he hoped ere long to see a Girl's Central School—the speaker had evidently forgotten the ambitious name given to the Courtenay Street Girl's School. Continuing he said he believed that it was not the duty of the State to educate children beyond the fourth standard, anything further than that should be done by the parents themselves. He again referred to the adverse comment the Board had met with from outside in building such schools as the High and the Central but he held that the expenditure was warranted.

Mr. James Bellringer, chairman of the Town School Committee next spoke, requesting the Mayor and Mayoress to declare the School Buildings open; for many years No. 3 Committee had worked hard for centralisation.

The Mayor, Mr. Wm. Bayly, said it gave him much pleasure to declare the Central School open, and congratulated the town on having such a magnificent building for educational purposes. When he came to New Zealand there were no schools and so he should have to leave the advantages of education to be dealt with by speakers more familiar with the subject than he was himself.



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Other speeches were made and Mr. Foulis replied, thanking the Mayor and Mayoress for their attendance. "It would ever be his aim to impart to the children that knowledge that would make them industrious and God fearing citizens."

The children were granted two days holiday, the announcement being received as children at all times receive such announcements. They were entertained at what would be called afternoon tea now-a-days and at 3.30 p.m. taken to the Alexandra Hall, afterwards the Theatre Royal, for a limelight entertainment.

The staff of the school were Mr. Robert Foulis, headmaster, and Mr. O'Connell, assistant, Miss Blair, first assistant mistress, Mrs. Lissaman had received this appointment but resigned it just before the school opened. Other teachers were Misses E. F. Ellis, M. Scott, M. Barnes, B. Cliff, with Mr. R. G. Surrey and Miss Petty, pupil teachers. The average attendance for the third quarter of the year was 330.

The Courtenay Street School was a separate school under Miss Brooking with two assistants, the attendance for the third quarter being 84. It was incorporated with the Central School in 1885. The West End, opened in June 1884, was an infant school receiving pupils up to the second standard, with Miss L. Shaw as mistress and an assistant, and had an average attendance of 73.

During 1885 Mr. F. Tyrer, afterwards headmaster of the Stratford School for many years, was appointed first assistant master. On July 4th Mr. Foulis was thrown from his horse near the mouth of the Henui River and suffered severe concussion of the brain. He never recovered consciousness and died on the 21st of the month. Mr. Tyrer was placed in charge and in September Mr. Hector Dempsey, of Ashburton, was selected to fill the vacant headmastership, and to him, qualified as he is with an experience of thirty-four years as headmaster, the work of writing the real history of the Central School may be left with advantage.



History of the School

PART II.

Compiled by Mr. H. Dempsey.

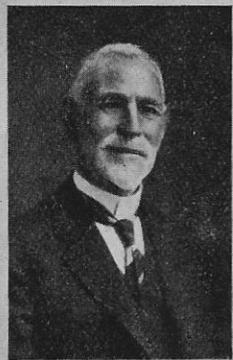
PREVIOUS to the year 1883, education in Taranaki appears to have been in a rather backward state, apparently chiefly owing to the smallness of the schools, and the poor salaries paid to the teachers, many of whom had very little previous experience. The inspectors mention another cause for the unsatisfactory conditions, namely the neglect of teaching the standard requirements, dealing with the more advanced subjects before the pupils were properly grounded in the elementary ones.

In an attempt to rectify this, the Education Board established the custom of having the inspectors' reports, together with the examination papers set, submitted to a committee of the Board, and through this it was hoped an improved character in the instruction would eventuate.

Another scheme was to close some of the smaller schools, the result being that the following schools were closed: East School and West Infants, 31st December, 1883; Kawau Pa, 1st July, 1884; Smart Road, 30th September, 1884; the Central being built absorbing most of the pupils of the schools closed.

The first staff of the Central School consisted of Robert Foulis, headmaster, with the following assistants and pupil teachers, Mr. O'Connell, Miss Blair, Miss Ellis, Miss Scott, Miss Barnes, Miss Petty, Miss Brooking, Miss F. Smith and Mr. Robert Surrey.

In July 1885, by an unfortunate accident while riding on the beach, Mr. Foulis was thrown off his horse and received such injuries that he never regained consciousness. He was an able and most respected teacher, and his death caused universal regret. Mr. Florence A. Tyrer, who had been added to the staff as first assistant master, was placed temporarily in charge of the School, and remained in that position until a new head was appointed.



H. DEMPSEY
Headmaster 1885-1919



A. J. STRATFORD
Headmaster 1919-1923



ROBERT FOULIS
Headmaster 1884-5



D. P. EVANS
Headmaster 1923-34



MISS CIVIL
Infant Mistress 1934



STAFF CENTRAL MAIN SCHOOL.

Back Row—Messrs G. W. Gordon; B. S. Whiteside; G. W. Shepherd. Middle Row—Mr. G. J. Colman; Miss E. F. Mail; Miss E. B. Smith;
Mrs. A. I. Okey; Miss F. M. Ritchie; Mr. R. Short, Miss M. W. Murray; Mr. D. P. Evans (Headmaster);
Front Row—Miss B. S. Egarr; Miss G. J. Hurlle; Miss R. E. Pepper.

In the meantime the school had become a rather important one, not only in Taranaki but indeed in the Dominion, so that when Mr. Hector Dempsey, in September 1885, was appointed headmaster, there were thirty-six applications for the position, which he held for thirty-four years, when he was drafted into the inspectorate.

On his retirement the school was for some time in the temporary charge of Mr. R. L. McIlroy, M.A., who had for some time been first assistant. Mr. Stratford, headmaster of the Inglewood school, and who joined the expeditionary force in 1916, was selected by the Board and committee on 1st July, 1918, as the future headmaster.

The effect of the war, however, had told so much on his health that after suffering for some months, he returned home invalided and died on December 15th, 1922. After his death Mr. David Evans was in February, 1923, appointed headmaster, a position that he still retains. During the eleven years of his headmastership, the school has continued to retain its high state of efficiency and has become the leading school in the district.

In 1885, four Scholarships for the Taranaki district were competed for. Three of these were gained by the following, George Ryan, Alice Hendry and Marion Cooper, all Central School pupils.

The first inspector, Mr. Crompton, who resigned at the end of 1883, in his annual report complains about the irregular attendance of the pupils throughout the district and the lack of interest shown by the parents. Two years later, however, he says: "The greatest credit is due to the New Plymouth School Committee for the very active measure used to enforce better attendance through the compulsory clause of the Education Act. Were several country committees in whose directions a great deal of indifference exists, to move in the same direction, there would be less refusals to meet their numerous applications for assistance."

In 1886 the pupil teachers system was introduced and at the midwinter vacation of that year the pupils-teachers' examination was held, when Alice Ford and Robert Surrey, both of the Central School, took the highest positions in their respective classes. In this year twenty-one candidates competed for six scholarships, which were gained by Percy White, Arthur Taylor, Sydney Rennell, Frank Veal and Alice Smaller, all of the Central School, together with two High School boys, Ernest Fookes and Samuel Atkinson. The scholarship gained by Percy White, who topped the list with 833 marks, was awarded to Arthur Taylor, Central, he being the next highest on the list, as the parents of



TEACHING STAFF CENTRAL INFANTS.

Standing--Miss E. Mullon; Miss O. Wernham; Mrs. F. Firth; Miss E. Oliver.

Sitting--Miss G. Civil; Miss M. O'Sullivan,

Percy White decided to allow their son to remain at the Central. The following year, however, White took up his studies at the High School.

At the annual examination of the school at the end of the year the Central was one of the eight schools said to be worthy of honourable mention for the position in class subjects, and one of the ten, thought worthy of honourable mention for the position they took in the additional subjects.

The following year, 1887, out of twenty Scholarships competed for, the first seven were gained by Arthur McIntyre, H. Moverley, H. Pearce, J. Rickerby, J. Surrey and Essie Beal, all of the Central, and Frank Morgan, Rahotu. In this year the staff consisted of Hector Dempsey, head, James Hislop, Isabella Blair, Ada Roby, Mary McLaughlan, H. E. Taylor, Beatrice Cliff, Agnes Sadler, Marion Todd, Emily Rennell, and Reginald Tatton.

In the subjects mentioned in the inspector's annual report that year, among other things he says: "In geography excellent papers were done by Waitara East and the Central School," while at the latter, "The answers in physical geography were exceedingly creditable."

Towards the end of 1885 the Courtenay Street Girls' School was amalgamated with the Central, since which time they have been treated as one school.

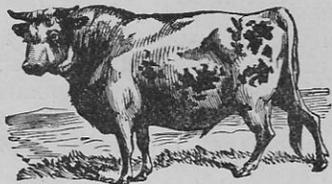
In 1888 the candidates for scholarships numbered 12, out of whom 8 retired before completing the examination. Those successful were Arthur Gayne, first place; Essie Beal, second; both of Central. In the same year Fenwick Halse, Central, Standard 5; Blanche Kirkby, Standard 4; Eveline Bland, Standard 3, and A. Stockman, Standard 2, gained highest marks in their standards.

In the year following William Free and John Rickerby, both of the Central, together with David Evans, Stratford, gained scholarships; John Rickerby taking first place, with 531 marks, and David Evans second with 463. A year later, out of 18 candidates competing, Philip Hopkins and Ada Hammond, both Central, gained scholarships, while in Class B or higher scholarship list, Felix Bellringer, Central, was successful. In 1890 the highest marks in the district in Standard 5 were awarded to George White, Fenwick Halse, Margaret Collis, and Gertrude Morey; Standard 4, Alfred Standard 2, Ida Morey; Standard 1, Roland Tooke; all Central.

In the following year the scholarship successes included Dennis Hursthouse, Francis Kelly and Archibald McDiarmid, all Central, taking first, second and third places respectively.

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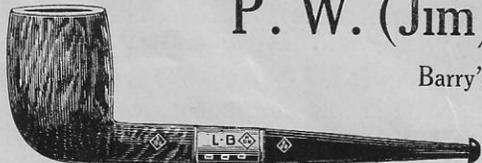
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The records for this year contain the following as obtaining the highest marks in the district, Charles Ryan and Philip Hopkins, Standard 6; Archibald McDiarmid and Ernest Robinson, Standard 5; Alexander McDiarmid and John Cook, Standard 4; William Fairclough, Fred James, Isabella Clegg and Frank Gardiner, Standard 2; Eva Nixon. Archy Kivell and Andrew Hutchinson, Standard 1; all Central, while in Class B scholarships Ernest Robinson and Archy McDiarmid, both Central, took first and second places.

In the 1892 scholarships, Ethel McDonald, Central, in Class A, Daisy Taylor and Gertrude Rickerby, both Central, Class B were successful, while in the following year Nellie Strauchan, Central, in Class A, and Wilfred Becket, Central, in Class B, were awarded scholarships.

The names of those in this year gaining the highest marks in the district in their standards were, Alfred Stockman and Annie Smyth in Standard 6, Lilian Biss in Standard 4, John Howell and Eva Nixon in Standard 3, Ned Tunbridge, Willie Wright and Jura Davidson in Standard 1, all of Central.

In the years that followed the scholarships conditions were such that only High School pupils attempted to compete.

According to the records available the Central School has, ever since its inauguration 1884, held an enviable reputation for (a) order and discipline and (b) manners, gaining in all these years either "good" or "very good," generally the latter, a reputation that is still retained.

In 1886 a Cadet Company was established in connection with the school, and became very popular. The movement was well backed up by the parents, who at their own expense, supplied the boys with smart uniform. They were also provided by the Government with cavalry carbines. Periodic trips were made to the Frankley Road butts, where some good scores were secured, and duly reported by the local press. Of course the headmaster always accompanied the boys in these firing expeditions and he was in honour bound to attire himself in keeping with his position as Captain.

One day when he was walking from his residence to the Flat in order to engage in the usual weekly parade, he was accosted on the way by one of the boys, who after looking him up and down, made the remark "My word you're a toff." Needless to say, this unmilitary manner of saluting his superior officer was overlooked. Talking of uniforms reminds me that we had in New Plymouth at one time an Inspector of Police, named Inspector Pardy, whose uniform so much resembled that the headmaster of the Central School, that they were sometimes accosted by the other's name.

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A frequent visitor to the school was a little old "lady" who used to arrive generally during playtime, in a merry mood, which made the pupils scatter in all directions on her approach. The only thing that used to damp her ardour, was the effect of a garden hose, plied on her from a section on the opposite side of the road. One day when she was having a good time, there arrived on his way to drill, the headmaster in uniform. The "lady," mistaking him for Inspector Pardy, immediately gave up her frolics, became quite friendly and in a short time they might have been seen marching down Gover Street, arm in arm, the "lady" looking up to the Inspector and trying her best to secure his sympathy.

Early in the career of this company a camp for men was held at Waiwakaiho and after some persuasion the Central cadets were allowed to attend. On the second day of the camp they were put on camp duty and were held responsible for the conduct of the camp for that day.

In the meantime dissatisfaction had arisen owing to the inferior condition of the meat being supplied. The men got quite out of control and groups of them might have been seen heading processions and carrying on their shoulders broad boards, on which junks of the despised meat were piled. The task for the boys was to quell the disturbance and disperse the rioters. Did they under such unequal conditions shirk their duty? Oh, no, they knew they had behind them the knowledge that military law must be obeyed, so one after another, the groups of men carrying these emblems of their disfavour, were halted, the meat ordered to be restored to the cook-house, and the crowd to disperse. This order was immediately obeyed and so ended the trouble; the only thing to remember it by was an ugly stain on the captain's pants, caused by being struck by a piece of meat as it was being dislodged from the board on which it had been carried.

Lieut.-Colonel Stapp, who at this time was in charge of the volunteer district of Taranaki, although not in favour of the Central Cadets attending the camp, afterwards complimented the Company highly on the way they had acquitted themselves while there.

At the camp Mr. George Whitelaw acted as first lieutenant and Arthur Humphries as colour-sergeant, and an excellent colour-sergeant he made. Some years later the Dominion Junior Cadet system was established and New Plymouth was selected as the headquarters of the battalion, which embraced all the school cadets in the Taranaki district.

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The Central unit was designated "Number 1 Company" and was looked upon as the senior company of the battalion, the then headmaster, Mr. Dempsey, was given command with the rank of Major.

Soon after the formation of the battalion a camp was held at Sentry Hill, where ten schools comprising about 600 boys assembled. The individual companies were under their respective officers with Lieutenant Colonel Loveday in supreme command.

On the Sunday the camp was visited by the Minister of Defence, who had travelled specially from Wellington for the purpose. On the same Sunday evening the officers, both senior and junior, met to spend a pleasant evening, and while indulging in a cup of coffee before parting, the Major, very innocently, proposed the health of the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Loveday, which was naturally followed by a return of the compliment. In the local press next day a report of the proceedings appeared, and when the Education Beard met a few days after, certain remarks were made by some of the members, which rather hurt the feelings of the officers in question. The result was that the Major and his officers immediately resigned their command. However, the next time the Board met, after making some very complimentary remarks, a resolution was carried asking that the resignation should be withdrawn. This was eventually agreed to, and everything went as before until the school junior cadet system was abolished in 1910.

Its abolition is generally looked upon as a mistake, as it was very popular with the boys and had a great influence in the formation of their character.

In 1906/7 the Taranaki junior cadet battalion was taken to Christchurch to visit the exhibition which was being held there that year. The Major, as commanding officer, was accompanied by Mr. Bary of the West End School as quartermaster. Mr. Bary was an excellent officer who took good care to see that his own battalion got the best of what was going. As the battalion passed down the line it was joined by the different units as far south as Hawera. An attempt was here made by the officer in charge to give his company a leading place in the train. So keen was he to secure this, on arrival at Wellington he doubled his company past the others to as to get in front to the wharf. A gentleman on the route, however, seeing this, advanced to the Major and offered to show a near way to the wharf where the boys were to embark for Lyttleton. The offer was accepted, the result being that the Central and other North Taranaki companies reached the wharf first and secured in the boat the best accommodation available.

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In the early days of the school a prominent feature was the hearty co-operation that existed between the headmaster and the senior boys, who gave much valuable assistance in checking unruly conduct and objectionable language outside the school. There was a committee elected by the boys themselves, whose duty it was to assist in creating a good tone and gentlemanly behaviour, and often members of this committee might be seen giving fatherly advice to some of their mates. Committee meetings were held regularly when some of the most offending cases were dealt with. Neither tale-telling nor corporal punishment were permitted. The popular punishment was being compelled to write a certain number of words each containing a particular number of letters. One boy might have to write fifty words each containing fourteen, fifteen or sixteen letters, and as the picking out of these words took some time, it made them careful in what they said or did. Sometimes the worst offenders refused to carry out the punishment allotted to them, and then the headmaster had to be called in. The system worked well, and in after years headmasters retain happy memories of those who worked so loyally in the interests of the school. They are scattered now to all parts of the world, but still they are remembered as co-workers in the good work in which they gave such valuable help.

Before conclusion it may be interesting to some to know that the Dominion scale of salaries in its introduction had a strong advocate in the then headmaster of the Central School. The teachers in small districts, such as Taranaki, Nelson, etc., were poorly paid compared with such districts as Otago, Canterbury, Auckland, etc. The consequences were that at the Teachers' Annual Conference the proposal received little sympathy, and if brought up was generally talked out. However, the Taranaki Teachers' Branch Institute felt the injustice so keenly that a petition in favour was got up and circulated throughout the Dominion. The petition was largely signed, especially by the poorly-paid teachers, and at a conference in Wellington, a resolution in favour of the scheme was proposed by the headmaster of the Central School and seconded by Mr. Reynolds, headmaster of the Picton School, and was carried, it was said, by one vote. The present system was introduced and made all the difference to Taranaki teachers.



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History of the School

PART III.

Compiled by D. P. Evans

PASSING reference has been made to the appointment of the late Mr. H. A. Stratford to the headmastership in 1917, and to his untimely death in November, 1922. This brief review would be incomplete without further comment on the vicissitudes of the school under his regime. Though there was no necessity for additional classrooms owing to the fact that the Education Board in the original plan had made provision for accommodation for many years ahead, the roll numbers steadily increased. A side-school attached to the Central was in operation at Vogeltown, a rapidly expanding suburb, and in 1919 a new school district was defined and a separate school established. The withdrawal of pupils provided a temporary set-back in the school roll, but the loss was soon overhauled.

An examination of the Courtenay Street Infant School—an obsolete and unsuitable structure—proved the inadequacy of its accommodation, so it was decided to replace it by a concrete building of four rooms which now adorns the old school site. The foundation stone was laid in August, 1922, and the school was ready for occupation early in the year 1923. During the Xmas vacation 1922-23 an extensive remodelling scheme was carried out at the Main School, the two rooms on the south side being swung round to face Gover Street. These are the rooms previously referred to as having been removed from another site when the original building was erected. While these building schemes were in operation the School Committee, roused to a sense of their responsibility, in preparation for anticipated increased expenditure to provide an attractive environment, organised an afternoon fete which resulted in a nett profit of over £582, a truly marvellous response to their appeal. The late Mr. Stratford who died at this time will ever be affectionately remembered as a teacher, his tactfulness, his impartial justice, and his sympathetic treatment of all who were associated with him in school affairs.

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Mr. D. P. Evans took over control of affairs in February, 1923, having been promoted from the position of headmaster at the West End School, New Plymouth. For the next decade rapid changes took place in educational reform and in the growth of the school, so to avoid confusion it is deemed necessary to deal with the schools separately.

When the new Infant School was opened provision was made for increasing attendance, but it was soon made evident that further additions were necessary, as will be seen as this history proceeds.

Mrs. Martin, Infant Mistress, retired on superannuation at the end year 1923, after long, faithful, and efficient service. Miss Papps, her successor, was attached to the staff for eight years, retiring in 1932. Fond memories of these two outstanding personalities in the teaching profession lie deeply embedded in the hearts of hosts of children who were privileged to pass through their hands in the early stages of their school career. Miss Papps was succeeded by Miss Robertson, who retired after sixteen months service. The present Infant Mistress, Miss Terry, is on extended holiday leave, Miss Civil acting as relieving teacher in her place.

After the erection of the new Infant School, negotiations were entered into for the purchase of two adjoining sections, the property of Mr. F. Orbell. This was necessary owing to the restricted size of the playing area, and within a few years the wisdom of this transaction was exemplified when it was found that two additional classrooms were required to satisfy the growing demand for accommodation.

The establishment of a school dental clinic in 1923 marked a decided advancement in school hygiene. A small spare room at the Infant School was taken over by the Education Department who appointed two dental nurses to supervise its management. Within a short space of time an additional clinic was built to cope with the growing demands for further treatment, two more nurses being appointed.

Now to return to the Main School. From 1923 onwards the rapidly increasing roll numbers necessitated frequent remodelling and additions, until by the year 1931 the classrooms numbered eleven with a total roll of 900 and a staff of 22 teachers, including probationers.

Externally the original Central School was an attractive building with its imposing tower, its high roof, and its stained-glass gothic windows, but an inspection of its interior revealed huge barn-like rooms of poor acoustic properties, and some of which were capable of seating 100 children.

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In July 1930 fire partially destroyed four of the classrooms in the main building. After considering its reconstruction the Education Department decided on its replacement by a totally new building of eleven rooms, three in wood and eight in brick. While it was in course of construction New Zealand was severely shaken by an earthquake, and progress was held up while plans and estimates for a 'quake proof building were under consideration. Eventually the work was completed with the result that New Plymouth now possesses a primary school of the open air type second to none in New Zealand.

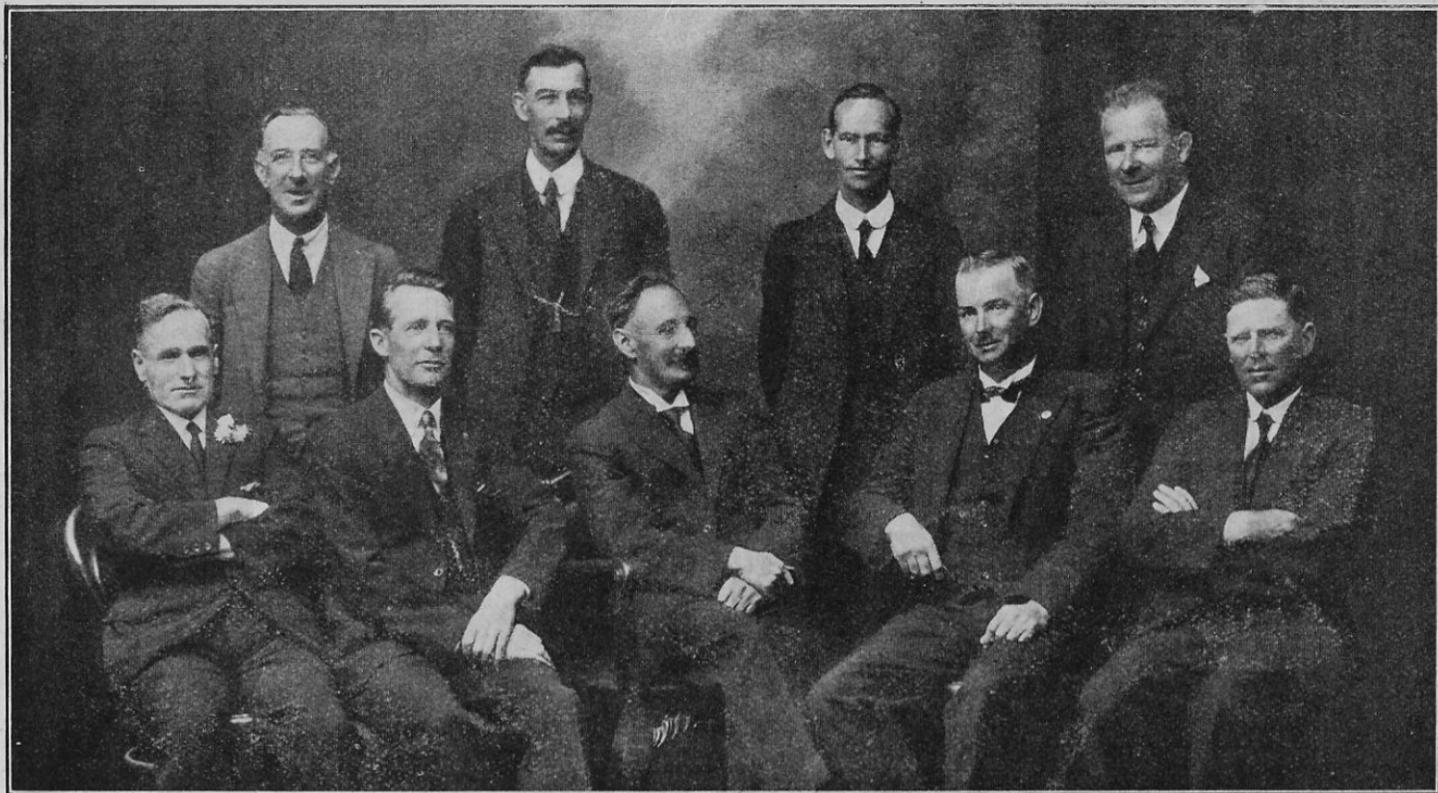
In 1931 the Education Board, recognising that the school numbers were becoming unwieldy, recommended the establishment of a school at Welbourn, two moveable rooms from the Central being transported to the site selected. This resulted in a loss of about 40 pupils. Following this came the economic depression, and the decision of the government to raise the school age of entry to six years. In addition to these factors the declining birth rate and the removal of pupils to country and suburban districts have reduced the roll to 730.

In respect to staffing the school holds a unique record in that during the fifty years of its existence only four headmasters have controlled its destinies, one of these, Mr. Foulis, having died as the result of an accident, after less than two years service.

Old pupils will probably be interested in a review of the names of the senior assistant masters who so ably assisted the headmasters in the organisation and management of the school. As far as memory serves they are Messrs. F. A. Tyrer, Jas. Hislop, O. Johnson, Wm. Burnside, R. L. McIlroy, — Bullians, W. L. Wagstaff, R. Adlam, and the present master, G. J. Calman. Of these Mr. Burnside was promoted to the inspectorate, while Messrs. Tyrer and Hislop attained the rank of senior headmasters.

It is pleasing to note that the scholastic records of the pupils have been well maintained, for in the last examination for Junior National Scholarships seven out of ten of the successful candidates were from the Central School.

A Home and School Association, founded in 1929, has done much to bring parents and friends into closer contact with the activities of the school. Its members have been particularly energetic, and, by acting in close co-operation with the School Committee, have achieved great success both financially and socially.



CENTRAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE, JUBILEE YEAR.

Standing—F. S. Nicholson; E. W. Hodder; A. Holder; A. Dunkley.

Sitting—F. C. Potter; J. O. Turner (Deputy Chairman); F. A. Coleman (Chairman); A. Feakins (Hon. Secretary); W. H. Huggett,

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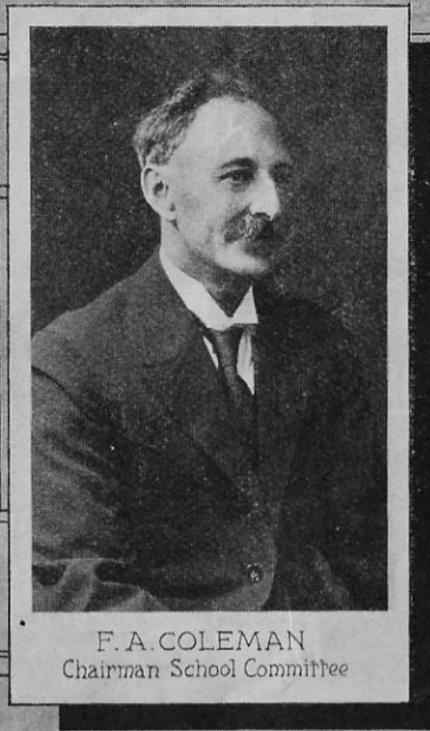
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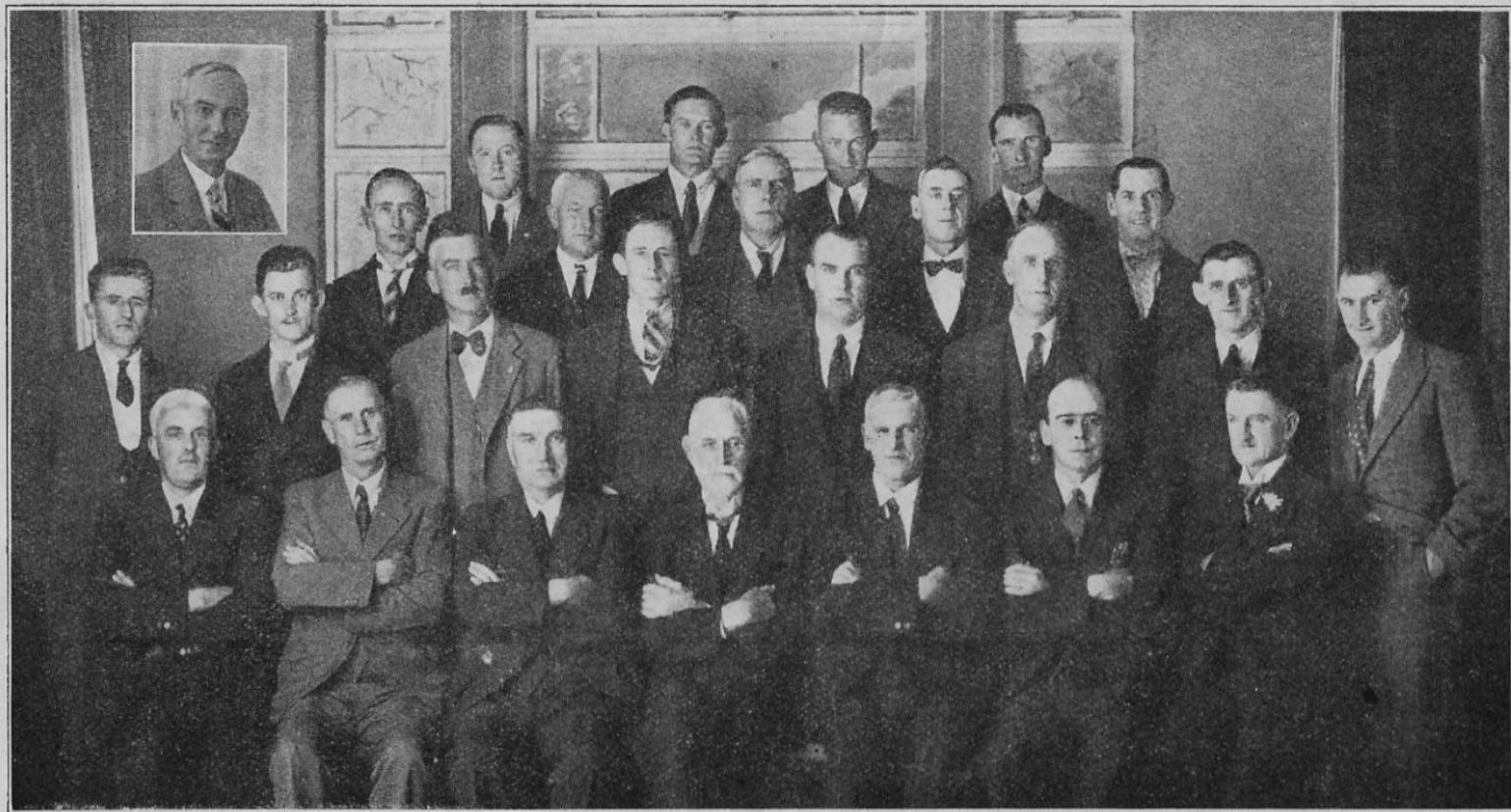
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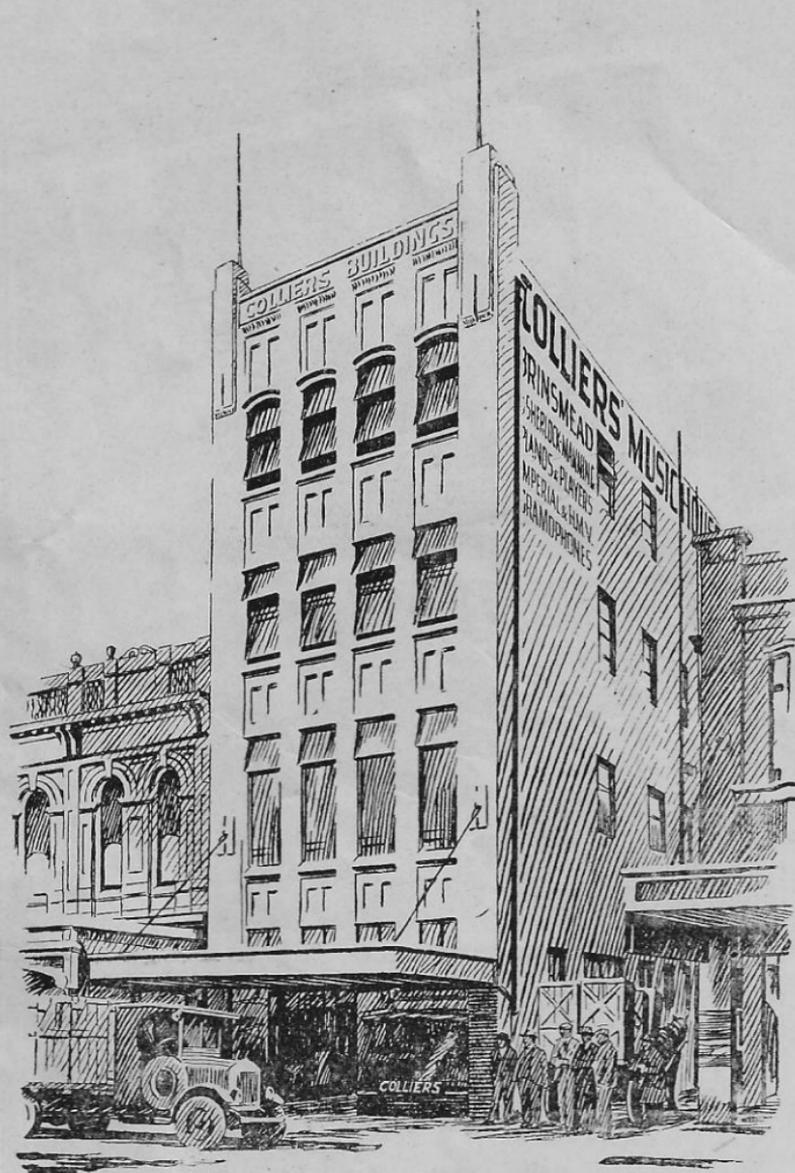
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