

I need not animadvert on the state of the Province as regards Education. We have no existing Education Boards, and the Government have temporarily assumed charge of the Department, and are expending the Revenue of the Province appropriated for the purpose. The tax, of course, cannot be raised, and the Ordinance simply creates the machinery required to be put in use, should circumstances at any future time make it necessary. The fees, voluntary subscriptions and Government aid, at present meet the requirements of Education.

With respect to the disallowance of the Ordinance, I have to observe that it had met with general approval throughout the country, and appears calculated to settle a question which had long agitated the Province respecting the aid to be afforded to Education out of the Revenue.

The Ordinance passed in the year 1856, enacted that the funds for Educational purposes should be raised by a poll-tax; but a poll-tax was found to be so unpopular, that the Government did not venture to levy it, and funds for the purpose were thereafter voted by the Provincial Council and expended by a Board consisting of the Executive Council and elective members; a body in no way responsible to the Provincial Council.

The object of the Ordinance passed in 1861, was not to place the Education of the Province entirely in the hands of the Government, but chiefly in that of the local Committees; and to entrust the expenditure of the monies voted out of the Provincial Revenue for Educational purposes to a Board responsible to the Provincial Council, and this Board, the Council decided, should consist of the Superintendent and Executive Council and the Speaker of the Provincial Council.

The Law of 1856 places the formation of Educational Districts in the hands of the Superintendent, with the consent of the inhabitants of the district, and there is no other authority in the Province by which such a power could be exercised.

There is some force in the objection, that the Ordinance makes the owners of land liable for the rate, without giving them a voice in the making of it, but in every Educational District the land belongs almost exclusively to persons resident in the District. Four shillings an acre may be too high a value for unimproved land, as compared with twenty shillings per acre for improved land; but this has very little to do with the great bulk of the wild land of the Province, as no Educational District has been, or can be formed in any part of the Province, until the District has become settled and the land for the most part improved.

It is true there are a few instances in which speculators have purchased land which they do not intend to improve or occupy, and which might be taxed for Educational purposes, and it is believed that no one has objected to the Ordinance in question, except one or two individuals of this class, but the very small sums which would be required of them as an Education tax would interfere very little with the large profit which they expect to make and do make by the sale of their land which they so hold on speculation.

The disappointment which the public have manifested at the disallowance of this Ordinance is almost universal, and the Government has been urged to call the Council together immediately, for the purpose of re-enacting it. I have declined to do so without conferring with the General Government on the subject, but will be obliged to submit a similar Ordinance to the Council at its next meeting, in which Ordinance it is proposed to include the owners of land in the rating clause, and to lower the annual value of unimproved land to two shillings an acre, being ten per cent. on the minimum cost price, and the Government will submit to the consideration of the Council, any other alterations which may be suggested by the General Government.

As the provisions of the Ordinance have been already carried out, the Council is not likely to agree to any material change.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Auckland.

J. RICHARDSON,
Superintendent.

No. 54.

MR. SEWELL TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, OTAGO.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Auckland, 12th February, 1862.

SIR,—

With reference to your Honor's letter of the 18th ultimo, on the subject of an Education Ordinance for your Province, I do not trouble your Honor with any remarks upon the policy of the proposed measures, which is properly matter for the consideration of your Honor and the Provincial Council.

Your Honor's proposal to include owners as well as occupiers in the rating power, removes the principal objection stated in my former letter, and with such an alteration, Ministers will be prepared to recommend His Excellency to leave such a measure to its operation.

I have, &c.,

His Honor the Superintendent,
Otago.

HENRY SEWELL,
For the Colonial Secretary.

No. 55.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, OTAGO, TO THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Superintendent's Office,
Dunedin, 21st December, 1861.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward herewith the following Ordinances, viz.,—
"Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance, 1861,"