

Liabilities and Engagements.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Steward's salary for December	42	6	0	2	14	0	45	0	0
Total liabilities	42	6	0	2	14	0	45	0	0

Christchurch, 5th January, 1882.

JOHN MARSHMAN, Treasurer.

I certify that I have audited this account and find it to be correct, and that the balance at the credit of the School Commissioners with the Bank of New Zealand, Christchurch, on the 31st December, 1881, was as herein stated.—J. OLLIVIER, Provincial District Auditor.—6th January, 1882.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

Office of the School Commissioners, Hokitika, 31st March, 1882.

The Commissioners have the honour to report concerning their administration during the past year.

During the year the seats of the following members became vacant: The Hon. J. A. Bonar, Dr. Giles, and H. L. Robinson, Esq. The two first-named gentlemen were reappointed by the Governor, and the last by the Westland Education Board. The Commissioners held ten meetings during the year, four of which were special meetings.

At a meeting held on the 22nd March the Commissioners decided to consent to the sale of sections held under lease in the Town of Kumara, in accordance with clause 7 of "The Kumara Education Reserve Act, 1879," provided applicants to purchase paid all rent due on or before the 18th April. On the 3rd May the Commissioners held a special meeting to meet a deputation from the leaseholders at Kumara appointed to interview the Commissioners concerning the payment of rents and the fees fixed for mining upon the reserve. In consideration of the delay which had occurred in fixing a date for the sale of sections, the Commissioners decided to accept one-half of the year's rental due in all cases where the leaseholder should have expressed his willingness to purchase by the 17th May. The Commissioners also agreed to certain alterations in the scale of fees fixed for mining upon the reserve. The scale as amended was agreed to by the Warden for the district, and approved by the Governor, and is now in force.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands having been empowered to sell the sections at Kumara, he appointed Thursday, the 27th October, 1881, as the day for the auction sale; one-fourth of the purchase-money to be paid at auction, and the remainder in one month. Ninety-seven applications were received to purchase, and the number of sections included in applications was 107; of these, 92 were purchased. The amount received by the Commissioners on account of purchase of sections up to the 31st December, is—primary, £258 10s.; secondary, £937: total, £1,195 10s. This sum has been placed at fixed deposit in the Bank of New Zealand until the 30th June, to enable the Commissioners to ascertain particulars as to a desirable investment, as provided by "The Kumara Education Reserve Act, 1879."

The Commissioners have not seen reason for altering their opinion of the Act above referred to, as expressed in the yearly report for 1880. This Act, passed as a measure of relief to the leaseholders and those desirous of taking up sections on the reserve, provides in the case of the latter that the applicant must first take out a business license; that then, having improved the ground, he can apply to the Warden, who, if satisfied with the improvements, can recommend the Governor to grant a lease not exceeding twenty-one years. Having obtained the lease for twenty-one years, the leaseholder can apply to the Commissioner to consent to the land being put up to auction. This, as compared with the simple process adopted by the Commissioners, of letting back sections at a yearly rental of 10s., can hardly be considered an improvement. On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent the Warden from granting residence areas in any part of the reserve, from which the revenue accruing would be so small as barely to be worth the trouble of collection. Again, the Warden, in considering applications for residence areas, &c., has not consulted the Commissioners, but has preferred asking the advice of the Borough Council, a body having no pecuniary interest in securing the proper administration of the reserve. Complications are also likely to occur from the fact of a number of sections being still held under lease, information as to which the Warden can only get from the Commissioners' office. The Commissioners would recommend the amendment of the Act, to allow of the whole of the sections in the township being offered at auction, and thereby enabling the Commissioners to dispose of a property in the administration of which there is so little that is satisfactory.

By order of the Commissioners.

E. T. ROBINSON, Secretary.

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year ended 31st December, 1881.

Receipts.

	Primary Education Reserves.	Secondary Education Reserves.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To Arrears of rents, &c.	88 18 0	334 19 3	423 17 3
Rents, &c., payable and collected within the year 1881	3 8 6	...	3 8 6
Sale of sections	258 10 0	937 0 0	1,195 10 0
Total receipts	350 16 6	1,271 19 3	1,622 15 9