

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE—continued.

Liabilities.

	Primary Education Reserves.	Secondary Education Reserves.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Debit balance on 31st December, 1883...	45 13 3	..	45 13 3
Owing to Secondary Education Account	225 16 10	..	225 16 10
Secretary's salary for three months	4 3 4	8 6 8	12 10 0
Sundry accounts	10 0 0	40 0 0	50 0 0
Balance		182 9 0	182 9 0
Total liabilities.	285 13 5	230 15 8	516 9 1

JAS. A. BONAR, Chairman.

E. T. ROBINSON, Secretary

I hereby certify that I have examined the above statement, compared it with vouchers, cash book, ledger, bank pass-book, and other documents, and to the best of my belief find the same to be correct and according to law.—W A. SPENCE, Auditor. 16th April, 1884.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 6th May, 1884.

In pursuance of Order in Council of date 17th December, 1878, and in accordance with Circular No. 83/10, dated the 20th December, 1883, I have the honour to forward the report of the School Commissioners of the Provincial District of Otago for the year ended the 31st December, 1883.

During the year the Crown Lands Department, at the request of the School Commissioners, as provided for by sections 50 to 57 of "The Land Act 1877 Amendment Act, 1882," disposed of 7,238 acres of agricultural land for cash, at an average of £2 6s. 6d. per acre, 14,538 acres on deferred payment, at an average of 6s. 3d. per acre per annum, and 11,825 acres on perpetual lease, averaging 2s. 5d. per acre per annum. The greater part of this land was not sold till the latter portion of December, 1883; and the proceeds were not handed over to the Commissioners till after the close of the year.

In order to assist purchasers of limited means to compete for the cash or "land of special value" sections, as well as to provide a suitable investment for the proceeds of such sales, the Commissioners arranged to advance two-thirds of the purchase-money, on security of the land, for five years, at 6 per cent. per annum, and of twenty-one cash purchasers at the first sale, after such arrangement had been made known, thirteen took advantage of the Commissioners' offer.

With the exception of the sum of £3,505 2s. 2d., which has been deposited with the Bank of New Zealand, bearing interest at 6 per cent., and the amounts advanced to purchasers as above, the whole of the proceeds of land sales, after deducting expenses of selling, has been invested on freehold security at 7 and 8 per cent. interest.

During the year the Commissioners leased thirty-three rural, eleven suburban, twelve town, and five pastoral reserves in various parts of the provincial district, at a total annual rent of £1,486 2s. 4d. of these reserves, forty-one were sections the original leases of which had expired, and they were again leased for further terms of years, the revenue now obtained showing an increase of over three times the original rents. After deducting all land suitable for settlement, the Commissioners leased four runs in the Waikaia district, the old licenses of which expire on the 1st March, 1884, at an annual rental of £890 per annum.

The amount shown in the statement of revenue and expenditure as arrears on the 31st December seems a heavy item, but, in face of the universal depression, and taking into consideration the fact that a much greater number of leases are in existence than heretofore, it does not compare unfavourably with the amounts shown in previous years. The rents are payable half-yearly in advance, and a considerable number are not due till near the end of the year. Of the amount shown as in arrear on the 31st December, £493 1s. 10d. has been paid during the first three months of the present year. In the amount shown as arrears for the years 1880, 1881, and 1882, £266 13s. 6d. may be considered as irrecoverable, and will have to be written off.

Annexed hereto is the statement of receipts and expenditure for the year, duly audited.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

J. P. MAITLAND, Chairman.