

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 14th June, 1900.

In compliance with Order in Council of 17th December, 1878, and in obedience to circular from the Education Department, dated 7th December last, I have now the honour to forward herewith report of the School Commissioners for the Provincial District of Otago for the year ended 31st December, 1899.

During the year the Commissioners held sixteen meetings, which, with two exceptions, were attended by the whole of the members, and, as the number of tenants on the Commissioners' rent-roll is now 885, a very large amount of routine business devolves upon the Commissioners, who spend a considerable portion of their time in the management of the endowments, and are thereby enabled to bring their practical knowledge to bear thereon.

In addition to the management of the endowments, the Commissioners have the sum of £26,914 5s. 1d. invested on mortgage over freehold securities, the number of mortgages being 32.

The Commissioners have made it a rule only to lend money on rural land that could be added to the endowment and worked profitably in the event of the security falling into their hands under power of mortgage. They also make it a practice to satisfy themselves personally as to the value and desirableness of a security before accepting it. In addition to this, they obtain a report and recommendation from an outside valuer, as required by the Trustees Act.

In the course of the year the Commissioners leased four holdings for pastoral purposes and fifteen sections for agricultural purposes. The area of the pastoral land was 104,140 acres, leased to four tenants at an annual rental of £565 1s. 9d. The area of the agricultural land was 2,262 acres, leased to fifteen tenants at £420 5s. 10d., or 3s. 8½d. per acre.

During the year the sum of £6,924 6s. 4d. was received in repayment of loans, and £5,220 was advanced on mortgage at 4½ per cent. interest.

Of the amount shown in the statement of receipts and expenditure as arrears of rent on 31st December, 1899, the sum of £4,148 8s. has since been collected, and the rest is coming in fairly well. As explained in former reports, the rents are all payable half-yearly in advance, and of those which do not become due in advance until the end of the year a great number are not paid until after harvest.

In explanation of the amount of £1,797 0s. 3d., shown under the head of expenditure in the statement of accounts, I beg to say that £344 6s. 4d. appears on the other side of the account as received from incoming tenants; £16 5s. 6d. was received for the preparation of leases by the Commissioner's office staff; £10 16s. was recovered from tenants for county rates; £9 19s. 6d. was deposited by tenants on account of valuation expenses, &c.; £37 10s. was received for office-accommodation; £191 13s. 8d. was expended on river protection, drainage, and road-making; while £127 14s. 2d. was returned to the Government in the shape of train-fares, stamps, telegrams, &c. (£53 19s. 9d. being train-fares of country Commissioners in connection with their attendance at meetings in Dunedin).

By deducting the foregoing figures it will be seen that the actual cost of management was £1,058 15s. 1d., or about 4½ per cent on the money collected during the year.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

J. P. MAITLAND, Chairman.

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1899.

	Primary.		Secondary.		Total.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
<i>Receipts.</i>						
Balance—						
Bank of New Zealand	...	...	...	...	131	14 11
Bank of New Zealand, fixed deposit	...	...	...	...	4,450	0 0
National Bank of New Zealand, fixed deposit...	...	...	...	...	5,950	0 0
Arrears of revenue for previous years,—						
Rents of reserves	4,331	7 9	133	9 3	4,464	17 0
Interest on mortgages	243	2 1	...	...	243	2 1
Revenues,—						
Rent of reserves for current year	8,463	6 11	556	10 0	9,019	16 11
Interest on mortgages	1,098	12 5	...	...	1,098	12 5
Interest on fixed deposits	334	0 0	...	...	334	0 0
Other receipts,—						
Net proceeds of land sales	1,070	0 2	...	...	1,070	0 2
Repayment of loans	6,924	6 4	...	...	6,924	6 4
Costs received for preparing leases	16	5 6	...	...	16	5 6
Valuation for improvements on leaseholds	344	6 4	...	...	344	6 4
County rates recovered from tenants	10	16 0	...	...	10	16 0
Deposit Account valuation expenses...	9	19 6	...	...	9	19 6
Insurance premiums from tenants	0	6 6	...	...	0	6 6
Office-rent, Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools						
Board	10	0 0	...	...	10	0 0
Office rent, W. Lewis	27	0 0	...	...	27	0 0
Total receipts	...	...	...	...	34,105	3 8