CHARLES CHRISTOPHER BOWEN
AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Education
University of Canterbury

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts and Honours

by
Malcolm Anderson
February 1962
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. BIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. EARLY PROBLEMS IN CANTERBURY</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE CHOICE OF A SYSTEM</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE IMPACT OF HUMAN NEED</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. BOWEN'S INFLUENCE INCREASES</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. A CLIMAX OF ACHIEVEMENT</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. BOWEN'S RECORD ASSESSED</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX E</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX F</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX G</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX H</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to record and assess the contribution made to elementary education in New Zealand by Charles Christopher Bowen. The major aims of the study are threefold: to attempt to define the nature and extent of the influences which surrounded and affected him; to estimate the significance of these influences when related to his actions in provincial and national education; and to draw some conclusions on the impact of Bowen on the educational and cultural character of the nation.

There are three major reasons for selecting this topic for research. The first, and the most subjective of the three, is the satisfaction of a personal interest and curiosity in the man who, although hardly to be ranked among the greatest of New Zealand politicians, was responsible for successfully piloting through Parliament one of the most significant, and latterly one of the most controversial, measures on the statutes of this country. That this was a private bill and not a government measure, a fact seldom remembered, adds to the interest both in Bowen and in the bill, and gives
rise to the desire to know more of the character of the man and the nature of his ideas.

The second reason offered to justify this research is the fact that the education system of today, not as yet a century old, reflects in many aspects the principles that were prominent in the 1870s and earlier. Because the life of this country as a civilized populated nation has been relatively short, the facts of the development of educational facilities have a direct relevance to the life of the present day. However, not only is public education a comparatively recent development, but its growth has been fashioned and nurtured by men who played notable roles in many other fields. The pioneers of education were often experienced in adventure, discovery, colonization, literature, and politics, to name a few of their other interests, and could thus relate their theory to a rugged colonial practice. The establishment of a sound educational system was to these men an integral part of the establishment of a sound organization of society.

The final justification for undertaking this study is a conviction that education in New Zealand has been comparatively neglected as a field for thorough historical examination and assessment. Co-ordinate with this conviction is an impatience with the fact that although
a few major works are available which deal with the important trends and events of education in New Zealand, there are few comprehensive or penetrating studies of the men whose ideas and ideals shaped the distinctive features of the educational system. At a time such as the present, when many of the facts and theories of New Zealand's history are being re-interpreted in the light of fresh evidence, more complete documentation, a greater degree of background understanding, or greater objectivity as a result of the passage of time, it is imperative that the history of education should receive its due measure of re-examination and, if necessary, critical re-appraisal.

PLAN OF THESIS

The sensible approach to the study of an individual's ideas and the progressive development of his attitudes and opinions is in terms of chronology. This not only enables the study to be more systematic and reduces the risk of omitting important data, but it helps to make the assessment of these attitudes and opinions sounder and better balanced. This is because the adherence to chronological sequence reveals the continuity of the stream of thought, and equates the variations or differences that arise in the individual's views with the changes which occur in his own circumstances and the
environment in which he lives, and makes allowance for the increasing maturity which he brings to bear on the problems which he considers.

This chronological approach to Bowen is the basic structure of the thesis. After a brief biographical essay has been given, various periods in Bowen's life which are associated with major statements of his belief or major phases of his activity are dealt with in turn. Of these there are five periods. The first examines the influences of his early years in Canterbury with particular attention being given to his contacts with John Robert Godley and James Edward Fitzgerald. This is followed by a study of his statements on educational problems during his term as editor of the Lyttelton Times, and their link with the specific educational developments in the colony at that time. After a review of possible revisions of his attitudes during the 1860s, considerable attention is given to his activity and expression of his opinions during his period as a member of the Board of Education in Canterbury from 1871 to 1874. His period in politics, and particularly his connection with the Education Act of 1877, is dealt with in a separate chapter. The Act itself is not dealt with in any specific detail—that has been done in other works—but an attempt is made to focus the attention
on Bowen's personal implication in the events leading up to it, his conduct and attitudes during the process of legislating, and the reactions towards the Act and his part in it. Some consideration will be given to Bowen's own backward-looking at events, as may be seen from several speeches delivered by him in Parliament and an important newspaper article written by him in 1896. The thesis will conclude with an endeavour to summarize and define the nature of his educational and, to some extent, his political beliefs, and an evaluation of his contribution to New Zealand education.

SOURCE MATERIAL: A CRITICAL REVIEW

Apart from the notices which appeared at the time of his death in 1917, the fullest account of Bowen's life is to be found in Scholefield's Dictionary of New Zealand Biography.¹ This shows clearly that there were two periods of his life when he was most actively engaged in the affairs of the community: locally in the 1850s, and nationally in the 1870s. A study of his speeches in the appropriate volumes of the New Zealand Parliamentary Debates revealed that his chief concerns in educational theory at the time of the Act were the

¹G. H. Scholefield, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), pp. 80, 81.
failure of the denominational system to cope with the
demand for schools, the nation's need of universal
education at the elementary level, and a strong
preference for local interest and participation in
administration over centralized direction and control.
From two points of view, namely the extent of his
knowledge and understanding of educational problems,
and the considerable importance to the community of
these problems during the previous quarter of a century,
it was reasonable to assume that his opinions on these
issues were judgments gradually arrived at, and that
these stages of thought could be important in a consid-
eration of Bowen's significance as a leading figure in
educational development. The issues of the Lyttelton
Times for the earlier period referred to, that is, the
1850s, proved to be a profitable field for this research,
providing sufficient evidence to support the claim that
Bowen's interest in educational problems was long-
standing, extensive, and based on a thorough
understanding of contemporary educational theory.

As yet no definitive biography of Bowen has been
written. Many works contain references to him in greater
or lesser degree, but few go beyond the limits of
standard minimum facts. Most educational works mention
Bowen only in his connection with the Act, although
Webb's work is a notable exception.² It is evident from the attention that Webb gives to the character and experience of Bowen that his acquaintance with the details of Bowen's life was far from cursory. There are numerous small details, mainly of biographical interest, to be found in many of the works dealing with the Province of Canterbury, but from their similarity it is probable that most owe their inclusion not to fresh discovery but to cross-quotation. It was therefore incumbent upon the writer to make a thorough investigation from as many sources as possible in order to begin with the fullest possible information on Bowen, the man.

Four sources of material were available. These encompassed primary sources in letters by or about Bowen, and secondary sources in books, newspapers, and interviews. There are, it would appear, few of his descendants in residence in New Zealand today, and it is therefore difficult to trace much of the intimate personal and familial detail which does much to produce an authentic honest appraisal of an individual. His old home still stands at Middleton, within four miles of the

centre of Christchurch, but after a succession of later owners it has no secrets to reveal. No collection of Bowen's own papers, as such, is known of, although it has been said that somewhere in England there is "a sack of papers" lying neglected and untouched. Webb mentions in a footnote that he had access, through the favour of a descendant of Bowen, to some of Bowen's private papers, but these do not appear to be available today.\(^3\) There are, however, in New Zealand a number of documents, chiefly letters, written by Bowen himself. A few of them are to be found in the collections of the papers of other notable figures such as William Rolleston and Sir John Hall. Two large collections of letters are held: one is the series of letters which he wrote to Godley between the years 1853 and 1859, these being included in the Kilbracken Papers which are housed in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch; the other is made up of those which he wrote over a longer period to H. Selse Selse, Emigration Agent for the province in London. These latter are included in the Selse Papers, which are the property of the Hocken Library in Dunedin.

Probably because of the nature of his relationship to his erstwhile employer, which is discussed in some

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 25.
detail in a following chapter, Bowen's letters to Godley seem to contain more references to the theoretical implications of the progress of settlement in the province and a greater revelation of his attitudes to people and events. The Selice Papers contain what is apparently the largest number of letters written by Bowen; most of these consist of comments on finance and emigration, general news of the community, and details of Bowen's own career. The letters of Bowen are all of very great interest, but they do not contribute a great deal on the subject of education. For the educational requirements of this thesis they were of little assistance, although they proved of considerable value in providing corroborative evidence of dates and activities.

Primary sources being relatively unproductive, most of the material has had to be culled from secondary sources. Most books, as has been mentioned, gave very little information. The best source of material was undoubtedly the files of the early newspapers of the province, particularly the Lyttelton Times from 1851 to 1859, and the Lyttelton Times and The Press from 1870 to 1877. From these papers was collected the bulk of the material covering Bowen's activities and statements of his views. The writer is especially grateful to Mr. R. C.
Lamb, of the Canterbury Public Library, and Dr. W. H. Scother, both of whom gave him great help in locating Bowen material in the newspaper files. Thanks must also be expressed to Mr. George Macdonald, of Woodend, and Mr. W. J. Gardner, of the History Department, University of Canterbury, for assistance rendered through discussion. Finally, the writer was fortunate to have some discussions with one of Bowen's nieces, Miss Margaret Bowen, who, although not able to say a great deal about Bowen and education, gave one or two valuable insights into her uncle's character and personality.

Until he moved to Wellington in 1874, Bowen was almost entirely a "Canterbury man", engaged in affairs that had few, if any, repercussions outside his province. It was therefore considered unnecessary to seek material on this early period from newspapers outside Canterbury. From the local newspapers a clear picture of Bowen's activities and opinions was obtained, and these will be examined in the thesis. More attention had to be given to the views of the press outside Canterbury for the period 1874 to 1877, and to this end inspection was made of three other metropolitan dailies, the New Zealand Herald in Auckland, the Evening Post in Wellington, and the Otago Daily Times in Dunedin.

Some unfortunate and disturbing aspects of
historical research became apparent during the study. The most serious of these was the revelation of the considerable gaps that exist in the country's educational records. For any examination of this period, a critical stage in the history of education in New Zealand, it is essential that actual documents should be available in the greatest possible extent, to provide the widest possible range of material to work from and to ensure that the facts used are accurate. However, two of the most likely sources of important data for the purposes of this study were found to exist no longer. Practically all the documents relating to the planning stages of the 1877 Bill, entered in the files of the Department of Justice (of which Bowen was then the Legislative head), were later passed from that department to the Department of Education, but are now, as a result of the efficiency of a departmental official some years ago, completely destroyed. Similarly, it was reported in a thesis on education in Canterbury written some thirty years ago that destruction of papers was committed by the Canterbury Education Board in 1924.\(^h\) Despite the efforts of the officers of the National Archives in Wellington to

ensure that local body records should be preserved safely, and in spite of the provisions of the Archives Act which outlines the steps in law which must be taken to secure departmental papers, many are still inadequately stored or housed. Two dangers face these documents: the first is the gradual disappearance of the writing as the inks begin to fade, and the second the fact that bureaucratic ignorance or zeal can still cause catastrophic and irreplaceable loss. If the history of New Zealand education is to be studied intensively, no further ground must be lost.

It has been found that many books and journals contain inaccuracies in their references to Bowen. Some of these mistakes result from the confusion that exists over the identity of Charles Bowen, and his son, Charles Christopher Bowen. The father played a leading part in the affairs of Canterbury during the period 1850 to 1865, being a member of the Provincial Council and at various times Speaker and acting-Superintendent. The son, the subject of this thesis, although he was very active in administration and was Provincial Treasurer both before and after his first return trip to Britain and a member of the Executive Council before, never stood for office in local politics, but he bore a sufficient resemblance to his father in interests, activities, and calibre of
character to mislead people into identifying the two as one person, or ascribing to the one what should have been accredited to the other.\textsuperscript{5}

Another inaccuracy which occurs in many of the standard works in which Bowen's career is mentioned is the assertion that he was chairman of the Board of Education in Canterbury from 1872 to 1874, whereas in actual fact he did not attain that office until July 7, 1873. This might be regarded as an error of little significance were it not for the fact that because of its occurrence in reputable works it tends to be repeated and accepted as an authenticated date. Such historical inaccuracy should not be allowed to be perpetuated. The original mistake appears to have been made by William Gisborne in 1897, and copied by almost all later authors and thesis-writers.\textsuperscript{6} It is very disturbing to find A. G. Butchers, in his book on Education in Canterbury, referring correctly to Bowen as having been chairman

\textsuperscript{5}Sources which fall into this confusion in either their text or their indexing are: David N. Hawkins, Beyond the Waikariri (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, Ltd., 1957), p.379; G. E. Schoefield (ed.), The Richmond-Atkinson Papers (Wellington: R. E. Owen, Government Printer, 1961), index; and A. G. Butchers, Young New Zealand (Dunedin: Coull, Somerville, Wilkie, 1929), p.295.

"from 1873 onwards", and a bare two pages later giving the dates of his period in office as "from 1872 to 1874".  

Yet another error of fact occurs in Downie Stewart's biography of William Rolleston. Speaking of Rolleston's position after the abolition of the provinces, he says: "At this stage his old friend C. C. Bowen, Minister for Education in Vogel's Government, seems to have become genuinely concerned." This is incorrect because the office of Minister of Education did not exist until the passing of the Act in 1877, and although educational affairs before that date were under the oversight of the Justice Department, there was no recognition of them as a separate portfolio.

DANGERS IN INTERPRETATION

On some points connected with the thesis it is not possible to say unequivocally that the statement or opinion quoted is the work of Bowen and none other. This arises chiefly in quoting from the early issues of the

---


8 William Downie Stewart, William Rolleston (Christchurch: Whitecombe and Tombs, Ltd., 1940), p. 120.
Lyttelton Times, where editorial writing was unsigned, and identification as the work of Bowen is largely circumstantial. However, this has proved to be beneficial as well as frustrating, for it has pointed to the need for objectivity in the approach to the material used. There is a degree to which an historian may go in interpreting data which it is impossible to authenticate; he must be prepared to use a certain amount of "historical imagination", depending upon the extent and nature of the evidence which he has available to substantiate his case. But, in so doing, he must constantly be aware of two possible hazards: the first is the trap of "biographer's bias", of living too close to the subject, and over-stressing his virtues while failing to see his defects; and the second is the temptation to construct patterns of relationship, motives, and sequences of thinking which did not in fact exist. The danger lies in allowing the "historical imagination" to run riot.

One example of the latter hazard will suffice. It might be assumed from a reading of Scholefield's biographical notes that, because of his active support for Moorhouse both in Canterbury and overseas, Bowen was,

9 vide infra Chapter IV, p. 74.
like Moorhouse, enthusiastically in favour of the scheme for a tunnel from Lyttelton to Heathcote. This interpretation would gather weight from the fact that Bowen in the newspaper strongly supported the necessity to link the port and the plains by means of a tunnel. But a perusal of one of the letters of the Selue Papers revealed that on the contrary Bowen was convinced that Fitzgerald's scheme for a railway and short tunnel by way of Summer was the more practical.10 This was merely one example of a dangerous assumption being drawn from too few established facts.

In the case of the former risk, that of treating the subject too subjectively, two factors weighed upon the writer. One was the pseudo-romantic aura which has been attached to and surrounds the first settlers in this country, whatever their province, and which tends to highlight their successful achievements and neglect to see them as human beings capable of error. The other was the inescapable evidence of Bowen's ability and integrity which enabled him to stand out from his contemporaries and be so greatly esteemed by them. Whatever the office he held, Bowen's character was never the subject of criticism. It has been a temptation to

---

10 Vide infra Chapter II, p. 30.
transfer this impeccable standard to his ideas on education, and arrive at the conclusion that in educational matters he was an infallible expert. Such a judgment, in view of the criticism of his ideas which followed the 1877 Act, would not be justifiable.

Nevertheless the picture that does emerge is of a well-educated layman who possessed an uncommon ability to take broad views of contemporary problems, to weigh issues dispassionately and independently, to look beyond local and parochial concerns to national circumstances and needs, and to visualize practical developments in a future which was to be characterized by rapid growth and complexity. These are the qualities that are offered to substantiate the claim that because of his impact and influence on the intellectual and cultural background of the nation, Bowen deserves to be rated as one of the great figures in the story of New Zealand's first century.
CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY

For my own part I can claim to have been a Canterbury man long ago at college, in England, long before the province now known as Canterbury was actually established. . . .

To appreciate Bowen's record as a man of experience and responsibility, it is necessary to view him in the light of his achievement in all fields and not merely the one aspect of his ideas on education. There was much more than a mere knowledge of contemporary education problems that fitted him to lead in the development of education on a national basis. A general resume of the important events in his life will enable the more specific attributes of later chapters to be related to the whole man.

Charles Christopher Bowen was born in Milford,

---

1 Bowen speaking at his farewell on his departure for Wellington. The Press, Christchurch, February 2, 1875.

County Mayo, Ireland, in the year 1830, into an old county family of Welsh origin. His father, Charles Bowen, arranged for him to be educated for some years in France, but he returned to England in order to continue his education at Rugby and Cambridge University. Of this period he later wrote:

I beheld in dim remembrance all my childhood's home arise;
Where the sorrow-stricken Erin in neglected beauty lies.

And again a child I wandered where the joyous peasants dance;
'Mid the vineyards and the fig-trees of the sunny lands of France.

Then again in merry England I recalled the happy years
When in school and all around it centred all my hopes and fears...3

Bowen as a young man showed all-round ability, being gifted both academically and in sporting activities, and in his early years in Canterbury he demonstrated some prowess in such sports as rowing and cricket. But it was in his potential as a scholar that his reputation was high at Cambridge. He read for a degree in law, and a brilliant career was prophesied for him. It was at this time, however, that his father became

3C. C. Bowen, Poems (Christchurch: Lyttelton Times Office, 1861) Extract from poem "The Work of Life".
interested in the proposed settlement of Canterbury, and that interest became communicated to his son. To accompany one's family on a journey across twelve thousand miles to face the rigours and hazards of colonial settlement would no doubt have seemed a promising prospect to a young man of spirit and twenty years of age, but it was pointed out to him by his tutors that he was throwing away his chance of a distinguished future. The decision was his alone and no pressure was put upon him by his family to travel to New Zealand.\textsuperscript{1} Bowen chose to embark with the rest of the family on the "Charlotte Jane", and landed in Lyttelton on 16th December, 1850, one of a distinguished and select band of settlers which still commands a respect and admiration among residents of Canterbury, the Pilgrims. Except for two visits to his homeland in 1860 and 1881, he was to spend the rest of his life of eighty-seven years in his adopted province and country, rendering to both a service which, though it is comparatively unsung in the story of New Zealand today,

\textsuperscript{1} According to Miss Margaret Bowen, the decision to come to Canterbury was his alone. He was, however, under some pressure for his obituary tribute in The Press, December 13, 1917, states that "John Robert Godley, with James Edward Fitzgerald and Lord Lyttelton, was chiefly responsible for Sir Charles deciding to come to New Zealand."
was probably more vital and influential than many better-
known contributions in the fields of politics and
administration.

Bowen's qualifications were hardly those that
would prove the most useful in adopting the role of a
settler. But few of the arrivals had very much knowledge
of the requirements of pastoral farming or the
possibilities offered by the Canterbury Plains. Many
years later, in the course of a paper he read to the
Popular Entertainments Association, Bowen pointed out
how the reaction of most of the earliest settlers to the
Plains had been unfavourable:

It was for a long time the custom to talk as if
we had been cast upon a hopeless, dreary plain; whose
only virtue was its agricultural capability...5

Neither he nor his family appear to have been in the
position of being able to become large landowners.
Indeed, although at various times in the first five
years he was employed on his father's farm at Riccarton,
Bowen did not fancy farming activities very greatly.
Writing from "Milford", his father's residence, to Godley
early in 1853 he said:

farming is still, and always, I suspect, will be

5Lyttelton Times, May 6, 1872.
to me rather a necessary than an agreeable occupation... 6

though much of this antipathy to the land at this time was caused, as was his impatience with the dullness of life in Lyttelton a short time later, by the departure four months earlier of his leader and friend. 7 Butchers claims in his work on education in Canterbury that

when Godley returned to England, Bowen went on the land, and established himself as a successful farmer... 8

This statement is debatable, for Bowen was not farming on his own account, but was working for his father, and appears on the Electoral Roll as "Bowen, Charles, Riccarton Road, labourer." 9 Taking into consideration the dislike he expressed for farming, the evidence of residence from electoral rolls of the 1850s, the fact that he was a bachelor, and his preoccupation with numerous other activities, it seems hardly likely that he "established himself" until at least his return to New Zealand in 1862.

---

6*Kilbracken Papers*, Bowen to Godley, April 25, 1853.

7"I have never liked this place since you went away." *Ibid.*, July 22, 1853.


9*Lyttelton Times*, July 16, 1853.
It is not known what occupations Bowen was engaged upon in the immediate months following the landing from England, but it is not surprising that one with such an intellectual background as his should soon have found his way into administrative channels. In 1851 he became private secretary to John Robert Godley, and on Godley's behalf travelled extensively between Lyttelton and Christchurch, and to other parts of the South Island. Godley thought very highly of him. As a result of the death of Edward Wright in 1853, Captain Simeon, requiring assistance to carry out routine business, enlisted Bowen's aid, and informed him that he was honouring a promise he had made to Godley, who before his departure for England in 1852 had requested Simeon to give Bowen a lift in public employment when he could. This "lift in public employment" was soon to begin.

The *New Zealand Gazette* of November 18, 1853 carried the announcement of Bowen's appointment as Inspector of Police and Chief Clerk to the Provincial Treasury. In his own words he was gazetted Inspector of Police, and chief clerk in the Provincial Treasury, which being interpreted means commander of the "brave army" of bombasts;

---

10 *Kilbracken Papers*, Bowen to Godley, July 22, 1853.
and only maid of all work in a little merchant’s office. . . .

That he was a man of spirit and action is seen from the report of his evidence on a case in the Resident Magistrate’s Court featured in the newspaper a mere eight days after his appointment had been gazetted:

I went to Owen’s house, and on entering the loft,
I saw the prisoner, whom I ordered to surrender . . .
I got hold of, and grappled with him, and with the two officers got him down and seized him.12

As Inspector of Police, he is mentioned in most of the accounts dealing with the arrest and prosecution of Jock McKenzie, the well-known sheep-stealer.

In a reshuffle of positions in 1855, Bowen took over the positions of Provincial Treasurer and Clerk to the Bench of Magistrates. This move, described by John Hall, then the Provincial Secretary, as a “streamlining of positions”, was criticized rather sharply in the Provincial Council by J. Brittan, who queried the propriety of Bowen’s appointment and objected to the manner of its announcement. He took particular exception to the youthfulness of Bowen, saying that the office of Treasurer was usually kept for someone well on in years who had given faithful service and who deserved a less

11 Ibid., October 20, 1853.
12 Lyttelton Times, November 26, 1853.
vigorous responsibility. The move smacked to him of patronage or preferment of race. In spite of similar expressions of opinion from R. Packer and W. J. W. Hamilton, the Council accepted Bowen as its Treasurer and did not again question any of the tasks that were allotted to him.¹³ Further appointments included as a commissioner of the Waste Lands Board in 1856, a Justice of the Peace in 1857, and a commissioner of native reserves in 1858. It might be thought remarkable that one as young as Bowen was then should have been entrusted with such onerous responsibilities, but in the first decade of the settlement there were few men of his intellect and experience available for local government administration. Besides, few of the positions were extensive enough to be carried on as full-time occupations without other means of making a living being employed. The significance is not so much in the number and nature of these positions as in the experience they gave him in the conduct of local affairs. In one of his early letters he acknowledged with a deep sense of gratitude the opportunity that Godley had given him:

I assure you that I feel more every day what you did for me in giving me a little insight into business and in making me like office work, and in

¹³Ibid., April 28, 1855.
showing the forbearance you did to a raw boy such as I was when I went into your office. . . . 14

This was written at the time of his substituting for Simeon, before any of his permanent appointments had been made, but it was a sincere appreciation on his part of Godley's vision and purpose for him, and an indication of his fitness for the tasks he was about to take up. To his background of academic brilliance was grafted the experience of practical business and committee affairs.

Journalism was at an early stage one of Bowen's chief interests and he soon proved himself to be a competent leader-writer for the Lyttelton Times. His name first appeared in the paper in the correspondence column after the Queen's Birthday regatta at Lyttelton in 1852, when he protested rather indignantly, as one who could claim to know something about rowing, against his disqualification by the regatta committee from the fours event for having a boy as the cox of his boat, and challenged all-comers to competition under true rowing conditions. 15 But it was not long before his writing skill was displayed, not in the correspondence column over his own name, but in the editorial column under the

14 Kilbracken Papers. Bowen to Godley, July 22, 1853.
15 Lyttelton Times, May 29, 1852.
newspaper's letterhead. He mentioned this position late in 1854, though he had then been writing for the paper for several months:

By the way, you must not think that the views of the Lyttelton Times are those of Fitzgerald. I am solely responsible for them . . . He tells me however that in the main points he agrees with me . . . I am afraid I have bored you about the paper, but that being my province of course I know most about it. . . .

For the next four or five years Bowen's opinions on a wide range of topics appeared regularly in print. Halfway through 1856 he and Crosbie Ward, a brilliant parodist and later a politician at both the local and the national level, bought the paper; Ward was responsible for the business side, while Bowen continued to supply most of the expression of policy and thought. This arrangement existed until 1859 when Bowen sold his share of the business preparatory to undertaking a trip overseas.

Towards the end of 1859 Bowen severed many of his connections in the province, and left on a trip to Britain by way of South America, U.S.A., and


17. Ward's obituary in the Lyttelton Times in December, 1867, states that on their taking-over of the paper Ward was responsible for management only.
Canada. After sailing across the Pacific to Peru, he took part with Clements Markham in a crossing of the Andes mountains, a journey he described in Galton's book *Vacation Tourists*, published in 1861. For this and several other articles he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. At the conclusion of the trip he travelled to the United States and Canada, where he made the acquaintance of several of the leading intellectual men of the time. From there he proceeded to England, where he spent the remainder of 1860 and 1861 renewing acquaintance with Godley and members of the Canterbury Association, and courting and marrying Miss Georgina Markham. Late in 1861, he and his wife set sail in the "Matoaka" for New Zealand, arriving in Lyttelton on 15th February, 1862. A fortnight later, he picked up the threads where he had dropped them two years before with his resumption of his duties as Provincial Treasurer.

Three months later an event occurred which illustrates Bowen's influence in the progress and

---

18 Bowen's resignation from the Provincial Executive was notified in the *Provincial Gazette*, November 14, 1859.

19 Later Sir Clements Markham, well-known in connection with Antarctic research.

20 *Provincial Gazette*, February 25, 1862.
development of the province of Canterbury. A public dinner was held at the Universal Hotel, Lyttelton, to celebrate the inauguration of the Electric Telegraph between Lyttelton and Christchurch, the first such link in New Zealand. The guest of honour and principal speaker at the function was John Ollivier, whose vote on the question of establishing the telegraph had carried the motion by a majority of one in the Provincial Council in 1856. Mr. Ollivier acknowledged that he had played a part in the scheme, but added that he must

ascribe honor to whom honor is due; and to whom was the honor due in this matter? Why—to a gentleman then sitting at the table—Mr. Charles Bowen. (Applause) In 1858, he had the honor to be associated in the work of government with Mr. Bowen; and that gentleman had suggested to him the propriety of uniting the chief towns by the telegraph. He at first thought the scheme impolitic; but his friend's oily tongue won him over to propose it to the Council. (Laughter and applause). . . .

The report went on to say that "C. C. Bowen, Esq., was loudly called for" and briefly spoke to the gathering. On numerous occasions in 1857 and 1858 the Lyttelton Times had strongly advocated the linking of Lyttelton and Christchurch by both telegraph and tunnel. Bowen had been one of the companions who had accompanied Fitzgerald when the first journey was made by horse and

24 Lyttelton Times, July 3, 1862.
trap over the Summit Road by way of Evans Pass to Lyttelton, but he did not share Fitzgerald's almost fanatical faith in the road as the most economic and practical means of uniting port and plain. The full extent of his participation in the tunnel project is not easily arrived at, but there is no doubt that he was one of those who had great faith in the scheme and contributed most to its success. He supported it strongly in the editorial column of the newspaper, and was also the Provincial Treasurer during Moorhouse's Superintendency when the idea was becoming a reality.\textsuperscript{22} Scholefield says of his participation in the scheme that

his association with Moorhouse showed his capacity for administration and his constructive mind. They co-operated on the tunnel and Moorhouse got from Bowen much of the information he presented in the House.\textsuperscript{23}

In addition, on his visit overseas in 1860 and 1861, he earnestly sought support for the scheme among his English

\textsuperscript{22}Yet Bowen was by no means at first convinced that the tunnel as planned by Moorhouse to be pierced at Heathcote was the best link. Writing to H. Sefse Sefse in London he said:

"I have spent much time with him [i.e. Moorhouse] and Dobson going over the whole thing till we were sick of it. Fitzgerald's suggestion i.e. of a railway via Summit is the most practical and the best way of making the link between Lyttelton and Christchurch." Sefse Papers, Bowen to Sefse, October 28, 1859.

\textsuperscript{23}G. H. Scholefield, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), p. 80.
acquaintances and friends.

Facets of Bowen's character that distinguish this period from 1850 to 1864 are his vision and initiative. He was able not only to understand the issues and ideals of early settlement, but also to foresee the practical problems of the colony and their easiest solution. There seemed to be few projects of any size or consequence in which he did not have some share, whether modest or substantial. When Mr. Justice Gresson proposed at the meeting held in the temporary church at Christchurch

that in order to meet the growing wants of the diocese, it is expedient that a central church or cathedral be erected in Cathedral Square as soon as a sum of money, not less than £2,000, has been raised,

his motion was seconded by C. C. Bowen, who was also appointed to the committee to work on the proposal.24

When a private meeting of gentlemen interested in the building of model cottages took place in the Freemasons' Hall, and it was moved "that a company be formed to raise a capital by shares, for the purpose of building cottage residences in the town of Christchurch and its immediate neighbourhood", the motion was seconded by C. C. Bowen, who was appointed to the committee to

---

24 Lyttelton Times, October 28, 1858.
investigate the project. Whenever a Ball was held to celebrate the Sovereign's Birthday, or a Breakfast or Dinner organized to welcome distinguished visitors on their arrival or to extol local representatives on their return from combat in sport or politics, it was usual to find Bowen's name among those who had consented to act as Stewards or Committee members. There is no finer summary of his contribution to the life of the province than Scholefield's remark that he "threw himself with enthusiasm and marked ability into the life of the colony."26

His organizing skill, common sense, and vision were not lost on the people for when, a few years later in 1868, Moorhouse completed his Superintendency, they asked Bowen to offer himself as a candidate. This he declined to do. Perhaps his decision resulted from financial considerations—the Superintendency was not an extremely well-paid office, and Moorhouse had had to draw upon his own resources. Perhaps it was governed by the lack of available time—he had become a busy man with several important commitments, and he might have been influenced by the need to establish his home and

25 _Ibid._, November 28, 1863.
settle down. It is possible also that he was at heart not very keen to enter local politics because of a certain lack of sympathy with their purpose and activities. In 1855 he had written to Godley thus:

My stand in the 'Lyttelton Times' has always been against the ultra-Provincial tendency of our politics ... If I were an independent man, I should try to form a Centralist New Zealand party and fight the battle in the G. A. ... 27

Later in the same letter he gave vent to his dislike of sham and roundly criticised Fitzgerald for pretending when opening the Provincial Council that his speech was prepared by Responsible Ministers though he (i.e. Fitzgerald) had really written every word of it himself. On at least two occasions he wrote editorials criticizing the attempt to incorporate the principles of Responsible Government in the set-up of provincial politics. The allegation was sometimes made against him that, without sufficient reason, he was hostile to the Provincial Council, but he defended himself in the Lyttelton Times by reiterating his dislike of much of the make-believe and artificial character of the provincial institutions and outlook. His grasp of the implications of New Zealand's development, as shown by his sponsorship of many progressive moves in his home ... 27 Kilbracken Papers, Bowen to Godley, March 31, 1855.
province, must have made him impatient of the parochial pettiness of some of his contemporaries, and hesitant to commit himself to the possible frustrations of inadequate vision and narrowness.

To sum up this decade and a half of his activity, two prominent features may be mentioned. The first is the fact that what was probably the most vigorous period of his life, the time from twenty to thirty-five years of age, was spent in an environment which offered numerous chances for the exercising of talents and abilities. Bowen's growth in experience coincided with a period of growth in the colony; circumstances regularly provided opportunities, and his talents matched these occasions. Godley's faith in his protégé was seen to be justified as each successive responsibility was capably and faithfully discharged. The second point is that during these years Bowen was essentially what might be termed "an ordinary citizen". The positions he held were principally clerical and literary, and in a small community where the differences in material advantages were not particularly great, and

---

28 "I was not trained to business, and since I have been a public officer, it has been my fortune to have to do with a young colony in an abnormal state of progress—I flatter myself that what with reading and travelling I have gained further experience now." Selve Papers, Bowen to Selve, April 13, 1863.
where the hardships of early settlement were distributed fairly evenly among the people, he joined in with and contributed to the activities of the general public, and became a well-known figure in the community.

Early in June 1864, Bowen entered upon a second phase of his career, one in which he did not have the same scope to be involved in the public affairs of the settlement, but where his intellectual skills and abilities could be made full use of. He was appointed Resident Magistrate in Christchurch, a position he was to hold for the next ten years. 23 The office was not completely new to him, as he had in his capacity as a Justice of the Peace officiated on the Bench on a number of occasions in 1862 and 1863. As a result of this appointment many of his other public activities were curtailed, and when he did take part in some event it was usually in an official or at least a semi-official capacity. Two of these occasions were the unveiling of

23 Bowen had become dissatisfied with working in the Public Service:
"I am likely to change my work. Poor Joe Brittan is giving up the Resident Magistracy and I have been asked to take it. . . . I am sick of the Treasury—which is a mere routine office; and as I don't choose to go into 'political' office till I am thoroughly independent, I prefer a more responsible billet than the Treasury."
_Selfe Papers_, Bowen to Selfe, May 15, 1864.
A month later he informed Selfe that "on the whole the change was very acceptable."
the statue of his old leader, John Robert Godley,\textsuperscript{30} and the breakfast in honour of Lord Lyttelton when he visited the colony early in 1868.\textsuperscript{31} On other occasions, such as the opening of the Provincial Council, he took his place as one of the chief dignitaries of the province in the solemn processions which characterized these events. By this time he had become well established at "Middleton Grange" in Riccarton, where he could look across the open fields to the vicarage where his brother Croasdaile, incumbent of Riccarton, lived.

Under the terms of the Education Ordinance of 1871, Bowen was appointed to the Board of Education, and this saw his return to a more active role in the affairs of the people. One of the first decisions of the newly-appointed Board was to allow newspaper reporters to attend and report the meetings; thus we have quite a detailed picture of its activities. The Board soon found its work increasing as more and more areas availed themselves of the opportunities to establish and open new schools. At the same time Bowen's interests extended to higher education and he took a leading part in the establishment of the Collegiate Union which was

\textsuperscript{30}Lyttelton Times, August 6, 1867.

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., January 26, 1868.
ultimately to become Canterbury University College. On both Board and Union business he was sometimes called upon to travel, probably at his own expense, either to various parts of the province or as far away as to Wellington or Dunedin. For example, in March of 1874 he formed with Rev. W. J. Habens, another prominent figure in education in Canterbury and New Zealand, a deputation which visited Dunedin in order to secure united action by both the Collegiate Union and the University of Otago on the applications by both for affiliation to the University of New Zealand.\textsuperscript{32} In April, at the opening of the St. Albans District School, an apology was tendered for his absence as he had only just returned from Wellington and was suffering from a heavy cold.\textsuperscript{33} Yet in May he was reporting to the Board of Education on a visit he had just made to Banks Peninsula, selecting sites for schools at Pigeon Bay, Barry's Bay, and French Farm.\textsuperscript{34}

The events from 1871 to 1877 will be treated in more detail in later chapters. It is sufficient to say at this point that in 1874 Bowen at last took the step

\textsuperscript{32}The Press, Christchurch, March 3, 1874.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., April 25, 1874.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., May 12, 1874.
which he had discussed with Godley nineteen years previously and entered national politics. The Press, whose attitude to Sir Julius Vogel and the members of his Ministry was severely antagonistic, could not bring itself to condemn Bowen outright for entering such a field in such a way, but it said sufficient to show its distaste for the move. But Bowen's reputation was too secure to allow of any derogatory reference being made to his integrity or high principles. His prestige among his fellow-citizens of Christchurch was exceptionally high. When his projected move became known his old friend, John Ollivier, organized a subscription list to which all sections of the public contributed, and early in 1875 a handsome presentation was made. William Rolleston, Bowen's friend of many years, said to him:

Your earliest friends remember you as one who had relinquished a sure and comparatively easy path to distinction in an academic career to join in the more laborious and heroic work of colonization and they regard you as connected with and animated by the same chivalry and the same enthusiasm as those to whom we are so indebted as the founders of this settlement. . . .

From the time that he entered Parliament until the defeat of the Atkinson Ministry in 1877, Bowen was Minister of Justice and Commissioner of Stamp Duties. At this time abolition of the provinces was the dominant

---

35 Ibid., February 2, 1875.
political issue; one of Bowen's first speeches in the Lower House was on the Abolition Bill itself. Not surprisingly, in view of the opinions he had expressed at various times on the shortcomings of provincialism, he lent his support to abolition, but he also played a considerable part in the leadership of legislative activity by bringing down many measures that were considered important at that time.36 His intense interest in education on a national basis and his sponsoring of the Education Bill of 1877 are discussed in a later chapter. Before it was finally passed he was to be out of office, but it was in the widest sense his Bill and it has always been associated with his name.

He remained a member of the House of Representa-
tives until 1881, when he resigned from politics and made another extended trip to his homeland. He returned to life in Christchurch but the seven years' absence in Wellington had broken his link with the youthful settlement. Christchurch of the 1880s was a large metropolitan centre, no longer the intimate pioneering

36"Mr. Bowen has lost no time in proving the value of the office he holds if placed in hands capable of discharging its functions. Besides others, the Debtors and Creditors Act and the Evidence Further Amendment Bill . . . bear witness both to his competence and industry in fulfilling the special duties he has undertaken. . . ." Editorial in The Press, Christchurch, October 9, 1875.
community of the 1850s. He now turned his attention to business interests, becoming manager of the New Zealand Trust and Loan Company, and in 1886 was elected a director of the New Zealand Shipping Company. In 1891 he returned to politics, being appointed to the Legislative Council, one of the last members to be elected to the Council for life. This appointment enabled him to continue his close interest with educational progress as it was expressed in legislation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When the Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901, he was one of the members of the Royal Commission set up to examine whether New Zealand should join that federation. In 1905 he was elected Speaker of the Legislative Council, a position he occupied for the next ten years. It was an interesting coincidence that he should have been in that office when the Education Bill of 1914 was debated, thirty-seven years after the Bill which he had brought down was passed.

His links with education continued to be strong. In 1894, he was president of the North Canterbury branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute, taking an active interest in the welfare of teachers. From 1878 to 1885 he was a member of the Board of Governors of Canterbury University College, and in the periods 1881
to 1882 and 1888 to 1915 was a member of the Senate of the University of New Zealand. In 1903 he was elected vice-Chancellor of the Senate and played an important part in the development of the universities.

In recognition of his outstanding service to his country in so many fields he was knighted in 1910, being further honoured four years later with investiture as a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. At his death in December 1917 there was universal recognition of the immense debt that was owed to him for his contribution to the solid foundation of both his province and his country. Tributes to his work in education were paid on most of the prize-giving platforms of that year, and similar eulogistic references were made by a large number of organizations with which he had been associated. Twenty years before William Gisborne had written thus of him:

he combines with a thorough mastery of his subject persuasive powers of a high order, a conciliatory attitude, firmness where he deems it necessary, and patient forbearance from an angry retort. . . .

In its obituary tribute, The Press stressed the qualities of character that he had brought to bear on society as a whole:

During the time he sat at the foot of that great leader [i.e. Mr. Godley], Sir Charles learned well the lessons which his distinguished chief strove so earnestly to impart to the young community, and during his after life he did more than any other man to preserve the Godley ideas and traditions for the benefit of the succeeding generations and for posterity. . . . 38

He left behind him an unblemished name for initiative, industry, and integrity; his influence on the calibre of the nation has far out-lived his life and times; and the quality of his words and actions, viewed through the critical eyes of later years, is in no degree diminished. Against the background of this impressive record, attention will now be turned to one field in which he played an extremely significant role, that of education, and one aspect only of that field, namely elementary education.

CHAPTER III

EARLY PROBLEMS IN CANTERBURY

[In respect to] the great fundamental principle that at this moment divides the country—whether the education of the common people be or be not something to which it is the duty of the State to attend ... I hold that it is the right and duty of the State to provide for the education of the common people. ... "

In the previous chapter enough was seen of Bowen's experiences to show that he took part in a wide range of activities and had abilities in many directions. An examination must now be made of the circumstances in which he lived and the possible factors which helped him to develop his ideas on education for an appraisal of these aspects will help to reveal what his thoughts were on the problems with which he became so immediately concerned.

The years before he came to New Zealand cannot be overlooked, for in many ways they set the pattern of his future outlook and attitude and gave him his point of reference for judgments and opinions. He had a

---

public-school education at Rugby and never regretted the years he spent there. Some years after his arrival in New Zealand, in his poem "The Work of Life", he wrote:

  Blessings on our public schools; for many blessings still they bring
  Over him who springs exultant from the shadows of their wing.

  He is wiser who has known them, and has felt their blessed sway...²

Rugby at this time favoured the classics and almost completely neglected science, so that it is not surprising that Bowen became well-versed in Latin and Greek, and was throughout the rest of his life to find mental relaxation in the classical writers.³ In addition, as the result of his time spent in France, he attained a facility in the language of that country which enabled him to use it almost as well as his native tongue. His time at Cambridge, although relatively short, gave notice of considerable ability and talent. That he was a clever scholar can not have been at any time in doubt.


³"Sir Charles was always keen on the classics, and the Sixth at Rugby at this time appears to have carried on the perennial controversy between the Aristotelians and the Platonists. Bowen was all his life an ardent Platonist..." The Press, Christchurch, December 15, 1917.
His letters to Godley and articles for the Lyttelton Times showed him to be, despite his criticism of his own ability, possessed of a fluency and originality which was expressed in logical well-balanced prose with no affectations. 4

Poetry interested him considerably. His first poem to appear in print, "Change Not the Name", was published in the Lyttelton Times in 1852, but although he continued to produce verse during the 1850s no further poems of his were printed in that paper. In 1855 he sent some of his poems to Godley, suggesting that if he thought they were "any good" he should try to get them put into a magazine, "or something of that sort." 5

Some months before this he had written to Mrs. Godley to thank her for sending him a volume of Longfellow's poems. He later admitted that he knew almost all these poems by heart. This liking for Longfellow's work would no doubt have provided him with a strong motive to make the poet's acquaintance when he visited the United States in 1860.

Another significant reference to Bowen's interest in

4 "I am perfectly aware of the defects of my style of writing... I wish if you have time, you would send me a line and pitch into my writing as there is no one here now to do so..." Kilbracken Papers, Bowen to Godley, June 23, 1854.

5 Ibid., July 27, 1855.
poetry is contained in a letter from the well-known author and statesman, Alfred Domett, to C. W. Richmond, which mentioned that Bowen, "a nice young fellow, poetically given was up here lately and much with me. I like him as given to the madness of the 'Muse'." Richmond himself when writing to Emily E. Richmond spoke of Bowen as "a poet and a great admirer of Domett." It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Bowen and Domett would have found the opportunity for discussing educational matters during the former's visit to Nelson. As far as can be judged by an examination of the editorial column of the Lyttelton Times and the date on Domett's letter, the visit most likely was made during February, 1857. Bowen was at this time Provincial Treasurer and may even have known of Fitzgerald's intentions to try to have something finalised on education before he relinquished the superintendency. But the question of denominationalism in education was so prominent in Canterbury at this time that it is hardly likely that it could have been avoided in discussion with one whose ideas on the defects of

---


7 Ibid., p. 316. C. W. Richmond to Emily E. Richmond, October 19, 1857.
denominational control had been so vividly set out in the Minute of Protest of 1849. Domett had been Colonial Secretary for New Munster from 1848 to 1854 and Civil Secretary for the colony from 1851 to 1854, and through his correspondence with the Otago and Canterbury Associations in connection with the new settlements, he would have had a good knowledge of the educational aims of the two schemes and have been ready to criticise them where he disagreed with their outlook and principles. Bowen was independent in his thinking, but he and Domett had points of common interest and one wonders if any of Domett's thinking rubbed off on Bowen during these meetings, or whether the younger man's opinions were too strongly guided by his background and his contacts with Canterbury men and ideals to be influenced by Domett's advanced and secular ideas. One thing besides an interest in poetry that the two did hold in common was a poor regard for provincialism. One tribute to Domett on his death in 1887 made the following claim:

all his political life long [he] was a consistent, indeed an ardent Centralist, to the extent of holding provincial institutions in contempt and those who carried them on in defiance. . . .

This would rather overstate Bowen's attitude, but he

---

Lyttelton Times, November 7, 1887.
certainly did not hold much sympathy for local
government shortcomings.9

A far greater influence on Bowen's life during the 1850s was that of his employer and the settlement's leader, John Robert Godley. Although Bowen's duties were mainly clerical,10 he was, by virtue of this association with Godley, in a good position to observe the practical application in the settlement of what had been envisaged in theory in England. Godley's position was not an easy one. He held the dual offices of Agent for the Canterbury Association and Resident Magistrate and Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Government. Thus he was acting for both the Association and the Government neither of which was on the best of terms.

9It should be remembered however that Godley also was not inclined to agree with the importance attached to provincial government. In his speech in Parliament on the Abolition Bill in 1875, Bowen quoted Godley's forebodings of the potentially restrictive character of provincial institutions.

10Bowen's obituary in The Press, Christchurch, December 13, 1917, stated that he came out to Canterbury as secretary to Godley, but this is not correct. The first mention that Godley appears to have made of employing anybody in his office was in a letter to his father in May, 1851: "... Wortley, a son of Lord Wharncliffe, is a very clever, well-disposed boy of 18, with the manner and self-possession of 30. He has very wisely determined to work as a clerk in my office at 5s. a day, until he shall have acquired experience. ..." Kilbracken Papers, J. R. Godley to his father, May 2, 1851. Neither in this letter nor in any of those
with the other, and by both of which he tended to be misunderstood. As the two men rode together between Lyttelton and Christchurch and met in the course of their day-to-day business, Godley would very likely have discussed with his young secretary the affairs of the settlement and his relationships with the Association and the Government. Many of the writers who corresponded with Godley after his return to England mentioned that he would hear about political matters from Bowen, so it can be assumed that he was in full knowledge of the situation of that time and that he retained the confidence of his contemporaries concerning his judgments on the affairs of the settlement.

Bowen thought very highly of his employer as did so many of the men of all walks of life who came into contact with Godley, and the extent of his admiration can be seen in the eulogy he delivered at the unveiling

preceding it in this collection was there any mention of Bowen being employed also.

The reference which gives the nearest indication of the date of Bowen's entry into Godley's employment is found in a letter written by Charlotte Godley to her mother and dated October 21, 1851: "... Mr. Charles Bowen, who is now in my husband's office instead of Mr. Wortley..." John R. Godley (ed.), Letters from Early New Zealand by Charlotte Godley 1850–1853 (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, Ltd., 1951), p. 259. Bowen had probably been busy in the months following the arrival of the settlers helping to establish the home of his parents.
of the statue of his leader in 1867. In such a relationship it would not be surprising if the younger men were to catch some of the opinions and attitudes of the older. From his letters it can be seen that Bowen set great store by Godley's opinions. Godley found himself in rather a curious position in Christchurch because virtually nobody disagreed with him. Writing to his father on one occasion, he suggested that it might have been better for him if he had had a good snubbing from somebody. Bowen would probably be aware of and in agreement with Godley's dissatisfaction over the attitude of the members of the Association in England who still tried to send out instructions for lines of action to be followed in the colony.

As far as education was concerned, Godley's ideals were the Association's ideals. Writing in October 1853, Bowen said:

Those who wished with you to found immediately

11 *Lyttelton Times*, August 6, 1867.


13 In the introduction to his poem "The Battle of the Free" Bowen wrote: "The following lines were written under the full conviction that in England's colonies, if properly governed—or rather properly let alone—she will eventually find her strength."
some educational scheme on a solid Church foundation are still [illegible], but I hope we may be able in a little time to do something of the kind well. ... 14

When it is remembered that at this time the use of the adjective "Church" indicated that the writer meant the Church of England, it would appear that the "educational scheme" referred to was that of the Canterbury Association, whose proposals for the provision of churches and schools were almost disarmingly simple. One pound of every three received from the sale of land was to be set aside to meet the cost of the settlement's religious and educational needs—a high proportion, but one that it was assumed would be acceptable to the purchasers who, it was planned, would "consist entirely of members of the Church of England." Few of them, it was envisaged, would "question the desirableness of making adequate provision for the building of a sufficient number of churches and schools." 15 Indeed, if the settlement were to develop the traits and features its founders hoped for, it had to take adequate practical steps to ensure the cultivating of those characteristics. To this end the Association calculated that

twenty clergymen and as many schoolmasters will not be more than are requisite to establish and maintain that high religious and educational character, which [it] hopes, with the Divine blessing, that this settlement will possess. 16

There was no question in the Association's plans of any alternative control to that of the Church of England, and no provision was deemed necessary for those who would not be agreeable to domination of creed and doctrine by the one religious denomination. The Committee of Management of the Association left no doubt in their instructions to Godley of their desire to place under her charge [i.e. the Church's] the general education of the Colony; not compulsorily, but by supplying opportunities of education under her direction, presenting such advantages as may virtually exclude competition. . . . 17

This would appear today to have been an exceeding naïve attitude on the part of responsible men, but the axioms of the 1840s relating to liberty of thought, social freedom, and community organization were very different from the accepted basic principles governing society and the control of education in the twentieth century. It was confidently assumed by the Association that Anglican institutions and support would be too strong for any opposition. A far more realistic note had been struck

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., Letter to J. R. Godley, October 1, 1850, p.233.
by The Times, London. Commenting on a letter from Bishop Selwyn which it had just that day published, it said:

There is no reason why a purely Church of England settlement should not be tried, though the history of all former examples warns us to expect that such a community if ever so successfully founded, will suffer its congenital ills. The Church of England is predominantly a mixed and tolerant community. Its formularies harbour a vast variety of opinions, and even inspire a constant divergence of sentiment. As sure as there are Dissenters in England, there will also be Dissenters in the Canterbury Settlement. . . . The settlement will start with Dissenters, and we can hardly anticipate that its leaders will be able to exclude that entire toleration and that equality of civil rights which, after many struggles, have been established in this country. . . . 18

As far as the promotion of elementary education in the settlement was concerned, Godley was expected by the Association to co-operate with the bishop-designate in the provision of buildings and equipment, his task consisting mainly of ensuring that finance was available to cover the expenses involved. Two factors soon became apparent, namely, that there was a surplus of clergymen and schoolmasters, and that there was insufficient finance. Although he knew that his action would antagonize many of his friends in England, Godley sided with the colonists, particularly over the continued arrival

of the clergy for whom no permanent endowment had been provided, and the attempted retention by the Association of administrative control. He warned the Association in these words:

The unanimity of feeling in favour of local self-government which has lately been displayed in this settlement ... will extend itself equally to all departments of affairs in which the colonists are interested, ecclesiastical and educational, as well as those with which the general Government is concerned.19

It would seem from this statement that he was prepared to allow that some modifications would be inevitable in the Association's plans for the settlement, though whether this meant a willingness to see the plans for education adapted to meet the needs of the circumstances is questionable. He appears to have favored a rather "aristocratic" approach to education. What concerned him some years later was that there was a danger of a deterioration in the upper class of the population, "the men of superior intelligence, the men of cultivated minds, and high education", who would "direct the policy of the country and give tone to society." He suggested that when there was a sufficient labour force in the colony, and the people had leisure and money, they would of themselves create the means of education. At the

same time it was very desirable that at the very beginning they should have a "sound system of education established . . . to keep the population up to a high intellectual standard," because what was discouraging people from emigrating and hampering the success of the colony was the fear of the people regarding the necessity for separation from their children when they had to be educated. 20

These, then, were the ideas of the man with whom Bowen worked during some of the most impressionable years of his life: education on a "solid Church foundation", the minimum of control from outside the settlement, the need to maintain a strong well-educated upper class, and a somewhat general approach to the question of a "high intellectual standard" for the community. Whether Bowen agreed with him on any of these points can only be guessed at. It is reasonably safe to say however that at first, as did Godley, he believed in the "Church" foundation for the basis of education, though in a few years' time, with the clamour of the Dissenters more insistent, this attitude became modified to one which can best be described as "liberal denominationalism."

20 Lyttelton Times, November 18, 1856.
In a survey of Bowen's early years in Canterbury, and his interest in education, a second figure must be considered, though probably Bowen was never influenced by him as he undoubtedly was by Godley and as he may have been later by Domett. That figure is Fitzgerald. He was a member of what Brittan sarcastically termed "the Right Honourable Privy Council", the circle of Godley's so-called aristocratic friends, and his place in the history of the province needs no elaboration here, but his part in the establishment of education in Canterbury was very important. It is not suggested that Fitzgerald exercised a direct influence upon Bowen because obviously there were too many points of disagreement between them. Their acquaintance was by no means nominal: they had known each other before travelling together to Canterbury and shared a number of interests. For example, they had both been educated, though at different times, at Cambridge, they both exhibited talents for writing and administration, and they shared an admiration and respect for Godley. After Godley returned to England in 1853, Fitzgerald was one of the few people whom Bowen liked and appreciated in a town where there were not many with gifts and interests.

\[21\text{ vide supra Chapter II, p. 20.}\]
similar to his own and where for some months he felt a
great deal of impatience and dissatisfaction. Yet he
did not share many of Fitzgerald's opinions. Writing to
Godley soon after he began editing the paper he was at
pains to point out that he "must not think that the
views of the 'Lyttelton Times' were those of Fitzgerald"
though he, Fitzgerald, said that he agreed with them on
the main points. After 1855, when Bowen became a
Provincial Treasurer, there would certainly have been a
close liaison between the two and some measure of
agreement, but on educational matters they were not at
first in accord.

It was Fitzgerald's firm conviction that as many
children as possible should receive the benefits of
education, and he took the lead in endeavouring to secure
it for them:

I use the word [education] in its largest sense,
as comprehending the instruction of all classes,
rich and poor; of all ages, old and young; in all
matters religious as well as secular. . . . This
subject is one which, in our old country, is
encumbered with greater difficulties than any other
[buts] those difficulties arise from circumstances
which have no existence here. . . .

On the question of the right of the State to "interfere

\[22\] Kilbracken Papers, Bowen to Godley,
November 8, 1854.

\[23\] Lyttelton Times, October 1, 1853.
in the education of the young, he regarded it as the most important duty of the nation to "transmit to posterity unimpaired, if not improved, that moral and intellectual condition which under the providence of God, it has inherited from the past," but he had some very dogmatic ideas on the limits of what it should transmit:

I steadily avow that the State is not bound to educate its subjects in matters of religion. That is the proper business of the Church, or the religious bodies to which the Church ought to belong. The business of the State is to educate in matters secular and in them alone. 24

Fitzgerald therefore represented a totally different shade of opinion to that which Godley had supported. Together they exemplified the dualism of educational thought of the 1850s, the one believing in education principally as it was required by a favoured group, nourished by private inspiration rather than public legislation, and under the careful oversight of the religious bodies, and the other looking upon it as a universal right, owed by the State to the individual, and outside the province of the church altogether. The necessity of integrating in some sort of compromise these two approaches to a critical problem was steadily to be borne in upon Bowen, although most of his

24 Ibid.
contemporaries seem to have been unable to appreciate or accept any but their own strong allegiance.

Before any attempt is made to deal with the events of the next few years, some attention must be given to Bowen's editorship of the Lyttelton Times. There is no clear indication of when he actually began writing, though there are indications in the following letter which tend to place it as shortly before that time:

I enclose to you a copy of the letter which I published in the 'Lyttelton Times' the other day... I will send you the 'Lyttelton Times' of next Saturday for which I am writing a long article on Colonel Wynyard's address. The task is too much for me but as no one else will step in and the paper is going to the dogs like all the rest why I thought I might as well try my hand. . . .

As far as his relationship with the publisher of the paper, Ingram Shrimpton, was concerned, Bowen referred to it in something considerably less than tactful terms:

Old Shrimpton is an old dolt and I can manage him pretty well when he is not stupid and makes mistakes—no one else interferes with me. . . .

Early in the next year he again mentioned the paper to Godley and gave a valuable clue to the extent of his writing for it:

I find the newspaper twice a week pretty severe

---

25 Kilbracken Papers, Bowen to Godley, June 23, 1854.

26 Ibid.
work in addition to my other duties... but the writing gets easier to me every day. It is certainly very hard to steer clear of personalities but I have tried to do so as much as possible... 27

It is most likely that his purchase of the paper in partnership with Ward would have confirmed rather than weakened his position as leader-writer. Ward's concern was with the management side of the paper, although in later years he "delighted to dazzle his opponents by occasional contributions and political squibs." 28 Although many authorities are aware of Ward's connection at this time, they fail to mention Bowen at all when referring to the editorship. Possibly Ward's reputation as a brilliantly witty, satirical, and topical parodist has kept him well-known and has suggested to the popular imagination that one so talented as he was must obviously have been responsible for such a reputable literary journal. 29 There is evidence available, however, to show

27 Ibid., February 16, 1855.


29 In his book The Cradle of Erewhon (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959), Joseph Jones, in dealing with Samuel Butler and early Canterbury, has eight references to the Lyttelton Times, and eight references to Crosbie Ward, but never once mentions the name of Bowen. Yet the two most authoritative sources of details on Ward's life, the obituary notices in the papers and Scholefield's biographical note, both stress that Ward's concern was only with the management side of the paper.
that Bowen, the older of the partners by two years and
the longer in the business, had a stronger say in its
policy and felt a greater degree of personal respon-
sibility for what was contained in the paper. Between
the two of them they raised it to such a standard that
it was highly regarded, even overseas, as a fine
newspaper, but it is only reasonable to assume from the
evidence that has been offered that the credit for the
excellent editorials and feature articles must go to
Bowen.

In this research the columns of the Lyttelton
Times have therefore been used in conjunction with
private letters and newspaper correspondence to reveal
Bowen’s views and attitudes on the development of
education in the province after 1853. To enable his
printed opinions in both letter and newspaper to be more
easily interpreted a summary of the events of those
years must now be given.

30 "Tuesday, October 27. Dined at the Club. Bowen
in a scot because some personal epigrams upon the can-
idates in the election for Superintendent had been inserted
in the Lyttelton Times which Bowen edits, by his
collaborateur Mr. Crobie Ward. Bowen walked over at
deaf of night to Lyttelton, knocked up Ward and seized
and destroyed the whole of the issue of the paper, which
was ready for publication on the morrow." C. W. Richmond
to Emily E. Richmond, quoted in G. H. Schelfield (ed.),
Broadly speaking, the story of education in Canterbury in the 1850s was a story of disagreement over administration and control, inadequate financial resources, and preoccupation with other vital and weighty problems. The Association's aim for education to be virtually exclusively in the hands of the Church of England was an aim well-nigh impossible to achieve. Dissatisfaction with the failure to carry out the promises made with respect to the provisions for religion and education was beginning to become manifest among both the clergy and the laity. 34

In his inaugural address to the Provincial Council at its first meeting in 1853, Fitzgerald elaborated on his aims as far as education was concerned, but he did not find a comparable degree of enthusiasm among the members of the Council. The merits and defects of the denominational system had already become prominent and they sharply divided the community. At a meeting of the Colonists' Society in Lyttelton it was agreed

34 "Nothing has been done for Akaroa. I don't know what the Association will next require, if it is not that the clergyman should build the Church, the Parsonage, and the School, as well as pay the schoolmaster's salary, and live himself on air. I was promised ere I left home great things, nothing realised, let the Association declare themselves Bankrupts, but don't hold out hopes never to be realised. . . ." Kilbracken Papers, Rev. W. Aylmer to Godley, August 12, 1852.
unanimously that "a good and sufficient system of education should be provided", and "that it is the duty of the State to provide for the support of this system", but on the resolution "that the system of grants in aid to denominational schools has a tendency to perpetuate divisions and limit the scale of education", opinion was by no means unanimous. Indeed, a minority protest maintained that it was incumbent upon the Government distinctly to recognize the right of every religious denomination to receive state assistance for the purpose of carrying out, according to its own views, a system of united secular and religious education—it being however distinctly understood that no religious training shall be forced on any child whose parents object to the same. . . . 32

Fitzgerald had stated his belief in the separation of Church and State, particularly as it referred to education. This was the contrary viewpoint, the attitude of the denominationalist: that every denomination had a right to state assistance in educating according to its own views; that it was the right and a role of the church body to give a united secular and religious education; and that no compulsion of religious doctrine was involved as the child of dissenting parents could stay away when religious teaching was being inculcated.

When the Council discussed the question of

32 Lyttelton Times, October 29, 1853. One of the signatories to the protest was Crosbie Ward.
education, it was agreed that a general plan ought to be adopted, and that if no other means were available, a special rate would have to be struck in order to get means to support it. However, several members were of the opinion that direct taxation would be highly distasteful to the people, and that the Council ought not to attempt to tax the people until their wishes and opinions were better known. The Council had therefore committed itself to nothing more than the encouragement to keep on trying. Fitzgerald felt justified in going ahead and bringing down a "Bill for establishing a General System of Education for the Province," and leave to introduce it was actually given during the second session of the Council early in 1854, but it could not be proceeded with because of lack of time. Instead a vote of £1,000 for education was granted, and a Minute on education was passed by the Executive Council. This did not completely satisfy Fitzgerald, but at least it was better than nothing. He wrote to Godley:

The next point is Education. It is sad indeed to see how the schools have dwindled down since you left. Children increasing, school children decreasing. I have at last, thank God, been able to set my hands on the schools, and although I cannot get any ordinance to work I have got a vote to spend virtually as I please. Indeed I can never speak in terms of sufficient gratitude for the confidence and support which the Provincial Council
give me. I have now got a system and the people are all delighted at the chance of schools. I hope you will read the Education Minute of the Executive Council. . . . 33

Under the terms of the Minute arrangements were made for transferring the Schools established by the Canterbury Association to the Government, and for placing them on a better footing as regards inspection. . . . 34

Thus the schools formerly run by the Church would pass under the control of the State. But the Executive Council's Minute had said that "until the details of a system of Education for the Province shall be settled by a local Ordinance the grant shall be expended in accordance with the provisions of the Education Ordinance of New Zealand, Session VIII, No. 10". This was Grey's well-known Ordinance of 1847 which stated quite plainly that "Religious Education, Industrial training, and instruction in the English language" should form a necessary part of the system, and that every school should be "placed under the superintendence and management" of the heads of the denominations, who would also be responsible for the appointment and dismissal of teachers. It is hard to tell just what Fitzgerald hoped to accomplish, but it would appear

---

33 Kilbracken Papers, Fitzgerald to Godley, April 26, 1854.
34 Canterbury Provincial Gazette, April 12, 1854.
that while paying lip service to the 1847 Ordinance he was endeavouring to get control of the school system into his own hands. Whatever was his interpretation the clergy were not deceived; in a very short time they were asserting their rights according to the main Ordinance. The Superintendent began to organize the system under the authority of the Minute; the Church began to organize it under the authority of the Ordinance. Thus 1854 saw a "dual" system develop, not according to the usual pattern of two systems operating side by side, but in the unusual sense of two organizations attempting to control the same system simultaneously.

There could be no doubt that the Church was in the more favourable position, but it was equally clear that Fitzgerald would not be satisfied with things as they stood. When the Council met in 1855, he dwelt at great length in his opening speech on the subject of education, saying that he had it "too dearly at heart to forbear to urge it upon the Province". After attributing the difficulties that had existed over the previous twelve months to "the limited supply of good schoolmasters, and . . . the impossibility of making permanent institutions on the frail security of a casual vote of the Council", he proceeded to examine the two sides of the educational question: what system should be adopted, and how it was
to be maintained. Without hedging around the question, he stated once more his concept of the role of the State in education:

whilst no system deserves the name of education which endeavours to separate secular instruction from moral and religious training, yet the duty of the State extends only to affording secular instruction. ... If the State then shall undertake to teach secular things and shall place it in the power of the teacher of religion to fulfil his proper duty, it has done all that it can do in the matter. ... 35

He then enumerated the various methods by which the annual cost of education could be met, favouring a general rate on the whole population in order that the Schools should be entirely open to all the Inhabitants of the Province, without any charge, and that, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of right. ... 36

Bowen, in referring to Fitzgerald's speech in the Lyttelton Times, commented on the general rate to enable free education to be provided in these words:

There will be but few, we conceive in this Province, who will grudge so small a payment as the one proposed to obtain so large a good. Whether he has children or not, no one can say that he does not directly benefit by the education around him, or that he would not suffer from the ignorance of the population among whom he lived. ... 37

But on the first question of what system of education

35 Ibid., April 11, 1855.
36 Ibid.
37 Lyttelton Times, May 2, 1855.
should be adopted, he was noticeably silent. He did not agree with the introduction of such principles at that time. A month earlier he had written to Godley:

As to Education I am afraid Fitzgerald intends to bring in too grand a scheme for our size. We would go on better as we are for a little time till we have more money and more pupils. . . .

As it was at this time that Bowen became Provincial Treasurer, his comment on the need for more money may have been of some significance. However, Fitzgerald did not enjoy the confidence of the members of the Executive Council on this measure. When he had introduced the draft for discussion, Hall, the Provincial Secretary, dissented from the principle of free education, thinking it "insanitary to bring forward the proposal of a rate at present." The Provincial Solicitor and Mr. Bealey, without disagreeing with the principle, thought it would not be desirable to bring it into that particular Bill.

Clearly the Bill was not destined to proceed far, and it was shelved after a first reading. Halfway through the session the Executive Council resigned.

38 Kilbracken Papers, Bowen to Godley, March 31, 1855.

39 Minutes of the Executive Council, March 18, 1855.
Hall being replaced by J. Brittan. In his revised estimates to the Council Brittan stated the Executive Council's intention "to make a grant of £1,000 for the purposes of education, and to continue at least for the present, the principle existing in the settlement." When the Executive Council met to consider how the vote for education was to be spent, its first resolution was to confirm the Minute of 1854 as the operative principle of the management of education. Ten days later the Revs. H. Jacobs and G. Cotterill attended another meeting, the former being asked to plan for "providing for the Education of Christchurch," and the latter being appointed to take over all the Lyttelton schools. Thus the religious bodies had consolidated their position, and the State had virtually withdrawn from the field. The Provincial government became merely a financing medium for an outside agency with almost monopolistic control of management and administration. This was the position.

---

40 Bowen also tendered his resignation but it was not accepted. A matter for speculation is his working relationship with Brittan, who had objected to his appointment (vide supra Chapter II, p. 24), and for whose ability Bowen did not have a very high opinion.

41 *Lyttelton Times*, June 6, 1855.

42 Minutes of the Executive Council, June 26, 1855.
which was to exist for two years. Apart from warnings to the leaders of the religious bodies late in 1855 and early in 1856 that, because of the unpredictable nature of the land fund revenue, their source of finance was by no means assured, the government made no effective attempts to sponsor any further educational provisions.

Although he was not a legislator in the strict sense of the word, Bowen had been at all times in direct contact with those who were shaping the development of the young settlement, and had a good grasp of the issues that were involved and the opinions of the various people who had participated. His own basic ideas on education were not particularly explicit—much more was to be revealed in the next two years—but from his letters, statements, and contacts it is possible to trace a developing viewpoint.

Though only twenty years of age on his arrival, he could claim to be a well-educated man who had a strong grasp of principles and sense of judgment. What contacts he had had in England with progressive thinkers or ideas, it is impossible to say. He agreed with Godley on education being solidly based on a good Church foundation, though how far at that stage he was prepared to extend that education to all sections of the community is not known. Fitzgerald's ideas were too
advanced for him—this might suggest some cautiousness on Bowen's part—but his agreement with Fitzgerald on the question of a general rate to expedite free education hints at a growing awareness of the social implications of education and of the beneficial effects that universal education could have in the whole community. He was on good terms with most of the clergy; he especially esteemed Rev. R. B. Paul, who had led the protest at the Lyttelton Colonists' Society meeting in 1853, and who was a prominent leader of the denominationalists in both Christchurch and Wellington.

Rather than adopt Fitzgerald's ambitious scheme, Bowen was satisfied to carry on with the denominationalist management of education. However, by 1857 he was beginning to judge it on its results over two or three years' working, and the picture was not satisfying. Writing in the paper in the House edition he assessed it in these words:

the system has not been productive of much benefit . . . The statistics of education in the province are tedious to give, and, we must confess, reflect anything but credit upon us.  

The system was proving by no means adequate, and it was becoming apparent that something more effective would have to be produced. The dissatisfaction grew from the

---

Lyttelton Times, May 13, 1857.
realisation that the facilities of learning were not being provided quickly enough to cater for the needs of a young community. It was also apparent from the different measures that had been undertaken in other provinces that there were several points at which a more enlightened and slightly less traditional approach might be taken.

The major problem was that there were two strong philosophies on the place of the religious bodies and religion itself in the field of education, and this was complicated by the fact that there were earnest protagonists for each philosophy, equally zealous to secure a system that embodied their beliefs and gave no encouragement to the opposing viewpoint. Until these could be reconciled or one could prove victorious over the other, there would be little agreement or hope of a stable effective system. The years 1855-1857 were to see Canterbury men exercised in mind over this critical question, none more so than Bowen himself.
CHAPTER IV

THE CHOICE OF A SYSTEM

It is curious what a tendency the subject of education has to set people by the ears. Some persons—too many, unfortunately—think the whole thing a nuisance, and hate to hear it mentioned. Those who take an interest in it generally have some pet theory which they use as a kind of educational Shibboleth, and in defence of which they are ready to stand up against a whole world in arms. Hence arise continual disputes. And when the question of religious teaching is brought up, then the fight becomes hot indeed. The battle rages long and loud, and confusion grows confounded. All prospect of agreement is at an end, and the combatants must be miracles of courtesy or self-restraint if they do not rapidly proceed to mutual excommunication.

Early in 1856 the Lyttelton Times advertised for sale at 1s. per copy, a pamphlet written by Rev. Arthur Baker of Wellington, which was entitled "The Denominational (so called, though improperly) the System of National Education best adapted to the Needs and Circumstances of this Colony". There had been in Wellington considerable discussion on education following the passing of the Education Ordinance of 1855 in that province, under which enactment "secular instruction

---

only was permitted and the right of entry was expressly
denied to Ministers of religion,² and it was claimed
for this pamphlet that it expressed well some of the
main arguments that were advanced against the system
decided upon.

On March 19, 1856, a lengthy review³ of this
work appeared in the paper, briefly setting out the main
points of Baker's pamphlet and then stating the grounds
on which the writer disagreed with him on several of his
contentions.

The review was unsigned but if it is judged by
several criteria was almost certainly the work of Bowen.
In its style, language, manner of argument, and views
expressed, it is typical of the written material found
in his letters and in the editorial column of the
newspaper. Another strong indication of Bowen's
authorship is the statement which appears at the end of
the review: "We were told in England that English society
was about to be transplanted to the other side of the
world". This would suggest that the writer was probably
one of the Pilgrims. The only two of the Pilgrims to
have much to do with journalism were Fitzgerald and

²A. G. Butchers, The Education System (Auckland:
³Vide Appendix A.
Bowen, but whereas Fitzgerald was a secularist, this reviewer admitted denominationalist sympathies. The writer therefore has assumed that the author of the review was Bowen.

Baker had divided his survey into two lines of research, "the nature of the fund for the establishment and maintenance of common schools, [and] the management of the schools so established." On the first of these, Bowen interpreted Baker's preference as being for the purely voluntary system, though Baker had neglected to provide many details in explanation of his ideas.
Concerning the second, Baker instanced four systems that had been suggested: the Irish, the British and Foreign, the Secular, and the Denominational. The first had already been tried and found unfavourable at Wellington, while the second could never satisfy the religious bodies because of its prohibition on religious formularies and distinctive teaching. Regarding the third, he considered that it failed because it did not supply what the newly-established colony required, namely, a religious education, which could not be supplied in many areas because of the absence of clergy and churches.
Baker contended that it was chiefly because there was so little religion at home, and such a lack of religious ministrations in the country districts, that religious
schools ought to be established. Moreover, he maintained, by virtue of the Churches' rejection of the Secular system, a "fresh element of discord and rivalry" would be introduced into the State if such a system were adopted.

Outlining the merits of the Denominational system, Baker claimed that, whereas under any other system someone was bound to be excluded, by that system "every citizen would have his fair and just proportion of the public funds for educational purposes." This would produce a healthy rivalry between the sects, and also enlist the active support of ministers of religion as enthusiasts for the cause of education. The Commissioners who had investigated the provisions for education in Wellington had offered as one of the major defects of the denominational system the fact that it tended to multiply inferior schools. Baker did not deny this, but actually defended it on two grounds: the first that consolidation into larger schools in country areas was impracticable, and the second that, however inferior these schools were, they were better than none at all. Apart from these specific details, little was contained in Baker's pamphlet which applied to the contemporary situation.

Bowen's first criticism of Baker's work was that
of its twelve pages only one referred to the particular circumstances of education in the colony, while the rest contained a collection of general statements of the type that were usually made favouring the denominational system and attacking its rivals. He next attacked Baker for the dogmatism that the statements typified, seeing only the excellence in the one scheme, and forgetting that it might have faults or that other schemes might have merits. This narrow assertion that there was only one true interpretation, he said, served only to turn away moderate or liberal thinkers and to make enemies of those who had strong views on the rightness of other schemes. He then stated clearly what his own views were.

Bowen preferred the denominational system, not because he thought it faultless, but because he thought it had "fewer imperfections and fewer difficulties than others." What Baker had mentioned in favour of denominational schools might, suggested Bowen, also be used as criticism against them. For example, the concept of the schoolmasters as the ministry of a district would immediately raise the question as to whether it was the duty of the state to provide for religious teaching, and the "rivalries of sects" would not satisfy some as being an adequate basis for the promotion of sound
education. Bowen conceded that small, occasionally inferior schools would probably have to satisfy the country districts, but argued that wasteful duplication could not be condoned in the larger towns. He gave it as his opinion that the people were not at all apathetic but were anxious to get a good education for their children. He strongly supported the provision of libraries and literary institutions which could, in addition to enabling the parents to see the need for education, provide the children when they grew up to adulthood with the justification of the value of the education they had then received.

In his conclusion Bowen revealed his ability to see the good points of both sides of a question, even though he might eventually give his support to one side only. More would be gained, he stated, from trying to see the good in all plans than in clinging doggedly to one's favourite scheme. He stressed that, although society in the colony was a transplant of English society, it was not a case of the same society in the same environment. The facts of the new situation had to be recognised. The religious system was different; the class structure was different. The practical demands of the circumstances were for good schools, not systems, and if these were to be provided, those responsible
should, instead of deciding on a system and implanting it on the situation, sum up the wants of the situation and seek the best solution according to the means at hand.

Bowen had dealt with Baker's points in skilful fashion and with the restraint which was characteristic of him. Baker, however, had a champion in the New Zealand Spectator and Cook Strait Guardian, which rounded on the reviewer and criticised him severely for misunderstanding Baker's arguments. In the controversy subsequent to the passing of the 1855 Ordinance in Wellington, this paper had taken the side of the denominationalists, and some of Baker's proposals were, in fact, identical with what the paper had put forward. It now came to Baker's defence, saying that the writer in the Lyttelton Times had perpetually missed the points, and in particular had misunderstood Baker's conception of the denominational system in which the Secularists had a place as representing one more denomination. If Baker's viewpoint were understood and accepted, then the denominational system was "surely the most liberal of all, as embracing all others." The Wellington paper also questioned Bowen's attitude to the "rivalries of

---

\(^{k}\)vide Appendix B.
sects," professing its inability to think of a higher motive than a desire on the part of the clergy to bring others to the knowledge of what they believed to be the truth.

The writer in the Spectator could also not refrain from indulging in what was often found in the editorial columns of the nineteenth century—derogatory reference to the character and motives of the reviewer. He spoke of the reviewer's "lack of moral courage, . . . trimming and time-serving, . . . carping strictures."

It was contrary to Bowen's nature for him to use abuse or invective—although he had not hesitated when writing to Godley in earlier years to apply such terms as "the fiend incarnate" to Sir George Grey or E. G. Wakefield, whom neither Godley nor he trusted. His review had rather been a cool reasoned appraisal of the value of Baker's claims. Despite the Spectator's protest against his misunderstanding of the original arguments, he maintained the position he had adopted on the various points of disagreement with Baker. 5 In the minds of most people at that time there was a standard interpretation of the term "denominational schools", but Baker and others were extending the designation past

---

5 vide Appendix C.
its usual well-understood limits. In Bowen's mind there was still a strong bias towards the denominational system, but he felt equally strongly that in any scheme there should be adequate opportunity for the secular system to be provided. That was the nub of his objection to Baker's concept of the denominational schools—they would be religious schools. Bowen repeated his doubt as to the worthiness of a system that would be established and would prosper through the division of Christians. As far as the reflections on his character and personality were concerned, he refrained from retorting in kind, but scored heavily off the northern paper by emphasising that he regarded the use of such weapons as a sure sign that he had not after all very much missed the points.

In the course of this argument with Baker and the Spectator, Bowen had revealed much of his own attitude towards education. His bias towards the denominational system was strong. He did not justify it in terms of a fundamental belief in the underlying philosophic basis of education organized and controlled on a denominational basis, but preferred it because of its efficiency in comparison with other systems. He did not feel that the denominational system strictly applied was the inevitable solution to all the educational problems of the colony.
He had by this time been Provincial Treasurer for almost a year and he must have been able to see that there was a certain amount of wastefulness associated with the duplication of facilities. He had misgivings about the application of the denominational system in thickly-populated areas, feeling that the multiplication of smaller inferior schools was not a desirable way of providing adequately advanced or effective teaching. Something of a higher educational calibre was imperative in the towns.

To summarize his position, one might best apply to him the term he himself had used in his review of Baker's pamphlet: he was one of "the moderate men," not prepared to support any side blindly or uncritically, but ready to analyse the situation as he found it, assess the needs, and look for the solution that would answer those needs. And the conviction that was growing upon him was that what the people themselves wanted was not a philosophy of education, but good schools providing a sound elementary education. While the theoretician argued, nothing was resulting to benefit the community. In spite of the fact that the opposing viewpoints were irreconcilable, something would have to be done to promote more quickly the education of the people.
That education was on Bowen's mind throughout 1856 is seen from the many other references that appeared in the Lyttelton Times in that year. The issue of April 19 published the report on the schools of the Province. This report had been laid before the Council previously. Bowen suggested that it would prove interesting to those who, "like ourselves, view the subject of Education as one of paramount importance to the future progress and well-being of the settlement."

A month later, he commented on the new Education Ordinance in Nelson, congratulating the people of Nelson on "the zeal which prevails amongst them both with respect to the education of the young, and the instruction of all." He was especially enthusiastic about the Nelson Provincial Council's provisions for libraries and reading-rooms, and expressed the hope "that our own Council will not forget this important supplement to an Educational grant when they have the means in their hands." Further references to the provision of reading material for the mass of the people appeared in the issues of June 28 and August 6.

Early in 1857, shortly before the end of his

---

6 Lyttelton Times, May 17, 1856.
7 Ibid., May 21, 1856.
superintendency, Fitzgerald made another attempt to establish some form of general system of education. That he had been planning it for some time in conjunction with the heads of denominations and the Executive Council is apparent from the message he delivered at the opening of the Provincial Council:

It is with the deepest regret that I shall be compelled to resign the Government, leaving nothing of a permanent nature done in this matter . . . I would be glad if one General School could be established in Christchurch, to which parents of all denominations could send their children, and another of the same kind in Lyttelton:—the clergymen of the several denominations giving religious instruction to the children of their own congregations at specified times, either in a classroom, or, what would be still better, in their churches. You will see by the correspondence that all denominations would gladly agree to such a plan. . . .

This seemed a hopeful augury for a settlement of the educational problems, but when the Executive Council's resolutions, embodying Fitzgerald's basic principles, were introduced in the Council by Packer, the Provincial Secretary, Bowen (i.e. Bowen senior, Speaker of the Council)

read a series of resolutions which he proposed to lay before the committee, in amendment of those proposed by Mr. Packer. They embodied the denominational system, which he thought would be found more easy to work, and more beneficial than that proposed by the Government.9

8Ibid., April 8, 1857. 9Ibid., May 13, 1857.
When the second of these amendments was discussed, moving that a certain amount should be divided "proportionately, according to the number of children under 15 years of age, of the various Christian denominations in the Province, according to the census returns," J. Bealey pointed out that this opened up the whole question of the relative merits of the national and denominational systems, and that he would at once "join issue against the amendment." Once more the problem had been reduced to its simple fundamentals.

As editor of the Lyttelton Times Bowen could hardly avoid entering the controversy. When the Council had deliberated upon the issue two years previously, he had been writing the leaders for slightly less than twelve months, and had had very little to say upon the matter. In the intervening time he had several times published in the paper his views on the subject, and thus he would be looked to for some editorial comment. Nor was he the only member of the Bowen family to be involved in the matter. It had been his father who had stepped into the breach in the Council and proposed the amendments which had exposed the whole issue, and his brother Croesdaile had studied for Holy Orders under the tutelage of Rev. H. Jacobs, whose views on the subject were well-known and uncompromising. The first
editorial reference to the question appeared on May 13, when a long statement was printed for the benefit of Home readers on all aspects of life in the Province; a short paragraph on education contained the following:

Just at this moment the system hitherto pursued by the Government in support of schools in the province is undergoing revision, and will probably be changed in detail if not essentially. A portion of our public funds has been annually devoted to education under an old ordinance of New Zealand, providing that assistance shall be given to the different denominations separately. The system has not been productive of much benefit, and the government has proposed to substitute for it a plan somewhat after the National System. . . . The coming week will in all probability settle the question.

In the next issue, that of May 16, he stated his views in more detail. He began by expressing an opinion which was to characterize his utterances throughout the next twenty years. This was that in dealing with such a question as the administration and conduct of an education system, some spirit of compromise would have to prevail in order to obtain the best possible conditions for all. It was natural, he agreed, that men should feel very strongly on any matter

---

10 The barque "Belisama" of 398 tons sailed for London on May 19, 1857. As often happened when a vessel sailed direct for Britain, the newspapers carried a full summary of events and developments in the colony for readers at Home.

11 Vide Appendix D.
affecting the well-being of their children, but they should try to differ without engendering hated party feelings or religious animosities. Any system of education arrived at would need to avert any collision of religious denominations, but at the same time leave the members of each denomination free to follow the dictates of their own consciences. The main difficulty that arose was the variety of interpretations that men placed on the word Education. Such had not been the case in the past, but the nineteenth century had seen change. It was claimed to be an age of enlightenment and progress, but in many ways it was also a most material and unbelieving age. Bowen could not see any value in teaching religion merely as another subject of the curriculum. Children were essentially materialistic and would not respond to religion in the form of a dry abstract "ology".

In 1856 Bowen had criticized Baker's support for the multiplicity of little inferior schools because he considered that they were quite unsuited to the needs of larger communities. Now he sounded a warning against larger schools constituted under a secular system. Such schools would never satisfy those who believed that religion could never be separated from education. Those who were forced in the interests of expediency to promote
a secular system might perhaps be aware of the conditions causing such a plan to be adopted, but the reasons for adoption would not be apparent to later generations.

Again Bowen supported the denominational system as "the least objectionable that can be devised." In answering Baker he had considered the denominational system from the point of view of efficiency of organization and administration. Now he examined its philosophical basis as a means of "inculcating by daily teaching and practice the highest truths known to man", and he favoured it because it avoided the danger of leading men to believe that education was a process of learning "useful arts for a life bounded by the grave."

He based his support on two beliefs. The first was that all religious bodies were entitled to receive back the portion paid by their respective members into the revenue of the province. This was tantamount to claiming that the denominations had a right to State assistance because the moneys made available by the State for educational purposes had been contributed by their people. The second looked deeper into the functions of religious bodies and maintained that they must be conceded to exist for more than mere expression of worship. In this claim Bowen was almost defending
sectarian differences, but it must be remembered that although examples of co-operative activity between the churches were not unknown at this time, there was not the sense of ecumenism or desire for union that is characteristic of some of the denominations of the twentieth century. He concluded by protesting strongly against any belief in or tendency towards secular education because he was convinced that there was far more to the education of the young than "the mere acquisition of knowledge."

In the evening of May 14, 1857, when the resolutions were introduced by Packer in the Provincial Council, the Lyttelton Colonists' Society held a meeting to discuss the question. The chief subject for debate was "that the denominational system was not only undesirable in principle but also quite inapplicable to the circumstances of the province." The chief speaker was Fitzgerald. From a perusal of his address one can easily imagine how his gifts of oratory and dynamic speech would have been seen here at their best. After condemning the Irish system—a district scheme with opportunity for the appointed minister of every denomination to carry out the task and duty of religious instruction—because it "professed to inculcate religious truth apart from theology, and the religion it taught
was obnoxious," he took a strong stand for purely secular education. He denied that the secularists were indifferent to religion but affirmed that they believed in keeping separate what was Caesar's and what was God's. Once again he advanced the idea that it was not the State's job to expedite the religious culture of the child—that was the Church's task, and if it confined itself to that it would have plenty of work to do. Those who clung hard to the old idea of a system of National Education, with its religious difficulties, were failing to adjust themselves to new conditions in a new age. As he came to the end of his remarks, Fitzgerald could not disguise his feelings on the part the clergy had played in delaying or preventing the initiating of a general system of education:

Had they been in earnest to co-operate with the Government, the work of education would have been more vigorously carried on... Unless something effectual was done to give true ideas to the people, the next age would show our great freedom to be a great curse, and society would merge into barbarism. 12

These were strong words, and they carried most of his audience enthusiastically along with him, but the next issue of the paper contained the answering fire, this time from Rev. H. Jacobs, who strongly contested Fitzgerald's conception of the separate natures of

12 *Lyttelton Times*, May 16, 1857.
Church and State: Jacobs contended that the State could not, by merely declaring that it did so, divest itself of its responsibility in the matter of religious education. The promotion of the highest temporal welfare—which should be the aim of the State—could not be dissociated from the preparation for immortality:

The State cannot perform its duty, cannot pay even a due regard to its own self-preservation and self-interest, unless it provides for the moral and religious education of the people as its chief object. And this duty is inalienable by the very nature of human society; the State cannot divest itself of it, because it may be the duty of some other society besides itself; neither can it rightly shrink from the performance of it, because circumstances, religious differences for example, may have surrounded its performance with difficulties. A duty does not cease to be a duty when it becomes difficult to perform. ¹³

He pointed out that it was not much use teaching the child to read and understand the laws he was called upon to obey, if he had never been taught the duty of obedience and self-control, and he concluded by saying:

Of course I do not mean to say that it is necessary or possible for the State directly to convey religious instruction, but only that it is bound to provide and put in action the best means for securing its conveyance. ¹⁴

Bowen's attitude to this controversy was contained in the editorial of the same issue in which

¹³Ibid., May 19, 1857.
¹⁴Ibid.
Jacobs' letter had appeared. Two sides to the question had been advanced: Fitzgerald, on the one hand, held it to be a development of those times to separate Church and State and the functions devolving upon each; Jacobs took the opposite view that, whatever happened, the responsibility for the inculcation of moral and religious values could not be disowned by the State. With characteristic broadmindedness Bowen recognized the existence of the opposing viewpoints and the sincerity of those who offered them, but felt it "our duty to express our views as distinctly as possible, even though we may not be so well acquainted with the subject' as our able correspondents."

He stated that the two sides really started from totally dissimilar premises which would be most unlikely to come together. He conceived it as being in the interests of the State to provide "that higher education which is intelligible alike to the child and to the man, and to the ignorant and to the wise." The limits of the State's duty had, he felt, been so admirably expressed by Jacobs as to require no further elaboration. Bowen considered also that he himself had tended to be misunderstood. He did not by any means

15vide Appendix E.
favour the denominational system because it would provide for the "specific teaching of theologies". On the contrary, it was his opinion that the setting-aside of special days for the teaching of religious dogmas would have little interest for the pupil and would tend to lower the tone of the teaching. He was also afraid, however, that one of the faults of a purely secular education would be the encouraging of an attitude that the clever manipulators of knowledge were likely to become the "pattern members of society". Where the State was the only body able to provide education, and was therefore relied upon by the mass of the people for assistance, it was up to it "to look to those bodies whose professed duties it is more especially to supply" the type of education it was itself unable to supply. He agreed that since the Reformation numerous religious bodies had replaced the one pre-Reformation church, and that their various and conflicting claims served to embarrass the question, but he would not concede to administrative expediency the need to find some solution to the problem of integrating within one system rival "isms". As Jacobs had said, the difficulty did not do away with the duty. Nor could the duty be put aside if the denominations were themselves to be recognized for what Bowen contended that they were, namely, "schools
for the education of the people

It will be recalled that on the day on which the meeting was to be held in Lyttelton, the matter was being dealt with by the Provincial Council. Bowen senior offered to withdraw his amendments which he said had been rather hastily constructed without consultation. This withdrawal would, he suggested, allow the House "to proceed to the consideration of those resolutions recommended by the heads of the religious bodies, in the general principles of which he coincided." Dr. Donald, doubtless with a mind to the meeting to be held that night, moved an adjournment. Fitzgerald's utterance at that meeting and its enthusiastic reception have already been noted. But when the Council reopened the question after the adjournment, it was the resolutions of the heads of the religious bodies which were debated and voted on:

Though by a previous vote the Denominational system was accepted as a general principle, the whole question was practically reopened on this occasion. A very natural cause for this was the fact that a great many members had been considering the question in the interval and had placed their thoughts together in the form of speeches, for the letting-off of which some occasion had to be found. . . . Almost every member spoke. . . . Finally, the Council thought it best to follow the recommendations of the reverend gentlemen who had submitted to it their experienced opinions, and only mended up the grammar of their resolutions,
and a few other 'clerical' errors. 16

It required but a few resolutions to be voted on
nine days later for the denominational system to become
the official education system in Canterbury by virtue of
a local instead of a national ordinance. For the next
five years the system obtaining was to place the
effective power of administration in the hands of the
heads of the religious denominations, and make an
arbitrary division of the available funds among the
three strongest. Virtually the only power left
exclusively in the hands of the Superintendent and
Executive Council was the right to remove the Inspector;
on practically all other counts the heads of the
religious bodies had to be consulted or agreeable. After
four years of procrastination the decision had gone in
favour of the churches.

Thus the denominationalists were in a position of
strength, with a mandate to control education for at
least five years, and the chance to establish their
schools, consolidate their position, and prove the merit
of their claims. To all intents and purposes the debate
on the religious basis of education was finalised and
the opportunity was available to provide what the

16Lyttelton Times, May 19, 1857.
populace themselves required—facilities for elementary instruction. It was time for practical construction and planning to replace ideological struggle. But the problems had not really been solved. A temporary truce had been called in the dispute between the religious and secular basis of education, but there were other questions still to be answered. One of these was to be the clarification of the role of the State in the provision of education. In the next decade however the problems that were to be especially important were the questions of providing even the simplest facilities for an expanding population and deciding what proportion of the population should be educated at all.
CHAPTER V

THE IMPACT OF HUMAN NEED

There can be no doubt whatever that a large number of children are receiving instruction of some sort—what sort there is no legal means of ascertaining—at private schools, and that a very considerable number do not receive any instruction at all, or do not, at any rate, attend a school. In short, the educational condition... is as unsatisfactory as it well could be...*

From December 1859 until February 1862 Bowen was overseas. After making his journey across the Andes with Markham early in 1860, he proceeded to the United States. Several factors may have influenced him to travel there. While there was obviously a strong attraction for most of the settlers in Canterbury to the United Kingdom from which practically all the adult population of the first decade had come, there were some similarities in conditions between them and the American colonists. They shared the experience of pioneering, adventure, and isolation from home. The early issues of the New Zealand newspapers gave generous treatment to news from the United States.

*Lyttelton Times, January 29, 1872.
Bowen himself had been interested in that country for some years; in one of his earliest letters to Godley he had written:

[visiting] the Fitzgeralds and Russells and Hamilton ... and reading histories of the United States and the colonies especially ... are my only amusements ...  

Both Godley and Domett, with whom he had strong bonds of friendship, had visited the United States before they came to New Zealand, and may have discussed it with Bowen in conversation. Little is known for certain about Bowen's movements there because of the lack of any diaries or other written evidence. The only references that can be traced mention his visit to Boston and his encounters with many prominent American thinkers, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. It is not known whether in any other way he came into contact with educational affairs either in the United States or later in Britain and the Continent.

While he had been absent from Canterbury the system decided upon in 1857 had continued to operate; the Bishop of Christchurch, by virtue of his control of about 75% of the revenue devoted to educational

---

2Kilbracken Papers, Bowen to Godley, April 25, 1853.
purposes, was almost in the position of director of education for the province. Late in 1862, however, and chiefly through the efforts of Fitzgerald who had returned to Canterbury and re-entered provincial politics, a commission was set up to enquire into the state of education and recommend improvements. It is not proposed to outline the steps leading to the Commission, its progress, or its findings, except to say that one of the research techniques adopted by the Commissioners in collecting evidence was to circularise a large number of public men, of both clergy and laity, asking through a series of questions for their views on the state of education. Bowen was one of those approached for their opinions. Unfortunately no records appear to exist today of the replies received by the Commission; had they been retained they would provide

---

3No writer on education in Canterbury has done justice to Fitzgerald for the part he played in securing the setting-up of the Commission. While it is acknowledged that the general attitude to the education system at this time was one of dissatisfaction, and that sooner or later an overhaul of the system would have been necessary, this might have waited for several years had not Fitzgerald moved his amendment to the proposed Bill.

4With a view to obtaining information as to the requirements of the Province generally they addressed another circular of questions to persons whom they believed to be interested in the cause of popular education. . . . . Report of the Commission on Education, 1863, p. 3.
invaluable evidence of the views on education of most of the influential men of the province at that time. The Commission published its report in 1863, and in the following year the Provincial Council passed a new Ordinance whereby public schools were established so that for some years a system which included both public and denominational schools was to cater for education in Canterbury.

After his appointment as Resident Magistrate in Christchurch in 1864, Bowen was somewhat restricted in the amount and nature of the activities he could undertake. He had on his return from overseas continued to write articles for the Lyttelton Times, but as he was no longer editor it is difficult to judge which articles were his work. He appears to have taken part in no educational affairs at this time, and indeed was probably fully occupied with the task of establishing his home at Middleton, and with preparing himself through reading and study for his office as Magistrate. Nonetheless his support was given to a number of worthy and humanitarian proposals. A few examples of this

---

5"I have been writing a great many articles for the Lyttelton Times since I came back ..." Selse Papers, Bowen to Selse, July 15, 1862.

"I have been writing a good many articles for the Lyttelton Times but somehow or other have not yet got up the keenness I had about it." Selse Papers, Bowen to Selse, date unknown.
public spirit will make this clear. Towards the end of 1863 he took part in the meeting to consider the proposal to erect cottage residences; this has already been referred to in Chapter II. Another subject in which he was interested was the question of temperance; although he did not fully subscribe to the views of the Reformers he expressed his approval of several of the principles they stood for. Still another question to which he gave his attention was that called in that day the "social problem", prostitution, and how to curb it. At a meeting of leaders of the community Bowen was appointed to a committee to investigate the problem and find what steps should be taken to reduce its incidence. All these concerns for the welfare of people illustrate how much he was aware of the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual needs of the community of the 1860s.

Conditions had changed in the twenty years of the province's existence. In the first few years it had been a small settlement engaged in the task of establishing itself and building a strong society. The

---

6 In 1866 he chaired a meeting called by the Temperance Reformers at which the candidates for the Superintendence stated their views on the question of temperance.

7 *Lyttelton Times*, November 22, 1867.
lack of physical facilities brought out the resourcefulness of the people and their determination to build well for the future. But the lack of educational facilities, while a cause for some concern to those who knew the value of a sound education, did not then have the same urgency for solution that it was to have twenty years later, for there was work for all, young and old alike, and no reason for anyone to be idle. In 1856 the population had been 6,160; ten years later it had grown to 58,752, and was to continue to rise. Christchurch was becoming an urban centre with the problems that were associated with town living. The effects of the influx of thousands intent on discovering gold were felt even on the eastern side of the Alps; but most of the newcomers did not have the same ideals which had characterized the early settlers, and almost inevitably the standards of the community were affected.

In the course of his duties as a Magistrate, Bowen was able to see the parlous state of many of the less fortunate townspeople, and indeed had to deal with many of them when they appeared before him. Many of these cases appear to have but reflected the tensions of

---

8 *Statistics of New Zealand, 1857 and 1867*. The second figure includes the West Canterbury, i.e. Westland population.
a young, rapidly-expanding, occasionally-uninhibited society, which, suggests Dr. Sutch, was largely at the mercy of circumstances of fluctuation and insecurity. Throughout the 1860s there had been a considerable increase in the numbers of the working classes, but, despite the vastly-increased funds resulting from the discoveries of gold in the west, the ordinary population had suffered from the trade depressions which had over-taken the community. At this time no unemployment payments or Poor Law existed to ameliorate these difficulties, so that many people had to undergo hardships for months or even years on end. It is perhaps too often assumed from the evidence that the gold discoveries filled the exchequers of Otago and Canterbury that this state of prosperity was shared by all levels of the community, but, in Canterbury at least, most of the wealth had come into the hands of a few. Sutch says of the provincial governments that they

had a great deal of revenue which they could have used in providing social services had there been the will and understanding among the majority of the legislators, but an examination of the available records does not show that any great advances in

---


10 In 1867 at least one meeting of the unemployed was held in Christchurch. Between 200 and 300 attended.
social legislation were made by the South Island as compared with the North during the provincial period. . . .

There would indeed seem to have been far less awareness of the seriousness of the situation in Canterbury than in, for example, Auckland, where the financial situation had reached rock-bottom, every section of the community was affected, and everyone was aware that drastic measures were necessary to effect a recovery. In Canterbury there was, by contrast, provincial wealth, economic stability at the higher levels, and a strong tinge of the nineteenth century conservative tenet that the responsibility for the maintenance of a man and his family lay fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the man himself.

Almost one of every six cases dealt with by Bowen was for drunkenness, a failing which often had direct social consequences and repercussions for the offenders' spouses and families. While with many who stood before him he showed firmness and decision, even to the extent of inflicting the maximum penalty for the particular offence, in many other cases he showed a quality of sympathy and mercy which revealed his attitude towards human beings as people and not as culprits. In one case

14Sutch, loc. cit.
three boys were brought before him charged with having been found unlawfully on private premises. Under questioning by Bowen, one of the boys admitted that he had nowhere to go as he had been turned out of his home. Bowen asked the boys if they were willing to work, and, on being assured by them that they were, promised to find some work for them.

It could have been at this time that he became convinced that the facilities being provided for educating the youth of the province were inadequate. About ten or fifteen years later, in the course of the Address in Reply debate in the House of Representatives in 1879, he was to say that he had long believed that the denominational system was unable to cope satisfactorily with the needs of the quickly-rising school population.

Many years ago in the province of Canterbury, long before the question of a national system of education was mooted, I, for one, gave up the denominational system because I found that it did not educate the people. Like many others I was brought face to face with the fact that there were a large number of children in the colony growing up little street Arabs absolutely uneducated, and without the means of getting any knowledge, human or divine; and I was satisfied, with many better than myself, that we must give up any feelings or ideas we had on particular denominational questions, and determine that the children of the land should be educated.12

When Stafford called for special returns on education in 1866 as a result of the retrenchment of the education vote for the Auckland province and the general concern for a national basis to education, the figures brought down showed that although Canterbury lay a close third behind Nelson and Otago in the number of children attending school per hundred of population, it had also the highest percentage of children unable to read, and the lowest percentage of all the provinces of those of the whole population who could both read and write.  

The position affected both country and town. In the Report of the Board of Education for the year 1867 the following comment was made:

it is evident that an increasing demand exists for means of education in remote districts, and it will be necessary to expend a sum in excess of that usually allowed for the establishment of new schools, if the children of settlers in outlying districts are to be placed on any footing of equality with those whose parents reside in more settled localities. . . .  

Lady Barker, chronicler of early Canterbury life, writing in 1867, drew attention to the difficulties in

---

13 The position may have been affected by the influx of people to the goldfields. It should be remembered also that it was not always possible to take out extremely accurate figures from the returns because school information was often the least carefully filled-out data on the census form.

1h Canterbury Provincial Gazette, May 1, 1868.
country areas. In describing the situation encountered by the small farmer, or "cockatoo", she said:

their ignorance is appalling! Many of them had never even been christened; there was no school or church within thirty miles or more, and although the parents seemed all tidy, decent people, and deplored the state of things, they were powerless to help it; . . . there is no time or possibility of teaching the children. The neighbouring squatters do not like to encourage settlers to buy up their land, therefore they carefully avoid making things pleasant for a new "nest", and the cockatoos are nobody's business; so, as far as educational advantages go, they are perfectly destitute. . . . 15

When she mentioned her dismay at this state of neglect, she was warned not to interfere, but by visiting homes, encouraging attendance at Sunday services, and discussing plans, she was able to initiate a small educational scheme. How great was the extent of her concern can be judged from the following statement:

Well, the purpose of my life henceforward is to raise money somehow or somewhere to build a little wooden schoolroom [for] every year which slips away and leaves these swarms of children in ignorance adds to the difficulty of training them. . . . 16

The lack of progress was not confined to the country districts. The number of children on the books of the schools rose from 4039 in 1867 to 4946 in 1870,

16 Ibid., p. 112.
an increase of 22%, but in the same time the total amount paid out by the Treasury increased by only 15%, so that whereas in 1866 the average cost of education per child was estimated at £2/16/3, four years later it had dropped to £2/5/7 per head. In its report covering the year 1871, the Board of Education drew attention to the unsatisfactory conditions in the towns:

Being of opinion that the means of education provided for the children in towns is not sufficiently extensive and systematic, the Board has exerted itself for the promotion of measures leading to reform in this particular.

Bowen's concern over the fact that the people were not being educated has already been mentioned. He could hardly be classified as one who "had not the will or the understanding" to provide social services for the needy in the community. Vested interests in the country in the shape of worried landowners tended to put personal advantage before improving conditions; conservative denominationalism in the towns moved with slow deliberate pace and meagre financial resources; but the population increasing so quickly outstripped the provision of services. The ignorance of the people was apparent to Bowen, and not that fact alone. He was sure that a correlation could be seen between the incidence of crime and the lack of education. In the middle of 1871 he wrote to the Superintendent on the subject of a
Sir, with references to repeated conversations on the subject of a reformatory for juvenile offenders and to your Honour's request that I should write to you on the subject, I beg to draw your attention to the following facts:

1. That a distinct criminal class is growing up in this town among the children under the age of fifteen years, owing chiefly to the want of supervision and neglected education . . . 17

A few weeks later the 1871 Education Ordinance was passed by the Provincial Council, and under its terms a new Board of Education was to be appointed. It is not surprising that Bowen, the strong advocate of education as the antidote to crime and the mild anti-denominationalist, should be nominated as a member of the new Board and thus be charged with the responsibility for stepping-up the provisions for education throughout the province.

Bowen was on the threshold of one of the most important periods of his life, when his influence on education was to be felt strongly in both the provincial and the national spheres. In the space of six years profound changes were to be made in the basis of elementary education, and the value of his background and experience was to be recognized by the leaders of the community. He was fitted both by character and by

17 The Press, Christchurch, July 22, 1871.
ability to cope with the demands of the imminent problems.
CHAPTER VI

BOWEN'S INFLUENCE INCREASES

In a colony of small and often struggling communities, in which several sects were repre-

sented, each of equal standing before the law and each anxious to extend its influence, complete

ecclesialism—or a close approximation to it—was the price that had to be paid for economical and

efficient organization of schooling.¹

Beginning in 1868, there was a steady movement
towards placing education on a national basis. This
trend began in the North Island, where financial
difficulties made the provision of even the minimum
educational facilities almost impossible, and gathered
momentum until a resolution was brought forward in the
House of Representatives in 1870 that it was the
Government's duty to make provision for education in all
parts of the country. This movement, not perhaps
surprisingly, was strenuously opposed by the two large
southern provinces, especially by Otago. Sufficient
support was given however, for the Premier, Fox, to
introduce a Bill designed to establish a national system

¹Compulsory Education in New Zealand (Studies on
into the House in the next year, but it lapsed after a second reading. The system proposed was national but neither free nor secular.

Most of the provinces had been hesitant to alter their Education Ordinances while a possibility existed of a new system coming into force over the whole country. When the fate of Fox's Bill was known, they then set about putting their own systems of education in order. In his opening address to the 35th Session of the Canterbury Provincial Council, Rolleston gave notice of a Bill to be introduced which would make "considerable changes in the existing Education Ordinance," and asked the members to give their consideration to the desirableness of setting aside a further provision for the purpose of Education in its several branches 'with the view’, in the words of the Board, 'of placing the available income for Educational purposes on a permanent footing, in such a manner as to secure its continuance during any period of temporary depression.'

He laid stress on the situation as it affected the towns:

The necessity for the provision of more efficient teaching in the towns and municipalities of the Province has pressed itself on the attention of all who have interested themselves in the promotion of Education for some years past . . . You will be asked to provide a sum of money to assist the inhabitants of municipalities in the erection of School Buildings, in which a more completely organized system of instruction may be introduced, commencing with the rudimentary teaching of the Infant School, and leading on to the higher
branches of learning, belonging to what are termed
the High Schools. . . \textsuperscript{2}

Four days later the new Education Bill was intro-
duced, a comprehensive measure of 92 clauses, consolidat-
ing both the district and the financial bases of school
establishment in the province, and drawing some close
limits to the amount and nature of religious instruction
permitted in the schools. In their original form the
'religious' clauses restricted the scope of religious
teaching to reading of the Scriptures during the first
thirty minutes of the day by good readers or by the
teacher, and allowed the teacher, provided there was the
unanimous consent of the school committee, to give
religious instruction. Nobody except the teacher was to
be permitted to give any instruction, religious or
secular, within the school, but the committee might set
aside one day or two half-days when the ministers could
give religious instruction to those of their denomin-
ations, always allowing for the recognition of parental
objections.

The clergy looked on this proposal with some
dismay, but they could not stem the tide of movement
towards universal education on a state basis. Before the

\textsuperscript{2}Journal of the Canterbury Provincial Council,
Vol. XXXV, p. 3.
Ordinance was passed the Diocesan Synod held its annual session. When education came under discussion, grave concern was expressed over the turn which events were taking. Jacobs moved that the Synod should intimate to the Council its desire that "any measure should include the re-organization and aid of denominational schools." This motion was seconded by Bowen's own brother, Rev. Crossdale Bowen, who said that he thought "that the denominational system was the only one on which they could rest." But the voice of the churches now carried less weight than it had in 1857 and, despite a petition being taken to the Council two days later, the Ordinance that was finally passed contained within it the seeds of the downfall of the denominationalist establishment of schools.

One of the provisions of the Ordinance established a new Board of Education, and to this Board Bowen was appointed. His suitability for the position was obvious to many, and no doubt his friend Rolleston prevailed upon him to accept nomination. The membership of the

---

3 The Press, Christchurch, August 1, 1871.

4 The members of the Board were announced in the newspapers on August 24, 1871. Bowen's friendship with Rolleston was close and long-standing. He had been one of those who met Rolleston on the latter's arrival in Lyttelton in 1858. They shared an intense interest in the classics, often exchanging letters in Greek or
Board does not appear to have interfered in any way with his duties on the Bench—indeed he would hardly have accepted the appointment if it had. Meetings of the Board were held weekly. Most of the business was concerned with the establishment of district schools and consideration of Inspectors' reports, but even these began to carry a germ of inspired activity as the educational provisions of the province expanded.

It is not possible to find out a great deal about the opinions of individual members on controversial issues from the newspaper accounts of meetings of the Board, because most of the matters which came up for discussion were routine and not controversial, but occasionally the questions discussed involved deep philosophical problems and detailed reports were produced. One that is of more than passing significance

Latin. Mr. George Macdonald of Woodend, with whom the writer discussed the two men, related how he had conversed some years ago with the last surviving son of Rolleston. According to the son, his father would on occasions retire to his room with his guest and there converse with him in Greek or Latin. Bowen might well have been such a guest. Their pleasure was mutual when in later years a son of Bowen married a daughter of Rolleston. Although their political ideas were often poles apart—Bowen was a Centralist while Rolleston was a staunch Provincialist—their frankness and friendship with each other enabled them to avoid the distrust and suspicion that often characterized the relationship between political opponents.
dealt with the history syllabus and illustrates how seriously religious affiliation and individual conscience touched day-to-day educational practice.

Early in 1872, the Board received a letter from the chairman of the Rangiora School Committee stating that two of the three boys entered for the Junior Scholarship examination were "of the Hebrew persuasion," and asking if that would militate against their chances in the examination. Montgomery, chairman of the Board, had already replied to this by letter, giving an assurance that the Board did not consider the religion of the candidates at all, but Bowen felt that this did not fully meet the situation. He was of the opinion

that instructions should be given to the examiners to examine in Biblical knowledge only as a Book of history, and not as a theological book . . .

and moved that the examination of candidates in sacred history should be strictly confined to "the historical portion of the sacred narrative." 5 However, another letter was received from Mr. L. E. Nathan on behalf of the Jewish candidates and a further discussion took place on the subject of sacred history. Bowen thought that the Jewish boys would inevitably be adversely affected to some extent in the examination as the New

---

5 *Lyttelton Times*, April 20, 1872.
Testament was never taught to them. If their parents were prepared to sign a declaration that the teaching of the New Testament narrative was repugnant to their religious beliefs, the boys should have an average amount of marks allotted to them in proportion to their proficiency in the Old Testament. When another member suggested that the Jewish boys would probably score well enough in the Old Testament to counter-balance the disadvantage in connection with the New Testament, Bowen pointed out that the examiners would be Christian and therefore likely to ask questions on points with which the Christian boys were familiar.  

The subject of religion in schools came up again a year later, after the passing of the Education Ordinance of 1873. Because it gives a valuable lead to Bowen's opinions on the question, it is amplified here. The main purpose of the 1873 Ordinance was to remove some of the anomalies apparent in the Ordinance brought down two years previously, but some important changes were made in the field of religious instruction.

6 Bowen concluded his remarks by saying that it had occurred to him that Roman Catholics might wish to be examined from the Douay version of the Bible. As far as is known no such request was made, but it illustrates Bowen's quick appraisal of a situation, and his determination that no academic disadvantage should result from particular religious belief.
Reading of Scripture during the first half-hour of the day was dropped, but the right of the clergy to enter on two half-days or one day per week was retained, though only by a majority of two votes in thirty and after a keen debate. A conscience clause was added to the teaching of history. The charge was levelled that the old Ordinance had removed the Bible from the schools, but this was denied by Montgomery, who drew attention to the fact that it was still available through its use in the study of sacred history. Bowen said that the position as he understood it was that the clause making it compulsory to read the Bible for half an hour after the opening of school had been excised, and he thought that that was rightly done. He agreed with Montgomery that the Bible was not excluded by the Ordinance from their schools, because it would still be used as a text-book for sacred history. If the parents of any child objected to the teaching, then the pupil did not need to be present while history was being taught. He went on to say that the conduct of the schools was actually, by the Ordinance, left in the hands of the people through their representatives, the school committees, and the Board would see that no proselytizing was allowed to be carried on. Nor, he continued, would any doctrinal teaching be allowed.
What the Council had in effect said to the majority was:

You must not compel the minority to be present when Bible history is taught in the schools but there is nothing in the law to prevent you from teaching the Bible as history so long as you do not coerce the minority on religious subjects.  

Other subjects upon which Bowen expressed his opinions demonstrated his desire to see wider provisions for education. These could be achieved in many ways. Schemes which he supported were the awarding of scholarships, the consolidating of financial reserves through land endowments, and the appointment of well-trained, qualified teachers. He declared on one occasion that he wanted to see more scholarships thrown open for pupils fifteen years of age, because it was at that age level, when their talents were the most promising, that pupils tended to be removed from school by their parents. Any inducement that could be offered to parents to continue their sons at school should, he felt strongly, be brought to their notice.

Bowen’s interest in higher education was at this time finding a practical outlet in his work organizing the Canterbury Collegiate Union and endeavouring to secure its affiliation to the University of New Zealand.

---

7 *The Press*, Christchurch, June 17, 1873.
He knew the value of education at the higher levels and could see the gap which would exist between elementary education and university study. Later in the year he proposed to the Board that it should urge on the Government "the necessity of the permanence of higher education beyond the municipal schools." There were, he claimed, teachers able to impart the higher branches of education, and scholars ready and willing to receive it, but at that time there was no means of providing it. When the Annual Report of the Board was being adopted he moved the inclusion of the following:

The Board sees every year with pleasure the help given to promising scholars in the District schools to pursue their education further by means of the scholarships established by the Provincial Council but the Board cannot contemplate without anxiety the precarious provision as yet made in the province for securing the establishment of higher teaching. It has lately been shown that, with very moderate encouragement, available teaching power can be found, and that a considerable number of scholars desirous of university teaching are ready to come forward. It is scarcely beyond the province of the Board of Education to express a hope that the work provisionally undertaken by the Collegiate Union may be placed by the province on a permanent footing.9

Thus it may be seen that Bowen was adroitly using the Board of Education as a platform for the expression of his views on a matter that, while it was of some concern to all and presented a problem for the

9Ibid., October 29, 1872.
community as a whole, did not strictly come within the Board's compass. But he felt particularly strongly that the Council should provide help and that it should be in a particular way. In speaking to his motion, he cited the case of the Province of Otago whose Council had at that time made "large and liberal endowments of land for educational purposes."

Land endowment was one way of making provision for education; another was by making use of land revenue. Only a week before the action referred to on the previous page, Bowen had been speaking on the necessity to provide a Normal or Training School. He suggested that, in order to pay for it, it was:

the duty of the Board to urge upon the Provincial Government the desirability of devoting a portion of land revenue to the purpose of education.

The number of children attending school had increased so rapidly that the attention was turning to the supply of teachers available to teach them. Bowen strongly advocated the establishment of a Normal School, warning that "it was a step that should be taken at once as the danger was that if it was put off till hereafter it might be too late."\(^{10}\)

---

\(^{10}\) *The Press*, Christchurch, October 22, 1872. Later, as Chairman of the Board of Education, Bowen officiated at the ceremony when the foundation stone of the Normal School was laid by the Governor. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1873.
On July 7, 1873, Bowen became chairman of the Board of Education.\textsuperscript{11} In accepting the position he expressed his sense of the honour that his colleagues were conferring upon him, his thanks for their pledges of support, and his hope that Montgomery would be prepared to help him on the occasions when he would need such help.\textsuperscript{12} During his tenure of office over the next sixteen months, he was to make one of his most important contributions to the welfare of his province.

He was faced with the challenge of the province's increasing population and the necessity to provide education for the people in many new districts as was required under the terms of the 1871 and 1873 Ordinances. Yet he had the breadth of vision that the position required and that was necessary in such circumstances. For example, the West Christchurch committee wished the Board to sanction the purchase of a site in Addington for a school for children six to eight years of age. The site had certain advantages: it was well-placed in a centre of population; it was just over one acre in size; and it was reasonably priced at £200 per acre. But Bowen did not favour it. He could see no future in

\textsuperscript{11} vide supra Chapter I, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{12} The Press, Christchurch, July 8, 1873.
building a school of such small dimensions, and so limited in the age of the children it would cater for. A small school of that nature could only give an inferior type of education compared with that which would be provided by the larger borough schools when they were established.  

He was concerned for the spaciousness of education in both the physical and the academic sense. Twelve months previously the Board had sanctioned the acceptance of an offer of two acres of land from Bowen himself for a school site in Oxford East; Bowen commented that the size was to be two acres, because he held that large sites were necessary for schools.  

At this point it is appropriate to give some statistical evidence to illustrate the vast educational changes with which Bowen was connected. It has already been mentioned that during the 1870s there were considerable population increases. Between 1871 and 1874 the number of children in the province between the ages of five and fifteen years increased by 61%. In 1871 only 25% of those attending schools were catered for in the public schools; in 1874 55% were so provided. This had

---

13 Ibid., September 23, 1873.
14 Ibid., September 10, 1872.
resulted from the 1871 Ordinance, which, in its regulations for the setting-up of educational districts and its different financial provisions for district schools and non-supported schools, dealt a severe blow to the prospects for private schools, which had to compete with the public schools where no fees were paid. The number of denominational schools dwindled from 32 in 1871 to 15 in 1872 and only 8 in 1873. Even these few had their aid completely cut off by the Ordinance of 1873. The Board was faced with a three-fold task: it had to make facilities available in districts which had had none whatsoever and now requested them; it had to make new provisions for areas where the closing of the private schools left no education whatsoever; and it had to absorb many more into district schools where the private schools had closed down and their pupils immediately sought entry in the existing public schools. The number of district schools increased from 37 in 1871 to 86 in 1874; attendance in the same period increased from 4,096 to 10,136. Of those attending the number who were between the ages of five and fifteen was 3,842 in 1871 and 9,340 in 1874, these totals representing 35% of those eligible to attend in the former year and 60% in the latter. Bowen himself summed up the situation in a report to the Superintendent:
During the past year the Education Act of 1873 put an end to denominational schools; and the new District Committees are doing their best under very disadvantageous circumstances to supply school accommodation pending the building of the District Schools. 15

The tone of the second half of the quotation leaves no doubt that the Board was finding it difficult to meet all the requests for assistance, despite the fact that the sum paid out by the Treasury for new buildings rose from £3,754 in 1873 to £39,950 in 1874.

The office of chairman of the Board of Education was no sinecure. It involved much more than mere attendance at Board meetings and decisions on how to reply to correspondence. It was usual when a meeting of householders was held anywhere to consider the setting-up of a district school, for a Board member, preferably the chairman, to attend and, if he was asked, to explain the Ordinance and to answer questions. Or if a matter of contention arose over affairs in any particular area the chairman might have to travel there to do what he could on the spot to sort out the difficulties. When the Board themselves sponsored the establishment of schools, it was often the chairman's responsibility to make his time available to assist in such decisions as the sites of the proposed schools.

An example of this on Bowen's part was referred to earlier in the account of how he reported at a meeting on the visit he had made to Banks Peninsula for the purpose of selecting sites for schools at Pigeon Bay, Barry's Bay, and French Farm. Yet at the same time he was continuing his interest in Collegiate Union affairs and fulfilling his duties as Resident Magistrate. It was in order to recognize the work of Bowen in particular that a motion was introduced at this time in the Provincial Council proposing that the chairman of the Board of Education should be paid an honorarium of £200 to recompense him in some measure for the time and money spent in the Board's service. Although such sympathy was expressed towards the chairman on account of the onerous nature of his duties, the motion was not passed. The council was unwilling to run the risk of creating another paid official.

When his term of office expired, although members of the Board pressed him to continue, Bowen hinted very strongly that he would like to be relieved of the position. He felt that others should take their turn, and admitted that he had looked forward to the end of

---

16 vide supra Chapter II, p. 37.

17 The Press, Christchurch, June 12, 1874.
his term as his other duties took up a great deal of his care and attention. However, after postponement of a decision for a week, the Board still desired him to accept reappointment. In accepting, Bowen reiterated that it had been his hope that the position would have been filled by another member of the Board, but affirmed that although the work was hard, it was a pleasure to work with a Board which showed such unanimity.

He was not destined to hold the position much longer. On November 18, 1874, it was announced that Mr. C. C. Bowen had joined the Vogel Ministry as Minister of Justice and Commissioner of Stamp Duties, and would occupy a seat in the Upper House. A week later, he intimated to the Board that he would be sending in his resignation to the Superintendent that week. Thus he severed his direct connection with elementary education in Canterbury.

Some indication of the scope and quality of Bowen's work as a member of the Board of Education has been implicit in the details of his activity. A further attempt to assess his contribution will be made in the concluding chapter of this work. But before this period of his career is finished with, reference will have to

\[18\] Ibid., July 14, 1874.
be made in some detail to two extremely important speeches that he made, the first in 1872 to the Church Meeting following the Diocesan Synod of that year, and the second in 1873 when, in his capacity as chairman of the Board, he opened the Riccarton District School. The first serves as a climax to his statements over a period of years on the question of denominational control in education, while the second, shorter and less prominent, introduces a different problem, one which was to exercise his mind a great deal in the framing of the 1877 Act.

In order to understand more fully Bowen's 1872 statement, some of the events of 1871-72 must be recapitulated. By the Ordinance of 1871 it was set down that where, by March 1, 1872, application had been made by an area to be constituted as an educational district, no school fees would be charged in any school receiving aid from the Board. Instead of the fees which had previously been fixed by the local committees, a rate would be collected, every householder residing within a radius of three miles of a school in an educational district being required to pay annually the sum of twenty shillings towards the support of that school. In addition, householders with families had to pay five shillings each for those children between the ages of
six and thirteen years, whether or not they attended
the school.\textsuperscript{19} This was a copy of what Nelson province
had had for some years and it was described as "a
system of mutual help and indirect compulsion". It is
hardly surprising that the immediate result of the
Ordinance was a great deal of activity in the setting-up
of schools, especially in the country areas. If a
householder knew that he was going to be charged the
rate set down whether or not his children attended the
school in his district, and that the weight of Govern-
ment assistance would be lent to the district schools,
he was more than likely to give his support to the
establishment of a district.

The steps required for an educational district to
be proclaimed were relatively simple. On receipt of a
memorial requesting that a district should be established
from a considerable number of the persons entitled to
vote, the Board would investigate the case, and, if it
was satisfied that provisions for public education were
needed, it would call a public meeting to decide whether
such a district should be established. At this meeting
it was customary for the chairman or another Board

\textsuperscript{19}Exemption was possible if a certificate could
be produced showing that there had been attendance at
some other school for three of the four months before
the due date.
member to attend to answer questions about the operation of the Ordinance. If the meeting was in favour of establishment, and expressed its willingness to meet its share of the expenses required for the establishment of the school, the Board reported the decision to the Superintendent who declared the district.  

The new arrangement was quite attractive to the areas. The denominational system was often quite impracticable in thinly-populated areas, and the chance of assistance by becoming a district outweighed sectarian isolationism. But the denominationalists were by no means converted to the district set-up. For some time it had been obvious that things were not going to get any better for them, but they were determined to do all that they could to save what they already had. It was clear that the abolition of fees would put them at a great disadvantage, and that they would not be able to compete with the Board's schools on financial terms.

It was in the city and towns that the denominational schools were strongest, for it was there that the groups of church members were most numerous. Over the previous decade the Church had spent quite considerable

---

20 Many primary schools in Canterbury retain the name District School, having been established at this time.
sums of money on the erection of buildings, though it had failed to cope with the rapidly-increasing juvenile population. Thus the Church had its own little vested interest in education in the towns, and it did not want to see that interest jeopardised. It must have welcomed as a small crumb of security the 1872 Amendment to the Ordinance, which exempted Christchurch, Timaru, Kaiapoi, Lyttelton, and some other municipalities from the ruling conditions, and prescribed a more elaborate system of meetings and elections for the establishment of districts there.

In effect, by its financial terms and by its setting of a closing date for benefiting from them, the Provincial Council had presented a pistol at the people's head. It made the application for government assistance well-nigh inevitable, and drew attention—with probably unwanted publicity—to the areas which did not make application. The dead-line for applications was coming closer when the Lyttelton Times summed up the position as it affected Christchurch:

The question has frequently been asked of late why Christchurch should be entirely left at the mercy of denominational schools, and especially when the Board is now in a position to give substantial aid towards the establishment of one or more schools of a totally different character. The question has been more or less pertinent; it is now something more and the inhabitants generally will be of the opinion that the time has arrived when decisive
action is not only desirable but necessary.  

Before schools of the type contemplated by the Board could be set up in Christchurch, it was necessary that the city should be proclaimed an educational district in the usual way, or, if it was thought preferable and better calculated to promote the cause of education, into two, three or four districts, each having a public or municipal school of its own. Here the clergy fought their last-ditch fight. At several of the meetings clergymen spoke against the setting-up of educational districts, their arguments ranging from violent denunciation of secularism to shrewd advice to their hearers to think seriously before exchanging what was working well for something unknown. Sometimes, as in the case of the first meeting held at Lyttelton, the views of the clergy carried the day—though the Editor of the Lyttelton Times probably came very close to the mark when he said that the result there might have been different had there been even one man present who could have spoken strongly for the Ordinance and explained the benefits likely to follow from a district school basis of education. In other cases, however, despite the opposition of the clergy, the meetings, with few

Lyttelton Times, January 29, 1872.
dissentients, decided to approach the Board of Education with a view to setting up their education districts. 22

When the closing date arrived many areas of Christchurch had decided not to apply for recognition as educational districts. The Church’s stand was as uncompromising as ever. During the Diocesan Synod of 1872 a resolution was passed, praying the General Assembly to include in any new measure it might pass recognition and aid of denominational schools, and recognition of the practice of daily Scripture reading and prayer in Government schools. This resolution was moved by Dean Jacobs who, two years earlier, at the Annual Meeting of the parishioners of St. Michael’s Church had actually advocated yielding gracefully to the inevitable change:

Some change of system was needed. Very few Christian parents desired a purely secular system; yet much as he valued the advantages of the denominational system, he felt that at present very little interest was taken in the school, and he thought it would be better to meet the change in a friendly spirit than drag on feebly on the present

22 As at Lyttelton, the presence of clergymen at the early meetings held to decide whether to apply for district status often provided the rallying-point for opposition to the setting-up of districts. Later, however, it was discovered that clergymen, not being ratepayers, were not entitled to speak at these meetings, and this undoubtedly affected the degree of opposition. Bowen, in his 1872 speech to the Church Meeting, states that this unjust position had been speedily corrected.
system. He hoped to see one or two large schools established in Christchurch, in which all should heartily join...\textsuperscript{23}

In the meantime, however, he had repented of these compromising sentiments and actually apologized to a later synod for having entertained such deviations from the loyal line.

It is in the light of all these developments, arising from the Ordinance of 1871 and spreading over the next few months, that one must study Bowen's famous paper, "On the Secularisation of Education",\textsuperscript{24} delivered to the assembled clergy and laity of the diocese at the Church Meeting a bare week after the above resolution had been adamantly framed and presented. The die-hards, apparently in their desire to maintain their own distinctive doctrinal teaching, were unable or unwilling to recognize that the problem of catering for the increased numbers of children was so serious. Their concern was chiefly for the content and character of the education to be offered, rather than in the extent of the uneducated population. As will be seen in the remarks which followed Bowen's paper, their appraisal of the situation was, in the case of some individuals, little

\textsuperscript{23} The Press, Christchurch, April 26, 1870.

\textsuperscript{24} Vide Appendix F.
more than a naive satisfaction with the job that they happened to be doing rather than a realistic understanding of the work which cried out to be done.

The title of the paper was a misnomer. Bowen did not set out to justify a secular system of education; he was too much of a churchman himself to have believed in that.25 What he did strive to do was to place the feet of the Church metaphorically on the ground, and to persuade the leaders to view the problem in the light of cold reality rather than from the distance of impassioned idealism. He began by drawing a comprehensive picture of the situation as it faced the province at that time. This he was well fitted to do from his knowledge of the social circumstances, gained as a Magistrate and Board member. He made no attempt to minimise the seriousness of the position, referring to it as "a disgraceful state of things," and "absolutely intolerable." Then he threw the responsibility for its improvement straight into the hands of the Church, which, he said, in view of the offer of the Provincial Council to sponsor a system of education, had to make its own mind up on what its policy towards that system was going to be.

He retraced the picture of the situation as it

25 Bowen was at this time one of the two lay representatives to the Diocesan Board.
had pertained in England in former years. There, before the State began to interfere in education, the established Church had undertaken almost the whole of such primary education as the youth of England received. Because the Church in England was such a force in intellectual, political, and administrative life, the denominational system as it was provided in England provided a satisfactory basis for the provision and use of educational resources. However, the same set of circumstances was not to be found in New Zealand, where there was no State Church or favoured denomination. The good work done in New Zealand by the denominations had been done "with the assistance of grants of money supplied by the state."

If the state was not satisfied with the return for its money, then it was only reasonable that it should seek to find some better way of accomplishing what it hoped to do. This redeployment of funds for education did not, as some were suggesting, amount to confiscation, for the denominations had no legal rights to their grants. Judged from the standpoint of theory it might be suggested that the denominations had the best method of using those grants, but from the aspect of practical considerations the will of the majority of the taxpayers had to prevail.

Coming down to the specific problem, Bowen drew
attention to the measure of success enjoyed by the Ordinance in catering for education in the country districts. Wherever an Education district had been established under the Ordinance, the number of pupils had increased and the means of teaching them had increased proportionately. On the other hand the denominations, wherever their schools were the only ones providing education, were not coping with the problem. Again came the indictment: "the state of a large proportion of the juvenile population is a disgrace." Under a fair and reasonable process of taxation, he continued, two factors could not be avoided: that a section of the community that did not tax itself could hardly expect to be granted ample assistance in the same measure as those who did, and that it was

practically out of the question to suppose that the legislature will authorize the levying of a direct tax on all ratepayers with a view to distributing the proceeds to a few denominations. . . .

In view of all these considerations, he could not see much chance of success for the denominational schools.

It is interesting to compare these statements with those made by Bowen fifteen years earlier. In 1856, in the controversy over Rev. Arthur Baker's pamphlet, he had claimed to be a denominationalist, but particularly stressed that he was, if anything, a "liberal denominationalist." In the next year, when the
Provincial Council had at last committed itself to a system, he had strongly favoured the orthodox denominationalist approach, asserting that

in proportion to our respective numbers we should receive back that portion of the revenue devoted to education [because] where there is no state religion it would seem to be the only means of giving state assistance without doing violence to the consciences of men of various forms of creed.

Now in 1872, he said that there did not seem to be "much prospect of a proper fulfilment of their duties by the denominational schools." This was not a denial of belief in denominational enterprise and enthusiasm, but an admission of an absence of faith in denominational administration to cope with the demands of a particular situation.

Bowen next considered the role of the state in education and defined what he thought the limits of its activity should be. It could not, he claimed, nor ought it to, provide what were considered to be the highest truths, for three reasons: because certain other agencies had a part to play in teaching them, because there were acute differences in what men conceived these highest truths to be, and because the attempt to impose uniformity on all men would be both stultifying and degrading. Another limit to state power was the fact that it could not of itself foster a zeal for the
highest learning and highest truth. What the state was bound to do, he considered, was to supply its children with at least the minimum resources to enable those with ability and diligence to find and appreciate "useful knowledge":

To put knowledge within the reach of all, by means of elementary instruction, is as much the duty of the State as to see that children do not die of hunger or languish in hopeless destitution.

His earlier stress on the "inculcation of moral truths and values" had been omitted and his approach was one of strict utilitarianism with the accent on the need for literacy. This was basically what Fitzgerald had advocated twenty years earlier.

Bowen carried his attack further, to those who viewed elementary instruction with disfavour because it did not make men and women virtuous. These were apt to misconstrue Pope's couplet as meaning that it would be better for men not to have any knowledge at all rather than to have a little, which would enable them to be more dangerous. Certainly, he admitted, the knowledge possessed by some men did them no credit, for it tended to make them dogmatic and narrow-minded, but it was not their knowledge that was dangerous, but the ignorance of those who would be taken in by the false values. A little knowledge, however small in its scope, had in itself some power, for it enabled men to be less
vulnerable to deceit. He preferred to disagree with Pope, believing that if one could not drink deeply of "the Plerian spring," one should at least taste it, for in so doing one obtained a taste of the benefits to be obtained from the banishment of ignorance.

Bowen was a member of the Church of England. His brother was vicar of Riccarton and was probably present when this paper was delivered. Bowen senior had led the delaying action in 1857 which had held up Fitzgerald's plan for providing large schools in the towns, a plan which the heads of the denominations (including Bishop Harper himself) had actually approved. The tenor of Anglican thinking was reluctantly but gradually coming round to accept the fact that denominational resources and impetus were inadequate to keep up with the task of providing elementary education. Nonetheless it must have called for some courage to have spoken to his own Church, both clergy and laity, in the terms in which he now addressed himself to them. In 1857 he had said that the fact that there would be difficulties in making the denominationalist system work did not remove the duty of attempting to make it work, because, in order to satisfy the consciences of men, there had to be the opportunity for their particular conception of what was religious truth to be expressed and inculcated. But he had been
speaking in an environment of a mere 8,000 people, 72% of whom belonged to the Church of England. This was obviously a position of strength for the dominant denomination. In 1872 however, the population was 46,804, of whom only 52% were Anglican. Fifteen years previously the Church of England had been in a position not to be unduly worried about "state aid" to other denominations, for these accounted for only 28 in every hundred people, or one person in every four. Now, the numbers of Anglicans and non-Anglicans were about evenly balanced.

These statistics give the force to Bowen's next argument. Was the Church willing, by virtue of its own desire for and acceptance of government assistance, to facilitate through the rightful claims of other denominations for equivalent assistance the insculcation of what it considered to be absolute error? Bowen could not see this position being acceptable to the Church leaders.

Apart from these theoretical bases for argument, there were urgent practical considerations strongly suggesting that it would be better to pass the responsibility for elementary education over to the state. This was Bowen's strongest argument: the indisputable fact of the circumstances of the time. Again he placed it in front of his audience. Was the Church able to teach,
he asked, in fact was it teaching the "young Arabs of Christchurch"?²⁶ Such a statement or question coming from one with a practical concern for and daily contact with all strata of society and all walks of life carried the ring of authority. Bowen knew what were the vital humanitarian needs of the people and knew also that there were other desperate wants besides education. There was ample scope for the Church in the exercise of its talents for the welfare of its people, without endeavouring to do what the state could do more effectively. There would, he felt sure, be more than enough opportunity for the Church to exercise its influence over education in the largest sense of the word.

He concluded with a passionate plea to his hearers to look realistically at the situation. He echoed his expressions of 1856 when he wrote that it was best to find out first what were the wants and needs of the people before promulgating any specific system, this time saying:

```
twice as much good work would be done in this world of various opinions if men determined to do what was best under existing circumstances, instead of waiting to get what each thinks best.
```

Advising his audience to ask themselves whether in the

²⁶Cf. the reference to the "young street Arabs" in Bowen's speech in the Address-in-Reply debate of 1879.
existing circumstances the children could get the
instruction they had a right to, he warned them not to
stand in the way of the measures that could be adopted
to ensure that they did get it. If the Church devoted
its time to other, equally necessary work, it would find
itself completely occupied, and would be able to do
something really worthwhile to rescue many of the people
from scenes of degradation and vice.

It would have been remarkable if the views
expressed in this paper had satisfied all his hearers.
According to the newspaper account an "animated
discussion" took place, Bowen's chief critics being the
Dean, the Archdeacon of Westland, the Archdeacon of
Christchurch, and Rev. E. A. Lingard. The latter
advanced the usual reasons in favour of the denomina-
tional schools, that three-quarters of the children who
had received instruction in daily schools during the
previous year had received it in denominational schools,
and that the greater proportion of the Government
scholarships had been taken by them. The Lyttelton
Times, which during the previous six months had kept up
a strong campaign for declaring Christchurch an educa-
tional district, demolished Lingard's claims in no
uncertain terms. It congratulated Bowen on his
"admirable paper", which, it said, set out to
offer some arguments in favour of Christchurch adopting the system of education now in force in the province, so that the money voted by the Provincial Council towards the establishment of Borough schools might be utilised instead of being allowed to remain idle.

It then asked the question as to what was proved by the figures quoted by Lingard.

They proved nothing more, claimed the writer in the newspaper, than that a certain number of children attended denominational schools. They did not prove that the children were as well taught as they ought to be, or that as many children compared with the population attended school as should have been the case. As to the question of scholarships, the comment of the paper was equally forthright:

If the number of children attending denominational schools is as 3:1, we expect to find these schools credited with at least a majority of the scholarships. The point is, have these schools gained more than, have they even gained as much as, their proportion of the scholarships? Above all, has the denominational system succeeded in securing the attendance of as many children as ought to be receiving instruction? If it cannot be shown that it has, and we do not remember to have met any convincing proof in this direction, the advocates of the system must confess to failure in the one prime essential of any system.

As far as can be judged from the newspapers of the following days, Bowen's speech did not cause a

---

27 Lyttelton Times, June 13, 1872.
28 Ibid.
great deal of public controversy. The reason for this may have been that, in general, the public was in substantial agreement with the ideas expressed by him. Its effect on the clergy is more interesting. Some, such as Archdeacon Harper of Westland and Rev. W. Willock of Kaiapoi, steadfastly refused to shift their ground the merest fraction towards the Ordinance, while others, including Bowen's own brother, appear to have bowed to the inevitable, and, while not compromising their principles or firm beliefs, did not stand in the way of educational progress. Whatever may have been the effect on individual men, there seems to be a strong case for claiming that the speech represents one of the last great nails in the coffin of denominational education. Certainly the process of dying had begun a year or two previously but it was a slow lingering death with the patient fighting against it to the bitter end. Apart from individual opposition from clergymen at local meetings, there does not appear to have been any further concerted opposition to the Ordinance or to the establishment of a Government system of education.

Why had the Church of England held out so long

---

Archdeacon Harper had had some measure of success in Westland under a different system in which denominational control was encouraged.
against the tide of public feeling and necessity? There seems to be a great deal of accuracy in Bowen's rhetorical questions:

Why should you as a Church wish to interfere? Because you wish to seize the opportunity of teaching what you hold to be absolute truth?

While it was often claimed that in many of the denominational schools no doctrinal teaching took place, and that may well have been the case in most, yet the clergy were often quite unwilling to take part in unsectarian religious teaching when it was proposed. The Lyttelton Times cut fairly close to the bone when, in an editorial following the Diocesan Synod of 1871, it said:

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that when 'religious instruction' is spoken of and advocated, dogmatic sectarian teaching would be a better definition. It is the perpetuation of creeds, of some peculiar form of doctrine, that is contended for, and for which the aid of the State is asked ... Take the discussion in the Synod on Monday evening as a fair sample ... The Archdeacon of Westland, by whom the question was raised, contended that if there were no 'definite doctrinal teaching' in schools, the religious aspect of the people would be of an unfavourable character. ... The Dean of Christchurch agreed ... saying emphatically that there must be 'definite doctrinal teaching' in their schools ... When, therefore, the clergy speak of 'religious instruction' in schools, it is clear that they mean instruction in some form of religious belief. They wish, in fact, to keep the schools as

---

30 In 1873 Rev. E. A. Lingard, a clergyman of the Church of England refused to take part in the provision of unsectarian religious teaching at the East Christchurch School.
some sort of adjunct to and nursery for the Church [and] their object is to preserve . . . the bond between the clergyman and the young members of his flock, and to make instruction in the distinctive doctrines of the Church the leading principle in the work of the schools. . . .

But the writing was on the wall. Most of the churchmen could see that unless an area took steps to have itself proclaimed as an educational district, the provision of education would become increasingly difficult as the government grants to private schools ceased. Rather than risk seeing education in the area stop altogether, they reluctantly withheld their active opposition and enabled the district schools to be established. In addition, the support given to the district schools by most of the ministers of other denominations tended to cut the ground from under their feet.

The second of Bowen's speeches during the 1871-1874 period is by no means as long nor, perhaps, is it as dramatic as the address to the Church Meeting. However, as a fore-runner of a matter which was to give Bowen some concern in the framing of the Act in 1877, it deserves some treatment.

Following the example of many other areas, the residents of Riccarton presented a memorial to the

---

31 Lyttelton Times, August 2, 1871.
Board of Education asking that an educational district should be established there.\textsuperscript{32} The Board called a meeting to discuss it and appointed Bowen as its representative. His brother, chairman of the Riccarton School Committee at this time, was called upon to chair this meeting, and took great pains to point out that the only reason why the meeting was being called was a desire to make the school more efficient and not dissatisfaction with the ruling standards. It was a question, he said, of permitting the school to fall off in efficiency, or be brought under the Act, and he did not think that they should hesitate as to which course they should adopt. Fifteen months later, when the school was completed and opened, he again chaired the proceedings and stated his position:

\textit{Personally he did not consider the system the best, but in his opinion it was unwise for those who possessed influence to hold aloof from a system which, though not quite consonant with their views, offered the only means of meeting the full requirements of the district.}\textsuperscript{33}

A more reasonable statement than this could hardly have been expected from a Church of England clergymen at this time.

C. C. Bowen directed his remarks to the subject

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., July 2, 1872.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., October 3, 1873.
of local interest in education. It was as though the denominational question had been finally settled and there was no longer any reference to it required. He turned to another factor of major importance in promoting the cause of universal education.

He pointed out first how educational progress depended greatly on the pooling of many individual talents and abilities. A person with no knowledge of one particular process might be gifted in some other way and be able to make a considerable contribution to the general aim of discipline and order. His next statement heralded one of the major principles upon which the Act of 1877 was framed, for he claimed that

the backbone of the whole system of education in this province is the co-operation of School Committees with the Central Board. . . .

The School Committee epitomised the interest of the local population in the education of its children, a responsibility which no man could put off lightly as it affected the welfare of the whole nation. He did not wish this co-operation to give rise to uniformity—indeed there was no reason why it should—but there had to be a certain measure of agreement. It was true, however, that in trying to co-operate men discovered that there were many differences and difficulties between them, but it was necessary in any co-operative
group to leave room, within certain limits, for differences of opinion.

The Board's chief desire, said Bowen, was to see the committees working out the system. There had, he admitted, been some criticism of the Board from the committees on the charge that they (the committees) were not allowed to attend to matters which were, to say the least, mainly trivial. He reminded his hearers that at that time the greater proportion of the cost of education was falling on the public revenue because of the insufficiency of the rates to cover even teachers' salaries. Along with this heavy reliance on public revenue had to go a due sense of responsibility to the suppliers of that finance. Moreover, there were great differences of ideas among the committees on what were fair charges on the funds supplied, so that the Board was obliged to look very carefully into the distribution to ensure, as far as possible, fairly proportionate expenditure. 34

Certainly the committees were not slow to grumble against the Board, but as long as they were doing their work in earnest the Board would not complain

34 Cf. Bowen's statement in the first reading debate on the 1877 Bill, where he justified ultimate government control of expenditure on the ground that seven-eighths of the cost of education would be met by the Consolidated Fund. Vide infra Chapter VII, p. 187.
of their being "a little exacting."

He expressed his desire to see greater and greater public interest in education. Such effort and interest would do much to sweep away the bigotries and prejudices that existed at that time, and the tendency to argue as to who was to take charge of this or that work would disappear when men were faced with the magnitude of the task of education.

All political questions sink into insignificance beside that of public education, and in a young country, the character it will maintain in the future will greatly depend on the efforts of the present generation as to the immediate results of their work.

He concluded with a strong statement of his philosophy of education:

Few educated men, and even those few only at rare intervals, attain to the knowledge of their own ignorance—to a sense of their own insignificance, and of the unintelligible vastness of the Universe. But every step in knowledge, however humble, tends to loosen some ignorant conceit; and as instruction spreads we ought to become more and more astonished at our petty feuds and differences, our jealousies and ignoble ambitions. What is the result of any human effort? Can we tell, who can barely trace out its beginnings? But we do know that ignorance is darkness and that knowledge is light; and so far as we endeavour to dispel the darkness and to unveil the light, so far we shall be endeavouring to do our duty in the place and generation in which Providence has placed us.

There were other occasions when Bowen, in his capacity as chairman of the Board, was called upon to speak on educational matters, but on most of them the
subjects of his remarks followed the basic ideas of the major arguments of the time. The two major speeches adequately cover his principal opinions. In length of time his period on the Board had not been particularly long; yet it had proved to be a period of great influence. The scope and intensity of his activity had been noteworthy; his efforts had been unsparing, driven by a sense of urgency to solve a pressing problem. His work in elementary education in Canterbury had been characterized by his earnest striving for universal education, his thorough knowledge of the questions involved, and his eagerness to secure the co-operation of the people. As he moved from the provincial field into the national limelight, he took with him a deep understanding of the problems which faced those organizing education, and a desire to bring the resources of knowledge within the reach of the whole population.
CHAPTER VII

A CLIMAX OF ACHIEVEMENT

... men with large hearts, men of high culture, who have laid the foundation of our education system, of which we are at present reaping the advantage. ... ¹

According to Atkinson, Bowen had been seeking to enter politics at a national level for some time.² His move had actually been forecast by one or two of the nation's newspapers,³ so that it did not come as a complete surprise to some when his appointment to the Legislative Council and posting to Cabinet rank were announced.

There are two important aspects of this move to be considered: the first is Bowen's motive in entering


²"It seems [C. C.] Bowen has been wanting to join us all along. So he had a definite offer yesterday and has accepted." H. A. Atkinson to A. S. Atkinson, November 17, 1874. Quoted in G. H. Scholfield (ed.), The Richmond-Atkinson Papers, Vol. II, p. 386.

³"It is said that an offer of the situation was made to a Southern Resident Magistrate, but respectfully declined. . . ." Evening Post, Wellington, September 11, 1874.
politics at this stage; and the second the nature of the reactions to his quick promotion to Ministerial responsibility.

It is dangerous to attempt on the smallest evidence and after such a passage of time to reconstruct Bowen's specific motives or reasons for his actions, but one or two general conclusions appear to be reasonable. The first suggestion is that the dominant questions of the day, abolition of the provinces and its corollary, national education, were topics in which Bowen, through his distrust of provincial institutions and his impatience with educational delays, was very interested, for they were in accord with his own opinions. The opportunity to participate in two such developments may possibly have held considerable attraction for him.

Secondly, despite the severe criticism levelled by some of the more conservative newspapers at Vogel and his Ministry, Bowen seems to have agreed in some measure with his aims and policies. Whether his support belonged to Vogel or to Atkinson it is difficult to say. Atkinson's comment to his brother that Bowen had been "wanting to join us all along" does not indicate whether the "us" referred to signified the Ministry or those who shared Atkinson's views. W. J. Gardner, in commenting in Historical News on W. R. Armstrong's unpublished
thesis "The Politics of Development", writes thus of Atkinson:

Hall and Atkinson, men of 'prudence', joined the ministry, though they were opposed to its administration. When Vogel retired from the scene, Atkinson formed what was virtually a ministry with a different policy: 'a moderate self-restraint in our future operations.'

Speaking in the Second Reading debate on the Abolition Bill, and in one of his first speeches in the House, Bowen said of the parliament of 1874:

The present Parliament has not yet had the opportunity of doing any great deed. The last Parliament initiated a system of public works and immigration, and a system of pacification in this island, which, I believe, advanced us a generation in civilization. . . .

From this it would not appear that Bowen, as was Atkinson, was "opposed to its administration." It suggests, on the contrary, that he supported quite strongly the principle of development that Vogel's actions and policies demonstrated. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that on at least two occasions, and by different newspapers, it was said that Bowen "owed his allegiance" not to Vogel but to Stafford. 6

---

6"


6"The real secret of Mr. Bowen's appointment may be traced to the influence of Mr. Stafford. It is a sop
The *Stafford Papers* contain no direct evidence of a connection between Bowen and Stafford but the point may well be valid that Bowen's experience in local body finance and general administrative commonsense appealed to Stafford as being the qualities necessary for holding Vogel in check. Whatever the speculation on his alignment with a particular leader, the fact remains that on several occasions Bowen spoke well of Vogel, such as on the occasion of the discussion in the House of Representatives on Vogel's appointment as Agent-General:

The services which he has rendered to this country will speak for themselves. . . .

Two further possibilities governing his choice of a political career cannot be overlooked. The first is that at the age of forty-four Bowen may have felt that a higher position than that of Resident Magistrate would provide the climax to his career. The second, perhaps complementary with the first, might have been that he sincerely felt that service to his fellowmen through the field of politics was the next inevitable step for him.

---

*Evening Post, Wellington, December 2, 1874.*

*New Zealand Herald, Auckland, January 5, 1877.*

7 *NZPD, Vol. XXII, p. 37.*
to take. There was no doubt that, partly through his own nature and undoubtedly as a result of his experiences over many years particularly those on the Bench, Bowen was possessed of a strong trait of humanitarianism. Speaking again on the Abolition Bill, this time in its committee stages, he said:

... and where there are masses of people assembled, we have to provide the conveniences of life that are absolutely necessary to keep the people alive. ... 8

Whatever his beliefs and opinions, and whatever the extent of the inducements offered him to enter the political field, there can be little doubt that there was a genuine desire and willingness on his part to become involved in political affairs.

Despite his acknowledged integrity and lack of political stigma, Bowen almost inevitably shared some of the criticism that was levelled at the Vogel Ministry. Of the two Christchurch papers, The Press, consistently critical of Vogel, showed more clearly its distaste for Bowen's association with the Premier. Although it conceded that Bowen had always been regarded as "an excellent magistrate and an estimable private gentleman", it did not allow this respect to outweigh its customary antipathy to Vogel and his administration:

---

8Ibid., Vol. XVIII, p. 544-5.
If they have not secured a colleague of political experience, they have at all events obtained one of good abilities, gentlemanlike ideas and manners, and, above all, of character beyond even the breath of suspicion. To the present Ministry such an acquisition is priceless. . . . It is evident that the Ministry is going in for respectability; and on this resolve, however late in the day it has been taken, we offer them sincere congratulations. . . .

This ironic comment on the character possessed by the Ministry was not the sole criticism of The Press: it condemned also Bowen's acceptance of a seat in the Legislative Council, claiming that the proper beginning of the political career of a person as popular as Bowen undoubtedly was should have been through the House of Representatives, and not in "an assemblage of extinct politicians and of crack-brained amateurs." However Bowen had made it quite clear when he accepted appointment to the Upper House that he would take the first chance of contesting a seat in the Lower, and such a chance was to come even before he had time to take his place in the Council.

The third point of criticism of The Press was that although Bowen had doubtless been motivated solely by a desire to benefit the country, by his act he deliberately accepted proceedings which, the paper

---

9The Press, Christchurch, November 19, 1874.
10Ibid.
claimed, were "bringing disgrace upon the country and its Legislature." In this way, the rebuke continued, Bowen was coming in "at the fag-end of a Ministry—the partaker of its crimes and its fate. . . ."\textsuperscript{11}

The \textit{Evening Post} in Wellington had been equally acerbic in its comments on Bowen’s appointment. Early in September, 1874, it had hinted at his probable promotion to office, but when the appointment was eventually announced in November, it took umbrage at it for several reasons. It admitted that Bowen had outstanding personal qualities but asserted that those facts "in no way justified his promotion to political office." It went on to deprecate the inability of the Legislature to furnish a member fit to hold office out of its own ranks.

Mr. Bowen will weaken instead of strengthening the Ministry. . . . Surely Canterbury must exercise some glamour over Mr. Vogel in regard to its public men.\textsuperscript{12}

The sole criticism that could be aimed at Bowen personally concerned his entry into Parliament by way of a seat in the Legislative Council. This aspersion was soon met for within days of his appointment the

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Evening Post}, Wellington, November 17, 1874.
electorate of Kaiapoi became vacant and Bowen quickly offered himself as a candidate. Although his opponent took as his main policies provincialism and the advantages of having a local person for representative, Bowen won the seat comfortably and took his place on the Government benches in the Lower House.

The administration of the Department of Justice was not regarded as a very onerous task. When Bowen's appointment was announced, The Press commented that the portfolio was "not a heavy one to bear." Nevertheless there had for some time been a need for revising certain legislation in his department, and Bowen found himself with several bills to introduce. Ten months after his appointment, The Press was prepared to say:

Mr. Bowen has lost no time in proving the value of the office he holds if placed in hands capable of discharging its functions. Besides others, the Debtors and Creditors Act, and the Evidence Further Amendment Bill, both now, we hope, safe on their way through both Houses, bear witness to both his competence and industry in fulfilling the special duties which he has undertaken. . . .

The most important bill of the 1875 Session was the Abolition Bill, which Bowen supported. It proposed to abolish a pattern of administration that he had long considered impracticable. When abolition was achieved one of the ramifications would be a reorganization of

---

13 The Press, Christchurch, September 27, 1875.
the administration of education, and it is to that aspect that attention is now given.

The time was not yet ripe for legislation of a permanent nature to be brought down to establish a comprehensive national system; the suspicions and jealousies of provincialism were still too strong to allow of much unity of aim or effort. In the Abolition Bill itself, as a result of the concern of the southern provinces for their large endowments, additional clauses were included stipulating that education should be left for the time being in the hands of the Boards of Education. At first the fact that this did not cater for Canterbury seemed to escape Canterbury representatives,\(^1\) and a separate bill establishing a Canterbury Education Board had to be introduced. Eventually this Bill was thrown out by the Legislative Council, but Bowen had shown where he considered the strength of educational organisation to lie when he voiced his opinion that "education in Canterbury would not be well administered without some such measure as this."\(^2\)

Bowen was concerned for the standard of

\(^1\)We wonder that Mr. Bowen failed to see so obvious a blot. . . ." The Press, Christchurch, September 27, 1875.

\(^2\)Ibid., October 15, 1875.
administration in his own province. On several occasions he referred to his connection with education in Canterbury, and expressed his pride in and preference for its system. Speaking to his constituents in Kaiapoi during the election campaign of 1875 he said that "he was so much interested in the Canterbury system of education that he might be thought partial to it", and added that when the question of national education came up he would "favour such a system as that of Canterbury." 16

The election of 1875-6 upheld the decision to abolish the provinces and brought the establishment of a national system of education closer. Speaking at Wanganui early in 1876, the Premier, Vogel, said:

As to the action to be taken on the subject next session, some Bill we must introduce; but whether it will be a complete measure of consolidation I cannot say. . . . it will be not only our desire but our paramount duty to endeavour to secure that an educational system should be thoroughly carried out from one end of the colony to the other. . . . we are not willing to allow that in any part of New Zealand an uneducated population shall grow up. . . . 17

These were views that Bowen no doubt endorsed, and he may even then have had a hand in the preparation of a measure, for in opening his campaign in Rangiora late in 1875 he was reported to have said that he

16 Ibid., December 14, 1875.
17 Ibid., March 23, 1876.
"wanted free, compulsory, secular education introduced, and intended to bring down a Bill to this effect if re-elected." In a later speech in the same campaign he claimed that it was not the business of the Government nor its wish to rush hastily to overturn a system where it was working well, but they... intended to establish Boards for local administration where they were not established, to give power for local administration where they were established; and he looked forward to the time when a thoroughly national system of education would be established throughout the colony.

Before the session of 1876 began, Bowen was occupied in drafting the Education Bill that was to be presented that year. Early in May he wrote to Rolleston, sounding him out to see if he were interested in a position as under-secretary, and as a postscript to the letter he added:

I think we have a good Education Act simply providing for Boards all over the Colony. Come and have a hand in it. Bishop of Otago has been here, and is very useful.

---

18 J. L. Hunt, "The Election of 1875-6 and the Abolition of the Provinces" (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Auckland University College, 1960), p. 182. Hunt may have overstated the tenor of Bowen's remarks. In the reports of both the Lyttelton Times and The Press, Bowen outlined what he hoped to see in a national system, but gave no indication that he had a definite plan to bring down a Bill.

19 The Press, Christchurch, December 14, 1875.

20 Rolleston Papers, Bowen to Rolleston, May 5, 1876.
Bowen's high opinion of the Bill was not universally shared. For example, writing to Sir John Hall, Dr. J. Turnbull said:

While I am on politics I cannot help thinking the Education scheme a muddle. There is a good deal of feeling about the Bill, and the proposed appointment of one member of the Board by the judge is a good deal laughed at, and the ignorance of our local finances shown in the appropriation of the surplus of rents from reserves, and school fees to land or general purposes revenue does not reflect much credit upon Bowen. . . .

However this Education Bill was intended to be merely a temporary measure, seeking to "continue in existence the present Boards until February next", with the one amendment being that "the inspection of schools shall be under the control and management of the Colonial Government." Nevertheless its temporary nature was disturbing to some. The Press, for example, stated that under the temporary arrangements there could be no uniform standards, or general plan of classification, and that the main problem was the very one on account

---

21 Hall Papers, Turnbull to Hall, July 25, 1876.

22 "We are busy with cabinet work just now, settling what we shall bring before the House. We shall, I think, do as little as possible this session with education." B. A. Atkinson to A. S. Atkinson, Wellington, March 25, 1876. Quoted in G. H. Scholefield (ed.), The Richmond-Atkinson Papers, Vol. II, p. 415.

of which Canterbury had swept away its Board—the fact that there were two separate bodies, one to provide money, and one to administer it.  

A fortnight later, addressing a deputation representing the Wellington and Canterbury branches of the New Zealand Teachers' Association, the Premier indicated that preparations were to be made for a comprehensive bill:

> ultimately Government will introduce a Bill for the purpose of making the system of education uniform throughout the colony. During this interim, the Government will gather information as to the best mode of bringing about this state of things.

During the Parliamentary recess between the sessions of 1876 and 1877, the accumulation of information proceeded with some intensity, if one is to judge from the following:

> he \[i.e. Bowen\] seemed bent on accumulating every scrap of available data for the construction of a measure which should be a happy combination of every excellence. The resources of the Boards of Education were laid under contribution. Reports, statistics, estimates, information of every kind, were hunted up on all sides. . . .

Of the major metropolitan dailies, The Press

---


25 *Ibid.*, May 24, 1876. It should be noted however that the 1877 Bill was not a Government measure but a private Bill.

gave the new Bill by far the greatest attention. Three months before the session was due to begin, it began to discuss the impending Education Bill. It pointed out that this measure would be the subject of warm and continued discussion, and that it touched too many points of universal interest not to lead to earnest, even angry debate. "A Government," it said, "which has undertaken to bring in an educational measure for the whole colony is indeed an object for commiseration."

A week later the leader-writer returned to the subject, saying that of all the measures that the Government would introduce, none was likely to give rise to more discussion than the Education Bill. But still no information about the Bill was released, and on the next occasion that the subject was discussed in the paper, the writer complained petulantly over the lack of publicity about the projected measure:

we have more than once had occasion to observe an appearance of unwillingness on the part of the Government to let the public know beforehand what they are about. The Minister of Justice, too, is understood to have charge of the Education Bill, and it is more especially in his department that the fault we refer to exists. Mr. Bowen always seems to have a superstition against letting the public know anything about his intended measures; and we do not remember any of his Bills which have not been considerably the worse for this reticence. . . .

27 Ibid., April 17, 1877.
We trust he will not repeat the mistake in the more important matter now before us.28

But The Press itself had unwittingly given the justification for the non-publication of the contents of the Bill when it had stated in an earlier leader that "almost every clause of it will furnish occasion for debate." Because the Bill and education generally was such a deeply personal matter to all the members, Bowen could have been under no illusions about the difficulty of passing any measure to give a national system. It was such a contentious topic and full of points of vigorous controversy that it would not have been a good political move to have had the Bill bandied about by public opinion and subjected to too much criticism before it was even brought before Parliament. The Press undoubtedly had a good case, as did the Otago Daily Times some time later,29 when it pleaded for the release of information on forthcoming bills to allow of sufficient preliminary perusal and consideration, but the success of the Education Bill was by no means assured and Bowen seems to have been justified in holding it back.

28Ibid., May 1, 1877.
29Otago Daily Times, Dunedin, August 9, 1877.
He had not been idle, as The Press well knew, and the work of drafting had been proceeding quietly.

Writing to Hall, Pollen said:

the principal bills are drafted and ready and we shall be prepared to give honourable Legislative Councillors and gentlemen of the House of Representatives enough work to do to keep them out of mischief if they shall graciously deign to take it in hand... 30

And the Hon. J. D. Ormond, also writing to Hall, said:

we are busy getting ready for the session and mean to come down at once with our Bills and Finance. You will hear from Bowen generally what we propose. ... 31

The newspapers, however, in their impatience to get information of the contents of the Bill, had been critical of its preparation. In the same leader in which it complained about Bowen's unwillingness to reveal the Bill's provisions, The Press expressed serious doubts about his competence to handle such a measure as the Education Bill:

The framing of a system of elementary education to be set to work throughout the colony is not a matter in which Mr. Bowen can claim to be independent of assistance. His own experience has been but limited, and he is not understood to have a large acquaintance with the views of persons who are not of his own immediate set. He certainly will not be able to 'center over the religious difficulty' as Mr. Forster expressed it, unless he

30 Hall Papers, Pollen to Hall, May 8, 1877.
31 Ibid., Ormond to Hall, June 9, 1877.
shows the perfect appreciation which that gentleman had of its extent and importance. Neither is he at all the man, unless he exhibits much more real industry over the measure than he is usually credited with, to achieve the preparation of any Bill which will adequately grapple with the practical difficulties of detail. \[32\]

This attitude was echoed by the *New Zealand Herald*, which said that the preparation of the bill had been "relegated" to Bowen, and expressed its doubts whether there existed in the Cabinet any unanimity of opinion on the fundamental principles or any "touch of enthusiasm and earnestness" which would encourage the legislators to pass the bill. \[33\] *The Press* went so far as to share the doubt of the northern paper, indicating that it was inclined to concur in the suspicion that the Ministers were "but half-hearted on the education question." \[34\]

There might have been some excuse for the Auckland paper's lack of confidence in Bowen's ability as he was essentially a "Canterbury man", and his record might have been little known elsewhere, but the same could hardly be said for *The Press*. The charge of "limited experience in educational matters" would have

\[32\] *The Press*, Christchurch, May 1, 1877.

\[33\] *New Zealand Herald*, Auckland, May 15, 1877.

\[34\] *The Press*, Christchurch, May 21, 1877.
been difficult for a Canterbury paper to sustain, while the contention that he had few contacts with views on education outside "his own set" had small proof or substance. Included among his acquaintances were noted educationists in all parts of New Zealand; among the education systems of which he had up-to-date knowledge were those of the states of Australia, many of the states of the United States of America, Great Britain, and several European countries. The suggestion that he might be incapable of dealing with the difficulties of the religious question read strangely in view of the fact that The Press itself had complimented Bowen on his "admirable paper" at the Church Meeting five years previously, and that his tact and tolerance were widely-known qualities. And finally, the aspersions cast upon his ability to grapple with the difficulties of detail hardly coincided with the paper's own statement some two years earlier congratulating Bowen on his "competence and industry in fulfilling the special duties which he has undertaken."35

If the newspapers could not feel confidence in the ability of Bowen to handle the measure, it is a matter of wonder which of the Ministers they did consider

35 Ibid., September 27, 1875.
capable enough. Many of the members of the House of Representatives had had considerable experience in educational affairs but they were not of Cabinet rank. Of the Cabinet members themselves, most had had only limited contact; it would appear that the only member of any great experience was Ormond, who had been chairman of the Hawkes Bay Education Board.

Some writers have claimed that the Bill was more the work of Hislop than of Bowen.\textsuperscript{36} It has already been seen in Pollen’s letter of May 8, 1877, that the principal bills were already drafted and ready at that early date. The newspapers, lacking precise information on the contents of the bill, could only speculate on the extent of its preparation, and seek to justify publication of its provisions before the session began.

Thus The Press had said:

\begin{quote}
If by skilfully using any suggestion Mr. Bowen is able to improve his original design, he will gain so much the more reputation from his measure; and he will generally lose nothing in general estimation from having displayed a readiness to accept and make the most of every hint from whatever quarter it may come. . . .\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{36}"Hislop . . . drafted the first Education Act, the main principles of which have continued in force till the present day. . . ." I. Davey (ed.), Fifty Years of National Education in New Zealand 1876-1926, p.24.

\textsuperscript{37}The Press, Christchurch, May 1, 1877.
This thinly-veiled attempt to force Bowen to make his bill public rebounded on *The Press* two months later when it was announced from Dunedin that Hislop was to leave within a short time to "assist in framing the new Education Bill." The news was treated with some suspicion and distaste:

After all then, it will not be Mr. Bowen’s Bill, but Mr. Hislop’s. And being so, we can form a tolerable conjecture as to the probable character of the measure. For Mr. Hislop has been engaged on this work before. This is not his first Education Bill. . . . We are fully aware of Mr. Hislop’s experience and qualifications. But he must naturally be biased in favour of the system he has so long administered, and be apt to take for granted that whatever is done in Otago must be best for New Zealand. . . .

It was true that Hislop had been concerned with the preparation of previous Education Bills, for he had played a large part in framing Fox’s Bill of 1871, and, on Bowen’s own admission had made a useful contribution to the framing of the Bill of 1876. But if an examination is made of Hislop’s itinerary it will be seen that he could not have had much chance of constructing the 1877 Bill for he did not leave Dunedin

---

40 *Rolleston Papers*, Bowen to Rolleston, May 5, 1876.
until July 11, and this would have meant that he did not
.arrive in Wellington until just over a week before the
.session was due to begin. It would appear then that
.his summons to Wellington was merely to give the Bill
.a final check, and that the measure had been mainly the
.work of Bowen. Webb says of Bishops part in the
drafting of the Act that "his advice had been sought
and in the main ignored." 41 This point he uses to
suggest that the defects of the Bill which gave rise to
abuses in the post-1877 period had been recognized by
Bishop, and he had drawn attention to them but his
warnings had been unheeded. To what extent this was
true the writer is not aware; the point itself serves to
confirm that the bill was in all its basic features
Bowen's preparation and his responsibility.

Full details of the Bill and of its progress
through the various stages may be found in Butchers'
Young New Zealand. 42 It is not intended to cover the
same ground here, but rather to examine how Bowen guided
it through its passage, and to give some account of the
attitudes of both press and public to the measure itself.

41 Leicester Webb, The Control of Education in
New Zealand, p. 43.

42 A. G. Butchers, Young New Zealand (Dunedin:
Coull, Somerville, Wilkie, 1929).
Reactions at first were mixed. Canterbury opinion was that it was a good measure and that Bowen was deserving of congratulation. The general feeling was that he had "steered through his difficulties with no little skill." There was satisfaction in Otago with the secular provisions. "Denominationalism," said the Otago Daily Times, "is dead. Mr. Bowen performed its obsequies in a decent manner last week." Two days later it again gave whole-hearted support to the Bill when it said: "The more carefully we regard Mr. Bowen's Bill, the better we like it." However in the capital there was not the same measure of confidence or the same unanimity. The special correspondent of the New Zealand Herald in Wellington considered that it was likely to prove so contentious that it would not pass.

The house is divided on divers points. There will be a fight on its provisions, and in these circumstances what chance has the bill of passing? Very little, and that is the growing sentiment.

A newspaper correspondent is by no means an infallible prognosticator, but in suggesting that there would be difficulties this journalist was close to the

---

^4 Otago Daily Times, Dunedin, August 1, 1877.
^5 Ibid., August 3, 1877.
^6 New Zealand Herald, Auckland, July 27, 1877.
mark. The parliament of 1877 was still highly-coloured by provincialism and expressed wide ranges of opinion on all aspects of educational philosophy and practice. It was no doubt on account of this diversity of opinion and the intensity of people's views that Bowen chose the unusual course of explaining the general principles of the Bill on the first reading. At the same time he was probably anxious that from the outset members should be aware of the reasons underlying the Bill's clauses.

Webb summarizes the basis of Bowen's approach to the Bill in these words:

He was convinced, without prejudice to the general question of the connexion which should exist between education and religion, that no form of compromise which gave religious bodies a share in the general control of schools was practicable. He was convinced also that there ought to be a vital connexion between each school and its local district and that this connexion was best maintained by a locally-elected school management committee. Finally, Bowen was deeply impressed by the success the larger and wealthier provinces had achieved in the sphere of education; the provincial education boards, he realised, had experience and knowledge too valuable to be sacrificed to the need for administrative change. . . .

It was a measure of over one hundred clauses and it set out in detail the basis of the organization of education on a national scale. In his speech introducing the Bill, Bowen revealed the thinking that was behind

\[h7^7\text{Webb, op. cit., p. 25.}\]
many of the clauses he offered. On several points he expressed attitudes consistent with the experiences and opinions of education that he had gained in Canterbury. He pointed out that wherever enquiry was made it was common to find a very large number of children growing up in absolute ignorance. It was the experience of every country that such ignorance was a very great danger to the State, which had the duty placed upon it, if it did not wish to suffer from the depredations of an uneducated and brutish populace, to provide a primary education for every child in the community. In words that echoed his address to the Church of England Meeting in 1872, he said:

I am not going to argue that education makes men virtuous; but we do know that education teaches the self-control that is absolutely necessary for a civilized state of society. . . . It is no doubt true that there is a tendency to adapt educational means to criminal purposes; but it is also found that the amount of crime that arises from absolute ignorance is far in excess of any crime that arises from skill and education. . . . 18

On the religious question, the Bill had little to say, it being very briefly disposed of "chiefly by omission." 19 Bowen, however, explained his own attitude to the religious question at some length, traversing

---

18 {{\textit{NPB}}, Vol. XXIV, p. 30
19 {{\textit{Webb}}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 30.}
basically the same ground in his rejection of the
denominational system as he had covered in his
statements in Canterbury. Once again he quoted the
example of Dean Hook of Leeds to back up his arguments.
He stressed that no one person in his lifetime could
hope to accomplish all the good work which was his alone
to do, let alone try to do what other agencies could do
even better. Two facts, he considered, could almost be
regarded as axioms: the first was that it was beyond
hope to expect to reconcile the denominational system
with the administration of education by the State, and
the second that the notion that agreement could be
reached on some "general nondescript form of religion"
was a fallacy. There were two other considerations
which convinced him that it was best to omit religious
teaching from the school: it was impossible to allocate
funds fairly or with a guarantee of the most effective
spending, and the dependence on schoolmasters to teach
religion was bound to be unsatisfactory to many parents.

On this question of providing "secular" education,
in the sense that no opportunity would be available to
provide doctrinal teaching, Bowen had the support of
most save the fervent denominationalists. He did not,
however, receive the same support for his proposal to
begin every school day with the reading of Scripture
and the repeating of the Lord's Prayer. Bowen had always maintained that the Bible was an indispensable source of moral and ethical truth, and also a work of considerable literary and educational value. Speaking to the Bill he said:

I feel certain that it is the desire of nineteen-twentieths of the people of this country that the Bible should not be absolutely excluded from our public schools; and if we take care that it should be so arranged that no child should be obliged to attend at the time the Bible was being read, if his parents objected to his presence at such reading, I am sure no injustice can be done to anybody. ... 50

Although there were many who supported this attitude to reading the Bible in school, there were many objections. The Otago Daily Times reflected a strong sentiment in the province when it said:

Secularism, pure and simple, is the only true principle of State education, for the State, as a State, has nothing to do with religion. The secular system is logical, effective, just, and Christian. 52

After the House had in the committee stage deleted the clause relating to Bible-reading, the same paper had the following to say:

In sweeping away the clauses by which Mr. Bowen

50 NZPP, Vol. XXIV, p. 36.
51 "Mr. Bowen has very rightly decided not to exclude Bible reading ..." The Press, Christchurch, July 27, 1877.
52 Otago Daily Times, Dunedin, August 1, 1877.
sought to satisfy the religious claimants for attention, the House has done what is thoroughly satisfactory to the country. . . . 53

It is not possible to say whether Bowen included this clause because he genuinely felt that this was the universal desire in respect of the Bible, or because he felt that to sanction the removal of the Scripture in the original draft of the Bill would raise too much opposition. If his sincerity is accepted, then it must be regarded as an honest expression of his opinion that the use of the Holy Scripture was an essential part of the curriculum. However this interpretation of the desire of the people for inclusion of the Bible revealed some inconsistency with his standpoint of five years previously. In its original form the Bill said that school was to be opened every morning with the reading of a portion of the Bible and the repeating of the Lord's Prayer, with the proviso that parental objection would be recognised and accepted. This was precisely the position that had obtained in Canterbury schools by the Ordinance of 1874, but which had been changed by the Ordinance of 1873 which dropped the compulsory Bible reading. With this excision Bowen had agreed. 54

53Ibid., September 21, 1877.
54vide supra Chapter VI, p. 118.
sought to introduce a similar provision into the Bill. Moreover, in 1872, when difficulties had been apparent in the light of the differing Jewish and Protestant conceptions of Holy Scripture, it was Bowen who had pointed out the anomalous situation which might arise if a Roman Catholic request were made for the Douay version of the Bible. As with the religious conditions of the 1871 Ordinance, so with those of the 1877 Bill. In spite of the allowance made for conscientious objection, it was inevitable that those who could not agree with or accept the suggested religious forms would be excluded. It was this objection to "Protestant devotions" which played a large part in the eventual deletion of even this religious concession in the school day.

The other question of major importance brought into prominence by the Bill was that of administration. It had been Bowen's experience in Canterbury that education was in the strongest position when there was a keen interest in it in the local area and a willingness to take responsibility in its administration. It should be remembered that he always believed that adults should be interested in education for its own sake and not merely regard it as an activity of youth, and that they should lend their assistance to its organization for their children. This belief arose from the conviction
that the most effective way of maintaining a national service was by basing it on individual responsibility.

In his address at Riccarton in 1873 he had said:

55

the backbone of the whole system of education in this province is the co-operation of School Committees with the Central Board. . . .

He had been particularly anxious at that time to see the local committees working out the system thoughtfully, tackling heavy responsibilities, and solving difficult problems. He had felt that it was not necessary for all matters to be dealt with in the same manner. As far as the Board was concerned, he considered that they would be quite satisfied to do no more than see that all the provisions of the Ordinance were carried out fairly and impartially. There had been only one restriction that he had felt to be necessary and that concerned finance. He had emphasised that the Board had to examine very carefully the distribution of public revenue in order that as far as possible such revenue should be spent proportionately.

Bowen's conception of the function of the Committees and Boards in the national system followed the pattern that he approved of in Canterbury and that has been elaborated in the above paragraph. It was not

55 *Lyttelton Times*, October 3, 1873.
his idea alone but was shared by most of the
electors of that time. For example, Vogel, in the
course of a speech at Wanganui early in 1876, had said:

It is our view that whilst there should be a
general control of education throughout the country,
there should be a much larger amount of local
control than now exists in some parts; that there
should be large school committees, amenable to
school boards somewhere; and that generally the
management should be much more local than it is
now. . . . 56

The Bill, as Bowen presented it, provided entirely for
this local administration, but, as he had been forced
to admit at Riccarton, that administration had to be

subject to ultimate central control in certain
particulars, especially in matters of expenditure
. . . because it will be necessary that a due
control should be held by the power which gives the
money—in fact ultimately by this House. . . . 57

One of the arguments that had been advanced in
favour of centralization was that it would get rid of
the great diversity that existed in the management of
the different Boards throughout New Zealand. Bowen, on
the other hand, could not agree that uniformity was at
all desirable in educational administration. It was
more likely, he considered, that an effective over-all
system would evolve from the good points exhibited by
all the Boards.

56 The Press, Christchurch, March 23, 1876.
57 NZPD, Vol. XXIV, p. 32.
As has been pointed out, reactions to the Bill were varied. So great were the differences at one stage that a number of the members agreed that they would make sure that it would pass. Bowen had to meet a protracted discussion in the second reading debate, and wait through days of controversy while the measure progressed through the committee stage. It finally passed its third reading after the Atkinson Ministry had been defeated and the Grey Ministry had assumed office.

It had not been an easy task. Bowen was at the committee table for six weeks while the measure was being fought clause by clause. In later years he was to refer to it as the "toughest job" he had ever had. In the form in which it was finally passed, the Bill often bore but slight resemblance to Bowen's original draft, but he knew that he had to be prepared to concede some of his own ideas if he was to expect others to do the same. This did not mean that he was prepared to lay aside unthinkingly the opinions which he held strongly. The New Zealand Herald, after the second reading and before the committee stage began, instanced several clauses in the Bill to which strong exception was still being taken, and stated that "Mr. Bowen
stands firmly by most of the points enumerated.\textsuperscript{58} Through all the thwarting and frustrating set-backs that marked the progress of the measure he maintained his equanimity. According to the correspondent of the \textit{New Zealand Herald}, he

\textit{did not take the sulks and pitch the Bill overboard, nor did he use a single abusive epithet towards his opponents.} \textsuperscript{59}

Saunders says in appreciation of Bowen's sponsorship of the Bill:

\textit{Intensely alive to the ridiculous and absurd, he was conciliatory and politic in all his movements, and was more amused than irritated by listening to the most frivolous objections.} \textsuperscript{60}

Judged in general terms, the Act received generous treatment from the critics. The \textit{New Zealand Herald} thought that the measure as it stood would be satisfactory to the country, and "the best monument of the session of 1877." It was not the practice of that newspaper, it confessed, to praise Ministers of the Crown, but in this case it acknowledged that Bowen was "entitled to credit."\textsuperscript{61} It went on to say that he

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{58} \textit{New Zealand Herald}, Auckland, September 5, 1877.
  \item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}, September 20, 1877.
  \item \textsuperscript{60} G. H. Scholfield, \textit{Dictionary of New Zealand Biography}, p. 81.
  \item \textsuperscript{61} \textit{New Zealand Herald}, Auckland, September 20, 1877.
\end{itemize}
"displayed a large acquaintance with the subject", a noble admission after its earlier doubts as to his ability. 62

The process of passing the Bill had involved a great deal of impassioned oratory and fervent expression of personal beliefs. That it would pass at all was in doubt at some stages, and even when it had passed Bowen was under no illusions that it was only as a result of much tolerance and willingness to compromise. Speaking in the debate on the Education Bill of 1881, he mentioned again the fact that in 1877 "people gave way on one point or another determined to secure a national system", and stated that it would be "a great mistake to ride a particular hobby and endanger what the country was certain to gain by a national system." 63 It was partly because of this fear that the delicate balance of compromise might be upset if any part of the Act was tampered with that legislators of the period took pains not to prejudice the system by trying to amend sections of the Act. Bowen himself said that as far as he was concerned the question of national education was settled and nothing would ever break it down:


I rejoice more in having been able to take part in giving education nationally to every child in the country than about any other public matter in which I had a hand; and I shall certainly never be a party to any action which will endanger the national education of the people. . . .

It was not only Bowen who contributed to the sacrosanct nature of the 1877 Act. Many of the legislators, remembering the difficulties which had beset earlier attempts to pass such a Bill, were eager to consolidate what had been gained rather than to jeopardize its effectiveness. Nevertheless, whatever the degree of satisfaction felt by the legislators, it was not shared by the administrators of the new system. It was not long before defects began to be seen in the provisions of the Act, and criticism was forthcoming. To a large extent these defects were the fault of Parliament which, by virtue of its many alterations to the original Bill, created the opportunities which enabled unsuspected anomalies to arise and to remain undetected. However, Bowen must take some of the responsibility for allowing weaknesses to be incorporated.

While the Bill was in its second reading, Lusk, member for Franklin and chairman of the Auckland Education Board, attacked the provisions for

---

*6th ibid., Vol. XXXII, p. 424.*
decentralization. With uncanny prescience, he pointed to the Bill, which was described by Bowen as "the most decentralizing bill that has been passed in any English country", 65 as being the most centralizing that could be envisaged. He also drew attention to the power that was available to the Minister to override the Boards. The necessity for this power must have been apparent to Bowen, for he himself stated in his introduction to the Bill that seven-eighths of the revenue to finance the system was to come from the Consolidated Fund, and that it was inevitable that the agency supplying the money should exercise some measure of responsibility and control. What Bowen and the Bill both failed to adequately recognize or give expression to was that ultimately the greatest possible amount of control lay with the initial supplying body. In Canterbury, the Board of Education had been abolished in 1875 mainly because the body supplying the revenue, namely the Provincial Council, had felt that it was not exercising the measure of control and power that it was entitled to. 66 If a national system repeated these conditions, it was inevitable that there would sooner or later be

65 Ibid., Vol. XXV, p. 242.

66 Bowen, it must be remembered, was no longer a member of the Board at that time.
a repetition of attitude on the part of the supplying agency. It might be offered in Bowen's defence that control of essential services by the state was sufficiently uncommon at this time to excuse him for his failure to see the possible defects, but it was the obvious flaw in a plan for administering a system which had ultimate power in the hands of the state that whatever balance of powers of control was envisaged in theory would probably not endure long in practice. In time those who gave the money would demand to say how it should be spent.

Webb instances other defects and lays the blame for them on Bowen. He points out that Bowen had thought that the school committees would be the strongholds of local control. But he claims that Bowen should have realized, as a result of his experience in Canterbury, that the committees, lacking independent sources of revenue, permanent paid officials, provisions for systematic oversight or regular meetings, and sufficient keen and influential interest from the people, were unlikely to assume much importance in the system. This laid the weight of power in the hands of the Boards whose fierce parochialism was the factor least likely to promote improvement on a national scale. Webb also criticises the Act, and indirectly Bowen, for failing
to provide precise definitions of certain terms and functions, such as the meanings of "householder" and "consultation", and the working relationships between boards and committees. And he blames Bowen for the unsatisfactory financial provisions; the inequalities of provincial affluence were not changed by the principle of distributing the revenue by means of a capitation allowance, for it merely meant the continued disposal of funds according to population rather than according to needs. Webb says:

Bowen made it abundantly clear that one purpose of his Act was to remedy these inequalities; but it ought to have been clear to him that, in order to bring about equality, it would be necessary for some years to spend more in the poorer provinces than in the richer. . . .

Obviously the first need in the organization of the national system was an efficient guiding central power to promote the equal spread of educational facilities after a thorough survey had been made of the country and its needs, but the determination to prevent the growth of centralization had placed restrictions on the scope and authority of the central department, thus inhibiting its administrative potential and preventing improvements from being effected.

To sum up Webb's criticism of Bowen, he charges

him with a lack of administrative knowledge, because the system of administration which he envisaged contained too many flaws; and he contends that Bowen's grasp of political realities was defective, because in placing his trust in decentralization and responsibility at local levels he failed to see that "even before the passing of the Education Act there had been a general tendency towards district centralization." 68

It was by no means a perfect piece of legislation whatever the somewhat fulsome compliments that were and are often paid to it. It had faults, and Bowen revealed that he lacked the political acumen that might have enabled him to achieve what he desired while appearing to concede. It may however be argued whether he did not, to a certain extent, have the odds stacked against him. There was no joy in endeavouring to secure agreement in an environment which seethed with parochial jealousy and doctrinal prejudice. To have provided the perfect answer in these circumstances would have demanded that Bowen's powers were superhuman. The political tendency evident in Abolition was towards centralization. However laudable and acceptable Bowen's desire for decentralization, it is questionable whether

68 Ibid., p. 45.
it could have hoped to succeed in times of opposite administrative developments. Is Bowen then only to be blamed because the provisions of the Act did not meet the needs of the next fifteen or twenty years?

It has already been pointed out that on two matters, the opening of the school day and the equating of the powers of those that provide the money and those that spend it, Bowen failed to heed his own experience in Canterbury. Attention has also been drawn to his inadequate understanding of the economic circumstances and community attitudes of his time. It is, however, only fair to him to point out that the period at the time of and following the Act was one of considerable political and social stress and tension, and that many of the factors were quite outside his control. Sir Edward Gibbes mentioned this fact:

Whatever may have been the views and aspirations of its authors, the Education Act of 1877 was not the expert and statesmanlike measure that it was commonly thought to be for in essentials its form was determined not by the knowledge and insight of competent men, but by the restrictive political influences of the time. . . .

Campbell comments that the fact that the Bill was passed at all was evidence that universal elementary education

had come to be widely regarded as a social necessity and that men both inside and outside Parliament were prepared to make large concessions as to means as long as the general aim was furthered.\(^70\) That this was Bowen's main aim also is seen in his speech to the North Canterbury Educational Institute in 1894, when he said that the common sense and public spirit of Parliament at that time overcame local and personal preferences to secure the one great object—that the key of knowledge should be placed within the reach of every child in New Zealand.\(^71\) Even in 1894 he was an unrepentant foe of centralization, despite the evidence that in some respects the powers of the central department were inadequate.

It would almost appear as though Bowen was aware of the defects of the Act but considered them as of less importance than the fundamental principles which he had always held on the question of universal education. Years before, in criticizing the ideas of Baker, he had said that the people were not interested in systems but in good schools;\(^72\) now, in 1894, he


\(^{71}\) *NZFP*, Vol. XXIV, p. 32.

\(^{72}\) *vide supra* Chapter IV, p. 78.
seemed to restate the argument. He was not interested in or concerned about the system’s difficulties or problems; the main thing was that "the key of knowledge was within the reach of every child in New Zealand."

The Act was Bowen’s last piece of legislation. Before it was passed the Atkinson Ministry had fallen and he became a member of the Opposition, in which he remained until his resignation in 1881. There were signs by that time that he had had enough of politics; it contained for him too much indulgence in personalities and misdirection of purpose. In his career of seven years in politics he accomplished many things, but none gave him as much pleasure as his role in the initiating of the national education system. It is clear that, in spite of the charge of lack of political guile and failure to adjust some of his ideas to the realities of the time, Bowen possessed one extremely valuable attribute, namely his zeal for the cause of education. This characteristic, in conjunction with the force of his personality, outweighed much of the criticism he encountered. It was, indeed, a quality of inestimable value to a Parliament which, although it contained many figures experienced in educational affairs, demonstrated too much disunity and divisions of opinion to permit of an easy path to a national system. Bowen’s
contribution was one directed more to education than to politics, but, in the final analysis, politics gained from having a man such as he to give it the lead it wanted at a critical time.
CHAPTER VIII

BOWEN'S RECORD ASSESSED

Whether he knew it or not the colonial politician was heavily indebted to Macaulay, Kay-Shuttleworth, Huxley and Matthew Arnold, and the majority of colonial speeches on education are little more than earnest restatements of views long held in England. Thus, as in England, the central strand in this pattern of thought remained that liberalism... which, while not anti-religious, was hostile to the claims of the Churches, and opposed the intervention of any authoritarian institutionalism between the State and the individual... by the 1870s there was little doubt in the liberal mind that it was the State, and not the Church, which should assume the responsibility for education. ¹

It will be recalled that it was stated in the opening chapter that the purpose of this study of Bowen was three-fold. In brief, the aims were to examine his background and environment, relate these to his ideas and activities, and endeavour to come to some degree of appreciation of his contribution to New Zealand education. The first two of these aims have been covered in the preceding chapters; it is necessary now to review the material that has been assembled and form some judgments on Bowen's life and work. In addition to

this, in the first part of the chapter two statements of Bowen are quoted because they provide a justification by Bowen of many of his principles and by their evaluative character help to produce an assessment of the role Bowen played in the development of elementary education in New Zealand.

After he left politics in 1881, Bowen's chief interests were in business and commerce until his appointment to the Upper House in 1891 returned him to the legislating sphere in Wellington. In matters of education his attention turned towards the University, but he maintained a link with elementary education and in 1893 succeeded his old friend, Rolleston, as President of the North Canterbury Educational Institute.

During this later period of his life he made many references to his work in education. Naturally there are some similarities in many of the statements which he made, but they point to the fact that many of the views he held never wavered, and that he was still convinced that the principles which he had supported were valid.

A perusal of Hansard leads to many references during his later years in Parliament to his work in education; other important expressions of his opinions are to be found in his address to the North Canterbury Educational Institute in 1894, and his article about
elementary education which opened the series of articles on cultural subjects run by The Press in 1896. Of these the most comprehensive is the last, which includes much that had already been said in the parliamentary debates or to the North Canterbury educationists. This article, therefore, will receive a more extended treatment.

If Bowen's speeches in Parliament after 1877 are examined, one or two strong characteristics may be found. The first is that he felt a great measure of pride and satisfaction in having fathered the Act, and wished to avoid at all costs doing anything that would jeopardize it. Speaking in the Address-in-Reply debate in 1879 he said that he rejoiced more in having been able to take part in giving education nationally to every child in the country than about any other public matter in which he had a hand, and that he would never be a party to any action that would endanger the national education of the people.² In the same year, in the course of a meeting of electors in Kaiapoi, he said, in reply to a question concerning the use of the Lord's Prayer and Bible reading in schools, that he would endeavour to reinstate them if he saw the chance, but not if it meant wrecking the Act.³

²NZFD, Vol. XXXII, p. 144.
³Lyttelton Times, August 27, 1879.
The second point which he invariably pressed was that he hoped that no interference would ever be allowed with the local element in the education system. This plea appears on numerous occasions. It had its roots in his intense aversion to State interference in the life of the community, and particularly in education, where he feared that directly public interest at the local level disappeared, the stultifying uniformity of a system imposed from above would make its effects felt. Twenty-three years after the Act was passed he stated:

I look on the local interest created throughout the country in the schools as the essence of our system. If you destroy that local interest in any degree, if you lessen or discourage it, you destroy a great deal of the effectiveness of the educational system.¹

But quite apart from reasons connected with opposition to centralization, Bowen regarded the level of elementary education as one at which most of the public were well qualified to form judgments:

The general conduct of elementary schools was a matter upon which most fathers of families were competent to form some opinion . . . ²

In his address to the North Canterbury Educational Institute in 1894, Bowen again touched on the point regarding local interest in education, and drew

¹ NZEP, Vol. CXVI, p. 613.
² Ibid., Vol. XCV, p. 35.
attention to three criticisms that were being made of the system. The first concerned the expense. There had been some complaint that all had to pay for something that not everybody enjoyed. Bowen would not concede that this was a valid argument and maintained that if steps were to be taken to ensure that the whole of the rising generation should grow up with the means of making their way in the world, then all the community should bear the responsibility. The second criticism was of the moral value of the secular system. It was then, as it would appear always to have been, a temptation to lay the blame for refractory or irresponsible tendencies among young people on the "godless" schools. Bowen, although not one to glory in secularism, yet knew to what extent the secular quality of the schools was essential, and he was not prepared to accept this charge as being supportable. Comparisons of religious or non-religious schools, or of countries supporting denominational schools with those administering secular schools, were invectives. The cause of larrkinism, he maintained, was not in the schools, but in homes where lack of discipline was most apparent.

An interesting point that is found in this but not in any other of his statements is a specific reference to the Roman Catholic claims for grants-in-aid.
Bowen did not approve of any such grants being made, as he felt that it would injure the national character of the system if any such concessions were allowed.

Practically all the other major points of the 1834 speech were repeated by Bowen in his 1836 article. This was by far the longest, save for his speech on the first reading of the Bill in 1877, and the most detailed of any of his statements on education. In it he attempted to show how far the system in the twenty years of its operation had remained close to the principles that were embodied in it, and where or to what extent deviation from these principles had occurred. At the same time he discussed in detail certain aspects of the curriculum and methods of study such as he had not done on any other occasion. Much of the argument he brought forward was merely repetition of previous claims, but much of it throws new light on his ideas.

It had been, for instance, a criticism of the Act that it failed to make provision for secondary education, and this had been forcefully stated especially by critics in Otago where the facilities for higher education were more advanced than in other provinces. As was pointed out in a previous chapter, Bowen was by no means

\[\text{\textit{ Vide Appendix H.}}\]
antagonistic to secondary education, and had in fact stressed the need for an institution in Canterbury to fill the gap between the elementary schools and the Collegiate Union, but in these circumstances, where primary and secondary education were both in need of revenue and support, he left no doubt as to where his sympathies lay: he thought that it must be primary facilities before secondary, and he believed too that they should be kept separate. The proposal to "tack on" a seventh standard did not please him as he thought this would merely lead to confusion. Nor did he favour the syllabus of the primary school becoming too diverse. It should be limited to fundamentals, those that would prove useful to all in adulthood, a solid foundation for those who proceeded to higher education, and a satisfactory accomplishment for those whose education would never proceed beyond the elementary stage.

Campbell says that the New Zealand primary school of 1877-1900 reproduced all too faithfully many of the unsatisfactory features of its English prototype. School discipline was rigorous, and the curriculum

\[7\text{vide supra Chapter VI, p. 120.}\]

\[8\text{The Press, Christchurch, October 29, 1872.}\]
extremely bookish. The main reason for such a development in curriculum, syllabus, and methods was the grasping of the initiative by the central department in its rivalry with the Boards. Bowen condemned this conforming, stereotyped, unimaginative approach. The root of the difficulty he considered to be the necessity, imposed by the demands of an examination system, for cramming facts into individuals. He enumerated all the contingent faults: the narrow close-set goals, the tedious repetitions, the putting of the pupils "through the mill." What was wanted, he considered, was greater freedom: freedom for teachers in the selection of books, freedom to teach youngsters to reason and think, freedom for inspectors to inspect more and examine less. This outlook is hardly to be wondered at when it is remembered that the atmosphere in which Bowen himself had grown up had not been one of narrow formalism but had been productive of stimulation and encouragement. Fifty years later he still advocated "real" teaching, the dispensing with textbooks, the use of trenchant example, the opening up of educational vistas. Only by providing an insight into the limitless ranges of learning and knowledge could the youth of the nation be roused to

---

9 Compulsory Education in New Zealand (Studies on Compulsory Education -- X. Italy: Unesco, 1952), p. 32.
regard their education as something that went beyond the narrow walls of school room and formal system.

According to the first draft of the 1877 Bill, the Inspectorate was to be under the control of the central department, but Parliament had passed the control back to the Boards. This Bowen had never agreed with. Although he was always a constant foe of uniformity, he had always felt that in order to maintain consistent standards throughout the country the Inspectorate should be part of the central department. He was convinced that at least twice as many inspectors were required and that they should be men of outstanding qualities. It should not be their task to examine children but to observe teachers, giving assistance where it was required. This was how he expressed it in his 1896 statement:

They should be men capable of taking a broad view of a teacher's duties, of appreciating the capacities of men of different temperaments, and of encouraging any special power of teaching, whether original or acquired. . . .

Another strong belief to which Bowen gave expression in his 1896 article concerned the role of the State in education. Although he was never a secularist in terms of his basic philosophy of education, he had

---

become one on the question of control and administration. The State, he claimed, would not be justified in interfering with home education and religious training, and where the taxpayers met all the cost of school buildings and facilities it could not in all fairness make any denominational discrimination. He did not favour religious textbooks, partly because of a general suspicion of textbook teaching, which could raise the importance of the written material far beyond its simple limits of being a useful guide to intelligent readers. Religious teaching would have to be carried on in other spheres. It appeared that many homes were failing to inculcate moral and religious teaching, but he believed that it was an overstatement to say that it was universally neglected. Again he defended the secular system from any charge of culpability for juvenile misbehaviour.

Regarding the relationship between Boards and Committees, Bowen did not deny that there had been friction at times between them, but he claimed that the good that accrued from such local administration outweighed any ill that arose through their differences.

Bowen re-stated his position on higher education. It was at this time that there was some agitation for a greater share of control in the universities for the
general public. Bowen strenuously opposed popular representation, saying that it was essential for the welfare and standing of the universities that higher education should not be controlled or limited by the lowest or even the average learning or intelligence of the country.\footnote{Ibid.}

He considered that the less the State interfered with the universities the better it would be, as long as they were energetically and faithfully doing their work. What the State should do was to encourage those of high ability by stimulating both public and private provision for higher education.

Nowhere in this article did Bowen discuss what have been regarded as the major defects of the Act. It has been shown that, particularly in its organization of finance and control of administration, the Act came in for considerable criticism, and that it was attacked on many points as anomalies became apparent. Yet Bowen seemed to pay scant regard to these or similar complaints. Apart from the brief reference to friction between Boards and Committees, he gave no sign of recognizing what were considered to be major points of criticism, namely, the relative early weakness of the central department and its rivalry with the Board.
This leads one to suppose that he was not really concerned about the administrative difficulties that emerged from the Act. His primary goal, and indeed his main achievement, was to see that children were educated. The system might give rise to differences and disputes in its actual operation, but what Bowen was interested in was to get children into school. It was, he believed, a matter of urgency, for if a generation were lost through lack of educational facilities, the community would suffer for years to come.

In the course of history there have been many people whose desire for humanitarian progress and improvement of the lot of their fellow-men led them to despise the trammels of officialdom and to chafe at the conventions of bureaucratic procedures. Florence Nightingale's passionate concern for the sick and the wounded cut through British Army red tape; Shaftesbury and the abolitionists considered that the freedom of man was the prime necessity, and were willing to let the adjustment to freedom look after itself. To place Bowen in the same category as these would be to exaggerate his claim to fame, yet in no small way he demonstrated the same essential qualities of impatient purpose. The conviction had grown upon him from his earliest Canterbury days when the first provisions for
educating the province's children were inadequate, through the time when his contacts with offenders against the law made him aware of the absence of the refinement of education in society, to the years when the population so quickly doubled, that the education of the young was a dire necessity. Now, in 1896, his attitude seemed to be one of indifference to the difficulties—someone would have to solve them somehow but that did not immediately concern him; there was pride in what had been gained, both in principle and in practice, and a satisfaction that, however unsettled the situation still was, free, secular, and compulsory education was, in his opinion, an established fact.

Even those who criticised the Act recognised that the task Bowen had accomplished was momentous. In the eyes of his contemporaries Bowen's prestige was high. His refinement of character, his intellectual qualification, his breadth of judgment, and his personal relationships with all types of men, all made him a figure who was generally respected and admired. The list of his accomplishments is notable both for its length and for its variety. It is obvious, however, that for an individual's achievements to be so marked and his opinions to be so highly valued, there must have been a foundation of deep personal beliefs and a
philosophy of life, and these have been referred to at
appropriate stages of this thesis. Summing them all
up, what was the quality and character of Charles
Christopher Bowen? An attempt must now be made to
review and assess the man and his influence.

The first factor that should be mentioned is the
strong bond of family loyalty and attachment in which
he was reared. There was the sharing in his father's
ideals of colonization which brought him out to
Canterbury; there was the restlessness which found him
eager to leave Canterbury and return to England when
his parents left the colony to end their days in their
native land; there was the submission to family demands
which found expression in the sharing of pioneering
tasks; and there was the obedience to familial desires
when the spirit moved him to enlist for service in the
Crimean War. 12 Bowen's was a characteristic Victorian
home with a strong patriarchal loyalty. However,
Bowen showed that he was independent of family bias
in his change of attitude towards secular education.
Although the members of both his family and his Church
remained strongly in favour of the Church control of

\[12\] "... Mr. Chas. Bowen is half mad to be off
to the Crimea but his father won't hear of it. ..."
Kilbracken Papers, Mrs. Watts-Russell to Mrs. Godley,
May 15, 1855.
schools, he could not continue to share their opinion and he became a critic of the denominational system. That this brought him into some opposition with his family must be concluded when it is realised that until 1872 his brother, Rev. Croesdaile Bowen, was still in favour of the denominational system, and did not change his belief even when he found acquiescence in the district system inevitable. Moreover, Miss Margaret Bowen, niece of C. C. Bowen, gave some degree of substance to this judgment when she commented, in the course of conversation with the writer, that it had always been felt in the family that in some indefinable way "Uncle Charles had let the Church down."

Yet Bowen was all his life a devout churchman, holding responsible positions in the laity of both his parish and the diocese. This attitude, of course, was typical of others who were equally convinced that success would only come if the education system were secular. Fitzgerald and H. J. Tancred, to name but two, played leading parts in the affairs of the Church of England. Speaking in the second reading debate of the 1877 Bill, Jerningham Wakefield said of Bowen's proposal to begin the school day with scripture reading and the Lord's Prayer:
Having gone in for secularism pure and simple, ... he comes round to this High Church whim of his—"for it is nothing more—and says, "But, while we exclude religious teaching from our schools, I do not think there is any necessity for excluding any allusion to a Higher Power." ... I believe it is a mere Church whim and nothing else that the honourable gentleman is actuated by. ..." 13

There is another interesting point on his possible High Church leanings in one of the letters he wrote to Selfe. He asked Selfe whether he had read the report of a speech given by Montalambert at a Roman Catholic congress at Malines and went on to comment:

If ever there is to be a real Catholicity on earth, a union of the Christian Church, I am quite convinced that it will be more due to such men as Montalambert in the Roman Catholic Church than in any amount of fusion between Protestant bodies. ... such a credulousness [as Montalambert's] is far more respectable than "Protestant" fanaticism such as your Scotch divines indulge in. ..." 14

Without being too specific in interpreting the above quotation, one might suggest that it illustrates more the integrity and impartiality of his thinking than the degree of his devotion to religious form. His faith involved piety and sincerity, but it also included "credulousness" as opposed to "fanaticism". Perhaps because of his intellectual background it was a creed of tolerance and broadmindedness, ready to weigh the

---


14 Selfe Papers, Bowen to Selfe, December 14, 1863.
situation before coming to a decision, to change a decision if different circumstances made this necessary, and to see the good and true wherever they happened to be and to value them.

It was a faith that did not fail to see that people come before laws, and that human need is more demanding and requiring of satisfaction than philosophical clarity or the defence of doctrinal values. Underlying his Christian belief was a strong humanitarian concern.

There can be no doubt that Bowen's educational background influenced him and moulded his life. His classical schooling meant that his approach to education was essentially through the humanities, but this did not mean that he was antagonistic to science. It is significant that he played a leading part in the establishment of the observatory in Christchurch, and that through his love for trees he became a keen student of botany. But it is equally significant that he laid more emphasis on values than on facts. In 1857 he stated his distaste for "ologies"; the study of an area of fact was not sufficient unless it related to the way the student lived life. It was a matter of some concern to him that the syllabus of the primary schools was beginning to show the influence of what
might be termed "items of knowledge". This can be seen in the 1896 article in his reaction against the factual deadness of geography as it was then taught, and the criticism of the elementary schools for endeavouring to include within their curricula "the ill-understood 'ologies' and smatterings of science, so-called."

It should be remembered also that although Bowen's lifelong interests were the classical languages, he was by no means unaware of the trends of contemporary theory and knowledge. It is evident from some of his speeches in Parliament that he had read the writings of both Huxley and Spencer of the nineteenth-century philosophers and was familiar with their works. On one occasion, writing to Selfe, he indicated that he was reading the works of French political economists.\textsuperscript{15} His speech in the first reading debate on the 1877 Bill shows how well-read he was on the problems of education in many countries of the world, and that not merely from a knowledge of practical matters but from an awareness of theoretical principles.

Despite the derogatory reference in the newspaper editorial to Bowen's "own set",\textsuperscript{16} it is clear that his

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., August 15, 1864.

\textsuperscript{16}vide supra Chapter VII, p. 168.
friendships with prominent Canterbury men played a large part in moulding his life. His regard for Godley was referred to in an earlier chapter. The gap in Bowen's life when Godley returned to England was almost more than he could bear. Fifty years later he was still corresponding with Mrs. Godley, inquiring after her family, and giving her news of Christchurch and the province. He had never forgotten his leader and mentioned that he still had photos of Godley which he often looked at. Godley's ideals were always high in his consideration. The other person whose friendship with him was long and valued was Rolleston. Even when they held opposite opinions on political topics they remained the closest of friends. On several occasions one followed the other in debate in the House of Representatives. Rolleston's educational activity included membership of the Education Commission of 1863, examining at Christ's College, and later Minister of Education. The refreshing contact with the minds of such men as Rolleston, and the other men with whom he mixed on the Board of Education and the Collegiate Union, must have meant much to Bowen.

An interesting point revealed by the Selse Papers is that even as late as 1865 Bowen did not regard himself as finally settled in New Zealand. Particularly
after his reunion with many of his friends in Britain and Europe in 1860-61, he felt that he could not regard Canterbury as his permanent home.\textsuperscript{17} He was careful to point out to Selse that it was not because of any dislike for Canterbury, but it was heightened by the decision of his parents to return to England in 1865. Factors which forced him to stay were the fact that he was unable to meet the cost of moving and that he had no position to go Home to.\textsuperscript{18}

Another possible cause of his unsettled feeling was his disillusionment at the quick fading of the dreams of the pioneers. He mentioned this in letters to both Godley and Selse, and there is a strong hint of disappointment at the turn events were taking. The general tenor of Bowen's complaints was that the sole concern of the bulk of the colonists and particularly those of later years seemed to be money-making, and that the effort to achieve a satisfactory form of society received small consideration.\textsuperscript{19} It might however be

\textsuperscript{17}"...Both my wife and I like Canterbury for the present but we are not prepared to look on it as a future home...but I shall go on loving Canterbury whether here or in England..." \textit{Selse Papers, Bowen to Selse, December 12, 1862.}

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., August 14, 1863.

\textsuperscript{19}In several of his letters to Selse, Bowen commented on the fact that the colonists had lost the ideals of the founders of the settlement.
said in the colonists' defence and in slight criticism of this attitude of Bowen that few of the settlers had had Bowen's intellectual or social advantages, and their chief concern was not the creation of a Utopia but simply survival and consolidation.²⁰

There must have been some point at which Bowen realized that he was to become a permanent settler, and this might well have been during the period 1865-70, for it was from 1870 onwards that he became more positively identified with New Zealand institutions. If such was the case, it is possible that his resignation to the fact was associated with his realisation of the humanitarian work to be done and his potential to do it.

If one attempts to categorize Bowen with one of the political labels of the time, it is difficult to know which to use. Because of his opposition to Grey, who had taken the label of Liberal, Bowen was looked upon by some, including his old paper, the Lyttelton Times, as a Conservative, but he himself did not accept such a classification. He did not feel that in a young colony there was really anything to conserve. Dewey defined conservatism thus:

²⁰According to the census of 1861, the population of Canterbury was 32,276. Of this total the number of those who had had a university education was 82.
the appeal to origin, precedent, and past history, by which the opponents of social change gave sacrosanct quality to existing inequities and abuses.21 This certainly does not describe Bowen's ideas for he showed no desire to perpetuate anything which was seen to be inefficient or unproductive. Yet it is a fact that in many respects Bowen was a complete Anglophile, and in many of his speeches drew attention to practices which pertained in England as his guide to what should be the practice in New Zealand. He showed an extensive knowledge of parliamentary and legal proceedings in England, this probably stemming from a wide reading of English newspapers and periodicals.22 But his devotion to English practice is not to be construed merely as a conservative love of the traditional, or a refusal to accept indigenous development. It was a deep-rooted belief in the worth of English manners and customs, and the ideals of English justice, fair play, sportsmanship, altruism, and sacrifice. He felt strongly that these values should continue to dominate the activities of Englishmen transplanted to a colonial environment.


22 Bowen often appealed to Selfe to send on to him any copies of English newspapers with which he had finished, and stressed how eagerly such copies were looked for by many settlers. He himself read as many as he could get hold of.
Although he did not in fact receive the classification of a Liberal, there is no doubt that Bowen displayed many liberal characteristics. It is difficult to state exactly what liberalism in New Zealand entailed at this time. It is usually accepted that it began with Grey's Ministry which assumed office in 1877 on the fall of the Atkinson government, but many politicians of various persuasions demonstrated the characteristics of liberalism without being recognized by that appellation. Liberalism in the nineteenth century showed two aspects. There was the traditional or classical liberalism which was individualistic

in the sense in which individualism is opposed to organized social action. It held to the primacy of the individual over the state not only in time but in moral authority. . . . It followed that the great enemy of individual liberty was thought to be government because of its tendency to encroach upon the innate liberty of individuals . . . 23

It was this aspect that Bowen typified in his keen aversion to the dominance of the central department. The "office in Downing Street" was anathema to him.

Webb says:

He had in a marked degree the liberal-minded Englishman's prejudice against the State, meaning the central government. . . . 24

23 Dewey, op. cit., p. 5.

24 Webb, The Control of Education in New Zealand, p. 27.
But in the second half of the nineteenth century the idea had arisen that government might and should be an instrument for securing and extending the liberties of individuals. There was a trend away from individual to collective liberalism, a gradual change in the meaning and spirit of liberalism. Yet this was not activated by liberalism itself, which had continued to uphold the principle of the free activity of individuals. Such freedom was identified with absence of governmental action, which was usually looked upon as an interference with natural liberty. This recognition of government as a force for securing greater individual liberty was, according to Dewey, a development of conservatism:

social legislation was fostered mainly by the Tories, who, traditionally, had no love for the industrialist class. ... factory acts, laws for the protection of children and women, prevention of their labour in mines, workmen's compensation acts, liability laws, reduction of the hours of labour, the dole, and a labour code ... were contrary to the idea of liberty of contract fostered by laissez-faire liberalism. Humanitarianism, in alliance with evangelical piety and with romanticism, gave chief support, from the intellectual and emotional side, to these measures, as the Tory party was their chief political agent. ... 25

Under the spur of such conservative attitudes, liberalism gradually became dissociated from the laissez-faire creed, and to be associated with the use

of governmental action for "aid to those at economic disadvantage and for alleviation of their conditions." 26

The followers of Thomas Hill Green developed the idealistic philosophy that men are held together by the relations that proceed from and that manifest an ultimate cosmic mind. It followed from this that the basis of society and the state was shared intelligence and purpose. It was only by participating in the common intelligence and sharing in the common purpose as it worked for the common good that individual human beings could realise their true individualities and become totally free. The philosophical liberals claimed that:

   it is the business of the state to protect all forms and to promote all modes of human association in which the moral claims of the members of society are embodied and which serve as the means of voluntary self-realization. Its business is negatively to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of individuals coming to consciousness of themselves for what they are, and positively to promote the cause of public education. Unless the state does this work it is no state.... [The liberals] fostered the idea that the state has the responsibility for creating institutions under which individuals can effectively realise the potentialities that are theirs. ... 27

It is reasonable to attribute to Bowen this second view of liberalism, for, despite his aversion to central authority, an expression of his belief in

26 Ibid., p. 21.
27 Ibid., p. 25.
traditional liberalism, he was convinced that the state had to take the initiative in providing adequate facilities for all to be educated. In speaking to the Bill of 1877 he said:

-it is absolutely the duty of the state to provide that primary education which is the key to knowledge for every child in the community... 28

This was merely an expression of the liberal philosophy of "creating institutions under which individuals can effectively realise the potentialities that are theirs." Bowen desired to provide people with education, not simply to confer a blessing upon them, but to acknowledge their right to knowledge and its necessity for the public welfare. He had asserted it thus at Christchurch:

-what the State is bound to furnish to all its children is the key which may unlock useful knowledge... To put knowledge within the reach of all, by means of elementary instruction, is as much the duty of the State as to see that children do not die of hunger or languish in hopeless destitution... 29

It would be wrong to suppose, because Bowen's attitude to the state and education exemplified each of the concepts of liberalism of the nineteenth century, that he considered himself a liberal in the strict

28HSPD, Vol. XXIV, p.32.
29vide supra Chapter VI, p. 139.
political sense, any more than it might be thought that
his humanitarianism or piety meant that he was a
conservative. The idea that he fitted into a narrow
political definition would have displeased him, for he
felt that there was no justification in the 1870s for
colonial politicians endeavouring to imitate English
party government:

I have been thinking whether we have not made a
mistake in putting on our grandfathers' clothes and
playing at this game of party government. I believe
that if we could get rid of the system of party
government we should attend much better to the
practical business of the country. . . .

On several occasions, particularly in the
election campaign of 1879, when the word Liberal was in
very common usage, he warned that not all who claimed
the name actually merited it. Speaking to the electors
at Kaiapoi, he said that the greatest liberalising
element that could be brought into the country was a
good elementary education among all classes of the
people:

he had been very amused at the use of the term
Liberal by some persons that he knew. His opinion
was that people should be judged by what they did
and said. He held that the true test was to allow
every child to become fit to govern; but it was not
Liberalism to endeavour to put power into the hands
of those who were not fit to wield it.\

\[30\] *NZED*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 73.

\[34\] *Lyttelton Times*, August 27, 1879.
He was to this degree suspicious of Liberalism, fearing that it would cultivate the control of power by those who were not qualified by training or experience to use it. He did not believe in "patronising the working man", nor in setting one class against another, and it is easy to see why he would be suspected of not being a supporter of the popular movements of his time in the political sphere. Pandering to public approval did not rank as one of the desirable qualities in his estimate of men.

Bowen's integrity was unquestioned. His niece suggested to the writer that if he was to be summed up in a single word, it was that he was in all respects "honest". He despised insincerity, sham, or cant in any form. Three examples of this attitude can be given. The first was the severe criticism of Fitzgerald that he expressed to Godley in 1855, when he castigated Fitzgerald for his pretence that his speech opening the Provincial Council session came from Responsible Ministers, although he (Fitzgerald) had written every word of it. This was a farcical situation to Bowen, and it was made even more so in his eyes because they could not even be made responsible for what was not their own doing.  

32 Kilbracken Papers, Bowen to Godley, March 31, 1855. Agreement with this attitude was
The second example is taken from the speech he
delivered to the Popular Entertainments Association in
1872, when he said:

I think that if the dignity and nobleness of true
work were once clearly pointed out to him, no man
would care to encumber his property with an obvious
sham. Why is almost every monument of the
eighteenth century hideously ugly? Because the
eighteenth century was an age of shams. The
virtuoso of that age wore sham hair and a sham
figure; he lived in a sham Gothic house, surrounded
by sham gardens, in which trees and shrubs were
tortured into the shapes of sham birds and beasts;
he built sham ruins and wrote sham sentimentality
about them; he admired churches in which the true
work of past times had been hidden by sham ceilings;
and he wrote verses to a sham love whom he probably
called Phillis or Chloe. If such was the supposed
patron of art, no wonder if the multitude wallowed
in bad taste. This generation has shaken off a
good deal of this, but it is far from having yet
accepted the law of truth as the only law of
beauty. . . .

The third example comes from the speech made by
Bowen when a complimentary dinner was tendered to him
by the electors of Kaiapoi after his resignation from
political office. Drawing attention to much of the
insincerity of men's words and actions, he recommended
his hearers to "set their faces, as Dr. Johnson advised,
against social and political cant in every shape."

expressed by F. A. Weld. "... Bowen will have told
you all the Canterbury politics. ... I quite agree
with Bowen that ministerial responsibility is quite
absurd with an elective head. ..." Kilbracken Papers,
Weld to Godley, May 15, 1855.

32Lyttelton Times, May 6, 1872.
What was wanted, as men looked to the future, was "more sincerity of purpose beyond expressions of opinion upon any one topic of the day."  

If this principle applied in the field of politics, it applied equally well in the field of knowledge, where it was possible to find insincerity masquerading as erudition or dogmatism. The attitude to education was too often governed by a false conception of the benefit to be gained from it. Too many people regarded it as a veneer to be acquired for a utilitarian purpose, as an end in itself instead of as a means to an end. Whether at elementary or university level, there were those who regarded the passing of examinations or the gaining of degrees as the process of being educated. On the other hand, said Bowen:

> the chief lesson to be inculcated is that education only begins at school, and that it is not to be prized merely as a means to attain to a certain position but because it sweetens and enlarges human life, and the conditions of any and every career however humble.  

How is Bowen's influence to be measured? It may be assessed from two angles: the direct impact of his personality, his speeches, writings, and opinions in the conditions of his day; and the influence, direct or

---

34 Ibid., October 24, 1881.
35 The Press, Christchurch, September 14, 1896.
indirect, that is felt even to the present day. Answering the first question, it would be easy to point to the legislative achievement of the 1877 Act as the only important or significant accomplishment of his career, and forget the wider influence of his personality and attitude to cultural matters in general. His writing in the *Lyttelton Times*, his high intellectual standard, his devotion to high ideals and purposes, his experience in administration, and his sheer all-round standard of excellence made him a man whose opinion was respected and valued. Particularly was this the case in his Canterbury days. It was especially noticeable that in the meetings of the Board of Education his conclusions were often so incisive and accurate that there would be no need for further discussion, and a motion that was neither amended nor opposed would often sum up the matter immediately.

Bowen was in one respect in a rather exceptional position. Although his family was not without some means, having taken up sections in some parts of the province, the Bowens did not become settlers of substance. Property therefore did not determine for Bowen, as it did for some, an attitude towards politics or a loyalty to a political creed based on land tenure and development. Nor did the possession of wealth
place him automatically into a class, and govern his attitude towards people and privilege. When he assumed the office of Resident Magistrate, he took a position where he could remain neutral and independent of popular preferences. The sum of these qualifications was an ideal opportunity for displaying opinions that were original and unbiased, but more important, worthy of note and headed by the community at large. Other men of rank respected his views and acted on them. His position was more that of a philosopher-idealist than a partisan.

It has already been mentioned that it was Bowen's speech to the Church Meeting in 1872 that seemed to spell the end of organized denominational resistance to the secular district scheme in Canterbury. There could have been few who could have spoken in such a vein to such a gathering. This meeting must be regarded as having had a direct and a very significant influence on the development of education in Canterbury.

The position in 1877 was somewhat similar. Just as it had been Bowen's lead that was appreciated in 1872, so it was the case when the need for a lead on the

---

36 "... The province is getting disgustingly rich (I wish I was)..." Selife Papers, Bowen to Selife, July 15, 1862.
national measure was keenly felt. On the evidence of the remarks of both Saunders and Gisborne, it must be regarded as a piece of good fortune for the cause of national education in New Zealand that Bowen was in the position to promote the Bill at the time when it was needed. What he perhaps lacked in political acumen, he made up in honour and trust from his fellow parliamentarians. One can only surmise what the position might have been had Bowen not had charge of the Bill. It is probable that another sponsor would have phrased the first draft quite differently. Could another have rallied the support of forty-five members to guarantee passage of his legislation? Would anybody else have had the strength of character to retain his patience, maintain his principles, agree to concession and compromise, answer bitter attack successfully and courteously, and see the measure through to completion as Bowen did? Such questions as these cannot be answered, but it is quite possible that the progress that Bowen made might not have been made so quickly or so easily by another.

In spite of the criticism that was levelled at Bowen for failing to foresee the defects that were to

---

arise from the Education Act of 1877, he showed on one or two occasions a shrewd ability to predict subsequent events very accurately. When he wrote in 1857 of the danger inherent in the initiating of a secular system of education, he foresaw the time when such a system would be accepted as the ruling system, but the reason for its establishment and continuation would no longer be recognized:

We ourselves, as initiators of the system might know very well what we intended by it; it might perhaps do ourselves no harm; but we should be taking the first step towards acknowledging that education might be a mere secular matter; towards encouraging the ignorant and thoughtless to believe that they were educating their children, when they were only teaching useful arts for a life bounded by the grave. First steps are dangerous things when tending in a wrong direction. . . . 38

Bowen's fear was that another generation, who had not known that the secular system grew not from a belief in a materialist philosophy but from the impossibility of denominational compromise, would accept the secular system and be satisfied with it as being in itself the perfect education system. It could be argued that a century later there is a tendency to misconstrue the secular system without an awareness of the intense struggle of irreconcilable forces that preceded the decision to establish such a system or the social and

38 Lyttelton Times, May 16, 1857.
economic justification for the decision. It is questionable whether many of those who insist, be it from genuine concern or because they feel that it should be inculcated somewhere, that religion should again be taught in the nation's schools, are cognizant of the factors that caused denominational organization to be rejected and of the ramifications that would follow any endeavour to include the teaching of religion on either a sectarian or an unsectarian basis. It is perhaps an even more controversial subject now than it was a century ago, because where the greater unity of the main Protestant denominations might now offset the deep denominational differences and prejudices of last century, there is now a proliferation of smaller sects, many doggedly fanatical and unwilling to compromise, agree, or even participate in co-operation with the state. These did not exist in the community one hundred years ago, but might now prove to be a strong minority opposed to anything resembling imposed forms or observances.

Another example of Bowen's long and accurate foresight concerns a prospect which he envisaged and which may have already materialised. Writing in 1857, he condemned the concept of education which regarded it as the dry teaching of "ologies" and the instilling of
facts and figures:

The oral instruction which ought to form a large portion of the limited education received by the majority of children is hardened and dried up into the teaching of figures and alphabets; and clever children are encouraged to believe that, so long as they can beat their fellows at spelling, reading, and cyphering, they are likely to become pattern members of society. 39

It would appear from subsequent speeches and writings, and their emphasis on values before facts, that this point was one of considerable importance to Bowen. It is unlikely that he foresaw the present-day attitude to intellect, the "rise of the meritocracy", the materialistic philosophy of civilized nations, and the premium put upon knowledge alone in order to maintain the standards by which the twentieth century lives. Nevertheless, with a prescience uncommon in many of his contemporaries, Bowen detected the inexorable trend that teaching and instruction was to follow for many decades, and that society was to adopt—perhaps from sheer necessity dictated by the growth of knowledge and learning and by the increasing demand for popular education.

39 Ibid., May 23, 1857.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Unpublished

Kilbracken Papers, letters from and to John Robert Godley, 1859–1861. MS held in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch. Transcript held in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Selfe Papers, letters to Henry Selfe Selfe, 1850–ca. 1870. MS held in the Hocken Library (University of Otago, Dunedin).

Hall Papers, letters to and documents of Sir John Hall. Collection held in the General Assembly Library, Wellington.


Stafford Papers, letters to Sir Edward Stafford. Microfilm of selected letters held by the Department of History, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.


2. Published

The Canterbury Papers, issued in nine parts (twelve numbers), 1850–1852.


### B. SECONDARY SOURCES

1. **Official**

   *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*. Period covered 1875-1918 with particular attention to 1875-1877, 1879, and 1881.

   *Canterbury Provincial Gazette*.

   *Ordinances of the Canterbury Provincial Council*.


   *Statistics of New Zealand*. Census Returns for the years 1857, 1868, and 1871.

2. **Newspapers**

   *Lyttelton Times*. January, 1851-December, 1864; 1870-1877; 1879; 1881.

   *The Press*. Christchurch. 1861-1864; 1870-1877; 1879; 1881.

   *New Zealand Herald*. Auckland. September-December, 1874; January-December, 1877.

Books

a) Biographical


b) Educational


--- *Young New Zealand.* Dunedin: Coulls, Somerville, Wilkie, 1929.

Campbell, A. R. *Educating New Zealand.* Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940.


c) Background


4. Unpublished Theses


APPENDIX A

We have received a pamphlet on the subject of Education, lately published by the Rev. Arthur Baker, the clergyman of St Paul's church, Wellington. Its subject is to prove that the Denominational System is the one best suited to the wants and circumstances of the province to which the author belongs. We took it up with the intention of drawing from it, for the benefit of our readers, a clear statement of the arguments which are in favour of such a system for a community like our own. We must candidly confess that the pamphlet does not help us much in doing this. There are evident symptoms of its having been written in the haste which, Mr Baker tells us, was necessary. We venture to remind the author that a cause may be injured by its advocate writing in too much haste; and that he is bound to prove that it was necessary for him to write at all before his apology for necessary haste will be accepted. What we miss in Mr Baker's pamphlet is, not only a clearness of arrangement and argument, but a fulfilment of the promise of the title page, that he was about to shew the especial fitness of the Denominational system to the wants of a new settlement. About one of the twelve pages of the pamphlet has reference to the particular circumstances in which we are placed; the rest contain some of the statements usually made with respect to disadvantages of other systems, and the advantages of the one favoured by the author.

We have felt obliged to express our disappointment at the contents of the pamphlet before us, in order to account for our passing quickly over the main portions of it. Those statements, however, which bear on the question of education as it meets us in New Zealand we will quote at length.

Mr Baker begins by saying that 'the question divides itself into two distinct subjects of consideration: I., one, relative to the nature of the fund for the establishment and maintenance of common schools; II., the other, as to the management of schools so established.' Under the first head he mentions three plans which have been suggested for
raising the necessary funds: I., the compulsory rate; II., grants in aid from the Provincial Revenue; and III., the purely voluntary system. We expected to find a discussion here raised as to which was the most desirable plan of the three for obtaining funds for educational purposes. This subject, which is one of considerable difficulty under the circumstances of a new settlement, Mr. Baker does not enter into. He only points out his objections both to rates and grants if any other system except the Denominational be adopted.

On the third head he remarks:—

'I am inclined to agree with those who have ventured an opinion that, at this early stage of a newly settled colony, all the available funds were better administered, even for educational purposes, by appropriation to public works, such as means and facilities for colonial inter-communication, than directly, by the establishment and support of schools.'

If this means anything at all, it would appear that the author prefers the purely voluntary system. He seems, however, to feel that the indirect assistance he speaks of:—viz., by appropriation of available funds to public works, such as means and facilities for colonial inter-communication, is rather a doubtful matter; for he goes on, without further notice of it, 'to the second head of consideration, that relative to the management of common schools, conditional to their receiving grants in aid.'

'Four systems,' he says, 'have been suggested for the purpose and partially discussed: I., the Irish; 2., the British and Foreign; 3., the Secular; and, 4., the Denominational.' I. The Irish system has been abandoned at Wellington, and it certainly is not likely to find any favour amongst ourselves. II. The British and Foreign system allows the free use of the Bible as a class book, but prohibits other religious formularies and all distinctive teaching. Mr. Baker believes 'this system to be impossible in fact,' that 'the Church of England and other communions, as such, would never rest satisfied with any system which restricted religious teaching in the schools,' and that 'the tendency of this particular system is to indifferentisation and infidelity.' III. We come next to the Secular system. Mr. Baker writes:—

'The purely Secular (or exclusion of religion) system, though apparently impartial, seems to give satisfaction to very few. The truth is, it does not answer the purpose of education according to almost anyone's idea. The great need of a newly
established colony is religious education. It is all very well to say that religious education can be given by the clergy of the several denominations out of school hours; but in point of fact there are no clergy perhaps of any denomination in certain districts; certainly not of all; so that the school may be the only source of religion in a district. If secular schools could be established all over the Province, they would do very little towards civilizing the population unless a commensurate extension of religious ministrations were established; and schools on the Denominational system, at least to a certain extent, supply that need. In the lack of clergy, they become the evangelists of the country. The schoolmasters become the ministry of a district. The school is the best substitute for pastoral visitation and the pulpit.

'I repeat, the argument that children can be taught religion at home, or by ministers of religion elsewhere, always appears to me to betray a singular ignorance of the ready need to be supplied. It is chiefly because there is so little religion at home, and such a total lack of religious ministrations almost universally in the country districts, that religious schools ought to be established, if only as a method of police, to counteract the influence of vicious parents and elders, and, if possible, to carry through the children into families some partial religious restraint.'

Mr Baker also considers that the Secular system would be rejected by the Church of England and others, and 'would introduce a fresh element of discord and rivalry into the state.'

Mr Baker, lastly, enters more particularly into the merits of the Denominational system. He seems to suppose that the term is not generally understood. We have never heard any other explanation given to the term than that it is the system in which the funds available for educational purposes are granted to all denominations without regard to denominational differences. The author gives various reasons for supporting this system. He says 'some portion or other of the community would be excluded by the adoption of any other system that I know of; in this, every citizen would have his fair and just proportion of the public funds for educational purposes.' Again, 'such a system would lead to a wholesome rivalry of sects with a view
to educational pre-eminence and thus great practical
benefit would redound to the State in the improvement of
the common schools.' Again, 'Introduce the Denominational
system, and the ministers of religion would become
agitators in the cause of education.' Mr Baker also
mentions sundry objections usually made against this
system, and gives his reasons for thinking them of no
value. The objection that especially applies here he
speaks of thus:—

'An objection has curiously been made to the
Denominational system, that it multiplies inferior
schools. It appears to me one strong argument in
its favour.* [Footnote in paper included here—
"Instead of one large and good State school in each
district, you have probably at least six small and
indifferent ones. In 1840, in the districts of
Sydney and Parramatta, with a population of not more
than from fifty to sixty thousand, there were 200
schools; many of them numbering not more than 10 or
12 pupils"—(Report of Commissioners in this
Province.) Surely a number of these little schools
is the only practicable remedy for our present need!
Of what possible use would "one large and good State
school" be in such districts, e.g., as Rangitikei or
Wairarapa, with settlers' stations four or five
miles apart? The idea of concentrating the young in
sufficient numbers in such schools, particularly in
the country," (Ibid.) is most impracticable.' [Footnote—]
The only practicable way of educating a
newly settled district is multiplying little schools.
Our object is to educate the people; our complaint,
at present, that we can get no schools of any sort.
Surely, any system which would tend to multiply
however inferior schools, is a vast improvement in
that respect. I should rather urge, as a serious
objection to the establishment of large central
schools, under any system, that they would
discourage and swallow up the little private
denominational schools distributed through the
country districts, and at the same time, owing to
their distance from the homes of a scattered
population, would fail in the contemplated purpose.'

In one portion of the pamphlet the author alludes
to the difficulties of providing school-masters, and
securing the attendance of children. He does not give
any suggestion on the first of these difficulties; on
the second, he suggests that, on the Denominational
system, the ministers of religion would be forward to 'beat up children and remonstrate with neglectful parents.' He also gives an extract from a newspaper letter, in which an English clergyman suggests an Educational test for all trades and professions in order to enforce education.

Such are the principal contents of Mr Baker's pamphlet. Our objection to such statements as are made in it, is, that the authors of them overshoot their mark. In their eagerness to point out the excellence of their own plan, they forget the possibility of a fault in it, as well as the merits of other schemes. They thus drive into opposition many moderate men who would be otherwise inclined to favour them, and make thorough partizans of others who have plans of their own.

Our own bias has been toward the Denominational system, carried out in a liberal manner; but we do not so far put our faith in this system that we cannot see its evils, as well as good points in other systems. We have preferred the Denominational system, not because we thought it free from imperfection and difficulty, but because we supposed that it had fewer imperfections and fewer difficulties than others. In the discussion of this subject we would well consider both sides of the question. For instance, we know that that which Mr Baker mentions as an argument against Secular schools and in favour of Denominational Schools, would be to many minds the strongest argument the other way. He says 'The Schoolmasters in the Denominational System become the ministry of a district.' The general question thus is raised,—is it the duty of the State to provide for the religious teaching of the people? and if so, is the establishment of petty schools the most effective method of doing this? Again, is it true that 'in the Denominational system, every citizen would have his fair and just proportion of the funds for educational purposes.' At any rate, the assertion must be very much modified, for no system would be more exclusive than the Denominational, if it were not liberally carried out. Again, are we to suppose that a system is perfect which, according to Mr Baker, gains its chief support from the 'rivalries of sects,' and 'the agitation of Christian Ministers.' There ought to be higher motives than such rivalries, and the desire of Christian Ministers to gather proselytes around them,
which should urge men to the promotion of sound education. Again, we cannot at all agree with Mr Baker that "the only practicable way of educating a newly made district is multiplying little schools." We are forced reluctantly to allow that for the outlying districts in a colony, there is nothing to be done generally, but to give them "any sort of school." Most of these must be contented with a very elementary education, and that too, from the difficulty of finding suitable persons, given by very moderate teachers placed under little or no control; unless indeed they will liberally help themselves as one district at least in this colony has done already to its great credit and benefit. But for the towns (such as Lyttelton, in which particular case nearly one fourth of the whole population of our settlement is within reach of the schools), it is surely not desirable to encourage the multiplication of little schools. We can not have good schools everywhere; let us have them in some places, where the people from the country, as well as the people in the towns, may obtain an education for their children something better than the teaching of a dame’s school. Every possible convenience should be given for receiving, in the town schools, at a moderate cost, boarders from a distance, who may attend either the upper or lower school. We think that no government grants should be given to the town schools where this is not done. If such means be provided, and country schools 'of any sort' be assisted as far as possible, all will have been done which can probably be done for the present. We very much deplore the idea of frittering away all the funds in multiplying little schools. The superior schools must be a general benefit. The little schools will be in many instances almost useless.  

[Footnote included here:— Such places as Okean’s Bay are peculiar cases— they are almost out of reach of inspection and control, but they ought to be assisted liberally. If the Government is not able to give a grant without putting a stop to schools already established, there would be no difficulty in raising funds by voluntary subscriptions; and we would like to see one begun at once for this particular locality.]

And if we do use the Denominational system in our higher class of schools, let us use it with no sparing liberality. We should not be content with Mr Baker’s requirement, that:—

"Where only one school in connection with any
religious body were established in a neighbourhood, it might fairly be made a condition of a public grant in aid, that children attending the school, at the option of their parents, be exempted from the necessity of special religious teaching. In the particular circumstances of a new colony, the door must be opened very wide; in fact the Secular system must be liberally mixed with the Denominational.

We do not agree with Mr. Baker in what he says as to the apathy of parents. In the towns, at any rate, there is a deep anxiety among the people generally to obtain a good education for their children. Many of those persons who make use of the common schools feel the want of education themselves, and are willing to make many sacrifices to give to their children what they feel is wanting in themselves. Still, there is need of a stimulus, and we believe that far better than educational tests is the simple remedy of libraries and literary institutions. A person may often do more for education by supporting such societies, and helping to keep them at their right work, than by fighting hard for his beloved system, or by making himself very active in school committees. The library, and the news room, and the lecture, despised as they are by some, are one great means by which parents learn the advantages of exerting themselves for their children's education, and by which also their children themselves can alone carry on the work which has been begun at school.

The general tone of such writers as Mr. Baker leads us to make the following remarks in conclusion.

There are few that do not allow that the subject of education is one of the most important matters that we have to deal with. Perhaps it is a pity that more persons do not allow that it is one of the most difficult. Perhaps it would be better if we were not quite so sure that our scheme was exactly the right one; and, if we set to work, not to force our pet plan on the community, but to seek to find out the good points in our neighbour's plans, and to make use of them in bringing about the ends which we must believe all are aiming at. We think that the first question to be discussed is, what are the needs and circumstances of a new colony, what are the wants and requirements of the people? We were told in England that English society was about to be transplanted to the other side of the
world, and to a great degree it was so transplanted. But we must not forget, while we cling to the old country prejudices, that the same plant wants different treatment in a different climate. We must not forget, that we are living in a very altered state of things from that in which we used to live. Our religious system is changed. The classes for whom we have to provide schools are much more mixed up together than the corresponding classes were at home. While people are fighting for their systems those most concerned are perhaps saying—"We do not want your systems, support good schools." Our belief is that it is the wisest plan to reverse the usual order of things. Not to get our system cut and dried, and then force circumstances into it; but rather to enquire fully into the circumstances and wants of our population, and then to come dispassionately to the enquiry, how can these circumstances and wants be best provided for by the means we have at hand.

"Systems of Education",
Lyttelton Times,
March 19, 1856.

Attributed to C. C. Bowen
by the writer of this thesis.
"The 'Lyttelton Times' of March 19th contains some lengthy strictures on the Rev. Arthur Baker's recent pamphlet on the Education question. The writer appears to have read and considered the pamphlet with the offhand haste which he attributes to Mr. Baker in his composition; for he perpetually misses the point. His 'own bias,' he admits, 'has been towards the Denominational system,' but, 'the door must be opened very wide; in fact the Secular system must be mixed with the Denominational.' Now, it appears to us, that one express purpose of Mr. Baker's pamphlet is to shew, that Secular schools, representing a denomination, (which he calls the Secularists), would not be excluded by the Denominational system, but would receive a proportion of the public grants. This, indeed, is the peculiarity in Mr. Baker's usage of the term 'Denominational system'; which the writer in the 'Lyttelton Times' does not perceive. He says 'we have not heard any other explanation given to the term' than such as Mr. Baker describes. In its common acceptation, the term surely means the appropriation of certain grants to certain denominational sects, as such. In such sense only it obtains in England. Mr. Baker proposes in his pamphlet, and it was the plan advocated in this journal during the public discussion of the question, that the religious character of the school should be ignored altogether, as beside the purpose of the grant; that it should neither qualify, nor disqualify, for a share in the public vote; that each school should be assisted according to its scholastic merit, as educating a certain number of children (of whatever religious faith, which is a matter of private judgment), and so advancing the civilization of the public and the progress of the State. The Denominational System, so explained, (and in this sense only is it used by Mr. Baker), is surely the most liberal of all systems, as embracing every other; while every other excludes all others but itself. As Mr. Baker shows, and it is a principal point in his argument, every other system is in fact "the Denominational System limited to a single denomination." On this issue, therefore, Mr. Baker and his Lyttelton critic are at one.
"The writer complains that Mr. Baker has suggested no specific remedy for the difficulties of providing schoolmasters, and securing the attendance of children.' But the object of Mr. Baker's pamphlet was, not to suggest details, but to argue out a principle and a system.

"He also puts the question, 'are we to suppose a system is perfect which, according to Mr Baker, gains its chief support from the 'rivalries of sects' and the agitation of Christian Ministers?' And he adds, 'There ought to be higher motives than such rivalries, and the desire of Christian Ministers to gather proselytes around them, which should urge men to the promotion of sound religion.' [Note — In the original article on March 19th the last phrase read 'of sound education'. From a reading of the next sentence it would appear that the error was made by the 'Spectator' because of its hint that it could not conceive of a better knowledge than what it believed to be the truth. If that was the case, it is remarkable that Bowen, in reprinting this extract from the rival newspaper, did not draw attention to its misquoting of his original statement.] Now, without going into the question, as to what is the particular motive which is 'higher' than a desire to bring others to the knowledge of what we believe to be the truth, we cannot find in the pages of Mr. Baker's pamphlet any encouragement to the proselytism and rivalry of sects. The rivalry he contends for is in the comparative excellency of the merits of each school which would entitle the promoters to a proportionate share of the public money. And the agitation he speaks of has reference to the zeal of Christian Ministers in beating up children to attend the school, which would naturally be exchanged for an active opposition, if the school were thought detrimental (as many think, for example, the Secular system must be) to the interests of true religion.

"These are but specimens of the hasty and inconsiderate manner in which Mr. Baker's pamphlet has been reviewed. His reviewer, if we may venture to judge from internal evidence alone, is one of a class which, having through lack of moral courage, or of a clear settled view, committed themselves to a compromise of principle, are intolerant of others who are bold enough to assert it, and regard them as casting a personal reflection on their own trimming and time-serving policy;
we cannot otherwise account for the carping spirit of the strictures. Mr. Baker's apology for haste in composition plainly has reference, not to any precipitancy or crudeness of opinion on the subject of his treatise, but to its brevity and abruptness of style. He sets out with stating that it is merely an exponent of his deliberate and matured conclusion, 'a repetition of his arguments at the beginning of the year.'

'We can however entirely subscribe to the closing sentiments of the writer. 'While people are fighting for their systems, those not concerned are perhaps saying, 'We do not want your systems, support good schools'. Our belief is that it is the wisest plan to reverse the usual order of things. Not to get our system cut and dried, and then force circumstances into it; but rather to inquire fully into the circumstances and wants of our population, and then to come dispassionately to the enquiry, how can these circumstances and wants be best provided for by the means we have at hand?' This is exactly taking the proper course which our wise Executive have refused. They have endeavoured to force their cut and dried theories, gathered from foreign countries, and a totally different order of things, down the throats of a free people, who are averse to them, and who have manifested their aversion by rejecting the unpalatable dose. It is just because the Denominational is 'improperly' called a system,—being, in fact, a comprehension of all systems of education, that we think it 'best adapted to the needs and circumstances of this colony.' If we may infer from the universal rejection of the two or three pet 'systems' which our Executive have endeavoured to bolster up by lavish promises of pecuniary patronage, and from the evident popularity of our local common schools, we conclude that the public in this Province are of one mind on this subject with ourselves.'

Extract from
New Zealand Spectator and
Cook Strait Guardian.

Quoted in Lyttelton Times,
April 26, 1856.
APPENDIX C

"Our late remarks on Mr. Baker's pamphlet have called forth an article in the 'New Zealand Spectator', of the 9th of April. We give the article in our present number, and now proceed to make some observations on it. We are sorry to fill so large a space with a matter chiefly personal but courtesy to the 'Spectator', and justice to ourselves, forbids us to pass it by in silence. The writer is evidently much displeased with our remarks, and we cannot blame him for trying to prove them worthless. He does this in the first place by accusing us of 'offhand haste and inconsideration' as shewn by our 'perpetually missing the points of Mr. Baker's production.' We must say that there is much excuse to be made for any person missing Mr. Baker's points, lost as they are in what the 'Spectator' calls 'the brevity of his treatise, and the abruptness of his style'. We are almost inclined to think that in some cases, an excuse may be found by supposing that these points agree too closely with the well-known definition—'a point is that which hath no parts, or which hath no magnitude.' We are quite ready however to confess our want of perception, and to apologize for our errors, if we have made any mis-statements; but we cannot plead guilty to the charges brought against us on the evidence given in the 'Spectator'. Three specimens are produced where we are said 'to have missed the points.' The first is thus given: 'His own bias,' he admits, 'has been towards the Denominational system,' but, 'the door must be opened very wide; in fact, the Secular system must be mixed with the Denominational.' From this it is taken for granted, that we could not have perceived 'one express purpose of Mr. Baker's pamphlet, namely, to declare that Secular schools as representing the Denomination of Secularists would not be shut out by the Denominational system.' Now our remarks contained in the paragraph referred to were intended to point out that with a strong bias towards the Denominational system, we yet felt that it was not a perfect one, and we concluded by expressing our opinion that 'under the peculiar circumstances of a new colony,' since the population was small and scattered, and schools for all denominations could not be established, 'if the denominational system
were used, the Secular system must be liberally mixed with it;" i.e. in all Denominational schools supported by Government grants, there ought to be a liberal provision for giving a secular education only, where objections were made to the particular religious teaching. It certainly does not follow from this that we missed what is said to have been one of Mr Baker's points; namely, that secular schools might be supported by public grants under the Denominational system, as well as schools where religion was taught. In England the rule has been, and we suppose still is, that no public grants are made to schools where religious as well as secular instruction is given, and the attempt to extend the grants to secondary schools has not succeeded. But we always understood, as we said in our former remarks, that 'by the Denominational system the funds available for educational purposes are granted to all denominations without regard to denominational differences." Under one administration of it we may have the rule laid down, as in England, that religious instruction must be given; under another we may have the term denominational extended, as it is by Mr Baker and others, and without any rule of the sort. Our doubts as to the perfection of the system arise, however comprehensive it may be; though the remarks which we were led to make had special reference to the fact, that Mr Baker's main arguments in favour of the Denominational system rest upon this, that its schools are religious schools. So much for the first specimen.

"The next charge made against us is, that 'we complain that Mr Baker has suggested no remedy for the difficulties of providing school-masters, and securing the attendance of children. But the object of Mr Baker's pamphlet was, not to suggest details, but to argue out a principle ..." We were surprised at this charge, and turned with some curiosity to our former remarks, to see if there were the slightest grounds for it. We found that we had made no complaint of the sort. We were mentioning certain contents of the pamphlet, and merely stated that after alluding to both difficulties, Mr Baker did not suggest a remedy for the one, and did suggest a remedy for the other.

"The last specimen of our 'missing the points' is, that we are supposed to accuse Mr Baker of encouraging proselytism, and the rivalry of sects, because we inferred a doubt as to the perfection of a
system, which as he says, depends mainly for its support on the 'rivalries of sects,' and the 'agitation of Christian Ministers.' We still express that doubt, and we cannot wonder that many who are sincerely seeking to establish a sound education, should feel difficulties about a system, which gains its chief assistance from the division of Christians, which will possibly become most effective where the breaches are the widest, and strong antipathies urge men on to strong exertions. But though these are our feelings, we do not suppose for a moment that Mr Baker is fond of the Denominational system for this particular reason, that he thinks it will set everybody by the ears and cause a general disturbance. It is surely possible to see certain evil tendencies in a system without supposing that its advocate delights in them.

"Such is the evidence brought against us, and still we say, we really cannot plead guilty upon it. But we have another rod in store for us. If these specimens are not enough to take away our credit,—a description of our character 'drawn from internal evidence alone,' will destroy us quite. And here we are fairly put out of breath by a volley of hard words,—'lack of moral courage,' 'intolerant,' 'trimming,' 'time-serving,' and the like, all applied without mercy to ourselves unfortunate as we are. Now we are really sorry that Mr Baker's advocate should think it advisable to use such weapons; we are sorry for his sake, though for our own, we naturally rejoice to see so sure a symptom that after all we have not so very much 'missed the point.'"

Article in Lyttelton Times, April 26, 1856, in reply to extract from New Zealand Spectator and Cock Strait Guardian.

Attributed to G.C. Bowen by the writer of this thesis.
APPENDIX D

"The Provincial Council have asserted their adhesion to the principles of what has been called the denominational system of education as opposed to the national or secular system. There are undoubtedly great difficulties to be contended against in any scheme which may be adopted, with reference to a question so important as that of education. No question has in our time occasioned greater differences of opinion; there is none on which men have found it so impossible to agree. This is very natural. Men feel strongly on a matter which involves the well-being, spiritual and temporal, of their children, and of the whole generation which is to succeed themselves. The stronger the convictions they hold, the less they will be apt to understand the point of view from which their neighbour examines the same question. All that can be expected is that we should agree to differ. And this we may surely do without exasperating the discussion by calling to our aid party feelings or religious animosities.

"In this province which was originally founded by members of the Church of England, there has happily been a wonderful spirit of forbearance and co-operation, when the joint efforts of other denominations have been required, and there is every reason to hope that such may long continue to be the case. We should, however, endeavour to avert any possibility which might arise of bringing religious denominations into collision; and, in establishing any system of education, our aim should be to select the one least likely to lead to such a catastrophe, and which would at the same time leave members of each denomination at liberty to follow the dictates of their own consciences in the education of their children. Some compromise there must be. As the world is constituted, compromise is to a certain extent the law of our existence. Compromise should, however, be the exception and not the rule.

"The difficulty which arises on the threshold of the question is in the interpretation of the word Education. On the meaning attached to this word depends in a great measure the view which will be taken of any
general scheme by different bodies of men. We doubt that any such difficulty would have arisen before this century; for, although men might differ widely of old as to the means and minor objects of education, they would have agreed at least theoretically as to its ends and aims. But times are changed and we change with them. Even if a Pagan Greek had been asked what he meant by educating his son, he would have answered that it was to teach them above all to obey and reverence the Gods. In almost all countries until lately we should have found that education meant the inculcating by daily teaching and practice of the highest truths known to the time and people. But "Nous avons change tout cela." The nineteenth century has discovered that such an interpretation of the word education is as far behind the age as the spears of the Theban Phalanx, or the Ptolemaic System. Cure is no doubt, in many senses, a most enlightened and scientific age,—an age of vast progress and refinement, but it is also in many senses a most material and unbelieving age. When we confess our inability to understand the expression 'Secular Education,' we are aware that it lays us open to a charge of being 'behind the age.' But we are lagging behind in company with good and great men who have refused to believe that the learning of figures and of 'ologies' can in any way be called an Education.

"We find it as difficult to believe that the scheme of "one day's religion" proposed by the Government resolutions would have mended the matter. What is this but adding one more 'ology' to those taught all the rest of the week? What effect is it likely to have on the children if this 'ology' be theology? We all know how careless children are generally as to all matters relating to religious instruction. They are naturally materialists, and we must rather look to the effect which the whole tenor of a Christian education will have, than to the fruits of a dry, systematic teaching on a given day of the week. Is religion then to be taught to children as a separate science? one day for arithmetic, another day for writing, another for reading, and another for religion? Is the schoolmaster to be carefully watched lest he should drop a word in his instruction which should show the children that he is not a pagan? Let us, if we adopt the system, deal honestly by all denominations. Let us send home for expurgated editions of English History, lest perchance some Christian or perhaps protestant idea might be
inculcated under the mask of 'secular' instruction.

"It is very true that we might have larger schools established on an apparently firmer basis, if the funds were not separated, and some 'secular' system were adopted. But this is not an answer to those who are prepared to deny that such a system would afford an education at all; who would look upon it as an acknowledgment that this young province was prepared to hand over its children to a school practically of materialist philosophy. We ourselves, as initiates of the system, might know very well what we intended by it; it perhaps might do ourselves no harm; but we should be taking the first step towards acknowledging that education might be a mere secular matter; towards encouraging the ignorant and thoughtless to believe that they were educating their children, when they were only teaching useful arts for a life bounded by a grave. First steps are dangerous things when tending in a wrong direction. We see examples enough around us every day of beginning with good intentions works which are certain to be perverted and abused.

"The denominational system seems to be the least objectionable that can be devised. Where there is no state religion it would seem to be the only means of giving state assistance to education without doing violence to the consciences of men of various forms of creed. We all contribute in proportion to our respective numbers towards the revenue; nothing can be fairer than that in proportion to our respective numbers we should receive back that portion of the revenue devoted to education. The responsibility will then lie where it properly should lie. The Church will educate her children, the Wesleyans theirs, the Presbyterians theirs. What do we mean by different religious denominations, if we do not mean different schools of education? Or are they merely machines for getting up public worship on Sundays, and perhaps teaching creeds and doctrines on Saturdays?

"We abstain purposely from entering at present into the details of either of the systems which have been proposed. These are comparatively immaterial. But we are anxious to enter a protest against an acknowledgment in this province of a belief in the so-called 'secular' education. Can we not for a moment see without 'an eye to the main chance', and dare to believe
that the mere acquisition of knowledge is not education?
Of course we are now speaking of the education of the young, for whom schools are supported or assisted by the state. We profess to supply that which is absolutely needful. What is needful and what do we supply?"

Editorial in Lyttelton Times,
May 16, 1857.

Attributed to C. C. Bowen
by the writer of this thesis.
Rightly we conjectured that the subject of education would not be discussed without considerable controversy, warm at least, if not acrimonious in tone. As our object is only to open and enquire into the question so as to afford every facility to the public to judge between the general principles of the denominational and 'secular' systems, we are much obliged to those correspondents who have expressed their opinions through the columns of our journal. We are especially indebted to our somewhat dictatorial correspondent "Connell Councillor", whose long letter puts the view antagonistic to our own in a clear and prominent light. The subject under discussion is of too great importance to justify our dwelling at length upon the charges brought against ourselves. We may say in passing that charges of disingenuousness, sneering, &c., are as easily brought on one side as another, and that we regret that they have been so rashly advanced. "Connell Councillor" may make the most of the expression 'National System', which in our hasty notice of the 9th instant we applied to the Government resolutions. It was inadvertently borrowed from the report of the sitting of the Council, where we presume it had been made use of owing to the difficulty of saying what the Government resolutions were. But the arguments in last week's paper were directed against the principle of the so-called secular system, and we are very much mistaken if the tone of last Saturday's article justifies the assumption that the inaccurate use of an expression in a former issue was made to mislead the public. We do not know whether the charge against the propounders of the denominational system of being 'too apt to assume to themselves the exclusive care for the interests of religion' be or be not in some cases just. We take the opportunity for our own part of repudiating such an absurd assumption; such illiberal nonsense can only weaken any argument. There are two sides to every question. If we fail to convince our opponents, it is unnecessary to undervalue their motives. Our duty we conceive is to express our views as distinctly as possible, even though we may not be so well 'acquainted with the subject' as our able correspondent.
The defenders of and the opponents of the secular system start upon totally dissimilar premises. It is not likely therefore that they will draw nearer as the argument advances. Let us clearly understand however what we are considering. Of course "a student attending a lecture on the Media, or the Binomial theorem, or the French Revolution," does not "mistake either of them for a divinity lecture." We are talking now of the education which the State is bound to take care is offered to those who have no means of acquiring any other. We should conceive that what would be most conducive to the interests of the State itself, if we take no higher ground, would be that higher education which is intelligible alike to the child and to the man, to the ignorant and to the wise. The duties of the State in connection with education are so well put in a letter by Mr. Jacobs which we publish today that we will not enlarge upon this portion of the subject. Our views have been very much misunderstood by our correspondents when they assume that the specific teaching of theologies is the great advantage which we hope to obtain by the denominational system. On the contrary, we expect that a large portion of the children who attend schools based on the secular would receive very little but a dry teaching of theology under the plan of setting aside certain days for the specific inculcation of religious dogmas. The whole tone of the teaching is lowered. The oral instruction which ought to form a large portion of the limited education received by the majority of children is hardened and dried up into the teaching of figures and alphabets; and clever children are encouraged to believe that, so long as they can beat their fellows at spelling, reading, and cyphering, they are likely to become pattern members of society. We cannot be too mindful of the trustfulness with which ignorant persons send their children to school. In aiding or encouraging schools the State must remember that it is locked up to by that class for whom it is interfering as a superior power, which, when it does interfere, takes all responsibility from those assisted; and that in many cases the only education, religious, moral, or secular, which the child will receive, is that afforded by State assistance. Under these circumstances we conceive it to be the duty of the State when it acknowledges the difficulty it is placed in, as to the inculcation of the highest truths known to man, to look to those bodies whose professed duty it is more especially to supply the deficiency.
"Connell Councillor" says truly that we cannot return to the times before the Reformation, when all State teaching was teaching according to the dogmas of the Church. It is very true and very fortunate that religious tolerance is now the law of the land. There would be few indeed who would wish to return to those times to which he alludes. But we do not see the 'sequitur' in our correspondent's argument. Other and various bodies now profess to stand in the place of the Church as it existed before the Reformation. Their various and conflicting claims embarrass the question as between them and the State, but, as our correspondent of today says, the difficulty does not do away with the duty. We said on Saturday last that we could not understand the objects of religious denominations unless they were schools for the education of the people. By this of course we mean primary education. And it is in this relation to their fellow-men that any society which professes itself to be a church stands on a very different footing with respect to the State from that on which stand insurance companies or railway companies or any such associations for supplying human wants.

The subject is so comprehensive that we are almost tempted to continue the discussion of it beyond due limits. The restraint, however, which we put upon correspondents we must remember ourselves.

Editorial in Lyttelton Times, May 23, 1857.

Attributed to C. C. Bowen by the writer of this thesis.
APPENDIX F

A large proportion of the children growing up in Christchurch are now growing up untaught; many of them are idling about in the haunts of ignorance and vice; the machinery for teaching is inadequate to the wants of the population; and the system in force is not sufficient to induce attendance at the schools that now exist. If these statements are true,—and I think no-one conversant with the facts of the case will venture to contradict them—it must be admitted that something must be done at once to amend such a disgraceful state of things. If our population were stationary it would be bad enough, but with the prospect of rapid increase before us it is absolutely intolerable. The Provincial Council has voted increased funds for schools, available if Christchurch is prepared to adopt a certain system of education. It is time for the Church of England to determine what position she will take up in the debate that must soon take place.

In discussing the system of instruction to be adopted, we must take into consideration our present circumstances. The question as between the so-called secular and denominational systems (I use popular terms) is much simplified for us. It is complicated in England by the existence of an established church, which not very long ago, before the state interfered in education, undertook almost the whole of such primary education as the youth of England received and which is still in possession of a large proportion of the school buildings, and of an educational machinery which it would be difficult to replace. Education was necessarily in the hands of the church alone, when the church comprised the whole nation, when almost all intellectual life was confined to the ranks of ecclesiastics who ruled cabinets as well as villages. The denominational system, as it arose in England, was one of those illogical compromises by which changes are begun and softened down in a country which understands better than any other in the world how to reconcile the claims of the present with those derived from the past, and to utilize to the utmost all its resources. Mr Forster's Act appears to be adapted to meet the present wants of England, and as
long as that is the case, the English people will not be induced to discuss abstract propositions.

But with us the case is very different. No church or denomination is recognized by the State; none has any claim on the public purse. The Church of England, and other denominations, have done good work by undertaking primary education with the assistance of grants of money supplied by the State. But if the State finds that the system is wasteful or the work is not done, it is right that some other means should be adopted for carrying out the objects for which the money was voted. Sometimes the denominations complain as if this withdrawal of agency was confiscation — as if they have a right to these grants. I think a little consideration will show that there is no right in the case. The question is one of expediency, and must be decided by the majority of the taxpayers.

Now in the country districts the question has almost settled itself, and no practical grievance has been discovered. On the contrary each day’s experience tells us that where a district has been established under the Education Act, the number of pupils has increased and the means of teaching the increased numbers increases proportionately. Lyttelton is in the transition state; but in Christchurch the question must be faced at once. The denominations with the machinery at their disposal cannot do the work, and, as I said before, the state of a large proportion of the juvenile population is a disgrace to us all as citizens — as Churchmen, as Christians. It is out of the question to expect that the State will grant a large assistance proportionately to communities that do not tax themselves as to those that do. Such a distribution of the public funds would be obviously unfair, and it is practically out of the question to suppose that the legislature will authorize the levying of a direct tax on all ratepayers with a view to distributing the proceeds to a few denominations. I therefore do not see much prospect of a proper fulfilment of their duties by the denominational schools.

But it is said that a system of instruction that does not comprise the highest truths is not education. No doubt instruction such as primary schools give is not education. That the State neither can nor ought to provide. Education is carried on in the family, in the social circle, in the duties and callings of life, as
well as in the school. Churches and denominations are not agreed as to what the highest truth is; and a system of State education professing to model all men on one pattern would be to degrade our civilization and merge the individuality of our race in the dullness of a Chinese pattern. State education will not foster a zeal for the highest learning and the highest truth; it is a snare which I hope the English race will avoid, as it has all other slavish uniformities. But what the State is bound to furnish to all its children is the key which may unlock useful knowledge for those who have the ability and diligence to avail themselves of it; the key which some find under their hand without effort, and which they neglect to use, while which, in the hands of others, would be a treasure without price. To put knowledge within the reach of all, by means of elementary instruction, is as much the duty of the State as to see that children do not die of hunger or languish in hopeless destitution.

But, it is said again, this elementary knowledge will not make men nor women virtuous; of course it will not. But the knowledge they attain to will, as far as it goes, elevate and refine their minds, and will give them new pleasures, less gross than those that would attract them if left in ignorance. I am almost ashamed of dwelling upon this commonplace; but the fact that knowledge will not make men virtuous is too often dwelt on, as though ignorance would make them better. It is wonderful what effect a telling epigrammatic saying, especially if it is in rhyme, has on the half-reasoning intellect. Pope once wrote——

'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring.'

And people have never been tired of quoting and misusing the couplet. What is a little knowledge? The knowledge acquired by a clever schoolboy appears to many of his elders considerable;—to Isaac Newton his own knowledge appeared as that of a child upon the sea shore with the whole ocean of truth unexplored before him. To many men who may take rank between the schoolboy and Newton, 'knowledge comes but wisdom lingers'. A little knowledge, more or less, will not necessarily make a professor of learning, wise and modest, no more than it will save a foolish hobbledehoy from making a fool of himself. The scientific man who, with a knowledge of some of nature's laws, and a guess at others, thinks he can dispose of the whole mystery of existence by a
system of negations; the theologian, overbalanced by
one-sided knowledge and fettered by clerical prejudice,
who shocks with his dogmatism the thoughtful men of
science; the self-elected teacher, who, blinded by
fanatical confidence, ventures to limit the scheme of
God's all-embracing Providence by his own narrow
formulæ—all these have a little knowledge, more or
less; but it is not their knowledge that is dangerous;
it is the ignorance of those who are taken in by it.

On the other hand, when a lad who can read a page
without stumbling, teaches the more ignorant brother or
sister, or even father or mother what he knows, his
little knowledge is a blessing. It will be a blessing
when a generation is trained up with just knowledge
enough not to be misled by the first fluent talker who
may himself possess a little of that power. For
knowledge is power, whether for good or evil. Ignorance
is a power for evil but never for good, and we must fight
against it with every available weapon. We may be sure
that it is want of knowledge that leads people to
dogmatize rashly in the face of the infinite universe—
of the infinite mystery of life and death—of our own
infinite ignorance, be the dogmatists scientific men,
or philosophers or theologians or politicians or
schoolboys. Let us reverse the sense of the well-known
couplet and say, 'A little knowledge is better than none;
if you cannot drink deep, at least taste the Pierian
spring.' The State cannot impart wisdom; that is a gift
beyond its powers; but it must arm every young citizen
with the knowledge that may unlock the sources of
higher knowledge.

Why should you, as a Church, wish to interfere?
Because you wish to seize the opportunity of teaching
what you hold to be absolute truth? And if the State
provides means to enable you to do this, are you
satisfied that it should find funds to enable others to
teach what you hold to be absolute error? Surely this
ambition must arise from a confusion of ideas, from
traditions of a state of society differing from ours.
May I be allowed to suggest that the church will always
have more work than it can do without endeavouring to do
the work of the State; for after all, the management of
State funds can scarcely be the proper work of a church
or denomination qua denomination. Don't let the church
set itself against a system that must prevail from the
necessities of the case, when it is unable itself to
provide the instruction the State offers. Can you teach, are you teaching these young Arabs of Christchurch? Depend on it, whatever system is adopted the Church will have its just influence in the largest sense of the word, and the clergy will exercise the influence they deserve as individuals, neither more nor less. Indeed, it has been held by some that the social influence of ministers of religion is likely to be so embarrassing that they ought by law to be excluded from school committees. Such an exclusion would be unjust, and as all injustice is, impolitic. For no system, let it be what it will, can work well that is not scrupulously fair to all; and the disfranchisement of any set of men on account of their opinions or their profession, is contrary to all the principles of English law. There ought to be no distinction between priest or minister and layman before the law. It is for the people to elect whom they choose and if clergymen and laymen of different denominations have to rub together on committees, so much the better. It won't do them any harm and it may do them good. I may say here that when the Board of Education found that by the accidental provision of the law ministers of religion were unable to take part in proceedings in Lyttelton under the Education Act, they urged strongly upon Government the necessity of so amending the law as to obliterate any distinction between men and man.

It is easy to suggest difficulties in working any system; indeed they must be met with every day; but there are none that may not be overcome by patience and a determination to meet them fairly and honestly; those who dwell upon every little difficulty will never be satisfied. We are constantly told that the elements of history cannot be taught in primary schools without offending the sense of truth or justice of some denomination. Are all members then of one church or denomination agreed on the debatable points of history? It must be admitted that very bitter discussions on historical subjects have been held between members of the same communion. Indeed it is strange if two tolerably well-read men can converse long on such matters without finding that they differ to to ceelo as to the character and even the acts of some of the greatest men of the past. As far as elementary teaching goes, there must be some compromise, and the history of the admirable Irish series of school books, approved both by Archbishop Whately and the contemporary Roman
Catholic Archbishop in Dublin, shows how men honestly determined to conquer difficulties can manage to come to an agreement for practical work.

In conclusion, I beg to say that I am not responsible for the title that has been given in the advertisement to this short paper. All I have endeavoured and hope to do is to urge upon the members of the most liberal Church in the world, a fair consideration of the position in which we stand. Twice as much good work would be done in this world of varied opinions if men determined to do what was best under existing circumstances, instead of waiting to get what each thinks best. Ask yourselves whether under the existing circumstances you can give to all the children depending on you the instruction to which they are entitled as children of civilized, not to say, Christian men, and if you cannot, do not assume a non-possession attitude in the face of the children's need. And do not be afraid that if you are relieved from the instruction of your children in secular matters you will not as a Church have enough to do—there will always be more than enough work even in the way of direct instruction. Your present school buildings are not too large for the infants and feeble of your flock—you will have more time and means to rescue many of them from scenes of degradation and vice, in which they may still be left so long as you struggle to maintain a position which you cannot hold with credit to the Church or with advantage to the community.

"On the Secularisation of Education," a paper read at a Church meeting by C. C. Bowen.

Lyttelton Times, June 12, 1872.
APPENDIX G

It will be a great thing to leave on the minds of boys and girls a pleasing impression of everything connected with the school at which they have spent so many years of their young lives, and there can be no doubt but that their perception as to what is seemly and beautiful will be very much quickened or blunted according to their surroundings during their most impressionable years. The interest shown tonight in the opening of the school is an omen for the future; and I hope that everyone will remember how each in his own sphere can help in the cause of education. One man has a gift for one thing and another for another, and a little zeal will make all these gifts useful; a man who has no knowledge of the detail work of schools may have some power of organizing assistance; all can help to make things work smoothly, and to promote, as much as possible, discipline and order. For, Sir, the backbone of the whole system of education adopted in this province is the co-operation of the School Committees with the Central Board. The management of education has been placed in the hands of the people, and it will be our own faults if, while we strive to instruct the children, we do not manage to educate ourselves. We ought to grow out of narrower into broader views of life and its responsibilities, as we learn that we can delegate to no-one the duties we owe to our children and our country. Difficulties and differences may arise in our endeavour to co-operate for the common good, but such duties have only to be faced to be conquered. For after all, co-operation does not mean uniformity. Those who give way on some points in order to effect practical work are the men least likely to coerce each other into soulless mechanical routine.

A story is told of a French minister, during the time of the last Empire, who, talking one day to some gentlemen on the conduct of his department, pulled out his watch with a self-complacent air and said—"Now, gentlemen, at this very moment, in every Lycée (or public school) of France the second class is reading the 'Fourth Georgic of Virgil'." Now, we Englishmen are apt to think that the cause of the breakdown of so many
systems in France is this same accurate winding up of
the machine to run from hour to hour with the precision
of a clock. Let the machine get but a little out of
order, and the whole collapses at once. We don’t want
a machine. We want to set to work the living energies
of men, and then there will be room within certain
limits for differences of opinion. For instance, it is
at last admitted in the most civilized countries that
the State is as bound to put the means of acquiring
knowledge within the reach of all as it is to see that
none perish of hunger. As men hold such widely
divergent views on the subject of religion, it has been
found necessary to exclude strictly religious teaching
from the regular course of instruction. But I think
the Provincial Council took a sensible and practical
determination in legislating on the subjects to be taught
in primary schools.

With respect to history, sacred and profane, there
were two courses open: either to extrude history, and
thus to emasculate the education given altogether, or
else to order it to be taught, but not to require the
presence at such lessons of those children whose parents
may object to the teaching. Practically the Act says to
local committees, "Teach history, sacred and profane;
we do not prescribe the exact system of teaching it so
long as it is taught; but you must avoid proselytising,
and you must arrange the lessons (at the beginning or
end of the day’s work) so as to allow the children whose
parents do not like these lessons to absent themselves
without losing the rest of the course.” It is not
compulsory to read the Bible, but there is nothing to
prevent the committees from using the Bible in teaching
sacred history. For myself, I cannot understand such
teaching without the use of the oldest history in the
world—a history well-known to a hundred generations,
and from which the Christian world has derived its
highest aspirations. (Cheers) I alluded to the question
of historical teaching as showing how far responsibility
lies with local committees, and how important are the
questions they will have to solve. The theoretical
difficulties which can always be conjured up as we sit
down to discuss such questions will disappear when they
are tackled in practical work. I am sure that I
represent the Board of Education when I say that their
desire is to see the local committees working out the
system thoughtfully, and meeting necessities as they
arise without too great a care for uniformity. It will
be enough for the Board to see that all the provisions of the Act are carried out fairly and impartially, without proselytism and without neglect, and to take care that the large public funds committed to their charge are spent to the greater advantage.

And here I would like to say a word as to the financial question. It is one that at the outset especially touches all school committees and from which I have no doubt a natural feeling of irritation has often arisen, owing to the necessity of referring to the Board on all trifling matters. The fact is that the Board would gladly hand over to the committees this financial responsibility which weighs heavily on their time and attention; but the case stands thus. The revenue proper of the committees is that derived from the rates that are paid over to them; but unfortunately at present barely a quarter of the annual expense of teachers' salaries, which is a first charge on this revenue, is covered by the rates. The consequence is that every penny wanted for the general business of the schools, must be supplied out of public revenue, for the distribution of which the Board is responsible. The revenue of the Committees will gradually increase and more experience will be gained, but as yet it has been found impossible to frame any fixed rule by which the necessary funds for carrying on the schools should be distributed. It has been found that school committees have very different ideas as to what are fair charges on funds so supplied. The Board is therefore obliged to look very carefully into this distribution, to ensure as far as possible fairly proportionate expenditure.

With regard to building, the Board in granting five-sixths to one sixth raised in the district, has endeavoured as much as possible, after examining proposed arrangements and consulting with the committees, to leave the management to those directly concerned. Of course where the proportion of public money is great, the Board are bound to satisfy themselves as to the ultimate usefulness of the expenditure. The work going on at present in the way of building and organizing schools all over the province is so heavy that, although the Board sits weekly, and the very limited staff of the office do their best, delays in one or two cases have arisen; and the committees have not been slow to grumble. But so long as the committees are in earnest with their
work, the Board won't complain of their being a little exacting. The more they, and the householders who elect them, concern themselves about the education of their children, the more they will realise the greatness of their task—the more they will understand that it is not in the schools only that children are educated. Every effort made out of school hours to develop the highest and noblest instincts of the children will be zealously responded to, and as public opinion is gradually purified and ennobled by the popular assumption of the task of education, we may expect to see prejudices and bigotsries fading away. (Cheers) There would be less disputing among individuals and bodies of men as to who should take charge of this or that work, if they could realise the fact that there will always be more work left for them to do than they will be able to overtake.

I feel confident that churches and religious organizations will do their duty more zealously and efficiently than ever under the new order of things, and that any wrong-headed person who may endeavour to make mischief between them in any educational district would be discountenanced at once.

It is fortunate for the cause of education, that the public funds are ample at the moment when the province is endeavouring to enlarge and strengthen the system. Great demands have been made upon the public purse, and the Provincial Council has responded liberally to these demands. It is creditable to the community that its representatives have, at a time when we are, so to speak, spending the capital, recognized the necessity for building and endowing educational establishments.

It is probable that further demands may yet be made for the same cause upon the public purse and I have no doubt that they will be fairly considered. It is above all important that endowments for primary education should be made at least equal to those already made for higher education, so that maintenance of the district schools should not be dependent on the state of the public exchequer from year to year, or fall more heavily on the future taxpayer.

I hope it will come to be understood more and more in civilized states that all political questions sink into insignificance beside that of public education; and, in a young country, that the character it will maintain in the future will greatly depend on the efforts of the present generation. I would ask you all not to
be troubled by those who ask tauntingly what results you expect to see—who tell you (truly enough) that people with a little education are often self-sufficient disagreeable prigs; and who, if they mean anything, would have you infer that it would be better to let the ignorant go on in their ignorance. Few educated men, and even these few only at rare intervals, attain to the knowledge of their own ignorance—to a sense of their own insignificance, and of the unintelligible vastness of the universe. But every step in knowledge, however humble, tends to loosen some ignominous conceit; and as instruction spreads we ought to become more and more astonished at our petty feuds and differences, our jealousies and ignoble ambitions. What is the result of any human effort? Can we tell, who can barely trace out its beginnings? But we do know that ignorance is darkness and that knowledge is light; and so far as we endeavour to dispel the darkness and to unveil the light so far we shall be endeavouring to do our duty in the place and generation in which Providence has placed us.

Speech by C. C. Bowen
delivered at opening of Riccarton School.

Lyttelton Times,
October 3, 1873.
Nearly twenty years have elapsed since New Zealand adopted the present system of National Education. Questions have naturally arisen, and difficulties have been encountered from time to time, which must be faced with a clear understanding of the chief objects aimed at by the State in dealing with a matter so vitally affecting the interests of the rising generation. It is unfortunate that the word "Education" has been officially applied in English-speaking countries to primary instruction in elementary knowledge. This misnomer has led to a confusion of ideas in considering the necessities and possibilities of such primary teaching as should be the birthright of every child in a free state. We have recognized in New Zealand the duty of the State to the children who will some day be the rulers of this country. Our system of primary education provides — in theory at any rate — that no child should grow up ignorant of the elementary knowledge which is the key to every branch of learning. And we are gradually making provision for helping such children as show special aptitude to proceed to secondary and University teaching, in proportion to their diligence and ability. It was provided at the outset that the State should not interfere unduly with the home education of the children, or with their religious training, nor run the risk of stamping out originality and diversity of character by a centralising and stereotyped system of school discipline.

These are the main principles which influenced the Legislature in the long discussions which preceded the passing of the Education Act of 1877. And that Act provided, so far as could then be foreseen, for State responsibility, for local initiative and supervision, for freedom of parental and religious education, and for making the annual cost a statutory obligation. In view of recent criticisms, it is advisable to consider how far the principles on which the Act was based have stood the test of experience, and in what direction we can benefit by that experience.

If we are anxious that no latent talent should be wasted for lack of opportunity, if we desire to provide
for the progress of children qualified by character and
ability from the lowest class in the elementary schools
to the highest honours of the University, we must stren-
uously insist on the management of, and provision for,
State schools being kept apart and distinct from the
control and maintenance of higher education. The
primary schools must be the first charge on the State,
and the active interest of parents throughout the
country must be elicited on their behalf. As it is,
the strain on the State funds is very great, and there
are not now schools enough for the increasing population.
These must be provided, and the claims of secondary
schools on the public purse must be considered after the
necessities of primary teaching are satisfied. The
movement to tack secondary education to the primary
schools by way of seventh standards or otherwise is not
wise. Anyone who knows the financial difficulty of
providing even reasonably for the State schools, and the
strain upon the revenues of the country to provide the
present inadequate accommodation, must look with
apprehension at any tendency to confuse elementary with
secondary teaching. The more elementary teaching is
relieved from the cramming of the ill-understood
"ologies" and amateurings of science, falsely so-called,
the better it will be for the children, whether they
proceed or not to the higher schools. If all their time
is given to sound instruction in elementary subjects,
the better will their minds be prepared for further
learning and for practical life. Children who have been
taught a little thoroughly, and whose minds have been
stimulated by sympathetic teaching, will be better
trained to acquire in after life any necessary branch of
knowledge, than if they had been puzzled at school by
scraps of textbook teaching. And here I must protest
against the craze for inventing Reading Books dealing
chiefly with New Zealand subjects. In a small country,
our object should be to widen the prospect before the
mind's eye rather than to contract it by concentrating
the attention of children on their immediate surround-
ings. Of these they are only too ready to think exclu-
sively. The children of a British colony have a heritage
wider than the little country in which they are born;
the interests of a world-wide Empire in which they have a
share, and in any part of which they may be called upon
to take their part, should inspire a larger patriotism
than that which cramps the aspirations of children in a
petty state. Is it not lamentable to see geography
(so-called) limited for the most part to a study of the
coasts and mountains and rivers of these islands, and to hear teachers, goaded by the gadfly of examination, depreciating the teaching of history altogether? Surely it would be easy for an intelligent teacher to make outlines of history, seasoned with anecdotes, very interesting to children. If they can once grasp some idea, however vague, of the relative position of New Zealand with reference to the British Empire and the world at large, they will take a more intelligent interest in the history and geography even of this colony, than if their attention was confined to our own shores. Another demand which has arisen in some quarters appears to me unfortunate — a demand for the uniformity of school books throughout the colony. Masters should not wantonly or without cause change class books too frequently. But considering the cheapness of the excellent school books now published in England, and the fact that parents pay no fees for their children's schooling, it is not in the interests of education that no latitude should be allowed to teachers in the choice of books. If parents could only realise the advantage to their children of not drudging with hackneyed repetition over the same books, they will not grudge the small expense involved. Our whole aim should be by every means to widen and stimulate the young minds. The majority of children will not acquire much definite knowledge at school; but their minds should be so exercised and trained that they may be able to learn all the days of their life. Exceptionally clever children leave school eager and able for a larger education.

But the chief duty of school inspectors should be to see that the teaching is sufficiently inspiring to awaken up the dormant intelligence of average pupils. There is a very good staff of teachers in New Zealand, many of whom are of exceptional ability. Our inspectors are generally able and painstaking. But both inspectors and teachers for the most part admit that the result of the school course on the minds of the average pupils is disappointing. The children go through the mill — they have acquired a certain amount of elementary knowledge. But too many of them are as uninterested in the subjects of study as if they had been turned out of a machine, and will not carry into their ordinary avocations any taste for further information. The standard reached by them is looked on by them and by their parents as the goal of their scholastic endeavours, very much as a degree is too often estimated by university students as
the main, if not sole, object to be obtained by a course of study. Nor is this to be wondered at, if we watch the course that is forced on teachers by a system of textbooks, standards, cram, and examinations. I know the difficulties that must be faced and conquered before we can relax formal systems without losing the means of testing work done. But in the Australian colonies the Inspectors do test the efficiency of the teaching without recording the "pass" or "failure" of individual pupils. We want more inspection and less examination. The few inspectors there are now in an educational district are overwhelmed with routine work, and they are only able to pay rare visits to the schools under their supervision — visits almost exclusively for the purposes of tests and examination. The present number of qualified inspectors should be at least doubled. They should visit the schools often and unexpectedly, not to interrupt the work going on, but to watch it, to consult with the teachers, to advise them, and to give the encouragement that isolated teachers so sadly need, by talking with them of their plans and difficulties. These inspectors should be men capable of taking a broad view of a teacher's duties, of appreciating the capacities of men of different temperaments, and of encouraging any special power of teaching, whether original or acquired. Moreover, the character and manners of the teacher should be noticed as much as his or her power of teaching. If ill-conducted, or rough or uncouth, young men and women are put in charge of schools, we cannot wonder if the children turn out ill-conducted, rough and uncouth. The inspector should report on the failure of any teacher to speak the English language decently. It is not to the credit of some of our schools that children should come out of them with the vile Cockney twang which is falsely called "Colonial." Above all it should be impressed on schoolmasters and school-mistresses that superintending the absorption of extracts from a textbook is not teaching. Real teaching is essential in primary schools (as indeed in all schools), and much teaching requires a living power of interesting pupils. Without that power in a greater or less degree the teacher fails in his mission. We should aim at turning out of our schools young people encouraged to reason and to think, even at a loss of some technical classification and elaborate statistics. What a sense of freedom, and therefore of enlarged powers, would be felt by an able teacher relieved from the deadly trammels of standards, who could devote to
"live" teaching some of the time now necessarily spent on cram. But to give this freedom safely we must have a great deal more inspection, and the best that can be secured.

In order to give as much variety as possible to inspection, and to secure for inspectors the confidence of the public and of teachers and parents, the inspectors should be on the staff of the Central Department, and should go on circuit through both islands in turn. It is essential that the inspectors themselves should not get into grooves, and still more essential that the reports on each school should come from varied and independent sources. In the original Bill produced in 1877 this provision was made, but the strong Provincial feeling which then existed caused its rejection in Committee. Experience has, I think, shown that it would be advisable to amend the law so as to provide for a general staff of inspectors acting under the instructions of the Central Department, but bound to put themselves in communication with, and report to, the Education Board of the district which they may at the time be inspecting.

Though it is the duty of the State to secure for all children such elementary teaching as may be a key to knowledge human and divine, it would not be justified in interfering with home education and religious training. The State undertakes to instruct in certain secular subjects, and no more. It does not recognize the claim made by the Medieval Church to an exclusive control over the teaching of the young. This was a natural claim when Christendom was practically undivided, and the clergy represented most of the learning of their age. But in a country where all the school buildings have been erected at the expense of the State, and the whole cost of elementary teaching is borne by the taxpayers, it is obviously impossible to introduce religious instruction into the school course. Unfortunately, the opinions of men are most deeply divided on the question which they hold to be of the most vital importance. In this colony we had to give up a denominational system which, for want of adequate means, did not reach the children most in need of elementary instruction. Even in England, notwithstanding all the provision inherited from past ages by the churches for denominational teaching, Dean Hooke was driven by his experience at Leeds to declare that education would never reach the masses until the
State took it up as a secular matter. Much as we must lament the necessity of excluding the Bible from our regular school course, it is our duty to act fairly and honestly by every section of the community. With all respect for the motives of those who advocate the reading of the Bible in schools, we cannot admit a practice which would, for instance, exclude Roman Catholic children, whose parents may wish, or find it necessary, to avail themselves of the National schools. It must be remembered that the school teachers may hold very varied views as to the lessons to be derived from Bible history, and if lessons given under such circumstances are to be deprecated, what is to be said for a Bible textbook? Textbooks on any subject are useful guides to an intelligent reader, but they are a delusion and a snare if put into children's hands without careful and suggestive teaching. If this is the case in regard to textbooks on science or other precise studies, how much more is it so with respect to religious instruction. I am unable to conceive how children can be taught what Christianity means by a perfunctory reading of scraps of Jewish history in an interval of school lessons. The children taught in the State schools live at home. They are not boarders in schools where the teachers are in loco parentis. Religious teaching must be insinuated in the home, in the church, in the Sunday School, and by means of organization to supply religious teaching, when it is possible, in the public schools out of school hours. Here is a wide scope for the energies of women who have super-abundant time and energy for work outside of their own families. Many women are doing vigorous work in this direction; but there are too many Mrs Jellyby abroad, who are so intent on making moral pocket-handkerchiefs for the children — see, and for the grown-up people too — of Borriboolia Gha that they neglect their own children and ignore those of their neighbours. Too many of our own young people are neglected, chiefly those whose parents do not take the trouble to seek such means of instruction as are available. In too many homes there is no discipline, and parents appear to lose all control over their children. But it is a very gratuitous assumption that moral and religious teaching is generally neglected in this country, and that the offensive conduct of some of our colonial youth is attributed to the secular basis of our national system of instruction. Statistics lead to a very different conclusion; and in the Australian
colonies we do not find such a suggestion borne out. Mr Hill, the Inspector of Hawkes Bay schools, in an interesting pamphlet on the school systems of Australia, makes the following remarks on the subject after his enquiries in that country:

'In Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and New Zealand the state system of education is both secular and free, but the statistics of crime in New South Wales do not compare favourably with those of the colonies named. I do not suppose that a bad register of police convictions in New South Wales is the outcome of too much religious instruction, but the fact remains, nevertheless, that in spite of such instruction in the public and denominational schools of that colony the statistics of crime are higher than in either of the other named colonies.'

The best way to secure the success of the schools throughout the country is to enlist in every possible way the interest of the parents. Local administration through the Education Boards and Committees should be jealously preserved. There is sometimes friction between the Boards and the Committees, and sometimes the Committees, from want of experience, make mistakes and are inclined to be unreasonable. But on the whole they have done good work, which could not have been so well done by any outside authority, and they have kept alive among the parents of the children a constant interest in the local schools. I venture to quote here what I said two years ago in addressing the North Canterbury Educational Institute:

... no present inconvenience or annoyance that may occasionally arise from local blunders will ever induce the country to give up the local Boards and Committees, which were intended to protect the schools from the deadening influence of centralisation. Remember that the blunders of a central office are more deadly and far-reaching in their effects, and far less easily rectified than the most stupid blunder of the most inefficient Committee. Committees will become more and more educated to the level of their duties, but the more intelligent a central office is, the greater is its tendency to usurpation; and the central office, with an absolute power of the purse, would very soon reduce the Committees to mere noughties without the intervention of the Education Boards, which represent, and are influenced by, public opinion in
a larger sense than the Committees, and whose
discussion of important questions from different
points of view tends to keep alive public interest,
and to preserve our system from a dead level of
conformity.

Not in educational matters only is it necessary
to set up bulwarks against the craving for uniformity
and symmetry, which is the besetting sin of well-regulated
official minds.

These are some of the reasons for putting our
system of elementary education on a broad, popular basis,
and for inviting the active co-operation of parents.
But to prevent misconception, I must add that in the best
interests of our rising democracy, higher education should
not be controlled or limited by the lowest or even the
average learning or intelligence of the country. A high
standard of learning has been maintained in Europe
through all vicissitudes by means of the self-government
enjoyed by the great Universities. The less the State
interferes with them the better, so long as they are
energetically and faithfully doing their work. But, as
it is in the best interest of the State to encourage
exceptional ability, it would be well if, before all
waste lands are alienated, sufficient endowments were set
aside to provide scholarships for deserving pupils from
the elementary schools, to enable them to pursue their
education further. Such scholarships are already
provided to a certain extent, both by private and public
foundations. The more varied secondary schools are in
origin and in method, the better it will be for the
intellect of the country. The most dismal prospect
conceivable for a nation would be that of an educated
class turned out in one pattern from a State machine.

But for the great mass of the children who must
face practical life at an early age the chief lesson to
be inculcated is that education only begins at school,
and that it is not to be prized merely as a means to
attain to a certain position but because it sweetens and
enlarges human life, and the conditions of any and every
career however humble. When will some effort be made to
teach children that it is the man that gives dignity to
the occupation and not the occupation to the man? If
children left our elementary schools with some perception
of these truths they would have a better chance of
becoming useful and even distinguished members of the
commonwealth, than if they drudged for degrees as so many do without interest in their work, merely for the sake of the honorary distinction, forgetting in two or three years all that they painfully crammed for their University examinations.

The schools and their teachers have done great things for this country, and a generation is growing up which has benefited by and appreciates the opportunities afforded them. But that is no reason for standing still. If we can by any means widen and deepen the impression left on the minds of children by what they have learned during their school course, we shall do more for the mental development of the rising generation than the best devised scheme of examinations and prizes can ever effect.

"Primary Education in New Zealand",
by the Hon. C. C. Bowen.

The Press, Christchurch,
September 14, 1896.