

In more ways than one the Newchurch Grammar School is entering upon a new phase of existence. Last week we announced that the foundation-stone had been laid of a new school building calculated to meet the increased demand for educational facilities. And now we have before us a copy of the draft scheme which the Charity Commissioners have prepared for the future government of the school. Although it is by no means so liberal as we could wish, yet it is a great improvement on the old system, and as such we heartily welcome it. Hitherto the foundation has been administered by a body of Governors in whose election the public had no voice, and of whose transactions nothing definite was made known. Naturally enough, this has long been a source of complaint, because the public, for whose benefit the school was presumably founded, were kept in total ignorance as to how the money left to the school was invested or spent. Some time ago the subject was raised in our correspondence columns, but whether or not the new scheme is the result of that discussion we are not prepared to say.

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It provides that henceforth there shall be twelve Governors – six to be called representative Governors and six co-operative Governors. The representative Governors are to be elected by the following bodies:- Two by the Local Board of Rawtenstall, two by the Town Council of Bacup, one by the Newchurch School board, and one by the Council of the Victoria University but if any body of persons is established under any Act of Parliament as a District Council for any district including Newchurch-in-Rossendale, two of the representative Governors shall henceforth be appointed by such District Council, and the Rawtenstall Local Board and Bacup Town Council shall henceforth each appoint only one Governor. They will each be appointed to office for a term of five years. The first co-operative Governors will be the Rev J.B. Phillips, rector of Newchurch; Mr H H Bolton, J.P., Heightside; Captain Charles Patrick, Cloughfold; Mr R J C Mitchell, Springfield, Newchurch; Mr Edward Hoyle, J.P., Bacup; and Mr Henry Maden J.P., Bacup. Thus the old Governors will constitute one-half of the new governing body. The subsequent appointment of co-operative Governors shall be made by the general body of Governors subject to the approval of the Charity Commissioners, who will still have a supervision over the school and its affairs.

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There is one clause in the scheme which cannot fail to give satisfaction. We refer to the clause which provides that “ the Governors shall make out and render to the Charity Commissioners such accounts as shall be required by such Commissioners, and shall also on rendering accounts for any year to such Commissioners exhibit for public inspection in some convenient place in Newchurch-in-Rossendale copies of the accounts so rendered for each year, giving due public notice where and when the same may be seen, and shall at all reasonable times allow the accounts so rendered for any year or years to be inspected, and copies thereof or extracts therefrom to be made, by all persons applying for the purpose.” This clause will of itself inspire greater confidence in the school, inasmuch as the public will henceforth have the opportunity of investigating for themselves the manner in which its finances are disbursed.

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The headmaster of the school has to be a graduate of some University in the United Kingdom, or have such other qualifications or certificate or other test of his attainments as may be fixed from time to time by any regulation of the Governors approved by the Charity Commissioners. From this, one is led to infer that he master must be a Churchman, although he is not required to be in holy orders, and seeing also that a majority of the first co-operative Governors are churchmen, it would appear that the intention is practically to attain the school's allegiance to the Church of England. And how else can be construed that section of the clause referring to the instruction to be given in which it says "religious instruction in accordance with the principles of the Christian Faith shall be given in the school under such regulations as shall from time to time be made by the Governors."? There is, however, a clause which provides that the parents or guardians of day scholars may secure the exemption of such scholars from attending prayer or religious worship &c. Altogether, the altered government of the school is a distinct gain to the cause of local education, It is a step in the right direction, and one which should tend to make the institution more popular than it has ever been before.