



MR W. A. **TOLMIE**

On Monday it was our sad duty to chronicle the death of Mr William Alexander **Tolmie** [who died on 8 August 1875]. On Tuesday his friends paid to his memory their outward token of respect, when they followed his remains to the place of interment. We take this occasion of saying a few words concerning the deceased gentleman's career as a colonist. From what we can gather, Mr **Tolmie** arrived in Victoria, Australia, about the end of 1852, and after visiting the country districts for a few months, he entered the service of the Union Bank of Australia at the age of twenty. In that service he continued as a much respected officer until the year 1859, when he was induced to join the Colonial Bank of Australasia by the offer of the managership of the Geelong branch of that Bank.

In Geelong he made many friends both for himself and the Bank. He, however, severed his connection with the Colonial Bank about the end of 1864 and came to Dunedin as a partner in the firm of Dalgety, Rattray, and Co. It may be added that from the time of his arrival in Victoria, Mr **Tolmie** and the late Mr George Webster, were connected by ties of friendship with our fellow-citizen, Mr W. J. M. Larnach, who has thus been deprived of two of his oldest associates within a few weeks.

At the expiry of Mr Tolmie's term of partnership in the house of Dalgety, Rattray, and Co., he decided upon abandoning mercantile pursuits, and he betook himself entirely to stock breeding at the property which he had acquired at the Waiwera [South Otago]. His success as a breeder of first-class sheep is well-known throughout the Colony. Paying attention to merinos in the first instance, he, by the introduction of the best strains of blood from the flocks of Australia and Tasmania, soon gave to his stock a name second to none in New Zealand. Indeed, his merinos were never beaten at any of the principal shows in Canterbury and Otago. He afterwards turned his attention to the breeding of long-woolled sheep with no less success; and at the present time there are on the Clinton and Waipahee properties stud flocks of Leicesters, Lincoln, as well as sheep of the Romney Marsh breed, which have all been highly spoken of by competent judges.

Regarding Mr Tolmie's political career, it may be mentioned that he was gazetted Deputy-Superintendent on the 10th August, 1871 and held the office in the absence of the Superintendent at the Assembly that year. In May 1872, he was elected Member Provincial Council for the Peninsula district in the place of Mr James Seaton ; and in September, 1872, Mr Tolmie was elected MHR for Caversham, in the room of Mr Cantrell, deceased. On the 19th November 1872 Tolmie on that occasion was appointed Provincial Secretary and Secretary for Land. He also held this position in a, subsequent Executive, which included himself and Messrs Turnbull, Bastings, Turton, and McDermid.

On July 10th, 1873, there was a "reconstruction" of the Executive, that is to say, Mr Tolmie retired and his place was taken by Dr Webster.

It will not, however, be in connection with his career as a public man that Mr Tolmie will be remembered by those whose good opinions he most valued while he was still amongst us.

While he brought to bear upon political questions and administration of the affairs of the Province the shrewdness and good sense of an excellent man of business, he instinctively shrank from the turmoil of debate. Nor had the intrigues of political life any charm for him.

He was not a party man, and it was his declared custom to give his vote, as a rule, in accordance with the merits of a question. While displaying such independence, he could never have been a successful politician. While it is true therefore, that as a public man the name of Tolmie may in a few years be almost forgotten the recollection of his social qualities will not be erased from the memories of those who had the pleasure of meeting him on terms of intimacy.

Of a genial and humorous disposition, he made many friends but never lost them. His services were always freely given to heal up the troubles of others and his hand was ever ready to help in an unostentatious manner where charity was needed.

William Alexander Tolmie is buried in the family grave in Dunedin's northern cemetery and marked by a very imposing memorial.