



Mr. Edward Bowes Cargill, J. P. , was Mayor of Dunedin for the year 1897–98 (the year of the Otago Jubilee), and was the seventh son of the late Captain William Cargill, the founder of Otago.

He was born in 1823 in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he received some of his early education, and subsequently continued his studies at Norwich, England. After spending six years at sea, Mr. Cargill became a merchant, and was in business in Ceylon from 1844 to 1855, under the style latterly of Nicol, Cargill and Co., general merchants, planters, and coffee exporters.

After two years spent in Melbourne, he settled in Dunedin, in 1857, joining his brother John and the late Mr. John Jones in partnership, under the style of Jones, Cargill and Co., general merchants. The first steamer trading on the coast—"The Geelong"—was purchased by this firm in Melbourne, and she was the only steamer plying on the coast of Otago prior to the gold "rush." In 1859, after the dissolution of the firm of Jones, Cargill and Co., Mr. Cargill carried on a similar business, first in partnership with his brothers, afterwards with the Hen. George McLean, and later with Mr. H. G. Gibbs, Mr. Richard Gibbs, of London, and Mr. Geo. Joachim; the firm acted for some years for the Australian Mortgage, Land and Finance Company, and held a foremost position as general merchants and wool exporters.

The business, which was conducted under the various styles of Cargill and Co., Cargills and McLean, and Cargills, Gibbs and Co., was disposed of to a London company in 1881, and after that time Mr. Cargill did not directly engage in business. For over thirty-six years he held the positions of Consular Agent for Italy and Vice-Consul for the Netherlands, in Dunedin.

In the foundation of the chief enterprises of Dunedin, Mr. Cargill took a leading part. He held interests in and was a director of the Dunedin Water and Gas Companies, the Otago and Southland Investment Company, the Colonial Bank (of which he was president for two years), and the National Insurance Company; and to the last he was on the boards of the Mosgiel Woollen, New Zealand Refrigerating, Union Steam Ship, Westport Coal, and Trustees and Executors Companies, and several others.

He occupied many public positions, and was member of the House of Representatives for Bruce, member of the Otago Provincial Council (in which he was twice Provincial Secretary, or Premier), member of the old Dunedin Town Board, of the Dunedin City Council, the school committee, the High School Board of Governors, the Otago University Council from its inception, and after the death of the Rev. Dr. Stuart, vice-chancellor of that body.

For many years he was a member and elder of Knox Presbyterian Church. Towards the end of 1897, Mr. Cargill was elected Mayor of Dunedin. He was not then in the City Council, but the honour was conferred upon him by the spontaneous action of his fellow citizens, in testimony of their appreciation of the services rendered by him throughout a long career—in filling many public positions and promoting numerous useful enterprises—and as a mark of respect to the memory of his father, Captain William Cargill, who, as founder and promoter of the Otago settlement, holds deservedly a high and honoured place in the remembrance of the settlers. It was deemed fitting that, in the Jubilee year of the foundation of Otago, a son of the man who took such a prominent part in its early history, and who, in fact, was mainly instrumental in its formation as a settlement, should occupy the highest position in the gift of the burgesses, and thus have the opportunity of directing to still greater prosperity the affairs of its capital.

In 1854 Mr. Cargill was married to a daughter of Dr. Nesham, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and had five daughters, the eldest of whom married Mr. F. W. Petre, architect, of Dunedin. Mr. Petre, who was born at the Hutt, Wellington, in 1847, is the son of the Hon. Henry Petre (at one time Colonial Secretary), and grandson of Lord Petre, an active member and chairman of the old New Zealand Company. Thorndon Flat, Wellington, was at one time the property of the Hon. Mr. Petre, who named it after his father's family seat in Essex. Mr. Petre also held a large property in the Wanganui district, and the town of Wanganui was originally named Petre, in his honour.

Mr. Cargill, who was predeceased by his wife and their youngest daughter, died at his residence, "The Cliffs," near Dunedin, [known to us now as Cargill's Castle] on the 9th of August, 1903, and is buried in the Cargill family grave in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery.

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