



GEORGE HEPBURN, Died December 9, 1883. Aged 81 years.

The place of another of the old worthies of Otago has become vacant, thus still further narrowing the circle of the devoted band of early pioneers who struggled hard against difficulties which can neither be known nor appreciated by the present generation. On September 4, 1850, Mr Hepburn arrived at the Port of Otago by the ship Poitiers, Captain Beal, after a seven months' voyage from London, being accompanied by his wife and a large family. Accustomed in his native land to indoor occupation, the prospects of making a living for his family and himself in the midst of his strange surroundings were not inviting. In Dunedin he saw no opening in the trade which he had at his finger ends - there were already too many pursuing it for the small population. He did not give way to despondency, and although not of a very robust constitution, he bravely faced the difficulty, and having secured a section of land at Half way Bush, he, with a will, and with the help his young family could afford, tackled the arduous task of clearing the bush and making his ground yield out of its richness

sustenance for his household. About six months afterwards Mr Macandrew arrived, and the services of a competent and trustworthy general manager and salesman being required, the position was offered and accepted by Mr Hepburn, and in this employ he remained until 1859, when in conjunction with Mr James Paterson, he purchased the business from Messrs Macandrew and Co., and carried it on under the firm or style of J. Paterson and Co. for several years very successfully, until he retired to more private life. Even with all the comforts of metalled roads and different conveyances, the daily journey to and from Dunedin and Half-way Bush, especially in blustery weather, does not present many attractions, and some idea may be formed of the pluck needed to perform the journey seven days in each week, and in all weathers, through bush, scrub, and swamp, and with scarcely a track to guide his footsteps. Keenly alive to his responsibility for the exercise of his religious duties, which were ingrained in him in youth and practised in manhood's prime, he at once attached himself to the congregation of the First Church, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr Burns, and on Sabbath, the 16th March 1851, having been elected thereto previously by the members of the Church, he was inducted as elder for the Half-way Bush district, and for several years he was also Session Clerk in the First Church congregation (he had formerly been an elder of the Free Church of Kirkcaldy). He had for his colleague in the deaconship the late Mr James Marshall, who had in the Home Country been a deacon of the Free Church of Falkirk. Continuing in connection with the First Church until the opening of Knox Church in 1860, when he was appointed as one of the interim session in its formation, remaining in that position, and being the last survivor of its first session. In both he zealously devoted himself to those labours in which his heart delighted.

The subsequent erection of Wakari into a separate charge, being in Mr Hepburn's own immediate neighbourhood, received his warm support and active assistance.

The politics of the Province received from Mr Hepburn a considerable amount of attention, and although not a "heaven born orator," he possessed the rarer attribute of common sense, and showed it as occasion required. In

1855 he was returned at the top of the poll as one of the representatives for the Wakari district in the second Provincial Council, and continued as member for Wakari in several Councils, and for a considerable period occupied the difficult position of Chairman of Committees. The still higher position of a member of the Assembly was conferred on him in 1866, the constituency of Roslyn returning him as their member against two other candidates.

At the close of the Parliament in 1871 he did not again offer himself for a seat in the House.

Warmly alive to the advantages of education, he gave his assiduous attention to the school requirements of his district, occupying the position of chairman of the School Committee.

Mr Hepburn leaves behind him two sons, Mr William Hepburn, of the firm of McLandress, Hepburn, and Co., the well-known auctioneers, and Mr Andrew Hepburn. There are also two daughters, one married to Mr Arch. Barr, postmaster, and the other to Mr R. A. Lawson, architect. To them particularly his loss, even although he had exceeded the fourscore years, will be severely felt. They have the satisfaction of knowing that in their sorrows they have the public sympathy. The funeral took place on Tuesday afternoon. The service at the late residence of the deceased was conducted by the Revs. Waddell and Sutherland, and the Rev. Dr Stuart officiated at the grave. About 250 persons followed the remains to the Southern Cemetery. A considerable number were present at the service at the deceased's late residence at Wakari, but by far the larger number joined the procession at the Octagon. Amongst those who attended the funeral were the Revs. Dr Stuart, Waddell, Sutherland, Ryley, and Kerkham, the Hon. W. H. Reynolds, his Worship the Mayor, and Messrs C. S. Reeves, J. Wain, R. Wilson, J. Wilson, W. Langlands, J. Barnes, H. J. Maclean, J. B. Park, J. Green (M.H.R.), N. Y. A. Wales, J. Findlay, A. Mollison, J. Sibbald, G. E. Elliott, G. Turnbull, T. Brown, A. O. Begg, K. Ramsay, Jas. Smith, A. Scoullar, R. B. Martin, J. Robin, and E. B. Cargill.

