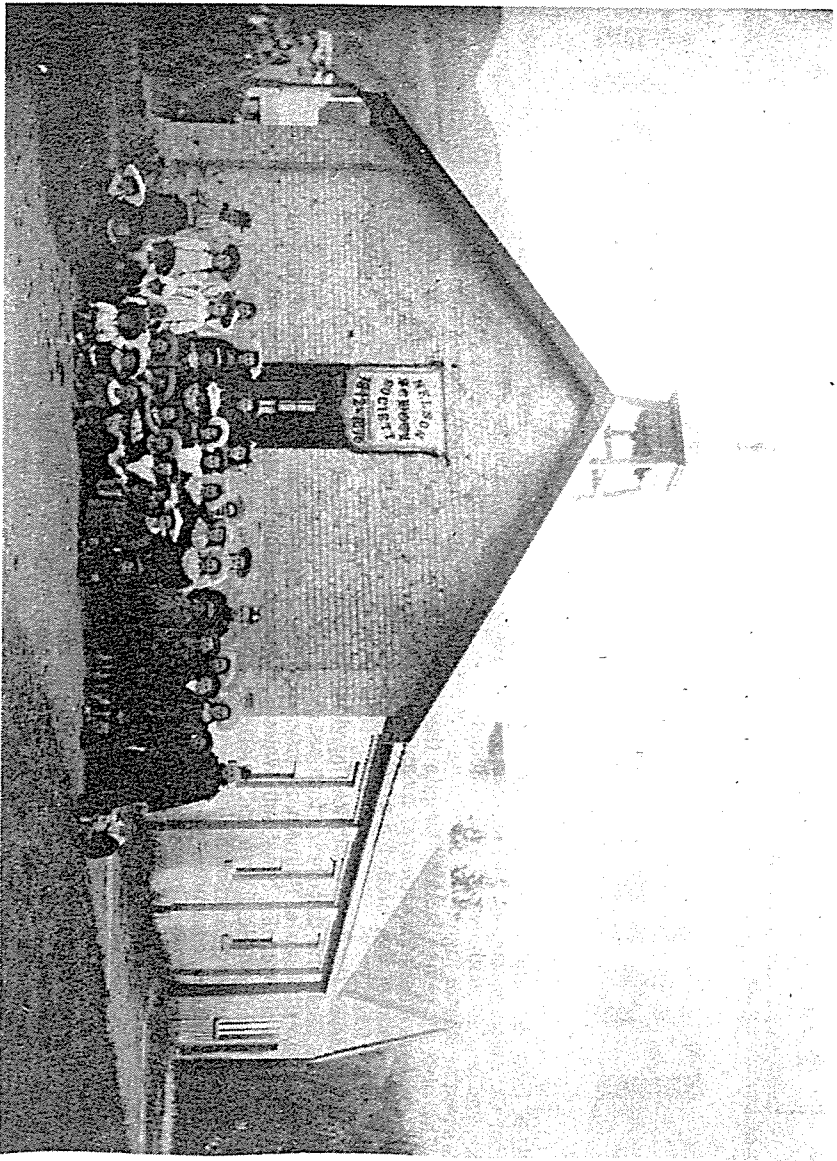


H. STOKER BURCHINOSSE, Nelson.

Colonial Album

NEM. '87.

Photographs from the
Tyree and Jones collections



There were risks of 'most serious evils'

School uniform was not an issue in 1896, but the prevailing fashion clamped every schoolchild into a hat just as firmly as any beret-boater-panama-cap-conscious teacher of the 1960s. This Lyree photograph taken in 1896 shows a final gathering of pupils and teachers outside Matthew Campbell's Bridge St school, which closed the following year.

With most school pupils a week back at school, and no doubt muttering about it in time-honoured student fashion, it is interesting to look at education origins in Nelson.

In 1842 a foundry worker called Matthew Campbell landed at Nelson from Westmoreland. He had had no formal schooling but wanted to

building for the times — brick, with a slate roof and measuring 42 feet by 26 feet. It had a schoolroom, a teacher's room and a library, but there are no records about books or other equipment.

The first headmaster-teacher was John Robinson, who in his native Birmingham, had been a wood-turner.

Money to run it came from donations, grants and public subscriptions. Mr Campbell tried, to keep fees as low as possible to make education available for everyone, no matter how poor.

The school's philosophy was to provide education for the labouring classes, based on a morality which Aid "not seek to foster the minds of

Other people did not feel this way, however, and in spite of this criticism Mr Campbell opened branch schools at Wakefield, Spring Grove, Waimea, Stoke, Richmond, Appleby, Hope and in other places over the bay.

Provincial government began in Nelson in 1853, and a commission was set up to enquire into the state of education in the province. Late in 1855 a central board of education was set up to take over the schools run by the Nelson School Society.

The society then confined its activities to promoting and managing Sunday schools, which it did until 1897, then closed entirely.

It is debatable whether Matthew Campbell would think the present