

Dunedin Presbytery and the Compulsory Military Training Debate of 1911

By John Milnes MA

Good evening. My name is John Milnes and I work here at Knox College as the Ab Epistulis. In my spare time, I have been researching for a PhD in history on Dunedin churches during the Great War. Several months ago, Yvonne asked me if I would be willing to give a seminar on part of my research. The topic I have chosen is the debate within Dunedin Presbytery on the compulsory military training scheme of 1911. As Presbyterian meeting structure can become confusing with the various motions and amendments, there is handout which details the meeting, the motions proposed, and the movers and seconders, who are not to be confused with the movers and shakers!

In 1909, it became evident to New Zealand's Government that the armed forces were in no shape to repel any serious attack. Up to this point, the Defence Forces had been organised on a volunteer system. Any male who wished to join was accepted.

Training was ad hoc, and those who turned up to drill nights and annual camps being a distinct minority of the total enrolled.¹ Turnover was high, with as many as half the volunteers being replaced each year, and the professionalism and ability of those who did take part in drill was low.² In 1909, the New Zealand Defence Act was passed by Parliament, introducing compulsory military training into New Zealand society. The Act was further amended in 1910 and 1911, when it reached its final form.³ There was almost no opposition to the act within Parliament, and the opposition that did exist within New Zealand society in general proved ineffectual in altering either the

¹ NZPD, vol 148 (13 December 1909), p 1001.

² I. McGibbon, *The path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand 1840-1915*, Wellington, 1991, p 182.

³ The Defence Acts provided for the eventual formation of a peacetime army of 20,000 and a wartime establishment of 30,848. The Act compelled all males between 12 and 30 to undertake some form of military service. This service was divided onto four stages: Junior Cadets, Senior Cadets, General Training Scheme, and the Reserve. A Permanent Force was also established to train and co-ordinate the territorials. Each male between 18 and 25 was expected to serve 14 full days in camp and 12 half days drilling each year. Those males outside this group also had set numbers of days they were expected to drill. The country was divided into 4 military districts: Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago. Each district was subdivided into 16 area groups, and each area group into four groups. Each military district was expected to furnish three mounted rifle regiments, four infantry battalions, and two artillery batteries, as well a coastal defence soldiers to man the local batteries. In war, these forces would furnish two infantry divisions and two mounted rifle brigades.

introduction of the Act or the enrollment of men.⁴ When Lord Kitchener, the Empire's foremost soldier, toured the Empire in 1909/10, New Zealand's Government took the opportunity to obtain his thoughts on the Defence Act. Kitchener advised modifying the Territorial Army slightly so that it would be similar to what he had recommended for the Australian Commonwealth.⁵ By 1911, New Zealand's armed forces were very similar to Australia's, which in turn had been based upon that of Great Britain.⁶

Under the Defence Acts, all males aged between 14 and 20 were required to register with the military authorities. Registration began on April 3 and concluded on July 17 1911, during which time 21,000 Territorials and 30,000 cadets registered.⁷ Only a small proportion refused to register, and, when required to parade for the 1911/12 camp, some 82% of those enrolled did so. These numbers were actually in excess of those required by the Defence Authorities, and greater than the projected figures.

As laid down in legislation, the Defence Act called for the formation of junior and senior cadet companies of boys and youths aged 14 to 18 years. This was to be followed by seven years as part of the active Territorial Army, and then five years in the Territorial reserve. New Zealand was divided into four military districts, Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago, each district being subdivided into sixteen area groups, each area group comprising four groups. Every male between 18 and 25 was expected to spend 14 full days in camp and 12 half days drilling each year.

Within the active Territorial Army, each military district was required to provide an infantry battalion, a mounted rifle regiment, two artillery batteries and a coastal defence section. On mobilization, the Territorial Army was to provide two infantry divisions, each with two battalions and two artillery batteries, and two mounted rifle brigades, each of two regiments. This force would comprise around 30,000 men.

⁴ Only a small number of men objected to enrolling in the Territorial forces, and of those who did enrol, 82% paraded for the 1911/12 camp. McGibbon, p 202.

⁵ Kitchener to J. Ward, 2/3/1910, NA AD series 10 file 16/1.

⁶ *NZPD*, vol 151 (4 October 1910), p 190.

⁷ Weitzel, RL, "Pacifists and Anti-militarists in New Zealand, 1909-1914" in *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 7, No 2 (1973), pp 128-129.

It was primarily the matter of the cadet companies, both junior and senior, which occupied the minds of the churches during this period. The New Zealand Government had asked for the church's support regarding the introduction of compulsory military training. The Government had also mooted the possibility of denominational cadet companies being formed and had called on the churches to support their formation. It was in reaction to these requests from the Government that a long and acrimonious debate within the Presbyterian Church in general, and the Dunedin Presbytery in particular, began. There was considerable discussion within the Presbytery as to both the desirability of forming companies and the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act, and two vocal factions evolved within the Dunedin Presbytery as this matter was debated. The first faction, supportive of the Defence Acts, was led by the Revs Dixon, Whyte, and Dutton, while the second faction, opposed to the Defence Acts, was headed by the Rev Cameron.

Opposition to the Acts and the Presbyterian Church's involvement in cadet companies, revolved around three key issues: morality, militarism, and the fear of denominationalism. Paradoxically, those who supported denominational cadet companies also used morality and denominationalism as justification, as well as a strong belief in supporting the Government, and a belief that military service was desirable for society.

The discussion over the compulsory provisions of the act, its association with militarism, and the extent of the Presbyterian Church's involvement, was very acrimonious. This was best demonstrated within the meetings of the Dunedin Presbytery during 1911. The issue was first raised at its April meeting, when, after discussion, the Presbytery agreed to refer the matter to a sub committee, comprising Whyte, Dutton, and Crawly who were to consider the matter and report back to the next meeting of Presbytery.⁸ As time progressed, Dutton and Whyte were to emerge as leading proponents of Church involvement in the cadet companies. At the next meeting of Presbytery, held on May 2 1911, a second committee was established, this time convened by Dutton, to consider the matters raised by a letter received by the

⁸ Minutes 11/4/1911, Presbytery Minute Book 1907-13, Dunedin Presbytery, PCANZAO BH 6/6.

Presbytery Clerk.⁹ No indication was given as to who the letter was from, but it seems probable, in light of the subsequent meetings, that it was a request from either the Defence Force or the Government for the Church's help in forming and running these companies.

A special meeting of Presbytery was called for May 23, and at this meeting Dutton reported back on behalf of his committee. It was at this meeting that Cameron came to the fore as the leading member of Presbytery opposed to the Church's involvement in the cadet companies. Cameron initially lodged an objection against the meeting being held at all, maintaining that it had not been called in accordance with the rules as laid out in the Book of Order. However, he withdrew his objection shortly after the meeting commenced. The Presbytery then debated the extent to which the Presbyterian Church should be involved with the cadet companies. Cameron moved a motion objecting to the formation of denominational companies, and argued that the Church should have no involvement in the formation, administration, and training of cadet companies. Before a vote could be taken on his motion, a motion was moved by Whyte and Dixon supporting the formation of denominational cadet companies.

When put to the vote, Cameron's motion in opposition to involvement received 18 votes, Whyte's only 6, and it was agreed to send a copy of Cameron's motion to the Minister of Defence. A third motion was moved by Kinmont and Dutton, aimed, I believe, at reaching a middle ground between the two factions. Again, Cameron objected to this motion, claiming that the words "and otherwise" should be deleted. I am unsure as to Cameron's motivation, but think that it may be that he was concerned that he believed that the words "and otherwise" could be a way to increase the church's involvement beyond the provision of chaplains to the companies. When put to the vote, Kinmont's motion was successful and Cameron's amendment was defeated.¹⁰ If I am right in my thinking, this would suggest that there was more support for the church's involvement in the cadet companies than the earlier 18-6 vote would imply.

⁹ Minutes 2/5/1911, Presbytery Minute Book 1907-13, Dunedin Presbytery, PCANZAO BH 6/6.

¹⁰ Minutes 23/5/1911, Presbytery Minute Book 1907-13, Dunedin Presbytery, PCANZAO BH 6/6.

Cameron's victory at the special meeting of Presbytery was not the end of the matter. Indeed, the controversy had only just begun. At the first ordinary meeting after the special meeting, held on June 6, a debate was held as to the legality of the special meeting and, when put to the vote, the Presbytery was split evenly, 18 votes for and against declaring the special meeting illegal. It was the Moderator's casting vote that declared that meeting illegal. Consequently, the resolutions passed at that meeting were invalid. Both Cameron's motion in opposition to involvement, and Kinmont's motion to allow the church to provide "chaplains and otherwise" were overturned, and the church's active participation within denominational companies was once again open for debate.

This decision by the Presbytery is very difficult to understand, as an examination of the Book of Order demonstrates that there was no basis for such a ruling. The special meeting had been called in good time. The Presbytery had agreed at its April 11 meeting that the committee established was to report back to it. Even if members of Presbytery had objected to the committee reporting to a special, rather than a general, meeting, the notice had been given in accordance with the rules. To be sure, the matter for discussion was contentious, but it was certainly not one outside the competence of the Presbytery. The basis for this ruling, whatever it was, must for the meantime remain obscure.

As a consequence of ruling the special meeting illegal, the matter was brought up once more at the Presbytery meeting on June 20. At this meeting, Dutton reported that the Congregational Church had begun the formation of denominational companies, and urged the Presbytery to consider like action for the Presbyterian congregations within Dunedin. Dutton urged that congregations be grouped together, each group furnishing 120 boys and youths to make up the cadet companies. The controversial nature of the suggestion, and the acrimony of the debate, is indicated by the fact that the Moderator allowed no minister to talk on the matter for more than ten minutes, and no lay member to speak for more than five. Clearly, many members wanted to have their say on Dutton's suggestion. Once again, a challenge to the Presbytery debating the topic was made, but this was overruled. Unfortunately the Presbytery minutes do not record who made this objection, but it seems reasonable to assume that it was either Cameron or one of his supporters.

As a consequence of this debate, a series of motions were moved, and for their text I refer you to your handout. Chisholm and Whyte moved a motion supporting the formation of companies and called on Kirk Sessions to consider the matter anew and fall into line with the Government's recommendations; another moved by Chisholm and Smith, opposed denominational companies across all churches; and a third by Davies and Reid opposed denominational companies, but affirmed the Presbyterian church's determination to work with the Defence Authorities in catering to the spiritual and moral welfare of those boys in the cadet companies.¹¹ Once again, protests were lodged by Cameron, but these were withdrawn prior to the vote being taken. When put to the vote, Chisholm and Whyte's motion was lost, Chisholm and Smith's motion received only 6 votes, while Davies and Reid's motion received 23 votes.¹² Davies and Reid's motion is printed on your hand out, and is, I believe, the second finest piece of fence sitting passed by Dunedin Presbytery during this time.

Once again this was not the end of the matter. At the July meeting of the Presbytery, it was Whyte who moved a motion, seconded by Dixon, to rescind the motion passed at the June 6 meeting declaring the special meeting of May 23 invalid. The Moderator vacated the chair, so that he could take part in the discussion, and the chair was occupied pro tem by Chisholm. Again, this debate seems to have been acrimonious, as, when first discussed, no vote was ever taken on Whyte's motion. Instead the Presbytery agreed by a large majority to move to further business, Chisholm vacating the chair in favour of the Moderator. This was a common tactic within Presbyterian meetings when contentious issues were being discussed. It allowed time for members

¹¹ The full text of the resolutions was: Chisholm and Whyte's "That in view of the situation created by Parliament whereby all lads from 14 to 18 years of age must be enrolled as Senior Cadets, and undergo some measure of military training; and further in view of the willingness of the Government to arrange that if a congregation or group of congregations in connection with any Church contribute a company of 120 senior cadets, the church authorities shall have power to nominate for such company their officers of their own order, whose competency has been approved by the military authorities; the Presbytery recommends the Kirk Sessions within its bounds to take the whole matter anew into their serious considerations and endeavour in the line of the Government's arrangements to secure the appointment of Officers who shall exact a Christian guidance on the coming manhood of the Church to the glory of God and the good of the whole community." Chisholm and Smith's "That the Presbytery protests against the formation of denominational companies of cadet, and is of opinion that the churches as such should take no part in the provision of cadet companies." Davies and Reid's "That the Presbytery believes that the formation of denominational cadet companies would be unwise, but at the same time is willing to do all in its power to secure the moral and spiritual interests of the youths who are enrolled by the military authorities."

¹² Minutes 20/6/1911, Presbytery Minute Book 1907-13, Dunedin Presbytery, PCANZAO BH 6/6.

to clear their heads and reflect on the arguments being put forward. Later that meeting the issue was revisited and the Presbytery voted on a further series of motions concerning the church's involvement with the cadet companies. While one motion, that of Whyte and Dixon's, supported the formation of these companies, Cameron and Don's motion opposed them. A third motion, obviously aimed at moving the Presbytery on from this contentious business, was proposed by Chisholm and Aitken. Although it's printed in your hand out, I would like to read it, as this, I believe, is the finest piece of fence sitting by Dunedin Presbytery that I have ever read: "That the Presbytery without expressing any opinion regarding the compulsory method of military training adopted by Parliament believes it to be the duty of all citizens to submit to what is at present the law of the land". This motion seems to have been pitched squarely at occupying the middle ground between the two sides. When put to the vote, Whyte's motion gained 5 votes, Cameron's 9, and Chisholm's 5. The Moderator gave his casting vote to Chisholm's motion, and, accordingly, a second vote was held, Cameron gaining 10 votes and being carried. As per the Presbyterian Church's history of allowing dissent, the dissent of the Revs Whyte, Dixon, Nicholson, Sutherland, and Chisholm from this resolution was recorded in the minutes.¹³ At last, the Presbytery had made its decision. No further objections were lodged at that or subsequent meetings, and the matter was allowed to settle.

The action of Whyte in wanting to nullify the resolution declaring the special meeting of May 23 illegal is surprising. If passed, this resolution would have approved the decision of the Presbytery to not involve itself in the raising of denominational cadet companies. It may have been that he and his supporters, those ministers and laymen who believed in involving the Presbyterian Church as much as possible within the denominational cadet companies, believed that the phrase "and otherwise" would allow for some more overt involvement than merely the provision of chaplains. If this was the case, it appears to be the last attempt by those supporting denominational companies to involve the Presbyterian Church.

Dutton himself seems to have changed his views over the course of these debates. He was always an ardent supporter of compulsory military training, but at the start of the debate he clearly favoured denominational cadet companies. Indeed, it was a

¹³ Minutes 20/7/1911, Presbytery Minute Book 1907-13, Dunedin Presbytery, PCANZAO BH 6/6.

committee convened by him that recommended each Session to consider the matter. Yet, in the *Outlook* of May 30, he was recorded as saying that he was utterly opposed to denominational companies, and that he would not support the Department of Defence in any way.¹⁴

The debate in the Presbytery did not exist in a vacuum. While it was progressing, there was debate and comment within the pages of the *Outlook* and the *ODT*. Cameron had sent a letter to the *ODT*, justifying his actions at the Presbytery meeting held on May 2nd and at subsequent meetings. In his letter, Cameron claimed that, when he left that meeting, he did not know that military training and denominational cadet companies were to be discussed, believing the outstanding issues to be ones of little consequence. He also clearly stated that his opposition to the formation of denominational cadet companies was based on opposition to both militarism and denominationalism.

“The Presbytery’s discussion makes it clear that we are invited to form, if possible, denominational or even congregational companies of Senior Cadets. We are told that the Roman Catholic Church has formed three cadet companies entirely of Roman Catholic boys under officers recommended by the Roman Catholic Church; that the Church of England is forming two companies of boys connected with that church, and under officers nominated by it. We Presbyterians are asked to form Presbyterian boys into Presbyterian companies, and the other churches will be asked, as far as possible, to do the same. Surely this is denominationalism run riot. Has anyone heard of such a proposal before? Our future army is to be ostentatiously denominational, and its banners are to proclaim the Church connection of its various sections. If that be the desire of our military authorities, it is, to say the least, surprising. The denominational aspect of the question is, however, of secondary importance. The question that most concerns us it: are we, as a Church, to ally ourselves with the State in army making? As individuals the members of our congregations owe loyal service to the State, and Presbyterian citizens have never been backward in doing their duty to the State, but as a Church we have other work to do than this. The Church is

¹⁴ *Outlook*, 30/5/1911, pp 25-27

not ours but the Lord's, and to identify it with the encouragement of militarism and the war spirit is, I take it, to be untrue of our Lord, who is the Prince of Peace. But, it will be remembered, we are not encouraging a war spirit; we are only seeking to help in the formation of an adequate defence force, and to hold our young people to the things of God. To those who say this, my answer is that there is no surer means of creating the war spirit than universal training. I have seen its effects in other countries, and am certain that from this curse we will not escape with our universal training. I believed that we have been fools to allow this system to be imposed upon us. But it is here, and sure I am that we will be still greater fools if we allow our Church to become the handmaid of the State in creating an engine of war. Let individuals do their duty – let the Church do hers in preaching the gospel of peace, not the gospel of war. That we must become the handmaid of an army in order to keep our young lads from evil I heartily deny.”¹⁵

The fear of denominationalism was also expressed by the Editor of the *Outlook* in its May 20 issue.¹⁶ His fear was that denominationalism would allow the Roman Catholic Church to continue its policy, as far as some members of the Presbyterian Church believed, of disengagement from New Zealand society. Sectarianism, which many believed would be encouraged by the formation of these cadet companies, was to be avoided if at all possible. The Editor reprinted summaries of the Dunedin Presbytery's discussions, including criticisms of Cameron's stance by Whyte, and the text of Whyte's sermon supporting the provisions of compulsory military service.¹⁷ Through the pages of the *Outlook*, Whyte accused Cameron of being Quaker-like, and refusing to accept that the Presbyterian Church was guided by the Confession of Faith, not pacifism. Whyte also explicitly linked service in the cadets to efficiency, both military and civilian, believing this to be one of the benefits of compulsory military service.

The debate on military service was also played out within the Kirk Sessions. As recommended by Dutton's committee, Dunedin Presbytery had asked all Sessions to

¹⁵ *Outlook*, 9/5/1911, p 4.

¹⁶ *Outlook*, 20/5/1911, pp 3-4.

¹⁷ *Outlook*, 30/5/1911, pp 25-27 and *Outlook*, 6/6/1911, p 3.

consider the formation of denominational cadet companies. The Presbytery had asked Dutton to enquire from Sessions as to the number of boys from each congregation who would be willing to join Presbyterian companies. This matter was discussed by the Sessions of First Church, Andersons Bay, Port Chalmers, South Dunedin, St Andrews, and at a combined meeting of the Maori Hill, Roslyn, Mornington, and Kaikorai Sessions. As with the Presbytery, Sessions were divided on the matter. Some Sessions supported the move, while others came out firmly in opposition.

Unsurprisingly, given the presence of Dixon, minister of Roslyn Presbyterian Church, and Chisholm at this meeting, the combined meeting of Maori Hill, Roslyn, Mornington, and Kaikorai churches passed a motion in support of forming denominational companies. Equally unsurprisingly, the Session of Andersons Bay church passed a motion “that this Session disapproves of any action by the Presbytery which would result in the formation of denominational companies”¹⁸. Cameron was the minister of Andersons Bay church and Dixon was the minister of Roslyn Church, and it would have been a brave Session to have disagreed with such forceful personalities.

The Session of St Andrews passed a resolution “That this session, while recognising the necessity of giving the youth of the Dominion sufficient military training to provide adequately for its defence, is of opinion that it does not fall within the scope of the Church’s work to undertake the formation of Cadet corps. Nevertheless, it recognises the duty of the churches to provide for the moral welfare of the young men who are thus called into service, and is willing to co-operate in providing chaplains to the territorial forces.”¹⁹ Interestingly, the Session of Port Chalmers, whose minister, Whyte, was one of the leading proponents of denominational companies and the involvement of the Presbyterian Church in their formation, refused to give an opinion. Despite the presence of Whyte on the Session and his vocal support for the church’s involvement in the training scheme at Presbytery, in the *Outlook*, and to his congregation, there seems to have been sufficient dissent within the Session for the

¹⁸ Minutes 9/5/1911, Session Minute Book 1897-1948, Andersons Bay Presbyterian Church, PCANZAO BA 1/7.

¹⁹ *Outlook*, 23/5/1911, p 25.

matter to be formally ruled as in abeyance. This ruling was never challenged, and the matter was not discussed again.²⁰

Wider afield, the Auckland Ministers' Association expressed reservations about the involvement of all churches in raising denominational cadet companies.²¹

The matter was also discussed by the General Assembly's Youth of the Church committee. It was felt by this committee that the requirement for cadets to spend several nights in camp, away from the influence of their parents, would make it easy for them to be subjected to undesirable influences. The Committee felt that the easiest solution to this problem was to support the formation of denominational companies, as these companies would be able to select their own officers and organizers. These officers and organizers would reduce the cadets' exposure to immoral influences, reassuring parents. Consequently, this committee issued an endorsement of the Government's scheme, and recommended that companies comprising 30 to 150 cadets be formed, with leaders drawn from Bible Classes.²²

From these discussions, debates, and arguments within the Presbytery, Sessions, and the pages of the *Outlook*, it is evident that there were three main reasons why denominational cadet companies were opposed. Those opposed believed that, through participating in the cadet companies' drill and camps, boys and youths would be exposed to immoral influences from which they had hitherto been insulated. Some opposed the cadet companies on principle: The Church should not be seen to participate in militaristic activity – this being incompatible with the message that the church sought to bring before the citizens of Dunedin and New Zealand. Still others opposed the companies on the basis of denominationalism. Universal service would, they believed, help break down barriers between different parts of society; denominational companies would merely reinforce these barriers. Some even believed that, through introducing denominational cadet companies, the Government was

²⁰ The minutes of the Port Chalmers session records that at the meeting held on 9/5/1911 "The Moderator brought before the Session the question of the advisability or otherwise of organizing a corps of the youths belonging to our Church in Port Chalmers and surrounding districts; after very full discussion it was resolved to leave the matter in abeyance in the mean time." Session minutes 1909-26, Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church, PCANZAO BF 4/4.

²¹ *Outlook*, 20/5/1911, pp 3-4.

²² *Outlook*, 23/5/1911, p 16.

dangerously stoking the fuel of a potential conflict between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Interestingly, opposition to compulsory military training per se was not a major factor in any of the arguments put forward. Instead, it was the church's involvement that they opposed.

However, just as strong and fervently held opinions were put forward in support of the Presbyterian Church participating in the denominational companies. It was felt that, far from being a bad moral influence, participation in both the drill and the periodic camps would expose the attendees to a good moral influence. This moral influence would be even greater if the cadet companies' officers and instructors were already leaders within the Church, as suggested by the Youth of the Church Committee. It would also ensure that any religious element to cadet companies, such as church parades, would be in keeping with the Presbyterian tradition. Church based companies would ensure that Presbyterians were only exposed to Presbyterian teaching and values, something that could not be guaranteed otherwise. It was also felt that the Presbyterian Church, as a good member of civil society, was beholden to support the Government. A request had been made to the church by the civil power, a request that those supporting the denominational companies felt did not impinge upon the church or its message. Therefore, the church should support the government. This was certainly the driving force of several of Dixon and Whyte's resolutions at Presbytery.

This was clearly a turbulent time for the churches within Dunedin. They were coming to grips with an alien and foreign concept, that of compulsory military service. It had been a century since any form of compulsion had been exercised upon British subjects, and during that time the legend and myth of free Britons had taken firm roots. It seems to have been within the Presbyterian Church that the most contentious debates took place, with clergy participating in an argument that took several months to run its course. The argument was not confined to the clergy, and was played out within Sessions, congregations, and the pages of the sacred and secular press. It was clearly not confined to just the Presbyterian Church, as references have been found to the Congregational, Roman Catholic, and Anglican churches forming denominational companies.

The conscription debate within Dunedin and New Zealand was an important moment in New Zealand's social and military history. The Defence Acts created a permanent army capable of being used nationwide, and equipped and trained for expeditionary warfare. For the first time, New Zealand was facing the imposition of Compulsory Military Training, essential for the industrialized wars of the 20th Century. No longer could New Zealand shelter behind the protective shield of the Royal Navy, an army was needed. The debates that surrounded the establishment of compulsory training, and the extent to which the Church, and by that I mean the Church Catholic, should be involved exercised many men and women for many months. Men and Women were being called to consider their positions and search their conscience. The answers they found, and the debates they held to arrive at them, can be seen as a prelude, a precursor, to a greater soul searching during and after the Great War.

How does this story, interesting and revealing as it is, relate to the use of sources housed within the Presbyterian Archives here at Knox College? In essence, the answer is mutuality and inter-dependence. No one source gives the full story. Without the records of Session, Presbytery, the *Outlook*, and the Book of Order, it would be impossible to make sense of what was happening and why. Cameron's opposition was recorded in the Presbytery minutes, but why was he so opposed? The answer could only be found in the *Outlook*, which reprinted his letter to the *Otago Daily Times*. What basis did the Presbytery have in declaring the special meeting illegal? Without the Book of Order, it would be impossible to conclude that there doesn't seem to have been a basis. How supportive were the congregations of the respective leading ministers in the debate? Without the Kirk Session records and the *Outlook* it would be impossible to answer this question. Was the debate confined to just Dunedin Presbytery, or did it spill over into other Presbyteries? Were other churches holding similar debates? To both of these questions, the *Outlook* provides the answer. It therefore becomes clear that the sources must be used in conjunction with one another, neither to be relied upon for providing the full story. We are lucky to have here in the Archives such a full collection that enables events like the compulsion debate to be examined in such detail.