

J. V. S. VEEL, Esq.—1.] I should prefer a Colonial University, but failing that, or as an interim arrangement, should strongly support the proposal to found the scholarships referred to. Without the University, to serve as a climax to the whole, the course of education is dwarfed and lowered. At present education comes to a dead stop precisely where it is beginning to be most useful. A boy reaches the top of his school and finds nothing beyond. He is at the top of the tree, and, even if he has the capacity and the will, can climb no higher. The prospect of a University career would be an immense stimulus, opening before him a new, unbounded, and most attractive field. Again, classmates soon take an accurate measure of each other's powers, and the boy who is the acknowledged head is apt to acquire a feeling of superiority and self-conceit, and is certain to relax in application, doing no more than just sufficient to keep his place. The fact of being pitted against competitors from other Provinces would be an admirable corrective, arousing feelings of emulation and zeal for the honour of the school,—powerful incentives to application,—while the qualities of his antagonists being unknown, he would be always under the sense of having to encounter at least his equals, and be unwilling by want of diligence to throw a chance away. I may add, that the benefit of the scholarships would not be confined to the successful candidates, since for every boy who gained one, ten would try for it, and be all the better for the work.

Many of the same remarks apply to the masters. I can easily conceive that a master, knowing that he can never get his pupils beyond a certain point, very soon reached, becomes to some extent disheartened and indifferent; and the more so the more real enthusiasm he feels in his profession. The University Scholarships would be to him, as well as to his pupils, an object of continual interest and ambition. He too would feel the spur of competition, for naturally he would be anxious that his boys should compare not unfavourably with those trained at other schools; and the whole school would feel the benefit of it, for it would be his constant care that no neglect in the lower classes should deprive a promising lad of the chance of doing credit to his school and his master when his turn came to pass through the ordeal of examination. Thus the whole working of the school would be more vigilant and efficient, and the general standard would gradually but surely be raised.

Lastly, a great advantage would accrue to the cause of education from the interest, which would no doubt be very great, taken by the public, and especially by parents having boys under tuition, in the result of the examinations; and also, which is a most important point, from the inducement to parents to keep their boys at school for a much longer time than they in general care to do at present.

2.] If by this question is meant exhibitions attached to the lower schools with the object of enabling the holders to continue their education free of cost at the upper, I consider them an essential feature in any effective scheme of education. (See answer to Question 7.)

3.] There is great practical difficulty about this question. I can only suggest the appointment of a kind of General Board, comprising several members in each Province, of whom three or four might be annually selected to conduct the scholarship examinations. Only those actually engaged should receive payment. The examinations should be held in Wellington, the travelling expenses of the candidates being defrayed by the Government, unless all or the great majority came from the Middle Island, in which case expense might be saved by holding it at Christchurch. I do not think that any plan of sending printed papers would work satisfactorily, or avoid suspicion of collusion; besides which, it would take away the zest of personal competition, and also give no opportunity for *viva voce*, which I should be sorry to see omitted.

It is important that the Board should comprise, in addition to gentlemen personally engaged in tuition, a fair number of competent men, members of Oxford or Cambridge, who are not so engaged, in order to lift things out of the professional groove and the routine of school examinations. Schoolmasters are apt to confine themselves to the text of certain books used in their school, and to consider that an examiner who, going outside of the book, endeavours to ascertain what a boy knows and what he has only learnt by heart, is examining improperly. They attribute deficiencies detected in their pupils to his unskillful method of examining, or, as the phrase goes, not having the knack of examining—the knack, that is, of keeping on safe ground, and asking only such questions as are pretty sure to be answered. There is this difference between a school examination at the end of a half-year and an examination for a scholarship, that the object of the former is to test a boy's recollection of what he has learnt during the half-year, and of the latter, to test the whole extent and depth of his acquirements. Quickness of memory assists so much in the first that it is a very fallacious test, so that a boy may win prizes again and again and yet be beaten in an examination of the second kind by a classmate who had always stood below him in the school. Now schoolmasters are so habituated to the one kind of examination that they are apt to fail at the other, which nevertheless is the one required, for unless a boy has been well trained and thoroughly grounded it is quite useless to send him to an English University.

4.] Oxford and Cambridge; but I suppose all Scotchmen would insist on the Scotch Universities being included, and if so, Trinity College, Dublin, may put in a claim. A difficulty strikes me about residence. At Oxford a man cannot get rooms at any of the best Colleges till his name has been on the books for some considerable time; and to send the New Zealand scholars to a small College, or, still worse, to one of the Halls, would be simply throwing money away.