

coming forward for the scholarships. I fear that estimate is extravagant; but assuming it to be correct, it would be a hard case that every year so many young men desirous of obtaining the benefit of a University education should have no means of accomplishing their wish, for I cannot suppose the Government have any idea of offering for competition thirty or forty scholarships sufficient to start a University in New Zealand at once. It is quite true that of these supposed thirty or forty candidates the majority would be below the standard required for the scholarships, but I am not prepared to admit that a University course neither is nor can be made of educational value except to the few who take honours. I believe that a University in New Zealand would be of immense practical benefit by inspiring a life into the whole system which cannot be obtained otherwise, and which by the adoption of the alternative course will be entirely wasted. If a clever lad goes home to Oxford or Cambridge with a Government scholarship, works hard and takes first-class honours, the chances are that he will not return to the Colony. A five years' absence from New Zealand will have disconnected him from old ties, easily broken at eighteen years; he will have found new associations, have gained high distinction, and see all the career which England offers to distinguished talent open before him, and can we expect that he will deliberately abandon it all to return to New Zealand? And for what? What inducement can the Colony hold out to him? We find it hard enough to get any able man to give up his chances in England and come out to the Colony, and surely we should pause before adopting a plan which, the more successful its results, will tend the more to deprive us of the very choicest of rising Colonial talent. A Colonial University would at least be free from that drawback, while by bringing the University into closer contact with the schools it would exercise a direct and most beneficial influence upon them and on education generally.

The only argument I have met with against the establishment of a New Zealand University is, that the idea is premature, meaning, I presume, that it would not attract a sufficient number of students to keep it afoot. I regard this assertion as a lamentable confession of the neglected state of education in the Colony, and the low condition of our public schools. But is it so? There would at all events be the candidates for the proposed English scholarships, successful and unsuccessful, with those who, though not equal to contending for the scholarships, yet desired to have the advantages of a University training, say at a moderate estimate ten in all; this in three years, assuming that to be the length of the course, would give a total of thirty students—no inconsiderable beginning. But the formation of the new public schools, which as I have already stated I regard as indispensable adjuncts to the University, would greatly increase the number. Supposing six such schools established, it would not be too much to expect that each would send up four students a-year to the University, which in three years would give a total of seventy-two. How could anything like that number be sent to an English University? The scholarships plan seems to me to take for granted that there are not, nor are likely for many years to be, more than two or three youths every year who care to enter the University; whereas I believe that if greater facilities were offered, the number would increase rapidly till the University became as much the natural termination of the educational course as it is in England.

The scheme I have thus roughly sketched out might, with the exception of the University, be accomplished in a twelvemonth, for much of the machinery is already at work; and it fulfils both the conditions with which I have started, by giving every child in the Colony, no matter in what rank of life or how poor, an opportunity of improving his faculties to the utmost, and by developing for the general benefit of the community all its hitherto neglected intellectual wealth. It is nothing like so difficult or complex a task as the organization of road districts; the misfortune is, that the public cares a great deal about roads, and cares comparatively little about education.

In conclusion may I be allowed respectfully to suggest to the Committee the expediency of recommending the appointment of a Commission, such as that recently appointed in Victoria, (an extract from whose Report I append), to consider the whole question of public education in this Colony, with which the other question of the establishment of a University for New Zealand is materially involved.

It only remains for me to apologize to the Committee for the length of this paper, which I trust may be excused in consideration of the interest and importance of the subject discussed.

J. V. C. VEEL.

Education in Victoria.

THE following is a summary of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Commissioners, just laid before the Victorian Parliament:—

The alterations in the existing system of public instruction which we would respectfully submit for consideration may be shortly stated as follows:—

1. The enactment of a law making the instruction of children compulsory upon parents.
2. The appointment of a Minister of Public Instruction, responsible to Parliament, with a general superintendence over the interests of education in Victoria.
3. The establishment of public schools from which sectarian teaching shall be excluded by express Legislative enactment, and in which religious teaching shall be in like manner sanctioned and encouraged.
4. Public schools to be placed under the superintendence and management, subject to the Minister of Public Instruction, of local committees, to be partly nominated by ratepayers and parents.
5. The teachers in public schools to be admitted to the public service upon passing a prescribed