

Rev. J. KINDER, M.A.—1.] The foundation of such University Scholarships would, I think, be found to have very little effect practically as an inducement to parents to send their sons to the Universities in England or Ireland. There are so many other considerations, besides the question of expense, which naturally have much weight with parents in making them unwilling to send their sons away from the Colony, that I believe few will send them who would not equally have done so without any provision of the kind contemplated being made by Government. Among these considerations may be reckoned the entire separation of the youths from their families for so long a time, and at a time of life when home-influence is most valuable; the difficulty there is in many cases of providing some substitute for a home for the youths during the vacations, embracing some five months in the year; the danger to which they would be exposed of falling into extravagant and bad habits, and of disappointing, after all, the expectations of their friends (a danger which in their case is increased by the separation from their homes); the expenses which must still fall upon the parents, even if all strictly educational charges be defrayed by Government; lastly, the many openings for young men in the Colonies enabling them to provide for themselves very early in life, so that three or four years at a University (even with all expenses of education paid) would be regarded as a serious loss of time both by the parents and their sons. This last consideration it is which takes our youths from schools so early. It would, I believe, be found equally operative in keeping them from availing themselves of scholarships to Universities in the British Islands or in Australia.

Under these circumstances the competition for such scholarships is likely to be confined in a great degree to those who would be sent to England by their friends independently of any assistance from the public purse. Even if some few others were induced to offer themselves, these, it might well happen, would not be our best and most promising scholars, able by their abilities and acquirements creditably to represent the New Zealand Colonies in the Universities of the Mother Country, but simply those whose circumstances accidentally favoured their being sent there.

If then the gain to the Colonies of New Zealand by the foundation of such scholarships is to be measured by the number and merit of the young men who are sent from us to the Universities in question over and above those who would go there without Government assistance, this gain will, I believe, bear a very small proportion to the expense incurred. Even from this a deduction must be made on account of those who might never return to this country as well as those who might fail altogether to realize the hopes entertained of them.

Upon these grounds I am unable to recommend the foundation of University Scholarships for the purpose of sending boys from New Zealand Schools to any of the Universities in the British Islands or the Australian Colonies.

2.] The plan suggested by this question has been in use for some time past in the school of which I have been master for the last twelve years. Several exhibitions have been attached to this school by the Trustees, of such value as to cover the expense of tuition, viz., £12 per annum. The effect has been highly beneficial, and is purchased at a very insignificant cost. Besides giving a healthy stimulus to the lads which is felt very much throughout the school, I believe it has contributed to retain boys longer in the school, and thus acted as an encouragement of a higher class of studies than they would otherwise have had time to prosecute. At the same time I do not regard exhibitions of this small amount sufficient by themselves for the end proposed. They require to be followed up by exhibitions or scholarships of considerably higher value to be gained by a higher examination.

I would therefore recommend the foundation of exhibitions for the encouragement within the existing schools of the Colony of a higher class of studies than that which the pupils generally can now be induced to prosecute.

3.] In the formation of a Board of Examiners lies one of the chief difficulties of any scheme that may be adopted either for scholarships to the Universities or exhibitions to the existing schools of the Colony. Upon the ability with which the examinations are conducted, and the confidence placed by all in the impartiality of the examiners depends in a great degree the success of either plan. It can hardly be a question therefore whether the Head Masters of Schools, and in fact all persons engaged in tuition, should not be excluded from such a Board. Probably even the Clergy of the Church of England and the Ministers of various denominations would not be altogether free from objection however impartially they might act while serving on the Board.

With regard to the mode of conducting the examinations, I am of opinion that printed questions alone should be employed to be answered by the candidates in writing. This ensures perfect equality and fairness to all who are examined. As the candidates would mostly be young men from whom no great extent of reading is to be expected, it would appear advisable that the names of the books in which they were to be examined should be published a sufficient time beforehand to admit of their being efficiently studied.

6.] I am of opinion that the classical and mathematical knowledge of the candidates should be the chief subject of examination, and that if any other subjects should be joined with these by the examiners they should be allowed only a subordinate place in the examination.

With regard to any limitation as to age, I would suggest that if the plan of higher and lower class exhibitions be adopted as recommended in my answer to No. 2, the age of fourteen or fifteen be fixed as a limit for candidates for the lower class exhibitions.