

REPORT

OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS.

THE Select Committee appointed to consider and report upon the Petition of the Reverend F. C. Simmons, for the establishment of University Scholarships, or, to speak more correctly, of Colonial Exhibitions to British or other Universities as a means of encouraging within the Colony the highest possible standard of education and general intellectual culture, beg to report that having first of all secured the attendance in Wellington, of Mr. Simmons, and received the very full and valuable statement of his views on the subject which many Members of the House of Representatives as well as of the Legislative Council have already seen in a printed form, they proceeded to draw up a series of Questions intended to elicit information upon what appeared to be either essential or subordinate points of the inquiry which had been committed to them. These were immediately printed and addressed to about sixty gentlemen residing in different parts of New Zealand, who, either by education and known attainments or by their social, political, or professional status in the Colony, appeared entitled to be consulted in such a matter, and best qualified to give the Committee such information and also such an expression of intelligent opinion as it was desirable to obtain before any positive action was taken by the Legislature, or indeed any recommendations submitted to it by the Committee with a view to such action.

To the series of Queries so issued answers have already been received from over forty gentlemen, who may be considered to constitute altogether a very fair practical representation of different localities, views, and interests; and it is a great satisfaction to the Committee to know that they have been the means of bringing together so much valuable information upon a very important subject,—such a body of facts, suggestions, and opinions, as is contained in these answers,—the more especially as it has been obtained in a very short space of time, and with scarcely any cost to the country. Of course, the communications thus received have not an uniform value. Some of them have been written with less care, and necessarily in some haste: many are evidently contributed by men of much special experience and of high attainments, and are therefore entitled to more consideration. But it would be unwise and invidious to make a mere selection where all have alike freely responded to the requisitions of the Committee; and they would therefore recommend that the whole of the answers, together with those that are yet to come in, be printed and bound up with the Parliamentary Papers of the Session, and also separately, in a form that will bring them before the notice of the general public as well as of the Members of the Legislature, in order that the subject may be thoroughly discussed before any decided action is taken upon it next Session.

With regard to their own views on the main question referred to their consideration, that is to say—the foundation by the Colony of Exhibitions which should enable the most promising of its young men to obtain the great advantage of a first-rate University education in Great Britain or elsewhere,—the Committee, after having had the opportunity of considering the various opinions and suggestions contained in the papers just referred to, are themselves disposed strongly to recommend the institution of such Exhibitions. They concur with Mr. Simmons and the majority of the gentlemen who have favoured them with their views, that University Exhibitions, if properly established and cared for, would exercise a very perceptible and beneficial influence, direct and indirect, upon the whole course and character of education throughout New Zealand.