

I venture to remind the Committee that minor towns in Italy, such as Pisa and Amalfi, had their Universities, producing some of the greatest men of the time, and that to such institutions, widely diffused, is to attributed the striking intellectual activity of Italy in the middle ages.

. I venture under this head to express a strong opinion in favour of a thoroughly good liberal education for all classes of the community—free. I regard this as one of the responsibilities and duties of the Government. It must be evident that all of the members of a democratic State should be well educated. The proposals as to the scholarships, &c., seem to me to have little or no bearing on this important matter, and rather to lead to its being overlooked. A school system for the Colony such as that of Prussia, or better, that of some of the United States, would do more to make the youth of this country fit for their future positions, social and political, than such limited and doubtful measures as the establishment of a few scholarships at Universities.

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G. P. ABRAM, Esq.—1.] Before any steps are taken towards the foundation of New Zealand Scholarships, tenable at any of the Universities of the British Islands, I think that most careful inquiry should be made into the working of the Tasmanian Scholarship System. My own impression is, that it has not proved successful to anything like the extent expected. This opinion is founded upon what I have heard from those who have had opportunities of judging, and upon personal observation of the working of the system in one instance at the University of Cambridge.

Apart from this, I think that the proposition of sending boys from New Zealand to Great Britain is, in itself, open to various objections. The English Universities (and I suppose the Scotch and Irish also, though in a less degree) abound with temptations of every kind, which would have unusual power in the case of Colonial youths suddenly deprived of all home influence, and beyond the reach of timely advice and admonition. The holder of a scholarship, similar to the Tasmanian Scholarships, would find himself virtually independent at an English University, pecuniarily and otherwise, and instead of working for honours would, very probably, content himself with taking an ordinary degree, knowing that most persons in the Colony would, in their ignorance of University matters, regard this as a highly satisfactory result.

Again, to take the case of an industrious, talented, and ambitious youth. Such a youth would, in all probability, gain a Fellowship at his College, and proceed to the Bar, or take Holy Orders in England; at any rate he would not return to New Zealand, as he could not fail to see that he would have a far better opening for a career in England than in the Colony. On the other hand, a youth who had failed, comparatively speaking, at the University, either from want of application or from some other cause, would return to New Zealand no better, perhaps rather the worse for his three years' residence in the home country.

In the third place, and this is the most important point, it is extremely doubtful if the University Scholarship scheme, unless supplemented by something of wider application, would be attended with any marked beneficial results, as far as the New Zealand schools are concerned. No doubt a rivalry would be created between the various schools of the Colony; but, in my opinion, the tendency of this would be, that a few clever boys would be selected in each school, to whose studies special attention would be devoted, while the mass of the pupils would remain precisely in their present state. If, therefore, the aim of the proposed scheme is to raise the standard of education generally throughout the Colony, and not to offer special rewards to a few promising boys, I do not think that that aim will be reached by any mere system of University Scholarships.

2.] In place of the University Scholarship scheme, or by way of necessary supplement to it, I should suggest that the schools of New Zealand be affiliated to the University of Melbourne or Sydney in exactly the same way as the Middle Class schools of England have been affiliated to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The main features of this system, which was founded in 1858, and has proved most successful, are as follows:—Each school is allowed to send up as many candidates for examination as it pleases. The Board of Examiners is composed of University men. The candidates are divided into two bodies. Those above fifteen are called seniors; those below, juniors. In the competition for prizes the seniors and juniors are kept entirely distinct. The candidates who pass with credit, are classified according to merit, and to the name of each in the published list is appended his place of residence, and the school in which he was trained. The juniors are rewarded with certificates of merit, to which certain money or other prizes may be added; the seniors with the title of Associate of Arts, and extra prizes in the case of those who have specially distinguished themselves. In fact, all the regulations for the Associate of Arts examination in connection with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge might be applied with scarcely any alteration to the schools of New Zealand, if brought into connection with one of the Australian Universities. The great advantage which such a system possesses is, that under it the efficiency of a school would be estimated, not by the accident of its having two or three peculiarly clever boys at its head, but by the number of candidates (in proportion of course to the whole number of pupils in the school) that it could send out educated up to a certain standard of excellence. The stimulus of competition