

was carefully considered, and the association was unanimously of opinion that it would be undesirable that any interference should be made with the examination for the degree, and the corollary to that was that they considered the present system generally satisfactory, and that the University was pursuing its chartered object of providing sound learning in New Zealand, and that it was not necessary to make any revolutionary changes in the system that had been adopted. As president of that association, I may say that my association was quite in agreement with what was described as evolutionary reform in the system, but they thought the proposal of the Reform Association could hardly be classed as evolutionary. I have heard something said here this morning in regard to the question of the value that has been placed upon the New Zealand University degree through the system of external examination, and, sir, I contend from my own experience as an old graduate—I graduated in 1885—and from what I have ascertained from other graduates, not only in Auckland, but throughout New Zealand, and also from the experience I have had in many tours when travelling round the world, and in conversing with educated people—that the fact of the New Zealand University degree having been awarded mainly by men of great learning and European reputation has added enormously to the value of our University degree. And the graduates, not only of Auckland, but practically of the whole of New Zealand—the vast majority—are most unwilling to see the present system which has been in vogue so long in any way modified. I should also like to say I am speaking here to-day in response to an invitation from the Chancellor of the University asking the Fellows of the University Senate to express their opinion before this Committee, and I want to speak as a Fellow of the University of eight years' standing. I should like to say that this question of doing away with the external examination for the degree has been discussed almost every year since I have been a member of the Senate, and it has always been rejected by a very large majority indeed.

*Mr. Allen:* Not last time.

*Witness:* Well, up to last year the motion to alter the system has been defeated, and I may say without fear of contradiction that on each occasion the eight representatives of the graduates upon the University Senate have been unanimous in rejecting any proposal to do away with the external examiners, and I think they represent a large majority of the constituency of the graduates of New Zealand, so that one can safely claim that they were voicing the opinions of the graduates; and I think due regard should be paid by this Committee to the voice of the graduates of New Zealand in regard to this question, which is one of the most important planks in the platform of the Reform Association. The University graduate of New Zealand, sir, regards the external examination as being a hall-mark upon his degree, and he is fearful that anything should be done which might obliterate the hall-mark. It has, I am sure, had a beneficial influence upon the course of studies of the student. The fact that they know that they will have to present themselves for examination before an examiner who is a man of the highest standing often in the world in the special subject in which he examines, I think, from my own experience, has its influence upon the general work, character, and enthusiasm of the man, because he knows that he will have to submit his work to the judgment of an external examiner of such repute. And it has been claimed in addition that it has a beneficial influence upon the professors themselves. It has stimulated them to keep themselves abreast of the highest work that can be done in their respective departments of learning. I know that has been traversed in this pamphlet, but nevertheless I feel, sir, that it has had in many ways a beneficial influence upon the work of the professors. I should like to say, sir, that those who advocate the maintenance of this external system of examination are not unconscious of the difficulties that it involves. They recognize it, sir. But I would also say that the reason why most of the members of the Senate are desirous of maintaining the system of external examination is because they recognize that the system advocated of having internal examiners represents so many difficulties that they prefer to maintain the system that has done such excellent service in regard to the University of New Zealand. I should like also to refer to the fact that in this pamphlet we have evidence of the opinions of a great many people in other parts of the world in regard to the question of external or internal examination. I think, personally, and it is the opinion of the Graduates' Association and others interested in education in Auckland, that a large part of this evidence may be discounted on the ground that those who give their evidence are not perfectly familiar with the conditions as they exist in New Zealand. A large number, apparently, do not recognize the difficulties that exist in connection with the four separate University Colleges, and those difficulties, sir, are very great indeed in regard to the question of conducting internal examinations. There is no doubt, and one cannot blink the fact, that between the four centres of the University there is a spirit of great jealousy existing. The same jealousy which exists in provincial matters exists in the educational world, and I may say that the opposition in the University Senate, as far as I can remember, has been largely made by the professors of the University Colleges who are on the University Senate. I have heard them again and again pointing out the difficulties that would arise through the students of one college having to submit to examination by the professor of another college. This difficulty is recognized as a very serious one indeed, and it has been urged again and again that it is one of the chief obstacles that lie in the way of adopting any other system of examination. Now, sir, I think, if the writers of many of these answers had been acquainted with the conditions that surround the university life and functions of our individual colleges, they would have realized the difficulties there were in carrying out a system of internal examination for the degree. But, sir, I should like to point out that the test for the degrees in the New Zealand University is not purely an external test. For three years during the student course a student has to pass the annual term examination, which is solely in the hands of his teacher. Each year he has to pass this examination, and in the Auckland and Canterbury Colleges it is laid down that the student must pass his third-term examination in the subjects he intends taking for the degree before he can appear for the degree examination, and if that system were applied to all our colleges it would be a safeguard. One realizes that it is not fully equivalent to