

PERCY GATES MORGAN examined. (No. 16.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—I am a Master of Arts in the New Zealand University, Associate of the Otago School of Mines, and am now Director of the Geological Survey. I have lived in New Zealand since early childhood. From 1875 to 1881 I attended primary schools; from 1882 to 1884 a secondary school (Dunedin Boys' High School); from 1885 to 1893 the Otago University and the Otago University School of Mines. I taught privately (coached) during some of my university years. From September, 1897, to May, 1905, I taught in schools of mines. I have therefore had considerable experience of education in New Zealand in nearly all its aspects. Before speaking of university reform I wish to refer to the great necessity of co-ordination between primary, secondary (including technical), and university education. Overlapping ought to be prevented as much as possible. At the present time there is overlapping of function between technical schools and the ordinary secondary schools, and there is also overlap between the technical schools and the University. There is also the serious overlap caused by the establishment of four University Colleges in a comparatively small population. It being now apparently impracticable to have one central University, further attention ought to be given to specialization in each college. Owing to there being four distinct colleges, it ought to be recognized that efficient university education must be more costly in New Zealand than in other countries where it can be centralized. The isolation of New Zealand and the high cost of living are other factors adding to the price that must be paid for the higher education. I may here say that I am in favour of a Royal Commission—not merely on university education, but also on primary, secondary, and technical education. It may be pointed out, however, that it ought to report separately on each of these divisions, and that each report ought to be concise and clear in language so as to be understood by the ordinary taxpayer. Functions and ideals of a university: I consider that the function of the University in New Zealand is to supply an education that will lead to the progress of the nation—material, intellectual, and moral. Research, then, must be the main objective of the University, and knowledge must be regarded as merely the end to this means. Hitherto I think we have all sought too much after knowledge without regard to its practical usefulness. Material progress: The University ought to adapt itself to the needs of the country as far as possible. If, then, it is modelled wholly on foreign institutions, and has little power of altering its organization, it will in some respects be a failure. Intellectual progress: I need not speak much of this, since it is certain to be given sufficient prominence in any discussion on university ideals. Many people seem to think that it is the main ideal of universities to cultivate the minds of people. Hence the stress sometimes laid on culture, which in the New Zealand University has not led to general progress. In my opinion, a man may acquire what can be truly called culture in any pursuit where skill is involved—*e.g.*, agriculture, mining, blacksmithing, house-building, or even politics. To promulgate the idea that culture is almost necessarily confined to university graduates is both absurd and harmful. Moral progress: It is essential that moral progress should keep pace with material and intellectual progress. In some respects—for example, in the inculcation of perseverance, honesty, and truth—the higher education is an excellent teacher of morals. I feel sure, however, that the inculcation of virtue ought to be a prime object in a university. I will not pretend to say how this ideal can best be accomplished, but will merely draw attention to its importance. Scope of university: Since I regard the university as for the nation, not the individual, its doors should be open to all who can benefit by its instruction. Fees, therefore, should be abolished, or almost so. Thus I believe in a free university. Entrance examination: The Matriculation Examination need not be made more difficult than it now is until some finality is attained with regard to higher examinations. I am glad that Maori is now a subject for matriculation. I utterly fail to see why Latin and Greek should each be considered of double the value of such a subject as English. Entrance scholarships: These are much more numerous than twenty-five years ago, and probably almost or quite adequate in number. The emoluments of most or all scholarships should be sufficient to cover cost of board, class fees (if any), and necessary books. I hardly think that many of the scholarships are sufficiently valuable. As regards the subjects of examination, I cannot see any reason for Latin being assigned 50 per cent. more marks than English, nor why history and geography should be given the lowest places. Maori ought certainly to be a subject of examination for scholarships in this country. Subjects of instruction: The only limit that should be placed on subjects of instruction and the standard to which they are taught is that imposed by financial considerations. In this comparatively poor country, still thinly populated and in large measure undeveloped, it would be absurd to teach such subjects as, say, Oriental languages at the public expense. Before the present list of subjects taught in the various colleges is materially extended it is highly necessary that adequate provision for the efficient teaching of the more important subjects be made. I consider, however, that the teaching of Maori to an honours standard ought to be undertaken, and the necessary means provided without delay. Of course, I need not say that Maori in its purity is now passing away, and measures ought to be taken to preserve a knowledge of it. Auckland is obviously the proper college for the location of a professor of the Maori language. The failure of the New Zealand University to provide for instruction in Maori illustrates better than any verbal statement its lack of adaptation to New Zealand needs. Presumably the authorities are waiting for Oxford or Cambridge or some other great university to take the lead. Degrees and courses of study: I consider that there should be homogeneous correlation of subjects in connection with the arts and sciences degrees. This would involve radical alterations in the regulations dealing with these degrees. I do not think that any one foreign university furnishes the best model for New Zealand needs. Even though the necessity for reform be admitted, it does not follow that we shall be able to formulate the best possible constitution right away; some amount of trial will be necessary. Classes and degree examinations: It is now recognized in the educational world that examinations have for many