

versity education. The result of that is the tendency to revise established methods and to adapt them to current needs. It is a remarkable thing that even conservative England is being stirred on the matter about as deeply as progressive America. In other parts of the Empire similar movements are going on, and I have read in connection with university education in South Africa arguments to show that the matter is being fought substantially on the same principle that the petitioners desire to place before the Committee now. So it is that the traditions that have endured for centuries in an old country like England are not exempting the oldest universities from the effect of this change in spirit and outlook any more than the comparatively mushroom growths which are the creations of the last fifty years. Oxford and Cambridge have not been exempt from the spirit, and they are also being revised and brought up to date. If this be so, would it not be remarkable if New Zealand were not also affected? It would have been especially wonderful if New Zealand, which is constantly experimenting in the field of primary and secondary education—not to mention the political and social fields—should have left this question of academical education untouched. It is not our desire to disparage anything that has been done by those who are as deeply interested as we are in university work, but who possibly do not see eye to eye with us. We can all be thankful to the Otago pioneers who founded the first university in New Zealand, to those who afterwards founded the New Zealand University, and to those who have carried on the work of teaching and administration. But it would be foolish, we submit, to allow gratitude to blind us to the fact that even a good thing can be capable of improvement; and it would be little short of a miracle if the old system that has obviously grown up in a piecemeal, irregular, and spasmodical fashion during the last forty years could claim exemption from the ordinary rule of human institutions or from that special necessity which all the universities of the world have recently felt for revising their methods. A bare glance at the chronology on the subject will be sufficient to establish this part of our case: In 1869 the founding of the Otago University; 1870, the passing of the New Zealand University Act; 1873, the founding of Canterbury College; 1874, a new Act substituted for that of 1870; in 1879 the appointment of the Royal Commission which overhauled the whole matter and submitted a very full report; 1882, Auckland University College founded; 1897, Victoria College founded, representing Wellington and the middle district. In 1892 there was a university amendment, and there have been several amended Acts; but none of these deal with the crucial points that we desire to submit to this Committee. The change which was made by the Act of 1874, which repealed the Act of 1870, constitutes one, and I suppose the most important, of the crucial points in our case. The preamble of the Act of 1874 enacts "Whereas it is expedient to promote sound learning in the Colony of New Zealand"; and that Act empowered the New Zealand University to treat with the Otago University Council with a view to absorbing that institution, and certain provisions were made against that contingency. It was expressly stated in the Act of 1874 that the University as reconstituted was not for the purpose of teaching, but to conduct examinations. The cardinal point of our contention is that that distinction of the Act of 1874 was an admitted and undeniable violation of the original University Act. That is the vital change to which we desire to direct attention, and in respect of which we desire to have a full investigation. The Act of 1874 limited the functions of the University to examinations. Mr. Herdman referred to the opinions of experts that will be found in the book and in the papers that have since been put in. I have not seen all the local opinions, but with regard to the opinions from outside sources we see that there is practical unanimity in connection with the undesirable character of complete separation between the teaching and examining functions. It is referred to by one of the leading university men of London as a curse or blight. He says that this divorce was the curse of the London University. I referred to the fact that a Royal Commission reported on the matter in 1879. They recommended the abolition of the anomaly which I have indicated, and which was practically forced on the country by Otago being the first in the field and not desiring to merge her identity with the new University. The 1879 Commission recommended the abolition of that anomaly. It recommended, in the first place, that there should be colleges established in the several centres, and that they should be brought into organic affiliation with the New Zealand University, and should be colleges of that University instead of entirely separate institutions as at present. That was in 1879, but no action was taken. Thirty-two years have passed, and all that has happened in connection with that recommendation is the foundation of University Colleges in Auckland and in Wellington. All that was done by the institution of these colleges was to provide the framework and the means of carrying out and strengthening the reforms which the University Commission desired. It was impossible in 1879, without colleges being established in other centres, to carry out fully the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The foundation was not there until 1897, because not till then was the necessary number of University Colleges established to represent practically the whole of the country, so that the foundation accordingly was not there to enable the ideal reforms which the Commission of 1879 had in view to carry out what was intended. I am only attempting to put the matter in a sketchy form, which will be filled in by men after me who have a better acquaintance with the subject. This petition is not asking for any new thing at all. It is asking for practically what was desired by the Royal Commission of 1879, and its request is in accordance with the general movement that is distinguishing all the leading universities in the world. I wish, in a final word, to make this quite clear, that although the matter is substantially as stated, the petitioners do not desire to submit any scheme to the Committee, and, indeed, they have not got any cut-and-dried scheme which they desire to thrust down any one's throat. But they do desire a full inquiry into the system in the light of the most modern developments of university teaching and administration, and they feel perfectly satisfied that this Committee—and the House, if the Committee reports favourably—will recognize, inde-