

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, 25TH JULY, 1913.

JOHN STUDHOLME examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] We understand, Mr. Studholme, that you have some information to give us with regard to the home-science course at the Otago University, and we should be glad if you would make a statement now and members might afterwards ask you any questions upon the subject?—It is in connection with the Chair of Home Science at the Otago University that I wish to give evidence, and I should like to point out that the objects of the promoters of the establishment of this Chair were two: one was that they hoped that the recognition by the highest educational authority—the University Senate—that this teaching was sufficiently scientific and of sufficient importance to be included in a University degree course would give a stimulus and greatly increased prestige in the eyes of the public to this part of a woman's education. That was one object they had in view. The other was that they hoped it would enable the necessary number of teachers for the teaching of this subject in our primary, secondary, and technical schools to be trained in the Dominion. Well, the establishment of this Chair has met both these hopes. In my opinion one Chair is sufficient for these two purposes: the establishment of another Chair would only mean two weak Chairs instead of one strong Chair. As to the Chair being at the Otago University, much of the domestic work is connected with health, and the fact of there being a Medical School at the Otago University, and much of the teaching being of a similar character for the Medical School as for home science, makes the University College the best of the four colleges for this Chair of Domestic Science. What I want to point out also is that this Chair of Domestic Science has not got an assured finance. It was in the way of an experiment, and it had to justify itself. The Government are only supporting this Chair by means of a subsidy on voluntary contributions. The Otago University itself has not the means to make provision for this Chair. The whole of the funds for this Chair are provided by two contributions, one of £200 a year by a Citizens Committee, and one of £300 a year by myself. Those two contributions are guaranteed for five years, two years and a half of which have matured, and there are still two years and a half to run. Those contributions are guaranteed solely for the purpose of meeting the expenses of the professor and lecturer and other expenses of the Chair itself. Those contributions are supplemented by the Government at present, the usual subsidy of £1 for £1 being given. To put it on a sound basis the Chair needs an assured finance for all time after these guaranteed contributions cease, because these contributions will cease at the end of 1915. But in addition to an assured finance it very greatly needs a hostel. There is no residence for the women students from outside who attend this course, and without a hostel the machinery for giving complete teaching is altogether incomplete. Wherever this teaching is thoroughly carried out—in America, and also in London, connected with the university—there is always a hostel for women in conjunction with it; in fact, it is looked upon as an absolutely necessary adjunct or complement to the teaching. I would suggest that this Chair has justified its existence; it is no longer in the experimental stage in which it was, because the students have steadily increased. There are now forty-two students taking this course, twenty-four of whom are doing so for diploma and degree courses, and the balance for shorter courses. I would urge upon this Committee that they should endorse the Inspector-General's report in advising the Government to make a grant of £1,000 a year towards the permanent establishment of this course. If the Government did that there would no longer be any need for the voluntary contributions that are promised for the maintenance of this course, because the Government grant of £1,000 a year, plus the fees, would cover, or possibly more than cover, the actual expenses of the Chair. But the Citizens Committee and myself do not want in any way to shirk our engagements, and if the Government will make this grant of £1,000 a year and so put the finance of the Chair on an assured footing our guaranteed contributions up to the end of 1915 could be utilized towards building a hostel or the necessary workrooms for the proper equipment of this Chair. I hold in my hand a resolution that was passed by the Citizens Committee, which the Inspector-General has in connection with the other papers on this matter. I do not know if it has been placed before this Committee.

The Chairman: No.

Witness: I will read it and it will explain the position to this Committee. This is a letter to the Professor of Home Economics: "Dear Madam,—Referring to the meeting of the Citizens Committee this afternoon I have now pleasure in advising you that the following resolution was approved of: That this Citizens Committee agrees to pay the balance of its obligation—namely, £400—being subscription of £200 for years 1914 and 1915 each, to assist in the building of a laundry and kitchen, on condition that Government takes over the financing of the Chair of Domestic Science as from January, 1914, and relieves the Citizens Committee from any further liability, and that Mr. John Studholme concurs in this course." My main object in coming here is to acquaint the Committee with that resolution, and to state that I am prepared to fall in with that proposal, provided that these voluntary contributions are devoted towards the erection of a hostel. It is immaterial to me whether the money is spent immediately on a kitchen and laundry as proposed, provided that that kitchen and laundry and other workrooms are erected on the site of the ultimate hostel and are to be a part of an approved complete hostel,