

60. Has your University assisted the local primary school or has it come into collision with it to some extent—I mean, has it crossed its work, as it were?—I have no knowledge at all of it having come into collision in any way with the primary-school work.

61. Let me give you an instance: we find in Dunedin that our technical-school students who are of the best class cannot carry on work at the University under the present existing arrangements. We pass the students who are ready to go on to university work, but the University makes no provision to meet them, and their education, so far as the University is concerned, stops at that point?—So far as our University is concerned we have made all provision to meet them, because practically all our work is conducted after 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when it is available for every one.

62. Then, if you came to do all the work during the day you would be in the same position as the Otago University?—Yes, if we did all the work during the day. That has not been advocated as the policy of our University College.

63. *Mr. McCallum.*] I understand, Professor Picken, it is the average student you are thinking of when recommending internal examinations?—No, certainly not. I mean to say the argument applies to every student, but the idea was that so far as external evidences are concerned no system of education prevents the really able man from coming out on top.

64. But I understand you have only had five years' experience. Even in that time have you found that occasionally one of your students who is well equipped will fail in his degree examination, whereas another student not so well equipped will succeed?—I have not personally conducted any detailed investigation into that matter, but I do know this: that the whole University system and the method of conducting these external examinations militates against my whole work. It works against what I regard as most important—the original ideas I might bring to bear upon my work.

65. Have you had no experience of that—that students who you considered were entitled to pass failed, whereas others who were not so well equipped or entitled to pass succeeded?—I think both Professor Hunter and Professor Von Zedlitz can give you actual facts upon that. I might say I have personally tried to forget the existence of the external examination as regards its effect upon my students as far as I can. It seems to me a hopeless thing to be up against, and I think the best thing is to forget it if one does not want to get into the depths of despair.

66. And you think if the professor was able to give the degree it would strengthen his hands and leave his student to devote his time to the work more earnestly?—We do not propose that. The colleagues in other universities and the colleagues in other subjects would all influence the passing of the student, and the whole system would be the means of getting the very best possible out of our students.

67. You strongly urge that?—Yes.

68. It has been urged in opposition to your views that you have no opportunity of judging of the professor's work?—You should determine that before you appoint the professor. If you appoint a bad professor nothing will cure that. The most deadly sin that you can commit against the University is to appoint the wrong man. You should exhaust every possible means of choosing your men with the utmost care before they are appointed, and we say it does not matter whether there is a delay of six months or a year so long as you get the best men.

69. You are of opinion that the present system does not lead to a review of the work of the professors?—I am perfectly certain it does not. It succeeds generally in concealing all the good work the professor may be able to do.

70. *Mr. Guthrie.*] You make that statement because some of the professors proceed perhaps upon original lines which they feel adaptable to their surrounding circumstances?—I think the main function of the university teacher is to present an original point of view on his subject, and that it should be determined before he is appointed whether he may be trusted to do that.

71. Have you any objection to the external examination bringing out the best points of the academical training?—I do not think it does do that. I do not think that is the way to bring out the best points of the academical training. I think it brings out the worst points.

72. According to your opening statement I notice that you are very strongly of opinion that if a Royal Commission is set up to inquire into this matter that it should be presided over by some one of Imperial university experience?—I am not tied to the phrase "presided over." I do not know if that would be the best. That is my own opinion, but I think if you brought in a man of that kind it would be impossible to do other than make him Chairman of the Commission.

73. A Royal Commission set up to inquire into university education here would have to a large extent to be guided by local circumstances?—Certainly.

74. Well, do you think that any one brought in from outside would have any idea at all of the local conditions that exist here?—His function is to take evidence on that. These men are used to consider local conditions of which they have no knowledge until they get amongst them. They are taken from one place to investigate into the conditions of another place, and they are men qualified to do it, if, of course, you have them properly supported by local men. We suggested a Commission of three on a previous occasion, one to be the external man and two local men.

75. Is it your opinion that we have no one in New Zealand capable of presiding over such a Commission who has the external experience and knowledge?—I am very strongly of that opinion.

76. With regard to the connection between our primary work and the University work, is it your opinion at the present time that the proper connection is not recognized?—I am perfectly sure that there is no proper connection at present. The University arrangements to some extent exercise as bad an influence on the school-work as the external examinations exercise on the University work. We are far too much related to the schools by the Matriculation Examination,