

Professor HUNTER examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Whom do you represent?—I represent the Professorial Board of Victoria College.

2. Do you wish to make a statement?—Yes. The main point I wish to refer to is in regard to the previous inquiry. The Committee came to a certain result, and I want to show that the natural corollary to that conclusion is that a Royal Commission should be appointed. In 1910 thirteen members of the teaching staff petitioned for a Royal Commission, and put in as evidence the opinions of sixty-five educational authorities abroad, who in the main condemned the organization of the University, which made no provision for the collective voice of the staffs of the colleges being heard on academic questions. Among those authorities should be noted the following New-Zealanders—Professors Beattie, Connall, Dendy, Gilruth, Inglis, R. C. Mac-laurin, Robertson, Tucker, and many examiners of the New Zealand University, besides such world-wide experts in university organization as President Eliot and Dr. Alex. Hill. A point I want to make is that at that inquiry, according to the evidence, certain aspersions were cast on the *bona fides* of those opinions. It was urged that you could get opinions on the other side just as easily. In the meantime I happen to have been elected to the Senate, and I moved at the last meeting that the Senate itself should draw up a circular letter descriptive of our examination system in arts, science, commerce, and law, and that the Chancellor, Mr. Hogben, and Dr. Collins should be the committee. Nobody seconded the motion, so that I take it we can say that those opinions which were gathered from men whose views were not known before did represent the academic opinions in Great Britain at the time, especially as we show that every New-Zealander who had passed through this University and gone abroad to a university post when he replied condemned the system. Then the Committee heard the evidence of and cross-examined the following witnesses—Messrs. A. R. Atkinson, Professor Von Zedlitz, Mr. A. Webster, Professor Hunter, Dr. McDowell, Professor Laby, Professor Kirk, Professor Easterfield, Dr. J. A. Allan Thomson, Mr. P. G. Morgan, Sir Robert Stout, Mr. C. Wilson, Mr. J. O'Shea, the Inspector-General of Schools, Mr. A. L. Herdman; and, although there were some witnesses who expressed the opinion that a Royal Commission was not necessary, if you read the evidence you will see that practically the whole of it showed that some inquiry was needed. The Court of Convocation of the Victoria College District, the Graduates' Association of Victoria College, and the Victoria College Council passed resolutions in favour of inquiry, and five professors of Canterbury College—Professors Evans, Gabbatt, Hight, R. J. Scott, and Wall—supported the request for a Royal Commission. Now, the evidence was so convincing that the gist of the Committee's report was that the case for reform was made out, but that a Royal Commission was not necessary, as the Senate, by setting up a Professorial Conference, had given evidence of a desire to reform the University. At the next meeting of the Senate the Hon. Mr. Allen succeeded in getting the Senate to establish an annual conference of professors, and the first meeting was held in November, 1912. It drew up proposals both for B.A. and B.Sc. degrees, and for a method of internal examination. The Senate threw out the proposals of the conference, and decided by fifteen to seven that the conference was not to sit again. Further, the Education Committee decided that the Senate ought to utilize the professorial staffs in the way of getting suggestions for curricula, &c., and in examining. The Senate dealt with those two points as follows: It threw out the proposals of the professorial conference on the method of examination by seventeen to six. The professorial conference agreed that the best way of introducing into New Zealand the recognized British method of having the teacher and some outside assessor, say the professor in some other university, was by combining the teachers on any subject in the four colleges as an Examining Board, so that every professor would examine his students with three other professors, and that becomes necessary so that the standard throughout the Dominion may be uniform. The Senate threw that out by seventeen to six. It is true that, having recognized it had done something for which it would probably be called to account, it passed a resolution to have reports sent to the English examiners, but it refused to allow that proposal to be discussed by the professorial conference. Then, as to the other point, the utilization of the staffs in framing the curricula, the Senate threw that out by fourteen to eight. It is plain, therefore, that the Committee's reason for withholding a Royal Commission has been shown by experience to rest on a poor basis. Without a division the Senate has itself agreed that reform of the constitution of the Senate and its methods are desirable. The resolution of the Senate appears on page 64 of the minutes. It was moved by Professor J. M. Brown, and is as follows: "(1.) That before coming to a decision on any question relating to the definition, scope, or treatment of any subject in a University examination, or its relationship to other subjects, if beset with difficulties the Senate ascertain the opinion of the members of the college staffs who teach the subjects, and if the question relates also to the entrance examinations it ascertain the opinion of the heads of the secondary schools. (2.) That before coming to a decision on vital questions relating to the constitution or working of the University it ascertain the opinions of the various bodies connected with the University whose interests are involved in the result, such as the governing bodies and the staffs of the colleges, and the Convocation. (3.) That a committee be appointed to suggest methods of ascertaining the opinions efficiently." To that was added, on the motion of Dr. Fitchett, "(4.) That the committee confer with governing bodies and teaching staffs of the colleges, also with the Convocation, on the expediency of a Bill to reconstitute the University on lines that, while in no way affecting the corporate entity of the colleges, their autonomy or finance, will associate them more directly with University government. (5.) That if a working agreement is arrived at the committee draft such a Bill and submit it to the Senate and the colleges for consideration." This Committee may think that this is evidence of the Senate's desire to reform itself; but when you are told that the method adopted is to send out to some sixteen hundred or seventeen hundred graduates, to the Courts of Convocation, to the Professorial Boards, and to the Councils of the