

TUESDAY, 12TH AUGUST, 1913.

SIR ROBERT STOUT, K.C.M.G., C.J., examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I might say, Sir Robert, that we have already before us the whole of the evidence you gave before the Committee two years ago, and that will be taken as evidence before this Committee?—In order to shorten the matter I would also hand in to the Committee the views I expressed on the proposed amendments of the constitution of the University. I understand that what the Committee is considering now is only the question of whether a Commission is to issue or not. That is so, is it not?

2. Yes. We are going to consider Mr. Hogben's report which was put in last year, but which we had no opportunity of discussing. That will be discussed in detail, and we have decided to take evidence in regard to that?—Well, I do not know that there is anything I have to say. All I wish to say is this: that if a Commission is necessary I apprehend that the Commission should not be confined merely to the constitution of the University; it should investigate the whole education of the University and see whether it is fulfilling its object. There is no doubt that the University has been exceedingly disappointing in some respects. I am speaking as one interested in all the University colleges as a whole. What has disappointed me most is the small number of students who take science. The statistics will show that. I have not the report for this year, but the report for last year shows that so far as science is concerned there has been a very small number that took science compared with other subjects. Another thing is that mathematics is dropped. Of course, in the last two years mathematics is not compulsory now in the arts degree, as it was before. That no doubt will affect the number, but independent of that there is a drop. I think you will get from Mr. Hogben's report of last year on higher education the numbers that have taken mathematics, physics, biology, and geology, not necessarily for taking degrees but attending lectures.

3. You mean the report by the Inspector-General of Schools?—Yes. If you turn to page 3 you will see there the number of students taking the several subjects in arts, science, law, commerce, music, medicine, dentistry, engineering, mining, agriculture, and home science for 1912, and you will see the small number comparatively of the science courses that have been taken. I have a very strong opinion that no one should get a degree unless he has taken some course in science. I have always held that, because I do not think a man is educated unless he understands scientific methods. But for some reason or other science is either unpopular or has become unpopular. I think from the table you have before you you will find that in pure mathematics for the whole Dominion there were 195 students, and for applied mathematics 167. Considering the number of our students that is exceedingly small. Then, treating mathematics as a scientific subject, if you take mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and geology, I think the figures will show that Auckland had 255 students—that means those attending lectures, and they may be the same names; Victoria College, 160; Canterbury College, 197; and Otago University, 274. I have taken those figures from Mr. Hogben's table. I should imagine you would need a Commission to deal with what the constitution of the University should be, because our University is different from other universities—different in every way. London is no guide to us. There has recently been a Commission in London, and I would point out to the Committee that, so far as London is concerned, the recent Commission's report has not been received with favour by everybody connected with the London University. The Graduates' Association has protested vigorously against the external students being prohibited, and if you look at the *Times* Supplement on education you will see that the head of the University College objects to the absorption of his college in the way proposed. In the appendix to the final report of the Commission it is rather interesting to see what the report says about the maintenance of external examinations. At page 270 it states, "Since the beginning of July, 1912, the Royal Commission has received letters from various bodies which have passed a resolution in the following or similar terms: This committee (educational authority) protests against any alteration in the statutes and regulations of the University of London which would close it to external students or diminish the opportunities for obtaining an external degree. Some of these bodies also forwarded a copy of a further resolution to the following effect: That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister (Downing Street), the President of the Board of Education (Whitehall), the Secretary of the Royal Commission (Westminster), and the Registrar of the University of London (South Kensington)." And then there follows the names of about two hundred local education bodies all over England, and several pages of bodies protesting against the abolition of external students. Since the issue of the report the Graduates' Association of London University had a meeting and protested against the abolition of the external students, and I think about nine-tenths of the colleges who are recognized as teaching institutions have also protested.

4. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] Perhaps you will explain what is meant by "external student"?—In London there are two classes of students, external and internal. The external students may attend an institution of which the London University has no cognizance. They may be taught by private teachers. All they have to do is that they must pass the Matriculation Examination and various other examinations required to a degree, and they cannot pass their final examination until generally three years have elapsed. In the case of medicine it is five years. In medicine they must also attend for their practical work a recognized medical institution. I have here the regulations for the external students in London in 1908, and I will leave them with the Committee. Then they have the internal students. The internal students are those who attend what are termed the teaching colleges of the University. They have, as you are aware, started teaching colleges in London. Formerly London had no teaching colleges, but recognized certain institutions as teaching colleges—namely, University College, Queen's College, Holloway College, and Bedford College, and certain denominational colleges of the Church of England.