

exceptions the maximum staff at present provided by a college for the teaching of a subject is taken to be a uniform minimum for the four colleges. This is obviously a simple practical way of meeting the case, but it does much less than justice to the college which has tried to do things well as compared with the college which has spread its butter as thin as possible over a large area—*i.e.*, it rewards College Councils with financial provision for the future in inverse proportion to the efficiency of their administration in the past. And, again, it is unfair as between subject and subject, because it tends to stereotype inequalities which have arisen quite accidentally in the past—as between history, economics, philosophy on the one hand, and English, classics, mathematics on the other; the distinction between the “suggested minima” for these two groups does not bear analysis on the principles quoted above from the report. The two-sided proposal (1) to institute a minimum for the colleges on the basis of the present maximum in each subject, (2) to leave the subsequent running of the concern to fees, introduces one other anomaly between the colleges in that it does not take into account the fact that a college has in the past “pooled” its fees into the general funds of the college. It therefore makes no provision for meeting the existing needs of those college departments which have the greatest claims on account of number of students—*i.e.*, it proceeds on the assumption that no subject in any college has yet got beyond the (undefined) limits provided for by the “suggested minimum”—this in face of such facts as the following (quoted from the report): Number of students in classics—Otago University, 120; Victoria College, 170. Number of students in philosophy—Canterbury College, 47; Victoria College, 115. Number of students in biology—Victoria College and Otago University, 30; Auckland University College, 95. It would obviously have been the logical application of the principle to state a minimum in accordance with the *smallest* number of students of a given subject in one of the colleges, and then to have provided each of the colleges with a nucleus fund, for development in that subject, proportional to its existing excess of numbers over the minimum. I am not arguing for such a policy, but merely stating an important criticism of the report's proposals. I do not believe that it is a sound policy to earmark the fees in a subject for the peculiar use of that subject. I do not think it possible to determine in any hard-and-fast way at what point additional assistance will have to be provided, and I do not think that adequate financial provision for the staffing in a subject can be made in this way. One further instance, associated with the difference between subjects, may be given. While it is an obvious matter of practical convenience to charge a uniform fee for lectures throughout a faculty—and to a lesser extent over several faculties—the principles stated in the report itself (and quoted above) debar the assumption that there is anything like the same uniformity in the law of increase of staff with students. It is, in fact, contrary to the spirit of university work to establish too definite a relation between fees and teaching staff. To emphasize this it is only necessary to call attention to the fact that one or two able students may make demands upon a professor's time and energy—and may on the other hand give a return to the country—out of all proportion to the fees paid either by or for them. There is, of course, some relation between strength of staff and number of students—a relation into which the fees must enter—but the working-out of such a relationship must be left to a wise governing body; it cannot be determined by Parliament or put upon anything like a statutory basis. The governing body will deal with its finances as a whole, and will make arrangements to give assistance to professors as that may prove to be necessary, but it cannot be done in a mechanical way. Parliament is responsible for so constituting the bodies which control the University and the colleges as to ensure the wisest possible administration; these bodies must have the confidence of Parliament, and must be relied upon to use funds committed to them efficiently and economically. The whole of my argument is based upon our belief that this question of reconstitution of the University system is the fundamental question involved.

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Professor LABY made a statement. (No. 9.)

*Witness:* The fourth point I should like to make is that at present Victoria College is given an amount for specializing in law and science. In the case of law it means that higher provision is made for teaching it in Victoria College than in any of the other four centres. In the case of science it is difficult to make out what is meant by the term, because it does not give the College, as is the case for medicine and engineering, the exclusive right to teach science. I do not think that is desirable, nor does it mean that we teach it on a higher standard than it is taught in other universities, but it does mean that if the fees of Victoria College are affected the £2,000 remains to provide the teaching in science and law—the teaching in those subjects is guaranteed so long as the grant continues. Under the proposed report that advantage will be removed. No specialization will be given to Victoria College, nor is any to be given to Auckland, so that there will be no special schools in the North Island district, which contains about 60 per cent. of the population of New Zealand. I might mention the principles which we think should underlie such a report. It may be inferred from the report of the professorial conference which was held in Wellington a little while ago that the opinion of the New Zealand professors is that the great need is for raising the standard of the work both in the subjects of arts and science curricula. The report proposes to introduce considerable additional teaching in commerce and law, and we believe that the money actually available for teaching will be such as not to meet the demands for teaching those subjects, and it is desirable to raise the teaching here and make it of a university character rather than spread it over more subjects. There is one other principle which we think should underlie the report, and that is, in determining the financial arrangements of the colleges,