

recominend that a Royal Commission be set up, and that effect be given to the Inspector-General's report or some modification of that report; (2) that a Royal Commission be refused and effect given to the Inspector-General's report or some modification of it; (3) that a Royal Commission be granted and no action taken on the Inspector-General's report; (4) that no action of any sort be taken. Of these I need only consider (1) and (2), seeing that we have already urged as strongly as we can the case for a Royal Commission as being in our opinion the only way to meet the position. But I may reiterate what I have practically said before, that in my opinion—and I think my colleagues agree with me in this—the proper use to make of the Inspector-General's report is to put it in as a substantial piece of evidence before a Royal Commission. We wish to express our appreciation of the painstaking way in which the Inspector-General undertook his difficult task, and of the tactfulness with which he made his inquiries. We shall have to put forward a considerable amount of criticism of the report, but we wish it to be clearly understood that we attach no blame to the Inspector-General for the defects to which we find it necessary to direct attention. We believe that the task committed to him was one which it was impossible for him to accomplish, and that under the circumstances he produced a very able document. With regard to the first course which this Committee might recommend—viz., that effect should be given to this report, but that a Royal Commission might also be set up—we would point out that to determine the finances of the colleges is to determine the major part of their policy, especially as this report itself proves conclusively that the question of policy cannot be severed from that of finance. The financial needs cannot be determined until the future policy has been determined, and determination of finance would mean that nothing of importance remained to justify the appointing of a Royal Commission. I take it, therefore, that the first of the four possible courses I have suggested is not likely to be followed by this Committee. It remains, therefore, to consider the second possible course—viz., that this Committee, instead of recommending a Royal Commission, should recommend that the Inspector-General's report be put into effect. That, we submit, would be tantamount to giving to this report the value of a Royal Commission on university education, for it would be equivalent to saying that the strong appeal which has been made for inquiry by a Royal Commission has been adequately met by the inquiry of the Inspector-General. Yet I may remind you that the Inspector-General's inquiry was instituted by this Committee on the hypothesis that a Royal Commission was not necessary, because, although a case had been made out for reform, the University was believed—for reasons which have since been proved ill-founded—to be carrying out its own reform. As there is this possibility of the Inspector-General's report being regarded as equivalent to that of a Commission, we would suggest three important respects in which it is not adequate to that end: (1.) It is not adequate in the constitution of the Commission of inquiry; the departmental head of the primary-education system cannot fairly be constituted a Commission of one upon university education; modern University Commissions invariably include men of the widest and most intimate knowledge of university administration. (2.) The method of inquiry was not that adopted by a Commission; the Inspector-General points out that he had "no power to call for evidence," hence there was no systematic inquiry, with opportunity for all concerned to give evidence under cross-examination. (3.) Consistently with (2), the "representations" and "recommendations" made to the Inspector-General during his inquiry have not been published. I take it, therefore, that this Committee would not be justified in expressing the view that the Inspector-General's report does away with the necessity for a further searching inquiry into the case for reform which Parliament agrees that we have made out. Turning now to some of the principles embodied in the report, we note that the financial proposals of the report are based upon very definite detailed assumptions as to the work which is to be done by the colleges and the staffing which is to be provided for that work. If effect were given to this report it seems almost inevitable that the financial provision granted by the Government should be definitely earmarked for the objects by reference to which the estimates were made. It is true that the Inspector-General very rightly expresses his personal wish that the freedom of the colleges to develop along their own lines should not be interfered with, but it is difficult to see upon what grounds the financial proposals of the report could be adopted if the very definite details upon which they are based are not to be endorsed. If the detailed policy is not sound then the report falls to the ground, a point to which my colleagues will give some attention. If, on the other hand, the detailed policy behind the financial provision is enforced by the Government's power of the purse, then all that would tend to attract men of standing into the college governing bodies is removed, and these bodies are reduced to committees for watching the public financial interests in the colleges. We submit that that would be a very undesirable result, and that a well-constituted College Council is very much better able to develop policy in university education than the head of the Education Department can possibly be. We believe that it is of the utmost importance that the College Councils should be strengthened in every way to the fullest possible extent, and given freedom to administer the finances which are placed at their disposal; and one of the matters we think it most important to refer to a Royal Commission is how these bodies may be so constituted as to perform their functions with the greatest possible efficiency, and how the University may be so constituted as to bring the College Councils into the closest possible relations with one another and with the University. The question of the constitution of the University is also raised by the important proposal in the report that the University of New Zealand should be put in the position of administering a large sum of money for the benefit of the colleges. The principle of this recommendation is one with which I believe we all agree—that is, we are agreed upon the necessity for some efficient national control over university education—but where we differ most emphatically from the proposal of the report is in the tacit assumption that the University as at present constituted might be entrusted with such powers. We submit that the University has been constituted to exercise the functions only of an examining body (on the model of the