

old University of London); that even in that very restricted range of activity it has laid itself open to very severe criticism; and that it would be the greatest possible mistake to endow this same body with powers which ought under proper exercise to be the most important factor in the future development of university education in New Zealand. This proposal, therefore, follows the others in making the case for a Royal Commission almost unanswerable. And it provides a second strong argument for the consolidation of University and colleges into one strong organization by uniting the four bodies which control the colleges into the body which controls the University.

TUESDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1913.

(No. 11.)

The Chairman: I have here a statement from the University of Otago which has been forwarded as evidence to be put before this Committee, and it will be treated as such.

UNIVERSITY REFORM.

In this statement an endeavour will be made to answer three questions:—

- (1.) What is a university, and what should be its functions?
- (2.) To what extent does the University of New Zealand fulfil these requisites and functions?
- (3.) In what manner are modern universities elsewhere organized so as to fulfil their proper functions?

(1.) *What is a University.*

The term has been defined in various ways, such as “a school where all arts and faculties are taught” (Johnson); “an institution which teaches universal knowledge” (Newman). In Roman law the term originally meant a “corporation.” Combining these definitions we may say a university should be a “corporation for teaching universal knowledge.” It consists essentially of a body of men banded together for a definite purpose, each individual having a separate and distinct function to fulfil in order that the purpose and function of the whole may be complete.

It will be observed that teaching and the acquisition of knowledge constitute the chief function of a university. The recognition of this fact is shown by the change in the spirit of university education during the last twenty years, and especially by the great increase in the number of teaching universities and the abandonment of purely examining universities. It would be difficult to find any competent authority who would maintain at the present day that the function of a university should be merely inquisitorial—that it should be a body elected only to find out what and how much certain members of the community knew. A university should be more: it should be the brains of the body politic. It should be an institution, a corporation, for teaching the individual members of the body politic to think and act for themselves, and at the same time to point out what has been done for the advancement of knowledge by other thinkers and workers past and present. It is to the university that the community should look for light and guidance in all matters that are concerned in the advance of human knowledge and happiness. The community is increasingly looking to the university to provide for its younger members a better training for the various professions and for commercial and even domestic pursuits than they can obtain elsewhere. It therefore behoves the university not to betray this growing trust, but to see that it keeps intimately in touch with the necessities, aims, and aspirations of the community, in order that these may be provided for, guided, and developed in the best possible manner. For the fulfilment of these requirements a university must be a visible, living, growing organization, correlated in all details and co-ordinated in all its parts, so that it may form one homogeneous whole.

A university must consist of governors, teachers, graduates, and undergraduates; but there should be a complete and automatically-acting organization pervading and welding all, so that the whole will act as one mechanism. Only thus can a university fulfil its duty to itself and to the community.

(2.) *To what extent does the University of New Zealand fulfil these Requisites and Functions.*

Under the University Acts the University was established not for the purpose of teaching, but for the purpose of examining and of awarding degrees. It therefore does not conform to the definition of a university in that it does not teach anything. Examination is its chief function—it places examination in front of everything else. Now, this is quite contrary to both ancient and modern views of the aims and objects of a university. True, for a comparatively short time during the latter half of last century “examination” had an enormous vogue; it was made the be-all and end-all of teaching (or should we say “cramming”?) in schools and universities. Happily, however, the error has now for some time been recognized by every one, even by that university which was chiefly responsible for its exaltation. We refer, of course, to the University of London.

It is now universally recognized by those who are engaged in university work that the older ideals are correct—that it is teaching and training which are of paramount importance, and that examination is quite a secondary matter. That a university should be merely a branding-machine for artificially grading the country's mental products is to degrade and stultify the name and object of a noble and honourable institution.