

The matter before you is so complex and so full of technical detail that I venture to say that the House cannot profitably discuss it without the evidence has appeared from day to day instead of, as on the last occasion, in the form of a report of 114 closely printed pages. It is clear that all the members of this Committee cannot be present at its deliberations, and I think it would be of assistance to them if the evidence was reported from day to day in the Press, or so much of it as the Press thought fit. Further, it is very evident that one of the questions before the Committee is a very delicate and difficult question—namely, that of making allocations to the different provinces and treating them fairly.

1. *The Chairman.*] What do you mean by "fairly"?—It is used in the ordinary sense of the word.

2. Do you mean that this Committee is not competent to make a recommendation?—I mean fair in regard to the allocations. I did not say anything about the Committee. On the last occasion twelve witnesses stated that a Royal Commission should be appointed, two were against, and one (Mr. Hogben) proposed a different solution, and five professors wrote supporting a Commission. It was not open to this Committee to report so against the weight of evidence had they not believed that those in favour of a Royal Commission were unduly represented—in other words, that the evidence was one-sided. If these proceedings are thrown open to the Press that cannot occur. The evidence will be representative, and the finding of this Committee will have greater weight and be more satisfactory to every one concerned. I should like to know the decision of the Committee on that point.

[The Committee then deliberated, and after discussion agreed to permit the Press to be present at the meetings of the Committee.]

Witness: I should now like to return to the point where I left off and to cover some of the ground I mentioned before, because I have more correct figures to put before the Committee. The question is in regard to a comparison of the endowments and grants from the Government. The provincial endowments at present are—Auckland, £460 per annum; Victoria College, £74; Canterbury, £8,900; and Otago, £6,200. The decreases in the Government grants proposed by the Inspector-General of Schools' report are for Auckland, £200 a year; Victoria College, £1,500. It is proposed not to alter the grant to Canterbury, and the increase for Otago is £2,300. That is the change in the Government grants. If we also include the £2,500 proposed to be paid from the national endowment the changes are—Increases of Auckland, £2,300 a year; Victoria College, £1,000; Canterbury, £2,500; and Otago, £4,800. The total for the North Island districts, which includes certain parts of the South Island, is £3,300, and for the South Island—that is, Canterbury and Otago—the increase is £7,300. As to the £6,200 of provincial endowments, it is a very difficult matter to determine what are provincial endowments and what are not. All the college accounts are in that position: they are not kept on a uniform system. I think it would be desirable that the Education Department should require in parliamentary returns that accounts should be uniform. As regards the proposed grant of £2,500 from the national endowment, according to Mr. Hogben's report, it states, "I have already expressed the desirability of giving the colleges additional endowments, the revenue of which would be likely to increase with the progress of the Dominion. The national endowments appear to me to furnish such conditions, and I know of no better use to which they could be put. The proportion of the revenue from these endowments that is devoted to purposes of education amounts at present to £45,000 per annum. It was suggested in a Land Bill introduced, but not passed, two or three years ago that 20 per cent. of this portion of the national-endowment revenue should be allocated to university education. I suggest that it would be a wise thing to set aside one-quarter or even one-third (at present £11,500 or £15,000) for university education. Out of this I would suggest that £2,500 be given to each of the four colleges." The £2,500 so allocated to the colleges is on a different basis to the statutory grants, because while a statutory grant could probably be carried in Parliament immediately this report was adopted—if it were adopted, but I hope it will not be—the national endowment would be on a different basis, as it would require, I understand, a Land Bill to make the allocation, so that any college dependent on national endowments for its revenue would not receive it probably so soon as one dependent on statutory grants. You can see the position Victoria College will be in if this report is put into effect. I will read a statement which compares the income as estimated by myself and the income as proposed by the report. The statements are as follows:—

VICTORIA COLLEGE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR 1914.

<i>Income.</i>					
				Estimated from College Accounts and Report.	As proposed by Report.
				£	£
Government statutory grant	..	..	..	7,000	7,000†
Fees	..	..	..	3,000*	4,455
Examination fees	..	..	..	180	..
Rent of reserve	..	..	..	74	..
Society of Accountants and subsidy	..	..	..	300	..
Sundries	..	..	..	47	..
Totals	..	..	..	£10,601	£11,455

* Provisional estimate.

† Re £2,500 from national endowment see below.