

formed by their combination, could not long be resisted: these were affiliated in increasing numbers, and finally the attempt to discriminate between institutions seeking affiliation was found unworkable. The logical result was reached by the abolition of the certificate that the candidate for examination had been trained in some recognized institution, and the door was thrown open to the private student.

It is a singular fact that the examining University of New Zealand came into existence through a similar collegiate rivalry and an unfortunate compromise.

In 1869 the Provincial Council of Otago established and endowed a teaching university in Dunedin on the old Scottish model—the University of Otago. In 1870 the General Assembly of New Zealand formed a University of New Zealand. A bitter controversy arose between the Councils of the two Universities as to the constitution, site, and endowment. While the legislation of the General Assembly provided that the new University should be at Dunedin, it provided also that of the twenty members comprising the Council at least twelve should be laymen. This provision was obnoxious to the Otago University Council, which objected to what was regarded as an invidious distinction against ministers of religion. Ultimately, in 1874, Otago accepted a compromise and agreed to suspend its degree-granting powers and to become one affiliated college of an examining University on the London model. Thus, as one witness (Professor T. A. Hunter) remarks: “The university system as it exists in New Zealand is truly an accident; it was never supposed by the men of the day that it was the proper method of dealing with university education. The circumstances and passions of the times, the lack of vision of the men, and not educational foresight gave us the system.”

Rivalry between Otago University and the New Zealand University.

The formidable and far-reaching effect of the decision of the London University not to require the certificate of some recognized institution was not realized at the time, least of all by its authors. Several of these were men eminent from their ability and writings, who had been precluded from attending the old Universities by the religious disqualification, and had gained their higher education by private study. They were naturally inclined to favour the method by which their own success had been won, forgetting that though self-education can perhaps produce the highest results, it is only minds of great originality and power that are capable of it. Others can only win high mental cultivation by the aid of instruction, on the quality of which everything therefore depends, and this quality, external written examination is unable to distinguish; indeed, it even tends to foster the wrong type of teaching, and to depress the teacher in favour of the crammer. In the view of those who supported the plan of an examining university, they were only carrying further the process of educational emancipation in resolving “no more to tie down the deserving student to a few privileged colleges than to a particular religious creed.” It is the same cry which was raised when the question of a Welsh University was mooted forty years ago: “The University is for the whole of Wales and not merely for the colleges”—a cry which was started in certain political circles, but to which the good sense of the Welsh public refused to listen.

Belief in the potency of examinations.

After a series of efforts at reform and several Royal Commissions a teaching university for London has now been organized, though the old external examination system still continues side by side with it. The report of the last of these Commissions, that presided over by Lord Haldane, which was issued in 1913, and is a mine of valuable information and suggestion on university problems in general, summarizes effectively the evils of a purely examining system in language which could not be bettered and which we shall therefore quote in full. The report is of especial interest to New-Zealanders, for the University of New Zealand was founded in 1870 on the pattern adopted for London, and the shortcomings attributed to such a system are, in our opinion, exactly those which may be found within the New Zealand University.

London University not a teaching university.

“We are convinced that both a detailed syllabus and an external examination are inconsistent with the true interests of university education, injurious to the students, degrading to the teachers, and ineffective for the attainment of the ends they are supposed to promote. The insistence on a system of external examinations is always based upon want of faith in the teachers. Even the so-called internal examinations of the University of London are practically external, because of the large number of institutions involved, and the demands of the common syllabus;

Effects of external examinations upon teachers and students.