

PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY.

Probably the most important question in the order of reference given to us is that relating to the constitution of the University, and "the question whether the present system of four colleges federated under the New Zealand University is satisfactory or is capable of improvement. In particular, whether each of the present four University colleges should become a separate university, and, if so, under what conditions."

Having heard evidence tendered from persons holding very diverse views as to the best constitution for university government in New Zealand, and after careful consideration of the present-day circumstances relative to university life and teaching, we have arrived at the conclusion that the time is not ripe for the establishment of four separate universities. We, however, recommend substantial changes in the present organization of the University in order to make it a federal university charged with definite responsibility for teaching, but allowing to the constituent colleges greater freedom in developing their own curricula and in holding examinations.

Under its present constitution the University of New Zealand examines but does not teach. The professors are professors of the colleges and not of the University. The University imposes the curriculum through its examinations, and these examinations take no account of the work done in the colleges, except so far as this may be tested by written papers. We have elsewhere endeavoured to set out fully the shortcomings of such a system, and to make it clear that in our opinion the highest results of university education cannot be secured so long as it endures.

We have been impressed by the far-sighted conclusions of the Royal Commission upon the New Zealand University, 1879, and we feel that the higher education of the Dominion has suffered from the failure to give effect to these conclusions. Shortly put they are,—

- (a.) That new University colleges be established in the North Island, and that the Otago University and the Canterbury College, together with the new colleges proposed to be established, be brought into a much closer relation with the University.
- (b.) That the professors of the University colleges be professors of the University, and be ordinarily its examiners.
- (c.) That the sanction of the governing body of the University should be obtained before new Chairs are established.
- (d.) That the tenure of office of professors shall, according to the ordinary custom of universities, be *quamdiu se bene gesserit*.

The report further states, "Our desire is that each college may acquire a marked individuality, such as to demand recognition in the form of examinations, and to secure for it a special reputation, which may at some future day be the foundation of its success as a separate and independent university." We feel that had the Dominion experienced since 1880 forty-five years of university teaching such as might have been expected to develop under the above conditions, the demand for separation might not have been made so insistently, and had it been made the granting of the demand would have been fraught with less danger of non-success than is the case to-day.

We feel that the union of the four constituent colleges into one university organization has distinct advantages, and provided that freedom of teaching can be secured for the teaching staff, the advantages largely outweigh the disadvantages. The greatest obstacle to success lies in the strong provincial jealousies which have been so marked a feature of university development in this country. We have in our recommendations for the composition of the various University Statutory Committees, including the Council or governing body, kept the existence of this strong provincial feeling in mind, and have endeavoured to secure a composition of these bodies which shall be based upon the representation of the whole Dominion rather than of a province of it.

We have read carefully the findings of the recent Royal Commission on university education in Wales 1918, and we are of opinion that the conditions in Wales are not very substantially different from those in New Zealand. In the principality there

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Example taken from University of Wales.