

and the State should recognize this by the provision of suitable education for her. There need be no duplication of graduate courses now provided at Otago; but good diploma courses suited for farm wives and daughters would be appreciated and would be most helpful.

LEGAL EDUCATION: AN UNSATISFACTORY CONDITION.

A great amount of evidence was tendered to show that legal education in New Zealand is at present upon a very unsatisfactory footing, and, although under present conditions the education and training of legal practitioners within the British Empire and America is not entrusted to universities so completely as is the education and training for other professions—*e.g.*, Medicine—we feel bound to comment at some length upon the matter.

There are, we conceive, certain broad lines along which legal education, like all professional education, must travel, if the profession of law is to be a reality, and to fulfil its true function. Members of a "profession" are distinguished by three main qualifications: (1) They have undergone a sound and liberal course of general education; (2) they have received an intensive training of high quality in the principles and in the practice of their special work; and (3) they have accepted a body of ethical standards as a guide to professional conduct. It is essential, therefore, that the scheme of education for entrants to a profession of the first rank should be generously planned and administered, and that a more or less empirical knowledge of the technique of practice in the various branches of the profession, superimposed upon a slender equipment of general knowledge and of principles, should not be accepted as satisfactory. Yet, according to several witnesses, such a description applies to the training of a great number of those admitted as solicitors and ultimately as barristers in New Zealand. Professor Algie (Auckland) asserted that candidate solicitors came to the law lectures fresh from school, and many managed to complete the seven subjects required in two years. The student had neither adequate general education nor maturity of mind and experience to appreciate fully the legal subjects. Mr. J. B. Callan, Dean of the Faculty of Law (Otago), stated, "The law professional subjects are concerned with the rules evolved by our Judges and enacted by our Parliaments to deal with the multifarious relations and duties of citizens in our complex social system. A boy or girl straight from a secondary school who attempts to master these rules of conduct necessarily labours under the disadvantage of being unaware of the very existence of many of the problems which the rules of law attempt to solve." "But," said Mr. C. P. Skerrett, K.C., "another factor, which is certainly peculiar to New Zealand, is that an admitted solicitor who has practised for five years, no matter what the extent of his practice, or, in the case of a managing clerk to a solicitor, no matter what the extent of that solicitor's practice may be, is as of right entitled to admission as a barrister after a period of five years." Mr. J. B. Callan, in his statement, asserted, "A substantial majority of the persons now holding the qualification of barrister have gained this distinction by five years' practice as solicitors, and not by any examination beyond those examinations which they passed originally to qualify them as solicitors." A low standard of education for solicitors therefore inevitably affects the standing of barristers.

Legal practitioners have always been regarded as members of a learned profession, as, indeed, is shown by the customary courtesy of allusion to "my learned friend." It appears to us that, unless a marked change is effected in the legal education provided in the Dominion, this term runs the risk of being regarded as a delicate sarcasm.

That the community should be vitally interested in seeing that lawyers are trained who are in the full sense of the term "professional men" follows from a consideration of the position which lawyers occupy in the State. "Practising lawyers do not merely render to the community a social service which the community is interested in having them render well. They are part of the governing mechanism of the State. Their functions are in a broad sense political. This is not due primarily to the circumstance that a large proportion of our legislative and administrative officials, and virtually all our Judges, are chosen from among this practically ruling class. Nor is it due entirely to the further circumstance that

Requisites of professional education.

Defects in education and training.

Function of legal practitioners in community.