

is as a result superficial. I must not be understood as casting a slur upon the ability or application of our students: I know them, and respect them too much for that. But I am attacking the system under which they are forced to work; it is a system which makes the examination the one and only goal, which offers no special inducement to a man to study his law for its own sake, and which, in fact, tends to concentrate his attention solely upon a process of unintelligent cramming for those examinations."

Failure to grasp fundamental concepts.

Mr. E. M. White said of the same course, "It seems to be generally recognized that our law professional studies are hopelessly inadequate, and that a radical change is necessary to enable students of law who are not sitting for the LL.B. degree to obtain a grasp of the fundamental conceptions of our legal system and of the origin and growth of the principles of English law. At present there is nothing in our Law Professional Examination which suggests that our law is a system of an ever-expanding and developing nature with its roots fixed in the history and temper of the English people."

Protest by N.Z. Law Societies.

Mr. F. A. de la Mare said, "As regards the Law Examination the New Zealand Law Society has felt compelled to protest against the present system. The commonest method of preparation for examination is to enlist the services of a coach, who supplies notes and model questions and answers. These questions and answers are built up on the questions set in various examinations, and one coach told me that in one year he had picked out ten of the twelve questions set. The text-books are not prescribed by the Law Society. Young men in the country solicitors' offices taking up university degrees do all their work by correspondence."

Mr. J. B. Callan stated in evidence on behalf of the Otago Law Society, "Consideration by the Law Societies of legal education in New Zealand is, however, no new thing. The subject had already engaged their attention. For example, early in 1923 resolutions expressing dissatisfaction with the system of studying law by the aid of correspondence schools were passed by the Hawke's Bay District Law Society and forwarded to the New Zealand Law Society. The New Zealand Law Society concurred in expressing dissatisfaction and brought the matter before the University of New Zealand.

Agitation for reform.

"In June, 1923, the University referred the matter to teachers in the affiliated colleges. It then came before the teachers of law in Otago University, and was fully discussed by them. As the result I was instructed by my colleagues, as Dean of the Faculty, to prepare an expression of their views, which made many criticisms upon the present inadequate system of training and testing aspirants to the legal profession. This was embodied in a letter to the University dated 16th August, 1923."

The views of the Faculty then expressed were considered and approved by the Council of the Otago Law Society in August, 1923, when the following resolutions were carried unanimously:—

"That this Council, having considered the representations of the Otago Law Faculty as to correspondence schools and legal education generally embodied in Mr. Callan's memo of 16th August to the Registrar of the New Zealand University, expresses its concurrence with the views set out in that memorandum, and in particular is of opinion,—

- "(1.) That the present state of legal education in New Zealand is extremely unsatisfactory.
- "(2.) That the Law Professional Examinations afford no sufficient test of a candidate's capacity to practise his profession in a manner creditable to himself or the profession generally or satisfactory to his clients.
- "(3.) That the matter is one for their Honours the Judges, to whom the appointment of Examiners and the making of regulations as to examinations is committed by sections 19 and 20 of the Law Practitioners Act, 1908.
- "(4.) That all the remedies suggested in the above-quoted memorandum appear desirable, useful, and practical, viz. :—

"(a.) Lengthening the course for the Law Professional Examinations so as to make it impossible for a candidate to complete the same before attaining twenty-one years of age.