

A paragraph appeared in the Press the other day quoting Sir W. Ramsay on the standard of work at the New Zealand University. It was as follows: "The standard is not maintained. There is no standard, and your degrees are of absolutely no value in Europe." This statement was made in contradiction to the assertions of those who wished to maintain the present system of external examiners, and who stated (1) that the standard is maintained, (2) the teaching is stimulated by the outside examinations, (3) the value of the degree is greatly enhanced. Such a statement might do a great deal of harm, and cause many to believe that the recognition of the New Zealand degree by the older universities was merely an act of courtesy, and that such recognition was not based on a high standard of work. Fortunately I have been able to obtain the opinions of examiners who are well acquainted with the papers done by students in England, and also with those done by students in New Zealand, and able to speak with authority, as they examine in one or other of the Home Universities, and also for the New Zealand degree. They are as follows:—

Professor Tout, Manchester (1905), speaking on the papers submitted to him: "I cannot speak too highly as to the solid excellence of the pass work."

Mr. B. H. Leonard, B.C.L., M.A. (1906): "The work generally has left a most favourable impression on my mind, and I think it fully reaches the standard of work in our principal English universities." (1909.) "The pass papers compare very favourably with those of English universities." (1910.) "In both subjects the candidates on the whole appear to me to compare not unfavourably with the candidates in our English universities, particularly as regards the work on the pass papers. (1911.) "New Zealand is to be congratulated on the solidarity in thought, reading, and writing which it maintains with much of the best work which is being done in the universities at Home, and on its familiarity with the best and most recent literature which deals critically and scientifically with the subjects."

Professor C. F. Bastable, Trinity College, Dublin: (1910.) "The work of the candidates certainly compares favourably with the work done in most British universities."

Professor H. A. Strong, University of Liverpool: (1910.) "The standard is quite as good as at any Home university, except perhaps in the best honours, for which more time ought to be given." (1911.) "The standard for the pass seems to me more satisfactory in the University of New Zealand than in our local universities."

Other references that might be quoted are not so direct in their wording, but still are such as to point out that a high standard is required in New Zealand, and while such a standard is maintained we need have no fear of the value of external examination.

I do not wish for one moment to be thought to be trying to place the New Zealand University colleges on a pinnacle of perfection, but merely wish to do justice to our educational institutions. Until we have residential colleges, and many of them, we cannot expect that the full benefits of a university course can anything like compare with those of older lands, nor can we hope that, except in very rare cases, our honours men can compare with those who take the highest honours at the Home university, when we know that those men are the pick of the picked.

At the annual meeting of the Senate a custom that has been always observed at our College was made practically law for all the colleges—viz., that students must pass their college examinations in the subjects they propose to take for their degree before they can be allowed to sit for the University examination. It is an excellent rule that has been adopted, for now all the four colleges are on the same ground, and one of the objects for which those who are agitating for university reform has been attained. Practically throughout New Zealand the professors now must exercise the right, that they could have exercised before, of saying whether in their opinion undergraduates are sufficiently far advanced in their studies to sit for their degrees. It has been felt by some that Canterbury College students suffered a hardship when they were required to satisfy two sets of examiners, one internal and one external, but now that all have been placed on the same footing it will be generally recognized, I think, that the high standard which has been claimed for our work must, and will, be maintained.

Another important matter has been brought before the governing bodies—viz., the interchange of students between New Zealand and the Home universities. The proposal is an excellent one, but is, I fear, a little premature. No one will doubt the value of our students being able to attend in fair numbers the universities of Great Britain, not merely from an academic standpoint, which in itself is great, but also from the national and social outlook, for it would enable men and women from the outlying portions of the Empire to be in close touch with the conditions at the heart of that Empire. It is premature, however, because we are as yet struggling to make our system here as complete as possible, and we cannot advance as quickly as we would like owing to want of money. When a way can be found to overcome the financial difficulty, then every one will be ready to welcome a scheme that will bring the colonial student in closer touch with Home, and enable the Home student to acquire at first hand a fuller knowledge of colonial affairs.

I regret to have to record the death of two gentlemen who were connected with Canterbury College—one, the late Mr. F. de C. Malet, who for some years occupied the position first of Registrar of the College, and afterwards as member and Chairman of the Board. Up to the very last he took a keen interest in all matters pertaining to the welfare of this College. The other was Mr. E. Watkins, who for the past seven years was Lecturer in Education. He was keenly interested in all matters connected with education, and will always be remembered kindly by those students who came in contact with him.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the members of the Board for the kindness extended to me during my term of office, and for the ready help they have given me in trying to carry out the duties of the chair.