

It was not until 1884 that the charter was extended so as to cover the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor of Science. No further charter has been obtained, and the degrees now conferred by the University—Master of Science, Law, and the various degrees in Commerce, Agriculture, &c.—are awarded under New Zealand legislation only, and may be said not to have legal status in other parts of the Empire.

After the Act of 1874 discontent grew; the number of affiliated colleges, exclusive of the two University colleges at Dunedin and Christchurch, had by 1878 increased to eight, by the addition of the Church of England Grammar School (Parnell), St. John's College (Auckland), Wellesley College (Three Kings), and the Bishopdale Theological College (Nelson).

Some of these were purely secondary schools, others theological colleges, but they had all become affiliated by virtue of the addition to their ordinary secondary work of classes giving university instruction.

A lowering of the status of the main University colleges seemed inevitable from this association, and in 1878 a Royal Commission was set up to make a full investigation of the condition of university education in the colony and its relation to secondary schools.

The members of the Commission were: Mr. (later Sir) G. Maurice O'Rorke (Chairman), Professor Macmillan Brown, Professor C. H. H. Cook, Mr. W. H. Cutten, Rev. W. J. Habens (Secretary), Dr. J. Hector, Dr. William Macdonald, Professor G. S. Sale, Professor J. Shand, Professor G. H. F. Ulrich, Rev. J. Wallis, Hon. W. Gisborne, Mr. W. E. Mulgan, Mr. J. A. Tole, M.P. The Commission began this work in January, 1879, and visited, throughout 1879 and 1880, all the chief centres of population in the colony, taking careful and voluminous evidence.

Royal Commission
commence sittings,
1879.

Most of the observations and conclusions of the Commission were far-sighted and apply to the circumstances of the University to-day. Many of the evils of the present situation would never have developed so far had the report of that Commission been adopted by Parliament. The following are extracts from the report:—

“We propose that the Government should invite the Legislature to make immediate provision for the establishment of two colleges—one at Auckland and the other at Wellington.” (This contemplated, in all, four colleges.)

Extracts from report
of 1879 Commission.

“Our desire is that each college may acquire a marked individuality, such as to demand recognition in the form of the 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.”

“In order that the Senate may have at its command a staff of competent examiners, we recommend that the professors of the University colleges be professors of the University, and be ordinarily its examiners. By selecting examiners from among the professors of the University the Senate will be enabled to have its examinations conducted wholly within the colony, and the delay which ensues from the transmission of the examination-papers to and from England or Australia will be got rid of, and the results of the examination made known with much greater promptitude than heretofore. At the same time, the Senate should be at liberty to avail itself of the services of the college lecturers as examiners, and also to appoint persons who are not connected with the teaching staff of any college, or who may ordinarily reside beyond the limits of the colony; but in no case should any part of the examination be conducted by persons who, for the time being, are not resident in the colony.”

“In Otago University and Canterbury College the time-table for the ordinary lectures is so arranged that classes for subjects of general interest are held in the evening, or before the usual working-hours of the day begin. It is found that some students, especially those who are engaged in the profession of teaching, have not only the desire to obtain a degree, but also the necessary preliminary knowledge for entering upon a university course, as well as the tenacity of purpose which will enable them to continue in it, while at the same time they cannot afford to give up their appointments and to devote their whole time to study. Owing to the system of classification of teachers adopted by the Education Department, the number of such students is rapidly increasing. There are others who are glad to