

in debates, and in all the various activities of college life. It is obvious that where the great body of the students are engaged in vocational work all day up to 4 or 5 o'clock, and have then to rush off for a couple of hours to lectures, after which there is barely time left for a hasty meal and the necessary preparation for the lectures of the following day, little time and opportunity remain for social meetings and committees. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that at Auckland, with over 1,000 students, "at the annual election of officers of the Students' Association only about 150 (15 per cent.) usually vote, whilst a general meeting seldom attracts more than 50 (5 per cent.)."

Mr. H. McCormick, a representative of the students of Victoria University College, gave striking evidence in the same direction: "The very great majority of the students are working all day earning their living. The lectures are held at night. Students rush from their daily work, arrive at the University five or ten minutes at the most before their lectures commence; and five minutes after their lectures cease they shake the dust of the University off their feet, rush to their separate and scattered homes or lodgings, where they devote a few more hours to 'study.' And the University does not see them again until five minutes before their next lecture commences. . . . These students thus miss the real benefit which they might get from belonging to a university. Look at the 'Intellectual' Clubs of the college—the Debating Society, the Free Discussions Club, the Historical Society—the clubs whose real aim is to foster independent thought, to foster an interest in current affairs, in literature, and the things that really matter in a university training. The membership of these clubs is deplorably small. I should put the active membership of the largest of them at not more than twenty or twenty-five, and it is very largely the same small band that takes an active interest in all these societies and in college affairs generally. I should estimate that the number of students who take a real active interest in the University, in university problems, and in intellectual affairs, apart from their own special line of study, is certainly less than fifty. And the number of students attending the College is somewhere in the vicinity of eight hundred."

No doubt, distinguished positions have been subsequently attained by men who studied for their degrees in this way. Exceptional men will come to the front under any system. But it would be contrary to common sense, as it is contrary to all the evidence, to suppose that a body of young men who come to their studies after a full day's work at some whole-time occupation can engage in them with the same freshness of mind and keenness of interest as they would if they were able to devote to them their undivided energies, free from all outside distractions. A student witness who was pleading in favour of retaining the evening-class system tacitly admitted this by urging at the same time that the standard should be set by the whole-time and not by the part-time student. Such a solution, however, is based on the common misconception that the standard of work is maintained by the examination, whereas experience shows that the standard of the examination is in the long run set by the quality of the candidates entering for it. If the bulk of the students are working on the part-time system and only a small percentage are full-time students, it is inevitable that the former will set the standard.

The evil effects of the part-time system are, indeed, open and palpable. It lowers the standard of the degree, tends to degrade the university teacher into a pass-degree coach, and reduces corporate student life to an anæmic shadow. Several witnesses have, however, defended it on the ground that it is necessary in a democratic country like New Zealand. They argue that if university education is to be accessible to all of proper intellectual calibre, irrespective of their private means, the poor student must be given the opportunity of paying his way through the University. They seem to forget that in other countries no less democratic than New Zealand and equally concerned with the problem of the poor student the part-time system is either non-existent or altogether subsidiary. Australia, Canada, the United States of America, Scotland, recognize that it must be possible for the poor student to pay his way through college by taking paid employment, but this is done not by carrying on the wage occupation day by day concurrently with the university study, but by putting the two classes of work

Quality of candidates inevitably affects standards of examination.

In other countries students work during vacation in order to finance University courses.