

THIRD-RATE UNIVERSITY?

SOME weeks ago, when the Chancellor of the University said that New Zealand has a third-rate University, we asked several graduates for comment. For various reasons we are only now able to print some of the replies, though we have, of course, in the meantime published an article on the subject by Professor I. A. Gordon.

"Better Than We Deserve"

WHAT does "third class" mean in this connection? If it means that Harvard (which serves 130 million Americans) or Oxford (which serves 40 million Britons) is first class, then the University of New Zealand (which serves under two million people) would be doing pretty well to be reckoned third class. Especially if you consider how little it costs. If New Zealand wants a first class University it must be prepared to pay for it and to give up paying lecturers less than carpenters and plumbers. In my opinion—and I have studied in English and American universities—the New Zealand University is a great deal better than the parsimonious New Zealand public deserves.

—HAROLD MILLER, M.A., Librarian, Victoria University College, former N.Z. Rhodes Scholar.

Putting Matter Before Man

IF a university finds that its main job is to equip its students with qualifications to enable them to earn more money, it has indeed lost its soul. When we see the surge of students after medicine, engineering, and the sciences, while the classics and philosophy are almost completely by-passed, it is clear that the university as a cultural force has almost ceased to exist. Present-day trends in New Zealand educational policy, in spite of their aims, are only serving to kill off the University completely. When you force youngsters to settle their careers on entering the secondary school can you wonder they are dazzled by the sciences? It is only later that they can understand the spiritual and cultural forces which mould men, see the value of cultural studies, and feel the appeal of a vocation which deals with men and not matter. Soon our graduates will feel uneducated in overseas university circles. The New Zealand University is not merely third class, but has almost ceased to be a University at all. Let us call it the New Zealand Professional Training School.

—IAN W. FRASER, M.A., B.D.Th.D., (Chaplain, St. Andrew's College, Christchurch).

What is First Rate?

IF we say that the University of New Zealand is third-rate or worse, I suppose we must have in our minds some notion of what a first-rate university is. To me it would be a place where a few selected students would come together in pleasant surroundings under some great scholar not to collect a miscellaneous assortment of facts and labels in the interests of their future advancement, but rather to acquire an attitude towards life and learning—the mingled humility and scepticism that are necessary before one sets out on the disinterested search for truth. Such a university hasn't perhaps existed since the days of Plato's Academy, if it did then; but I think the older British universities with their tutorial system, sometimes

approach that ideal. I owe much to our university, but, judging it by that standard both as a former student and as an occasional lecturer, I should say it is worse than third-rate. Our lecturing system is thoroughly bad both for the lecturer and the lectured. It must be reformed or abolished, and the university colleges must cease to be regarded largely as centres for vocational training. Any great change isn't likely until there is a change in our social outlook and a willingness to divert a larger, though relatively trifling, part of our national income to maintaining a university in the true sense. This won't come about in five years, but we should be grateful to Mr. Justice Smith for his plain speaking and his promise of reform.

—E. H. McCORMICK, M.A., M.Lit. (Chief War Archivist in New Zealand).

In High Repute

IN my experience of Oxford, University of New Zealand graduates achieved very good results, and I did not at any time hear the University of New Zealand disparaged. My tutor, now professor of English at London University, spoke highly of the standard of English linguistic work in Otago, and instanced two earlier students of Professor H. Ramsay's, Miss Joan Stevens and Mr. Norman Davis, as excellently grounded: both achieved Oxford firsts. My Otago contemporary, Major D. M. Davin, was a first in Greats (Greek, Latin, and usually Philosophy) in 1939. Two Canterbury graduates, Miss Margaret Dalziel and the then Miss Isobel Wright, were doing very good work when I left England just before the war. No doubt there are also many examples from North Island University Colleges not familiar to me. It is no exaggeration to say that both in Oxford and in London New Zealand doctors held a high repute.

English students frequently remain at school till they are nineteen; so it often happened that the New Zealand graduate and the English student were near in age. Consequently the above results are not easily discounted on an age basis; and are too numerous to be fortuitous. I am glad to acknowledge my own debt to the University of New Zealand and to the professors under whom I chiefly studied: Professor Ramsay, Professor T. D. Adams, and the late Dr. G. E. Thompson; and their assistants.

—WINIFRED McQUILKAN, M.A. (Principal, Colimba College, Dunedin).

Romantic

On Friday, March 22, "Reflections in Romance" started at the main Commercial stations. This interlude, heard at 7.30 p.m., is a mixture of music and verse, and a general commentary on matters romantic, and is said to have a special appeal for women listeners. At the time of going to press we had not heard the session but we are assured that it is interesting and accompanied by well-chosen music.

Potted History

A half-hour series of dramatisations of facts, people and mysteries, taken from all corners of the earth, and known as "Passing Parade," will start at 12B on Wednesday, March 27. Listening time will be from 9.0 till 9.30 p.m. The session will go on to 22B on Tuesday, April 2.

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