

UNIVERSITY TURNS PUBLISHER

A 30-Year-Old Decision Is Carried Out

THE University of New Zealand has recently carried out a decision that was made by its Senate Committee 30 years ago—that it should operate its own publishing concern. A short advertisement has recently appeared in "The Listener" announcing that the University of New Zealand Press is "prepared to consider manuscripts suitable for publication... works of general cultural interest or value, or studies likely to advance the cause of scholarship and learning." This does not mean that the University has imported a press and engaged printers and bookbinders, but it means that the Senate has established the principle, after making sure that the University Act permits it, and has set up a Board of Managers to start and carry on a publishing business, the printing to be done by existing printers. On this and the following pages we give our readers some account of the movement to establish a university press in New Zealand, some brief details of the history of the presses at Oxford and Cambridge, and some account of modern university presses in the new world—in Australia and the United States.

THE first move for a University of New Zealand Press was made in January, 1914, when the Committee of Senate was instructed to consider the cost and practicability of establishing a university press. The following year (January, 1915) the report was made, and was signed by Dr. James Hight, the convener, who has been the most assiduous worker since then for the achievement of the original ambition. Some parts of Dr. Hight's report as it was made then refer to conditions which are not necessarily the same now, and possibly the reasons for some of its detailed provisions have changed or disappeared, but the broad outline has been preserved. Dr. Hight's report began:

The Need and the Value

"In view (1) of the addition to the Revenue of the University provided for by the University Act Amendment Act of 1914, (2) of the need for encouraging investigations into the science, history, economics, and sociology of New Zealand, and (3) of the general advantages that are associated with a University Press, the Committee recommends the Senate to make provision for the publication of the results of scientific and other investigations carried on under its auspices. *Advantages:* the existence of a Press in a modern University implies that the University will print and publish, generally at its own cost, certain works more or less closely related to its activities. Most of the greater Universities of the British have arrangements to which the term University Press, in the sense defined above, may be, and generally is, applied. The rapidly increasing use of the institution is explained by the general recognition of its many advantages."

Later in the report this passage occurs:

"The statement that (in the United Kingdom) the publication of longer original works cannot be made upon a commercial basis.... applies with much greater force to New Zealand where the population is relatively so small that a local publisher will seldom accept an ordinary book at



DR. JAMES HIGHT
An ambition is fulfilled

his own risk, even though it may strongly appeal to local interests."

Action Deferred

Dr. Hight's report was approved by the Senate, but its execution was deferred, for reasons that are obvious when we remember that the year was 1915. And the matter lapsed until 1924, when a committee of the Senate again recommended that a Press be established. The Senate approved it again, but decided that it could spend no money on the proposal until it had investigated its legal powers. The University Act was studied, and the legal advice was that the University had no authority to run a publishing concern.

However, between 1925 and 1943, three more amendments were made to the University Act, and in 1943 Dr. Hight proposed that a fresh legal opinion should be sought, to see whether there was still any barrier. None was found. Accordingly, last year, the Senate established the principle and set up a Board of Managers.

Seven Managers

This Board comprises three Senate members, three from the Academic

Board, and one co-opted member. The Senate members are Dr. J. Hight (chairman), Sir Thomas Hunter, and J. H. E. Schroder; the Academic Board members are Professor Ian Gordon, Professor R. S. Allan, and Professor Galway; the co-opted member is Dr. J. C. Beaglehole (who arranged the typography of the Centennial Surveys, and has had experience in book production for the Department of Internal Affairs and Victoria University College).

The Board's first practical step has now been taken, with the advertisement we have referred to. For the time being, the Board's headquarters are in Christchurch.

The Board has already defined its policy by listing the following classes of work that will be considered for publication (roughly in order of preference):—

1. Original works of learning.
2. Works of general cultural interest.
3. Periodicals or journals.
4. Bibliographies.
5. Summarised Theses.
6. Manuals or Textbooks.

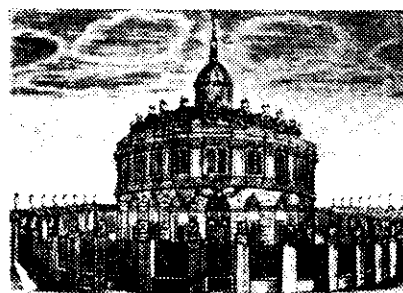
No Printing Yet

For the time being, the Press will be purely a publishing concern, and will not print. It may do so later—the advantages would be great, for there is an enormous volume of incidental and routine printing connected with the University that is at present handled by outside printers.

The first publications from this press will, however, not be the first University publications in New Zealand. Some colleges have already assisted the publication of research work, and Victoria College has a publishing fund and committee which has subsidised several small publications, some of them appearing as papers among the Proceedings of the Royal Society, and of the Astronomical Society. A book on *Nicholas Copernicus*, an essay on *Greek Tragedy*, and the full-size book, *The Statute of Westminster*, were published under the auspices of this committee.

Melbourne's Solution

Melbourne University has the nearest thing comparable to what is envisaged for New Zealand. Its press has been in existence since the Great War, and it produces chiefly scholarly works, and some textbooks. Melbourne's solution to the income problem (there is not enough profit from publishing to meet the overhead costs) is to operate a bookshop in the University, which also hires out gowns and hoods, and the profits from this shop subsidise the publication of works of scholarship.



The Sheldonian Theatre, which housed the Oxford Press in the 17th century

Oxford & Cambridge

THE Oxford University Press was founded at the end of the 15th century. Its first book, a commentary on the Apostle's Creed attributed to St. Jerome, was dated MCCCCLXVIII, but experts are agreed that an X has been dropped, and the real date is put at 1478. Misprints have since taken a less conspicuous place in Oxford printing—to-day the sum of one guinea is offered by the Board of Delegates (the governing body) to anyone who can find a misprint, in text or punctuation, in any one of its innumerable editions of the Holy Bible. It is rarely claimed, but gladly paid.

Oxford's first printer was Theodoric Rood, of Cologne. The press existed only sporadically until 1585, and there are gaps in its history (which is recorded in "Some Account of the Oxford University Press, 1468-1921"). Then in 1585, the first book from the new press mentioned the Earl of Leicester as its founder. The first notable promoter of the press was Archbishop Laud, whose statutes contemplated the appointment of an "architypographus," and who secured a Royal Charter in 1636 entitling the University to print "all manner of books." However, the privilege of printing the Bible was not exercised until 1675, when an edition edited, and having the spelling revised or modernised by Dr. John Fell was produced.

The Original Doctor Fell

This Dr. Fell is the original of the jingle,

"I do not love thee, Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell," etc.

(which was actually a translation of one of Martial's epigrams) but the rhyme seems to have little connection with so great a benefactor of letters. Fell procured from abroad some of the best type-faces obtainable, and castings from these are still used in Oxford books. He also promoted the Wolvercote paper mill, where Oxford paper is still made, and it was he who suggested to Archbishop Sheldon the building of the Theatre which still bears his name, and the printing house that was at first attached to it. The press was installed at the Sheldonian in 1669, and books printed there bore the imprint "Oxford at the Theatre." Later the Press moved to the Clarendon building, and later again to a larger building.

To-day, the Oxford University Press counts among its greatest achievements