AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES.

Universities were originally a growth. They came into being to meet a demand. They were associations formed to preserve and promote learning. Now they are mainly teaching institutions, and too incidentally places of research. The older academies conserve the classical culture, but the latest colleges are chiefly utilitarian—higher technical schools. Australia is not unresponsive to technical education. Queensland and Western Australia shall have taken into line, university life will be a factor in every State of the Commonwealth. It is improbable that the development of the Australian universities will be exclusively cultural, or exclusively technical, but which will dominate—the general or the special type of education? The question is already before the University of Melbourne. Dr. Barnett has advocated local university reform in the view that all university education must necessarily be utilitarian. In other words, he would subordinate the general to the special, and introduce new technical courses. Mr. Stephen P. Thompson, in combating the materialistic idea to make our university a huge training school, like some of the American universities—with diplomas for journalists, librarians, and others about to follow pursuits necessarily limited to comparatively few, observes that the university must be for the masses, not for the classes; for teaching working men history and economics, rather than for attracting society young ladies to study domestic technology. If the case for the humanitarian had no stronger foundation than that indicated by Mr. Thompson, there would be little scope for controversy.

"The idea of a university," said Rev. W. Hamilton, "is twofold: first, what I may call the school of liberal and general knowledge, and secondly, a collection of special schools, devoted to the learned professions. Of these, the former is the proper business of the University: the latter is an end out of and beyond the learning—his dexterity as a professional man." Others have pointed out, in defence of arts as a cultural course of practical value, the soundest evidence from schools in which law is never taught; that the most accomplished physicians are nurtured where medicine is but a name. Australia cannot afford to neglect higher technical training, but a good general education is essential to a successful use of the special schools; and it is not less important that a professional man should possess intellectual interests besides his calling. The design of the arts course is to produce a well-cultivated and vigorous understanding, and the habit of thinking at once with modesty and independence, and obviously a profession of technical science. If it is insufficiently, be associated with cultural subjects calculated to attain that end. No education can fairly be regarded as complete which does not develop the imagination and still apply disciplinary methods to establish sound judgment. To the Melbourne University are attached residential colleges, but these are sectarian; there is movement afoot to establish a non-sectarian residential institution. As Professor Naylor has remarked, the absence of residential facilities deprives university life of one great educational value. On the other hand, Australians have varied minds with distinctive interests and aims. The common weal is being promoted when the coming teachers and doctors, lawyers and physicians, farmers and engineers, miners and manufacturers, and soldiers and statesmen form lasting friendships under the one social roof connected with the sacred halls of learning.

In some university reform finds present expression in an effort to reorganize the government of the institution. For more than 20 years there has been an agitation to reconstruct the Senate, such as is proposed for the University of the University of Sydney, and the Senate of the University of Sydney. Dr. Peter Cullen, M.L.C.—himself a senator, and vice-Chancellor—introduced into the Legislative Council a bill providing for a six-years' term of office; but Sir Arthur Brawick, also a senator, secured the defeat of the measure. Sir Arthur did not object to the convocation electing the Senate, or to voting by post, but felt that the innovation would tend to displace the Senate to the stable element in the constitution of the University. "Iron rusts, and furniture becomes covered with dust. Whoever has a piece of apparatus, a delicate instrument, or an article to care for, must fear this slow invasion of oxides and dust." There are political and institutional as well as material oxides. Stability should be sustained without sacrifice of flexibility. Life, appointments, especially honorary appointments, collect dust and rust, and impair the usefulness of institutions. The Romans limited the occupancy of public positions to definite periods, and the people of the United States have an unwritten law that the Presidency shall not be filled by one man for more than two successive terms of four years each. We have, unfortunately, an unwritten law that, even when a member of a public body may have outlived his usefulness, the Government shall, from a mistaken sentiment of pity, refuse him as a matter of right, so long as he shall continue upon the earth. Frequently such a member may be worse than useless to the institution—a mere pawn in the hands of cliques. A university should be both conservative and progressive, and like a professor who has both to teach and to advance the subject. But if its governing body should always hold—either by law or by much—a life tenure, there would be the subject, but it will not satisfactorily promote the cause of education. In this respect the old British universities which annually elect their rectors or chief representatives are in advance of the Australian universities. If they are to become more widely useful than is implied in the phrase, "brief and pit factories," some means must be found to infuse into the management new blood and fresh energy.

UNIVERSITIES AND DEFENCE.

Melbourne, July 21.

The Minister for Defence (Mr. C. R. Hodge) yesterday announced the Melbourne University today that the Federal Government would give all assent that it could to help forward the proposal to establish a military college of education, and to form a University military corps.

On August 4 Mr. C. R. Hodge will complete 25 years service at the University. He entered the institution as a student and later was elected as deputy representing the absence of the late Mr. W. L. Ether, an ex-University Professor. He re-joined the position of headmaster, Hodge was promoted to the office, and he has been the chief executive officer of the University for 17 years.