

No. 3.

Professor Macgregor to the Secretary to the Royal Commission.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 23rd April, 1880.

In reply to the Chancellor's letter impugning the correctness of certain allegations contained in my evidence before the Commission, I beg to state that Mr. Barclay came to me, at the opening of our session in the beginning of May, 1879, and made arrangements to read with me with a view to honours in mental science. He continued to work with me till the middle of June, having all this time no doubt that he had given the requisite notice of his intention to the authorities of the University. As the accompanying letter shows, he informed me that, at the time when he received notice of his having passed the B.A. examination, he signified to the Chancellor his intention to proceed to honours in mental science, and also to the LL.B. degree. It now appears, from his earlier letters, which I had not seen, that he had omitted to specify the subject of mental science, and it would seem to appear, from the expressions quoted from these letters, that he was quite uncertain as to his own intentions in the matter.

The fact of his reading steadily for honours in mental science till he was stopped by the Chancellor's letter in the middle of June is to me proof positive that he was quite clear as to his own intentions; but how to make this consist with the expressions quoted from his letters I cannot understand, without seeing the letters themselves. I am bound, however, to admit, and I do so frankly, that, owing to Barclay's neglect to specify his subject, the Chancellor's action was formally correct and in strict accordance with the letter of the Regulations. I beg, nevertheless, to point out that, were it not for the fact that the Registrar took three weeks to answer Barclay's first letter and two weeks to answer his second, the misunderstanding might easily have been removed. With regard to White's case, the enclosed letter will speak for itself on the only point on which my evidence can be open to attack.

In conclusion, I would remark that surely something more encouraging than the treatment these students have received might reasonably be expected at the hands of the University authorities.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Royal Commission on Higher Education.

D. MACGREGOR.

Enclosures in No. 3.

1. *Mr. Barclay to Professor Macgregor.*

SIR,—

Dunedin, 17th April, 1880.

I have perused a copy, which you handed me yesterday, of a letter written by the Chancellor of the New Zealand University to the Secretary of the Royal Commission on Education. As "the young man of the name of Barclay" referred to in that letter, you will perhaps permit me to say a word or two on the subject.

The first point I wish to refer to is the use by the Chancellor of the word "suppression" in connection with the non-appearance in your evidence of certain of the letters which passed between the Registrar and myself upon the question in dispute. The word has been used evidently under the misapprehension that I had in my possession copies of the letters "suppressed," and that I wilfully withheld them on handing you the documents which are published. As a matter of fact, the only reason why copies of these non-published letters were not placed in your hands was that I had unfortunately not taken the precaution to preserve duplicates of them. It may possibly be in your recollection that, so far from attempting to "suppress" any of the correspondence on the matter, I expressed my regret at the time that I had omitted to make copies of my two previous letters, feeling sure that were they published they would very much strengthen, rather than weaken, my case. That the letters published were never intended to be considered as the whole of the correspondence on the subject must be palpable to any one who reflects for an instant that, even on the most cursory reading of the documents, no one could fail to note allusions to my letters of 4th April and 15th May, 1879, and to observe that these letters do not appear. The fact that some of the letters are not inserted is so very patent, and the notion of hinting at a "suppression" of the absent portion of the correspondence with the idea on the part of the suppressors of impressing the Commission with the belief that every letter which had passed on the subject was before it, is so manifestly absurd, that it is matter of some wonder the Chancellor has permitted himself to suggest a presumption so extraordinary.

As for the parts of your answer to question 7262 to which the Chancellor objects, I have this to say: That answer, I presume, purports to give, very briefly and shortly, a rough outline of the case as it stood when the answer was given. As such, I have no hesitation in saying that I consider it perfectly correct and, as well as my recollection serves me at this distance of time, strictly in accordance with the information which I gave you on the subject. One point, however, I may notice. I informed you, of course, that I had given notice to the Chancellor of my intention to proceed for honours. In doing so, however, I believe I also informed you that I had, in my first letter, in addition to giving notice of my intention to proceed at some future time to the examination, also given the Chancellor to understand the subject in which I elected to be examined. In the absence of a copy of the letter, and some time having elapsed between the date on which it was written and the occasion of my first bringing the matter under your notice, I was certainly under the impression that I had done so; and it was not until I read the letter on which I am now commenting that I was at all aware that I was not strictly correct upon this point. Nor was I aware till yesterday that it was at all a material point. I never was aware before that the real ground on which I was debarred from proceeding to honours was that I had not in my first letter specified precisely my subject. From all the correspondence on the matter no one could infer, by any mental process that I am aware of, that I was disqualified on any such ground. No objection, although honours were spoken of long before, was taken to my form of giving notice of my intention till the 30th May, 1879. Up to that time there had been no objection of any sort save to my postponement of the examination for a year or so, and, that objection being removed by my letter of the 15th May, written just twenty days after the Registrar's of the 25th April, I always considered the only obstacle to my sitting for examination had been smoothed away.