

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE DEANS OF THE FACULTIES.

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE.

(W. B. Benham, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., Dean.)

An important event, which marks an epoch in the history of the growth of the University, was the opening of the fine new Physics Building, where the department is now worthily housed, after being for fifty years confined to the basement and cellar of the original part of the University. The inaugural address on the occasion was delivered by Dr. E. Marsden, formerly Professor of Physics at Victoria University College, who took as his subject "The Life and Work of Sir Ernest Rutherford."

It is not without interest to note that a professor's work is not always confined to that defined in his agreement with the Council, for there are several members of this faculty who regard it as part of their duty, and as a privilege, to take a share in activities of various kinds outside the University, and thus to interest the public in the institution by means of lectures and addresses, and by taking part in other ways in the work of the community. Some also make time to carry on research and to encourage their students to pursue investigations in their particular departments of knowledge.

According to the statistics supplied by the Registrar it appears that the number of students in attendance at courses in these faculties has suffered a diminution of 135 as compared with last year, there being 334 during 1923. Of these 291 were taking courses in arts and 43 in science. For the first time for some years the number of women was less than the men—138 of the former and 196 of the latter. There were 42 graduates reading for honours or carrying on research.

Last year I recorded the fact that as many as fifty-two students came from other University districts; this year the number fell to forty-two, made up of six from Auckland, twenty from Wellington, and sixteen from Canterbury. It would be of interest to ascertain the reasons for so many preferring the education provided at Otago to that at their own University College.

FACULTY OF MEDICINE.

(Sir Henry L. Ferguson, M.A., M.D., &c., Dean.)

During the past year the work of the Medical School has been carried on smoothly. The total number of graduations during the year was sixty-seven, being four more than the previous year; the number of students attending classes was slightly smaller, being 357, as against 373; but the size of the classes is still taxing our accommodation and teaching staff very severely, and this pressure will continue to be felt until the new departments of anatomy and physiology are completed. The most important event in connection with the school last year was the decision of the Government to proceed with the erection of these buildings, a step which will have a far-reaching effect on the training of the profession of the future.

The mortality at the Intermediate Examination was less than in 1922, indicating that the change in the curriculum has resulted in greater efficiency in the teaching of the preliminary science subjects. The effect of the lengthened course on the First Professional Examination results will not be apparent till the end of this year.

The meeting of representatives of the Council of the University and of the Hospital Board to confer as to the appointments to the Hospital staff was a welcome innovation, as forecasting a closer co-operation of the two bodies in matters involving medical education.

During the year negotiations were entered into with the staff of the Christchurch Hospital with a view to making use of the clinical material in that institution for teaching purposes, and the thanks of the Council and faculty are due to this body for the spirit in which they offered to help us. The arrangements made promise to be of value to the school, and are at present being carried out.

DENTAL FACULTY.

(H. P. Pickerill, M.D., M.D.S., &c., Dean.)

During the year 1923, 103 students have been in attendance, of whom ninety were men and thirteen women; fifty-one were taking the degree course and fifty-two the certificate course.

Clinical Work.—Over sixteen thousand operations were done during the year. Patients' attendances totalled 17,032, an increase of 834 over last year. These operations have been performed for patients who could not afford to go to a private dentist, the usual limit of salary being £4 a week for patients with families. During the early part of the year an arrangement was come to with the Otago Branch of the New Zealand Dental Association to admit as patients University students and hospital nurses, in order to provide a class of patient who might afford to pay for precious metals, &c., used in the higher branches of dentistry. This arrangement has so far worked quite satisfactorily, and should, I think, meet the requirements. That over sixteen thousand dental operations should be necessary in one year for patients in Dunedin who could not otherwise afford dental treatment is a sad reflection on dental conditions in Dunedin, and especially of present-day children, and one cannot help wondering what would have been the state of their health if the Dental School did not exist here to look after them. Even with our very low fees—just to cover the bare cost of materials—patients with large families find it impossible to pay for the necessary treatment in many cases. If a fund were established, through private or public philanthropy, which could be drawn upon to assist such necessitous cases, it would be of enormous benefit.

Accommodation.—For the past four years I have reported in the strongest possible way as to the utter inadequacy of the accommodation, and the impossibility of carrying on efficient work and training under the present conditions. It is to be hoped that in the near future a start will be made with the building and equipping of a new Dental School which will be worthy of this University and of New Zealand.