

The position is very well put by a committee which investigated this subject recently in the Melbourne University.

Difficulty of dealing with the two classes of students.

The student who has resided or studied in a university has one educational life and experience; the student who has not has had another life and experience. Whichever of them is the better, they are, at any rate, different. A common degree can attest only that which they have in common—i.e., that they have passed the same examination. That a university degree should attest merely the passing of an examination is to deprive the *imprimatur* of the university of all significance in relation to a great part, if not the greater part, of university training. Moreover, examinations ought upon any sound principle to be based upon the actual course of the student and be closely related to the sort of experience, training, and opportunities that he has had. A single examination upon courses so different as those of the internal and the external student must impair the value of the results as a test of the work done in either course, and tends to lower the standard which can properly be exacted from either class of student. The university lecturer is embarrassed both in his teaching and examining by the knowledge that whatever he can do for his students and whatever they can do for themselves with such aid of libraries, &c., as the University can put at their service, the standard to be attained is limited by the fact that there will be many candidates who have been unable to carry their studies beyond the reading of a few set books. As the development of the resources of the University enables it to do more for its internal students, these evils are intensified. . . . Every provision facilitating actual attendance at the University for a full university course meets the situation by diminishing the proportion of those who have to be dealt with as external students. But it does not, of course, solve the problem altogether, so long as there are both internal and external students. Two plans are open. One of these is the system of separate courses, examinations, and degrees (with distinct scales of fees) for the two classes of students. This plan recognizes frankly the essential differences in conditions of work and enables courses to be laid down with a single regard to the opportunities of each class without embarrassment from the other.

But, before so debatable a plan is adopted as the institution of two different degrees in a course, it would be well to consider whether the number of exempted students could not be lessened by providing greater facilities for attendance at the University. The number of exempted students in the Dominion during 1924 was 428, of whom 348 were men and 80 were women students. This number represents exactly 10 per cent. of all students enrolled in the University colleges, a proportion which should be regarded seriously. The courses taken by exempted students are: Arts, 78 per cent.; Law, 16 per cent.; Commerce, 6 per cent. We learn, too, that no effective limitation is placed upon the student who wishes to become an exempted student, and that, in fact, some exempted students reside in University centres, but prefer to work with text-books and notes rather than attend University lectures.

Can the number of exempted students be lessened?

That this is so may be an indication that some university teaching is not all it should be. If the teaching in a subject consists of lectures to large classes, not supplemented by discussions and tutorials, and if the lectures are repeated year after year from the same material, it cannot be expected either that students will willingly attend, or that exempted students will have any less difficulty in passing the necessary examinations than those who do attend. The whole of the argument against the exempted student assumes that there is a high standard of university teaching, and it is the duty of the university to maintain such a standard in all of its work.

A possible cause of "exemption."

Of the exempted students taking the B.A. course the great majority are teachers who began their course when in the training college, and are trying to complete it. We have elsewhere recommended that the facilities for full-time university study for training-college students who are best qualified for this work should be increased. If this recommendation is accepted, a marked diminution in the number of exempted students must ensue, and, moreover, even if students do not complete the course while in the college, they will, it is hoped, have gained a great deal from the method and spirit of University work.

Teachers are a great proportion of the exempted students.

Assuming that every effort has been made to reduce the number of exempted students by increased facilities for full-time attendance, what supervision should the University give to them, and what conditions should it impose? We think that exempted students should be enrolled as such in the colleges, and that, so far as practicable, they should participate in the teaching given to the internal students. We hope that, in the near future, as a result of our recommendations, "tutorials" as a supplement to the lectures, will be the rule in such subjects as English, History, Latin. The exempted students should receive from the college guidance as to their reading; necessary help in the form of notes and suggestions

The University should recognize its obligations to the exempted student.