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## Outside the College Walls

EXTRA-MURAL study has long been an accepted feature of University life in New Zealand. It is in keeping with our national outlook that young people who cannot afford to be full-time students should be able to complete their degrees if they have the necessary strength of purpose and character. Apart from its value for individuals, the system has helped the movement of teachers from primary to post-primary work. Many students have gone to the Training Colleges, rather than to the University, because they knew that later they could complete their degrees extra-murally; and in the meantime they have been able to support themselves and to gain useful experience as teachers. External study is an admirable form of self-discipline; it encourages initiative, and it satisfies a democratic principle.

Inside the University, however, it has not been generally approved; and the opposition is growing. The Academic Board recently asked for a drastic curtailment of exemptions from lectures in arts and science subjects—exemptions without which degrees cannot be completed by extra-mural study. When the Bill to amend the relevant statute came before the Senate the restrictions were made less severe, but their effect will still be—in and after 1958—to deny exemptions in any subject at Stage III for the Degrees of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science "unless the candidate has completed, as an internal student, a minimum of three units." A further amendment provided for an increase in the required number of units, in and after 1961, to four, including a Stage II unit. It seems, therefore, that the University is committed to a progressive curtailment of extra-mural study.

There are, of course, many good arguments in favour of a full University education. They were summarised in 1925 in a report from the N.Z.U. Commission: "True University education con-

sists . . . in co-operation in study and investigation between students and able teachers. This involves much more than attendance at lectures, and includes discussions with teachers and with fellow-students, related reading in a well-equipped library, the writing of exercises for the criticism of teachers, and so forth." The report conceded the "very real and substantial benefit" gained by an exempted student working alone in a country district, but pointed out that "it is not what a true University training ought to give." The Academic Board, in a report recently before the Senate, endorsed these views and went on to emphasise improvements in methods of teaching, in college libraries, and in the corporate life of students. "A student who has studied within a University college has had one educational life and experience; a student who has not has had an experience different in kind from that of an internal student, and in the view of the Professorial Board in all ways a poorer experience." Poorer, yes—but only if judged by academic standards.

In some ways the experience of a man who equips himself largely by his own efforts, and who at the same time is learning to play his part in the community outside, is richer than that of a full-time student. Not all extra-mural students are working in country districts, but those who are can never be in complete isolation while they feel themselves in touch with the University. Yet it seems unlikely that the number of external students can ever be large: the qualities of mind and character required of them are too strenuous to be widely emulated. The University has no need to fear a dilution of standards or any weakening of its corporate life. On the contrary, a centre of learning has something to gain, in vitality and public esteem, from the tolerance it grants where the grove of Academicus thins out to the city and the plain.



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|---------------|---|---------------------|
| Wanganui      | - | Sept. 18 and 20.    |
| New Plymouth  | - | Sept. 21.           |
| Auckland      | - | Sept. 23 to Oct. 2. |
| Hamilton      | - | Oct. 4 and 5.       |
| Rotorua       | - | Oct. 6.             |
| Oporiki       | - | Oct. 7.             |
| Gisborne      | - | Oct. 8.             |
| Hastings      | - | Oct. 9.             |
| Waipukurau    | - | Oct. 11.            |
| Napier        | - | Oct. 12 and 13.     |
| Levin         | - | Oct. 14.            |
| Palmerston N. | - | Oct. 15 and 16.     |
| Masterton     | - | Oct. 18.            |
| Christchurch  | - | Oct. 20 to 25.      |
| Timaru        | - | Oct. 26.            |
| Dunedin       | - | Oct. 27 to 30.      |
| Invercargill  | - | Nov. 1.             |
| Gore          | - | Nov. 2.             |
| Oamaru        | - | Nov. 3.             |
| Wellington    | - | Nov. 4 to 13.       |