

Advertiser, March 27/11

FREE UNIVERSITIES.

PROFESSOR DAVID SEES NO OBJECTION.

Sydney, March 30.

At the sitting of the Education Commission to-day Professor David was asked by the chairman if he would have any objection to the University being free, provided the entrance examination was not in any way lowered, and that the State kept the University efficient?

Professor David replied that he had had experience of two universities in California where the fees were altogether remitted, except in the professional schools. At Leland-Stanford there were about 3,000 students, and at Berkeley between 1,500 and 1,800. Education at Leland-Stanford was paid for by private endowment, and at Berkeley chiefly by the State. At Leland-Stanford, which he knew best, he found that there was very great competition to get in among intending students, and the accommodation in the lecture halls was applied for twice over. That enabled the university authorities to choose the best students, those most likely to profit by the education they would receive. The standard of teaching was very high, particularly in science subjects, and it did not yield to any other university in the world with which he was familiar. The teaching staffs were efficient, and the standard of graduates was high.

"I am not aware," Professor David went on, "of any drawback to free education at the university, provided the standard of the entrance examination is kept up and the efficiency of the teaching staff and adequate lecture hall and laboratory accommodation is maintained. I can see no objection at all. On the other hand, I see an advantage. From time to time under our present system we admit students free of cost, but those students must first have an interview with the Chancellor and the Registrar, and put their private affairs before him. That places the students in a delicate position. It seems to me that it is the innate right of everyone in the country, who is worthy of the highest education the country can give, to get that education free. But if the standard of the entrance examination is lowered a lot of good money is being wasted in trying to train students who were not really worthy of the education."

A Commissioner—And they would not keep on.

Professor David—No, and if they did they would not make good students.

would fit students to enter the university. Mr. H. E. Barff (registrar and librarian) did not think New South Wales spent sufficient money upon the university. The scholarships should be extended to as many people as were fit to enter the university. Professor David gave it as his opinion that, provided a good standard of entrance to the university was kept up, there was no objection whatever to making the admission free. It seemed to him reasonable and proper that the Government should have a representative on the senate. He would like to see the university side equally represented with the non-academic in the senate.

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EDUCATION COMMISSION.

UNIVERSITY SENATES.

Sydney, March 30.

Mr. T. Ryan, M.P., chairman of the South Australian Higher Education Commission, is keenly opposed to life tenure of university senates, and to-day he succeeded in getting a qualified approval from two Sydney professors of a scheme of his own for a reconstituted senate. Mr. Ryan's scheme is elastic. He asked Professor David whether he could see any danger in a senate composed of about 25 members, five appointed by the professorial staff, eight by the graduates, five by the two Houses of Parliament at a joint sitting, the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, the chairman of the Chamber of Manufactures, the president of the Trades and Labor Council, and three men to be elected by the people of the State at the Federal Senate elections.

Professor David said—"In the main I think it is a good scheme, but I don't know how it would work to have non-university members in slightly superior numbers to the academic members. That is contrary to precedent. Otherwise it seems an admirable scheme."

Professor Anderson Stuart said he would favor the scheme provided there was provision for the election of any other representatives whom it might be considered advisable to include.

In reply to Mr. Ryan, Sir Normand MacLaurin said he considered it a very good system indeed to have the members of the Senate elected for life. There had always been a considerable number of judges of the High Court and the Supreme Court on the Senate, and they were most valuable men. It was impossible to conceive of these gentlemen being willing to submit themselves for election. They were to be elected at stated periods. Judges would not submit themselves to a contested election, and with elections at short periods the control of the University would fall almost entirely into the hands of the professors, as they would be always on the senate, while elected fellows would have only a four years' tenure. Contested elections would perpetually turn the University upside down, and would interfere with the business of the University, because about a month would be occupied in arguing and canvassing in connection with the election. The effect would be injurious.

The Chairman stated that in South Australia a member of the senate faced his constituents every five years. There the Chancellor had to contest his election, and no complaints had been heard.

The Chancellor said he thought nothing was to be gained by that system. What was the use of periodical elections if a man was always re-elected? On the other hand, if there was a bona-fide election a good number of the members of the senate would not stand for re-election. He was strongly opposed to any Government representative being on the senate. Sir Patrick Jennings, when Premier, had considered it unwise to appear at the senate lest anything he might say would have undue influence on the other gentlemen. Ministers of the Crown had also refrained from attending except in a formal way in order to retain their seats. The senate acted under an Act of Parliament, and there was no reason why the Government should interfere. The first essential of the senate was that it should be absolutely free from influence of any kind. There had never been any suspicion that the senate had not acted in accordance with the Act. The most important duty of the Senate was the selection of professors. In his opinion they should be elected for life, otherwise the best men would not come forward. A professor's appointment was for 20 years, or until the age of 50 was reached. A

professor could then retire on a pension of £400 a year. Experience had shown that after a man had worked at the University for 20 years he was pretty tired, but if he felt strong and vigorous and desired to go on he was allowed to do so. The Government should see that the University was supplied with sufficient funds for the purposes required, and the Senate should be perfectly free from any domination. Given these two things the University should be exceedingly successful. It was very much in touch with the people, and was willing to admit any person who was sufficiently trained to receive its advantages. Never yet had the University turned away a man or a woman from the faculties of arts or science because he or she had no money. The senate had at its disposal certain bursaries carrying from £25 to £50 a year. It also of its own motion allowed a certain number of exemptions from fees. The chancellor had a right to give exemption, provided there was evidence that the applicant was not able to pay the fees. He thought this system was a mistake, and instead of giving exemption he would favor a certain number of bursaries being given for competition in the faculties of arts and science. It would then be an honor to gain a bursary instead of something approaching a charity.

Mr. Ryan—Are you doing anything that we would do well to copy?

Sir Normand MacLaurin—The first thing is to increase the number of secondary schools. The greater number of our students come to prepare for a profession, and there are a good number of people in the professions who are poor. I don't suppose you would do much to increase the numbers of gentlemen studying law. As for engineering, I think a great deal might be done to encourage students. As for the faculty of arts and the faculty of science, I think we are about to extend the domain of scientific study by the introduction of such things as economics and applied chemistry. This would draw a number of worthy people to the University.

Register, April 1st 1911

EDUCATION COMMISSION.

ENQUIRIES IN SYDNEY CONCLUDED.

SYDNEY, March 31.

The South Australian Royal Commission on Education concluded its enquiries into the method of higher education so far as this State is concerned. It sat at the university to-day, with Mr. Ryan as Chairman.

Professor Carslaw was asked whether he thought that leaving certificates from the high schools should be accepted by the university as equivalent to matriculation examination. The university should, in his opinion, accept leaving certificates, and it would be most iniquitous for it not to do so. It would still be necessary for the university to conduct examinations. There had been strong feeling in political circles that something more should be done to bring the benefits of higher education within the reach of the people throughout the country.

Professor Warren, who was asked whether members of the Engineering School undertook research work in behalf of the Government, said the members of the staff would do such work, and some had been done. Professor Warren, in answer to a further question, thought it desirable that there should be close association between the various scientific schools of the university and the corresponding Government departments. Asked whether many engineering graduates entered the Government service, Professor Warren said that although some of the students did remarkably well here, many went to other countries, where more inducement was given. He thought there was a better chance for an original genius outside than inside the Government service.

Dr. Chapman (demonstrator of physiology) said he thought it desirable that the Adelaide Medical School should obtain the services of a lecturer on chemistry together with the equipment of a laboratory for the proper teaching of this subject.

Register, March 31st 1911

UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS.

A CHANCELLOR'S VIEWS.

SYDNEY, March 30.

Sir Normand MacLaurin (Chancellor of the Sydney University) gave evidence to-day before the South Australian Royal Commission on Education. He considered that the election of members of the Senate for life was a good system. Judges of the Supreme Court were the most valuable members of the Senate, and it was impossible to conceive that they would submit themselves to a contested election. The control of the affairs of the university would, with elections at short periods, eventually fall entirely into the hands of professors. These elections would interfere with the business of the university. He was strongly opposed to a Government representative on the Senate. There was no earthly reason why the Government should interfere. Sir Normand MacLaurin explained that certain bursaries provided exemption from fees, and he had the right to give exemption from the payment of fees. One condition was that the person so exempted must be unable to pay for the requirements of the university. He thought personally that was a mistake. Although no one knew who was exempt from the payment of fees, it would be better, in his opinion, if the Senate established a certain number of bursaries for public competition in the faculty of arts and the faculty of science. By this method the smartest students would be found, and instead of exemption being somewhat of a charity it would be an honour. He considered that in the interests of the university the professors should be elected for life. The Government should see that the university was provided with funds sufficient for all requirements, and that the secondary education scheme should provide education which