

Registered Feb. 11th 08.

THE UNIVERSITY.

FINANCIAL ABSTRACT.

The annual financial statement of the council of the University of Adelaide for 1907, which has just been made available, shows on the whole steady progress by the educational institution, combined with careful economy in administration. The number of graduates was slightly less last year, as compared with 1906, and totalled 388 and 409 in those respective years; but the number of non-graduating students at the University increased from 210 in 1906 to 266 in 1907, so that the real increase in attendance of students was from 598 to 675. There were 358 scholars at the Elder Conservatorium in 1906, and 336 last year. The teaching staff of the University consists of 10 professors and 25 lecturers, and that of the Elder Conservatorium of 10 teachers. The balance sheet reveals no startling departures. The revenue from schools of arts and science schools (including evening classes and public examinations) was £3,861, against £3,576 in 1906; but that from the school of music decreased from £4,184 in the latter year to £2,634. The additional receipts in the line, extension lecture fees, is evidence of the strong and growing popular favour of these winter programmes by professors at the University. The fees aggregated £139 in 1906, but swelled to £306 last year, and if, as was proposed, extension lectures be delivered in the Town Hall during the coming winter, there should be a considerable advance on the latter figure. There was a special donation to the law school of £250.

On the expenditure side of the balance sheet it is noticeable that the outlay on arts and science schools increased from £7,713 to £8,214, a difference which was caused largely by additional expenses—mark of progress—involved in degree and public examinations. In this particular the figures grew from £1,212 to £1,566. The school of music cost the council less this year. The expenditure on this account was £4,489, as compared with £5,221, and the decrease was probably due to the inauguration of the scheme between the Universities of Adelaide and Melbourne for association in public examinations in music. There was further economy in the registrar's department and house salaries, which accounted for an expenditure of £1,263 in 1906, and for £1,243 last year. Fees to lecturers and expenses increased from £81 to £292. The statement in respect to capital shows an augmentation of £164 in the total value of endowments. The total in 1907 was £271,115, in the preceding year £270,949. Noteworthy donations were a special gift by Mr. R. Barr Smith of £500 for research work, of which £226 was spent; Tinline Scholarship of £1,000, for history, founded by Mr. G. J. R. Murray, K.C.; and the gift of £500 by Miss Julia Stuckey towards a Chair of Botany. The funds (including that donation) subscribed towards this lastnamed object amount to £501. Special endowments in 1907 reached a total of £109,298, as compared with £107,797 in 1906. The other figures are:—Endowments for general purposes, £40,350 (1907), £43,251 (1906), land endowment, £58,734, £58,727; special endowment (Barr Smith Library), £8,105, £7,605 (the generous South Australian benefactor increased his donation towards this purpose by £500); others, £15,512, £14,453.

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Last August The Register published a letter addressed by Mr. Robert G. Leavitt, of the Ames Botanical University, Mass., U.S.A., concerning the study of botany. The writer regretted that no adequate provision for the teaching of the science had been made at the University of Adelaide since the death of Professor Tate. The proposal received a certain amount of local support, and Miss Julia Stuckey, an Adelaide lady, presented to the University the sum of £500, to be applied in furtherance of botanical teaching and study. This was supplemented by a further subscription from Miss E. M. Bunday, Mus. Bac. In its annual report, which has just been made available, the council of the University states that, though fully alive to the economic importance of the subject, it cannot, for financial reasons, at present establish a Chair of Botany or otherwise provide for a systematic teaching of the science. It will, however, continue to receive serious attention, and in the meantime the botanical collection of the University has been placed under the care of Miss Beuham, B.Sc., who is arranging it. The report also records that valuable additions were made during the year to the library, which now contains over 20,000 volumes.

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In the annual report of the University of Adelaide it is recorded:—"The council deeply regret to report the deaths of Mr. David Murray, Mr. Joseph Fisher, and Mr. Andrew Scott, B.A. Mr. Murray was for a number of years an active member of the council and of the finance committee. Although latterly absent from South Australia, he had shown undiminished interest in the University and its work, and he bequeathed the sum of £2,000 to found scholarships. Mr. Fisher was the donor of £1,000 for the promotion of the study of commerce in the University. His name will be permanently associated with the University, and with the successful development of a forward movement in commercial education. Although Mr. Scott was not a member of the University staff, his position as superintendent of the University Training College brought him into close relation with the governing and teaching bodies of the University. He was a devoted and successful worker, and it is fortunate that the difficult and responsible work of inaugurating the system of training teachers at the University was initially placed in such able hands."

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UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION METHODS.

CRITICISED BY A TEACHER.

There seems to be considerable dissatisfaction among teachers at some of the methods of the University in conducting examinations and in reporting thereon. One tutor, in the course of an interview with a representative of The Register, said:—"What I feel in regard to examiners' reports is that they are usually of too general a character to be of much assistance. Examiners seem to dwell far too much on the weak points of candidates, rather than give the teacher the benefit of the work done by the credit candidates. They ought to be able to help the teacher by bringing out the good points rather than reiterating the blunders of the unfortunate. The reports should be carefully edited before being put into print. This would ensure the omission of a mass of irrelevant matter from the reports, and might tend to raise the literary standard of the work. In ed. The full reports usually printed on comparatively new course, fuller reports should be given than in connection with other courses, in order that teachers might have an opportunity of knowing what is required. The full reports usually given on commercial geography have done much to place that subject on a sound educational basis. The examiner has always provided us something really valuable in his criticism. The exception is this expression, 'Hardly any candidates knew how to treat question 5, and some appalling answers were stated. In a few cases only had candidates been well prepared.' Question 5 reads, 'What are the immediate results in Australia of a large increase in the tariff on manufacturers of iron? What is the ultimate aim of a policy of protection?' That is really outside the scope of commercial geography, and especially of the junior commercial. It is a very interesting question, and no doubt those who could deal with it would have scored."

"What some teachers object to is an absence in the report of any indication of what the answer should have been, or what the examiner expected. Personally I was looking forward with great interest to an explanation of the question. It is the reports in regard to bookkeeping and commercial correspondence with which we find most fault. Out of 49 passes in bookkeeping 14 obtained credits. That is far too high, and argues that the paper was either too easy or that the examiner's marking was lenient. As a matter of fact the paper was too easy, several of the credit candidates having finished it in less than half the allotted time. The report, however, is of a pessimistic tone, and bears the impression that the work was of an inferior class, whereas, as stated before, 14 out of 49 obtained credits. The examiners invariably dwell on the bad work, and reflect on the teachers for sending candidates up for a University examination in such a state of ignorance, but do they ever consider that the fault too often lies with the University? For instance, a boy who enters for one subject has to pay the same fee as if he entered for five, and naturally he sits for all the subjects, whether prepared for them or not, and it is unreasonable to blame the teacher or tutor for work over which frequently he has no control. Take this statement, for instance:—"Candidates were allowed to enter who ought to have been kept another year at school before facing the ordeal." A statement like this is valueless, and shows that the writer doesn't know the conditions that prevail. As a rule a boy has only a limited time for his commercial studies, and he has to do the best he can within that time. While it might be the wish of the teacher to keep a lad another year he unfortunately cannot do so.

"Teachers are anxious to benefit by the examiner's criticism, and to maintain a high standard in their work, but such an insignificant paper as that set for bookkeeping last year does not tend in that direction. Seeing that arithmetic, including mental, is one of the subjects of the course, why does the examiner persist in putting absurdly simple mental arithmetic sums in the bookkeeping paper? The report on business correspondence and precis writing is exasperating. Only 30 out of 72 candidates satisfied the examiner, and one