

Register, Nov. 10/11

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ENGINEERING DEGREES.

REPORT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION.

The second progress report of the Royal Commission on the Adelaide University and Higher Education was presented to the Assembly on Thursday. It states:— "Among the many suggestions made to the commission prior to the presentation of our first report was one to give the University power to grant degrees in engineering, and this request has since been repeated. At the present time the University has not this power, although engineering is efficiently taught conjointly by the University and the School of Mines. For many years there have been established at the University courses in mining, metallurgy, and electrical and mechanical engineering, each extending over four years but in order that there should be no unnecessary duplication of laboratories, workshops, and instruction, the councils of the University and the School of Mines entered into an agreement under which the work to be done by each institution is set out. Although the arrangement prevents the establishment of a large engineering school at the University similar to those in Sydney and Melbourne it is, in the opinion of the University and School of Mines, working satisfactorily. In accordance with that agreement the University conducts teaching in mining and electrical engineering, and the School of Mines gives instruction in metallurgy and mechanical engineering. On the successful completion of his four years' work, and after having gained a certain amount of outside practical experience in his profession, a student obtains the University diploma and the fellowship of the School of Mines. If, in addition, he passes the senior public examination in two languages he receives the University degree of B.Sc. In the other States, after receiving similar instruction to that given in Adelaide, and on passing the necessary examinations, students are entitled to the degree either of bachelor of engineering or master of engineering. The students who have passed the Adelaide examination complain that the University diploma and the School of Mines fellowship, together with the B.Sc. degree, are not recognised in the scientific world as equivalent to the engineering degrees of the other States. In some professions it is distinctly made a condition of employment that a man must have completed a course of the degree of Bachelor of Engineering at a university recognised by an Australasian University. We have learned that there are 38 students who have passed through the School of Mines and the University who are fully entitled to degrees in engineering, but who have been unable to obtain them. The advisability of placing the students of all the universities in Australia on an equal footing was clearly put by Sir Langdon Bonython, the President of the Council of the School of Mines and Industries. We were assured by the authorities of the University and the School of Mines that at present there is no overlapping in engineering education at those institutions, and it is clear that the recommendation of the commission will not injuriously affect the working of the existing agreement, but that, on the other hand, it will earn for each institution the recognition of the excellence of its instruction by all the universities of the Empire. The granting of the power to the University to confer degrees does not necessarily mean the establishment of a new professorship, although some rearrangement of the teaching work at the University may be necessary; nor does it follow that so long as the present agreement lasts between the School of Mines and the University there will be any large outlay by the University in equipment for teaching purposes. We therefore respectfully recommend that the University Act be amended by providing that the council shall have power to confer the degrees of Bachelor of Engineering and Master of Engineering."

HIGHER EDUCATION.

TRAINING ENGINEERS.

COMMISSION'S REPORT.

The second progress report of the Royal Commission on the Adelaide University and Higher Education, was laid on the table of the House of Assembly by the Minister of Education. It is signed by Mr. T. Ryan (chairman), the Hon. J. Cowan, A. W. Styles, F. W. Coneybeer, A. H. Peake, Messrs. Thompson Green and F. W. Young, as well as by Mr. J. Sincock (secretary). The report is as follows:—

On September 12, 1911, we had the honor to present to your Excellency, in pursuance of the Commission addressed to us on January 26, a progress report, in which recommendations were made for an increased grant to the University and for an alteration of the constitution of the University Council. That report was adopted by the House of Assembly, and the Government have intimated their intention to introduce an amending University Bill to give effect to our recommendations. Another request of which we have approved involves a further amendment of the University Act, and, in order that both amendments may be made by the one measure, we have deemed it our duty to present a second progress report at this stage.

University and School of Mines.

2. Among the many suggestions made to the Commission prior to the presentation of our first report was one to give the University power to grant degrees in engineering, and this request has since been repeated. At the present time the University has not this power, although engineering is efficiently taught conjointly by the University and the School of Mines. For many years there have been established at the University courses in mining, metallurgy, and electrical and mechanical engineering, each extending over four years; but in order that there should be no unnecessary duplication of laboratories, workshops, and instruction, the councils of the University and the School of Mines entered into an agreement under which the work to be done by each institution is set out. This agreement is printed in the evidence, in reply to question 578, and although the arrangement prevents the establishment of a large engineering school at the University similar to those in Sydney and Melbourne it is, in the opinion of the University and the School of Mines authorities, working satisfactorily. In accordance with that agreement the University conducts teaching in mining and electrical engineering, and the School of Mines gives instruction in metallurgy and mechanical engineering. On the successful completion of his four years' work, and after having gained a certain amount of outside practical experience in his profession, a student obtains the University diploma and the fellowship of the School of Mines. If, in addition, he passes the Senior Public examination in two languages he receives the University degree of B.Sc. In the other States, after receiving similar instruction to that given in Adelaide, and on passing the necessary examinations, students are entitled to the degree either of bachelor of engineering or master of engineering. The students who have passed the Adelaide examinations complain that the University diploma and the School of Mines fellowship, together with the B.Sc. degree, are not recognised in the scientific world as equivalent to the engineering degrees of the other States. In some professions it is distinctly made a condition of employment that a man must have completed a course of the degree of Bachelor of Engineering at a University recognised by an Australasian University. We have learned that there are 38 students who have passed through the School of Mines and the University who are fully entitled to degrees in engineering, but who have been unable to obtain them. The advisability of placing the students of all the Universities in Australia on an equal footing was clearly put by Sir Langdon Bonython, the president of the council of the School of Mines and Industries, in reply to a question as follows:—

650. Do you think that anything could be done by this Commission, while we are making enquiries in the other States, in the way of making representations to the authorities that these certificates should be recognised, and that something be done to have a joint recognition of certificates throughout the different States?—Our old students would be immensely pleased if some action of the kind were taken. The

Government of New South Wales say to men—"Before you can be a mine manager you must pass a special examination." They reply—and their own university men are similarly situated—"Surely you do not ask us to do that? Look at that," and they produce their diplomas. The authorities say—"We care nothing about your documents." If this Commission could make representations which would have the effect of removing a disability of that sort it would be immensely appreciated by our students. We have received letters asking us if we could do anything in the matter, but all we could do was to write and say that we thought the thing was unfair. However, if this Commission would make a representation, I think that it would be very valuable indeed.

No Overlapping.

We were assured by the authorities of the University and the School of Mines that at present there is no overlapping in engineering education at those institutions, and it was clear that the recommendation of the Commission will not injuriously affect the working of the existing agreement, but that on the other hand it will earn for each institution the recognition of the excellence of its instruction by all the Universities of the Empire.

An Engineering Degree.

4. The granting of the power to the University to confer degrees does not necessarily mean the establishment of a new professorship, although some rearrangement of the teaching work at the University may be necessary; nor does it follow that so long as the present agreement lasts between the School of Mines and the University there will be any large outlay by the University in equipment for teaching purposes.

5. We therefore respectfully recommend that the University Act be amended by providing that the Council shall have power to confer the degrees of bachelor of engineering and master of engineering.