

Melbourne Angus December 20 1887.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

## MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

MONDAY, DEC. 19.

Present—The Chancellor (Dr. Brownless), Sir Archibald Michie, the Rev. Dr. Bromby, Dr. Fetherston, Mr. R. L. J. Ellery, Mr. J. H. MacFarland, Dr. Madden, Mr. Justice Webb, Dr. Bride, Dr. Cutts, Mr. H. B. Higgins, and Mr. Justice A'Beckett.

### THE LAW EXAMINATIONS.

In reply to Dr. Bromby,

The registrar said he had received no reply from Dr. Hearn regarding his alleged action in passing a candidate in the recent examinations in law who had sent in no answers. Dr. Hearn was very unwell, and this would fully account for the omission.

### CO-EXAMINER IN OBSTETRICS.

Dr. A. Rothwell Adam was elected as a co-examiner in obstetric medicine, in the place of Mr. Meyer, resigned.

### CO-EXAMINERS IN NATURAL SCIENCE.

Mr. A. N. Pearson and the Rev. A. W. Cresswell were elected as co-examiners in natural science with Professor M'Coy.

### WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE.

Mr. R. L. J. Ellery was re-elected as a representative of the University on the council of the Working Men's College.

### THE NATURAL SCIENCE EXAMINATION.

The following letter was received from candidates at the recent ordinary examinations:—

“To the chancellor and council of the University of Melbourne.

“Gentlemen,—We, the undersigned, known in the recent examinations under the numbers 417, 492, and 501, venture very respectfully to appeal to you for a re-consideration of our case.

“We would call your attention to the fact that in the interviews which took place with Professor M'Coy, the circumstances of which are already familiar to you, there was in no case any appeal to him to alter the results. This he did of his own free will, after re-examining the papers.

“Now we submit that Professor M'Coy's second decision represents his more mature judgment, and the council may fairly assume that his earlier award was due to an oversight. But if the council finds itself unable to entertain this view, we would then respectfully ask that we may be allowed to have our papers submitted to another examiner or board of examiners, and to the decision thus arrived at we would most cheerfully submit.

“To two of us, at least, the consequences of a failure are of a most serious kind, and we earnestly hope that the council will not allow us to be deprived of our university year through what we believe to have been no fault of our own.—We have, &c.,

“CATHERINE ALICIA RENNICK.

“STEPHEN PERCY THOMPSON.

“No. 501.”

Dr. Leeper, warden of Trinity College, wrote as follows:—

Trinity College, Melbourne, Dec. 19, 1887.

To the Council of the University of Melbourne.

Gentlemen,—I beg to lay before you the following facts:—

A statement has been published to the effect that the ordinary examination results of the second year of the Arts course were known to some students of Ormond College at least a day before they were announced on the notice-board or made known to the public. This statement is, I understand, supported by the authority of Mr. Charles Graham Weir Officer and Mr. Eneas Fraser Gilchrist, enrolled students of Ormond College.

It is hardly necessary to explain to you, gentlemen, that such premature revelation of the results of the pass examinations gives to the favoured students a decided advantage over the rest of the candidates in

the honour examination. The honour examination cannot properly begin until after the publication of the results of the pass examination. In some cases an interval of several days has, I believe, occurred. A reference to the list of exhibitioners for a few years past will show that the competition for these distinctions is exceedingly keen, there being not a few cases of an exhibition being divided between two candidates because of absolute equality of merit, and a good many cases also of a proxime accessit being granted, showing that the best of the unsuccessful candidates must have been very close indeed to the winner of the prize. A very few marks must in such cases make all the difference between success and failure. The advantage, therefore, of having a day or two's start of one's rivals might involve important consequences. More especially, the interval might allow of a much more careful revision of notes taken at professors' lectures—an essential part of the honour work. Students will generally bear testimony that until the pass results have been announced it is next to impossible for them to begin with any heartiness or confidence the revision of their honour work. Even in the case of some of the best-prepared and most industrious of the students of this college I have found this feeling strongly prevailing, and, as a teacher with many years' experience in preparing students for University pass and honour examinations, I say unhesitatingly that a day or two's extra reading may be enough, where candidates are evenly matched, to make all the difference between winning and missing an exhibition.

It may possibly be said that the other students of the University might have obtained an equally early acquaintance with the results of the examination if they had adopted the same means as those by which the Ormond College students obtained them. What means those may be I have not the least notion. Nor can I even imagine what fair mode there can be of obtaining the pass examination results from the registrar or from any of the examiners before they are announced on the notice-board. Any means that can be legitimately employed for obtaining such important information ought, I respectfully submit, to be made known at once to the general public. I have always met with the greatest possible courtesy and attention from the registrar and his staff when making inquiries about addresses of students, subjects of examination, and so forth, but I should regard an inquiry as to examination results before they were made known to the public as unwarrantable.

The premature revelation of the pass results in this particular case will, it is to be feared, raise a doubt in the minds of many University students as to whether the results of the honour examination in the second year arts can be satisfactory. If higher places in the lists of classes and exhibitions in the second year arts be taken by the students favoured with earlier information, the suspicion can hardly fail to suggest itself that the day or two's start which these gentlemen enjoyed may have given them just the required advantage over their rivals.

I therefore respectfully pray that you will direct an inquiry to be held, and will grant such redress to the students aggrieved as may be thought fitting. I make this appeal on behalf of a considerable number of students of the second year arts, candidates for honours in the present examination, who have been placed under my guardianship.

I am, gentlemen, yours obediently,

ALEX. LEEPER, Warden of Trinity College.

Mr. A. G. Roberts, one of the candidates at the recent examinations, wrote asking that his geology papers might be re-examined by co-examiners.

Mr. Justice WEBB remarked that Dr. Leeper's letter had nothing to do with the question raised by the previous letter, or to the examination of three students who felt themselves aggrieved by the action of the council on the previous Monday. He regretted exceedingly that he was then unable to be present, but he was in bed at the time through illness, and could not even take his seat on the Bench. As he was not then present he was, perhaps, in a more independent position than some other members of the council to review the position in which this matter now stood. He knew no more about it than did the general public—that was to say, his information as to what had taken

place was derived from the public press ; but it did appear to him that unintentionally—and possibly through an abundance of good feeling, which, he thought, was at the bottom of it all—(hear, hear)—an injustice might have been done to some of the undergraduates, and he was desirous that the council should, as speedily as possible, accord them that justice to which they were entitled. So far as he understood the facts of this unfortunate case, or cases, they were that Professor M'Coy, being the sole examiner, in the first instance rejected upon the written papers three candidates ; that afterwards representations were made to him which induced him not to reconsider the merits upon these papers, but to submit further *viva voce* questions to the examinees, a thing wholly unwarranted by the course of examination and by the University rules ; that then he changed his opinion as to the conclusion which he ought to have come to, and that he declared as passed those whom he had previously declared as not passed. As he had said, he was willing to attribute this to an excess of *bonhomie* on the part of the professor, but at the same time the council last Monday, acting, perhaps, somewhat stringently upon a first view of the case, and as he was free to confess he should have been disposed to act himself, said:—"The first determination of the professor upon the examination papers must be adhered to. He has not told us that these examination papers were investigated by him under any mistake, but for some matter outside those papers he has altered his verdict," and the council very properly said, "We will not allow any tampering with the examiner by anybody, and we will not allow an examiner who said that certain papers were not up to the standard afterwards to be approached, either by the examinee or by anybody on his behalf, and we will rescind it." The council, he thought, were quite justified in taking up that position, but he could not avoid thinking that the council themselves were somewhat to blame for not having carried out the principle which they had laid down as applicable to all examinations, that every examination should be conducted by a board of examiners. (Hear, hear.) It must be recognised that men who came up for examination must depend solely on the answers they gave to the questions submitted to them in the examination theatre. There was no provision for any further oral examination, and in that the professor in this case was decidedly wrong. The proper and dignified way to remove the present difficulty seemed to be to refer the papers of the three candidates in question to the board of examiners which had just been appointed. The gentlemen referred to really had nothing to complain of, for the professor still stated that they were properly rejected on the written examination, but under the peculiar circumstances of this case it would, perhaps, be well if the council were to go out of the ordinary course. He did not desire to take notice of any supposed under-currents of feeling between the colleges, but he had to express the strongest feeling of disapprobation at the interference of anybody, be he candidate or anybody else, with the examinations of students. (Hear, hear.) He moved that the board of examiners in natural science be asked to review the papers of these candidates.

MADDEN felt himself involved in great difficulty in this question. The professor adhered to his statement that these candidates were the first place rightly plucked,

but because they had the advantage over other students of having what might be called the impertinence to break the rules of the University, they now claimed the right to have their papers re-examined. If the motion were carried it must of necessity be made to refer to all the rejected papers, and it would amount practically to a vote of want of confidence in the examiner. The council knew it was not so, but the public would be disposed to so regard it. Nevertheless, they could not but recognise the feeling that injustice should be done to no one, and under all the circumstances he would be obliged to vote for the motion.

Mr. ELLERY pointed out that candidates in all other subjects where there was only one examiner would be entitled in the same way to appeal for a reconsideration of an adverse decision.

Mr. Justice WEBB said he would modify the motion, as suggested by Dr. Madden, so as to have all the rejected papers referred to the board of examiners. (Hear, hear.)

In reply to Mr. Ellery,  
The REGISTRAR said the other subjects in which there was only one examiner were mathematics (Professor Nanson), natural philosophy (Professor Andrew), biology (Professor Spencer), Roman law, constitutional law, international law, and jurisprudence (Dr. Hearn).

Mr. Justice A'BECKETT supported the resolution, but for a different reason, namely, that the actions of the professor had thrown a doubt upon his conclusions, and he had acted in an irregular way in regard to these particular candidates. If there were *laches* on the part of the council, steps should be taken at once to remedy them, but there did not seem to have been any such *laches*.

Dr. BRIDE thought the best course would be to refer the matter to the Professorial Board for their consideration. The board were the proper parties to take action. Again, it was nothing unusual for examiners to answer inquiries from students as to why they had been rejected in a particular subject.

Mr. Justice WEBB desired to go in the most direct way to meet the difficulty.

Dr. MADDEN held that it was quite within the province of the council to act as a board of appeal in this matter.

The CHANCELLOR agreed that the council was the proper body to deal with the matter.

Mr. HIGGINS failed utterly to find any reason for the revision of these papers. There was nothing to indicate that Professor M'Coy had not done full justice to the candidates on the papers. The precedent proposed to be established would be a most dangerous one. It had not been charged against the professor that he acted unfairly in rejecting these particular candidates. He agreed that the matter should be referred to the Professorial Board. If the resolution were adopted the council would find it difficult to draw the line.

Dr. BRIDE moved the following amendment:—

“That the Professorial Board be informed that the council is of opinion that the papers of the candidates in natural science who failed should be re-read by an independent board.”

Dr. MADDEN thought it would be very injudicious to lay down the rule embodied in the amendment—that the council had no jurisdiction to deal with appeals from examiners.

Mr. MACFARLAND said the council had already dealt with the matter, and must go through with it. It was only fair that the rejected papers should be re-examined.

Sir A. MICHIE said the impression left upon his mind was that this was a perfunctory and somewhat careless examination. There was not entire consistency in the way in which Professor M'Coy had put his own case.

Dr. BRIDE withdrew his amendment.

Mr. Justice WEBB said he had carefully looked through the statute relating to the Professorial Board, and could not see that they had anything whatever to do with this question.

The motion was agreed to in the following form:—

“That the papers of the candidates rejected in natural science at the last ordinary examination be submitted to the board of examiners in natural science now constituted, and that they be requested to favour the council with their opinion upon the question whether on these papers the candidates respectively ought to be reported as ‘passed’ or ‘not passed.’”

It was further decided that the newly-appointed board should also examine the papers of the honour examination in the current term.

Mr. MACFARLAND desired to state, in reply to the charge made that he had made a personal attack upon Dr. Leeper in this matter, that in the discussion which took place in the council on the first occasion the name of Dr. Leeper was not even mentioned by him. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. Leeper's letter was then taken into consideration.

Mr. Justice WEBB said it would be better to have the matter out as soon as possible. Dr. Leeper should be asked to give the evidence on which he founded his accusation. He moved—

“That Dr. Leeper and the students mentioned in his letter be requested to attend the first meeting of the council to be held next year.”

Agreed to.

#### SALARIES OF CLINICAL LECTURERS.

The Faculty of Medicine wrote, asking that the salaries of the clinical lecturers should be increased. For the present the fees derived from students for attendance at hospital clinical lectures and *post-mortem* demonstrations amounted to £741 7s., and it was estimated that in 1888 they would amount to £959 10s., besides which there was a Government vote of £500 for clinical teaching. Better provision required to be made for the whole work of clinical teaching.

The CHANCELLOR moved that the matter be referred to the medical members of the council.

Mr. ELLERY said he would oppose any alteration in the arrangements for clinical instruction until full information was afforded the council as to the hospital practice already given.

It was decided, on the motion of Mr. Justice Webb, that Dr. Bromby, Dr. Madden, and Mr. Ellery be added to the committee, and that it be referred also to the committee to inquire and report upon the way in which clinical teaching had been given during the present year.

## THE OPERATIVE SURGERY EXAMINATION.

The Faculty of Medicine wrote as follows:—

“The Chancellor and members of the council.

“Gentlemen,—The Faculty of Medicine begs to draw the attention of the council to the published report of the discussion in the council on the 12th inst. concerning the recent examination in operative surgery. Dr. Fetherston is reported by ‘The Argus’ to have referred to this examination in the following terms:—

“‘The greatest disgrace that has ever happened in connection with our Medical School examinations. Twenty-three men galloped through the examination in operative surgery in an hour and 45 minutes. They could not have selected the instruments for the operation.’

“The faculty reports that the examination was held at the last moment, because till then no subject was available on which operations could be performed; that the students had already been examined in surgery by written papers, by special examination in practical surgery at the hospital, and by oral interrogations; that the examination in operative surgery does not necessarily occupy a long time; that the faculty requested the council to adjourn for a fortnight, not because the examination itself would be of long duration, but in order to make certain that a subject would be available; and that the faculty is convinced that the examination was efficiently conducted.

“The faculty therefore begs to records its protest against the hasty utterances at the council-table, and the grave accusations against members of the teaching and examining staffs, especially when accusations are not at once followed by motion for full inquiry. In the opinion of the faculty, Dr. Fetherston’s remarks were extremely unfair to the officers whose work was disparaged, harmful to the University, and calculated to give a false impression concerning the style in which examinations are conducted in the Medical School.—I have the honour, &c., “H. B. ALLEN, Dean of the Faculty.”

Dr. MADDEN.—There is one little mathematical fact which still remains. Twenty-three students were examined in operative surgery in 105 minutes, which gives each student less than  $4\frac{1}{2}$  minutes to complete his operation in.

The CHANCELLOR said that this was not the fact, because four students were able to operate on the same body at the same time.

Dr. MADDEN.—In any case, it was the smartest thing on record.

Dr. FETHERSTON.—I think the faculty’s letter precludes the necessity of an inquiry. Notwithstanding that letter, I am still of the same opinion that the thing was a perfect farce. Men were telephoned for to the colleges and the hospitals after 12 o’clock. They were back at 2 o’clock, having gone through their so-called examination, and they got their degrees at 3.

Mr. ELLERY moved—

“That the committee already appointed re clinical instruction be requested to inquire into the late examination in operative surgery, and into the circumstances which delayed this examination until the last moment.”

Agreed to.

### APPOINTMENT OF CO-EXAMINERS.

Mr. Justice WEBB moved—

“That applications be invited to be sent in by the 1st of February next from gentlemen willing to act as co-examiners in mathematics, in natural philosophy, in Roman law, constitutional law, international law, and jurisprudence and in biology.”

Agreed to.

The council then adjourned.

## RESULTS OF EXAMINATIONS.

### MATRICULATION EXAMINATION.

OCTOBER TERM, 1887.

#### RESULTS.

The fifth instalment of the results of this examination was posted on the University notice board yesterday. It consisted of the results in French of all the candidates included in the third 50, whose numbers range between 101 and 150; the returns for the second 50 in this subject are not yet complete; in geography the results of all the candidates included in the seventh 50

whose numbers range between 301 and 350; and in elementary physiology the results of all candidates included in the first and second fifties whose numbers range between 1 and 100.

The numbers of the successful candidates in these subjects within the above-mentioned limits are as follow:—

#### FRENCH.

Third 50, in which nine candidates were successful, one of whom obtained honours, namely, candidates' numbers 101, 107, 110, 114, 115, 134, 140, 143, and 149 (honours).

#### GEOGRAPHY.

Seventh 50, in which 21 candidates were successful, namely, candidates' numbers 303, 304, 309, 311, 312, 316, 317, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 334, 335, 338, 340, 341, 344, 345, 347, and 350.

#### ELEMENTARY PHYSIOLOGY.

First 50, in which three candidates were successful, namely, candidates' numbers 31, 43, and 46.

Second 50, in which five candidates were successful, namely, candidates' numbers 54, 68, 84, 88, and 89.

#### HONOUR EXAMINATION.

OCTOBER TERM, 1887.

The first instalment of the results of this examination was posted on the University notice board yesterday. It consisted of the class list for the First Year Laws, under the new regulations, and the award of the corresponding exhibition.

The following is the announcement as made at the University:—

#### First Class.

Joseph Henry Hewison.

George Washington Power (Trinity College).

#### Second Class.

William Charles Lewers (Trinity College).

The exhibition awarded to Joseph Henry Hewison.

Proxime Accessit — George Washington Power (Trinity College).

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### THE EXAMINATION SCANDALS.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir,—I must ask to be allowed a few words of reply to Mr. MacFarland's letter in *The Argus* of to-day.

In the first place, I observe that he does not attempt to deny my statement that a clerical error was rectified last February through private representations made to an examiner by the Ormond College authorities, and that in consequence of this private (and in my opinion justifiable) inquiry, an exhibition was transferred from a Trinity to an Ormond student. The conduct of the Ormond College authorities in this case was, I submit, parallel to my own visit to Professor M'Coy, for which Mr. MacFarland has been condemning me.

Now as to my remarks on Mr. MacFarland's visit to an examiner. I have every reason to believe that the statement in my letter of Saturday is exactly true. I am sorry to observe that Mr. MacFarland has misquoted my remarks, completely perverting the sense of what I said, and has then proceeded to deny a statement which I did not make. But can Mr. MacFarland, without quibbling, deny the following? Two first-year medical students of Ormond College were suspected



by an examiner of "cribbing." After an interview with them the examiner eventually decided that they had cleared themselves sufficiently of the charge. Fearing some feeling against them on the part of the examiner, they were undecided as to whether to go in for honours; but Mr. MacFarland interviewed the examiner in the interest of the two students, though presumably believing that their case was still *sub judice* (for I could not suppose that he had prematurely obtained from the registrar's office any information which had not yet been communicated to the public). He discussed the matter with the examiner, agreed with his view of the case, and went away reassured, knowing that the matter had been satisfactorily arranged. He was thus, in the words of my letter of Saturday, "placed in a position to encourage" these two candidates "in their reading for honours." As a matter of fact they did not, I believe, compete for honours; but, none the less, Mr. MacFarland, through his private understanding with the examiner, was "placed in a position to encourage them in their reading for honours," if he chose to do so. I think that Mr. MacFarland's visit to the examiner (more especially considering that he is a member of council) was an impropriety. If it was not, let him explain why he visited the examiner at all. What right had he to inquire how the matter had been arranged? What right had his students to gain reassuring tidings from an examiner through the head of their college? What right had he to know anything whatever about results before they were communicated to the public? As Mr. MacFarland may wish to know who are my informants, it may be as well to tell him that I have heard of the "incident" from more than one source, and, most recently, from the lips of the examiner himself.

Let the matter be properly investigated, and if it can be shown that I have really wronged Mr. MacFarland, I shall be ready to make all the reparation in my power.—I am,  
&c.,

ALEX. LEEPER.

Trinity College, Dec. 19.

The meeting of the University Council yesterday was occupied chiefly in discussing the irregularities in connection with the recent ordinary examinations. The three students who induced the professor of natural science to record them as having passed after they had been announced as not passed, which latter decision was again reversed by the council at its last meeting, asked that their papers might be reconsidered by a board of examiners. The council elected Mr. A. N. Pearson and the Rev. A. W. Creswell to be co-examiners with Professor M'Coy, and it was decided, on the motion of Mr. Justice Webb, to remit the papers of all the rejected candidates in natural science at the recent examination to the new board for report, upon which a new list will be published. It was decided to take steps for the appointment of co-examiners in several other subjects in which the respective professor is at present the sole examiner. Dr. Læper, warden of Trinity College, wrote asking that an investigation should be made into the charge that the results of the ordinary examinations were known to certain students of Ormond College before they were posted, and it was resolved to ask Dr. Læper to attend the next meeting of the council, together with two students upon whose authority he based his statements. A committee was appointed to inquire into the circumstances under which the examination in operative surgery was alleged to have been rushed through at the last moment. The Faculty of Medicine denied that there had been undue haste, and held that the examination had been efficiently conducted.