

# The Register.

ADELAIDE: TUESDAY, FEB. 24, 1891.

## THE UNIVERSITY.

The calendar of the Adelaide University grows more bulky each year. The contents are varied and for the most part interesting. In the present instance we turn in the first place to the financial statements which accompany the report. We do so for a special reason. We have always maintained that the accounts did not faithfully represent the position of the University either as regards capital or income. A few years ago we were at pains to compile a statement from the imperfect annual accounts, in which we showed that many thousands of pounds of the income of the University had been misappropriated by being spent on buildings. Remorse at last seems to have seized the Council. This year they not only present the statements for the past year in an amended form, but they also present revised statements for the previous year. From the return showing "the actual financial position on December 31, 1890," we find that the University Buildings have cost £38,460, and that the contributions towards the building have amounted to £19,904, of which £18,014 was a special vote by Parliament. To balance the account an item is introduced on the debtor side, "Income received in excess of expenses, and devoted to the general purposes of the University, £23,201." This we venture to say is a most misleading entry. If it had been said "*not* devoted to the *general* purposes of the University" it would have been nearer the mark. The facts are that £18,556 of this income has been spent on the building, £1,064 on furniture, and £2,879 for payment of improvements on the land with which the University was endowed, and that the position was worse on December 31, 1890, than it was at the end of the previous twelve months. In this new statement there are two points that challenge enquiry. One is as to the way in which this excess income is made up. For the first time we are able to see whence part of it is derived. It is known that the University has several endowments which are subsidized by the Government to the extent of 5 per cent. per annum on the capital sum. The purposes to which this annual subsidy is to be devoted are—"for maintaining the said University, and for defraying the several stipends which may be appointed to be paid to the several professors, lecturers, examiners, officers, and servants to be appointed by such University, and for defraying the expenses of such fellowships, scholarships, prizes, and exhibitions as shall be awarded for the encouragement of students in such University, and for providing a library for the same, and for discharging all necessary charges connected with the management thereof."

With the accounts before us it is interesting to note how the Council of the University has interpreted those provisions of the Act which are intended for "the encouragement of students." It is well known that different sums have at various times been handed over to the University for scholarships and other



special purposes. The donors of the John Howard Clark Scholarship were wise enough to require that the income from that endowment should be used only for the purposes of the scholarship. Other donors do not appear to have had the requisite foresight to impose such a condition. We learn how these endowments have been dealt with in 1890, and in the case of some of them we suppose the same process has been going on in previous years. Thus there is an endowment for evening classes of £1,220. The income from it, including Government subsidy, was £122, the fees amount to £323, making a total income of £445. The lecturers were paid £167, charges came to nearly £3, and the balance of £275 was transferred to income account. In other words, in the course of a single year the fund raised specially for evening classes was made to contribute £275 towards the cost of the building. Without giving all the details in the other cases we may mention that from the Stow Prize and Scholarship Fund was taken in a similar way a balance of £35, from the Dr. Charles Gosse Lectureship £20, and from the Everard Scholarship £31. The last appears to us to be a case especially calling for remark, though the appropriation may have been made with the concurrence of the late Mr. Everard's executors. That gentleman left £1,000 for the purpose of founding a scholarship to be called by his name. The Council accordingly decided that there should be an annual scholarship of the value of £50. As this year the revenue from the endowment, inclusive of the Government subsidy, will probably be £100, the Council will be able to annex £50 to be devoted towards the cost of the building. Surely when an endowment is left for a specific purpose it is only right that all the income derived from it, including the Government subsidy, should be devoted to that purpose alone. This leads up to another question. How is it that there is what is pleasantly styled "excess income?" Is it because there was no way in which the usefulness of the University might have been extended? We may take the evening classes as a case in point. If in one year these classes can yield a profit of £275, might not an effort have been made to extend the classes or to reduce the fees? The manner in which the funds have been applied seems to indicate that in the estimation of the Council the chief things to be studied by them are the convenience of professors and lecturers and the erection of a building.

A comparison of the statistics for 1890 with those of the previous year unfortunately does not reveal such progress as could have been wished. In 1890 the number of undergraduates in the various courses was 122; in 1889 it was 118. In non-graduating students there was a falling-off, the figures being respectively 167 and 198. The Law School has had a chequered career during its brief history. Only seven students began the LL.B. course in 1890, as against twelve in 1889. The undergraduates studying for this degree during the two periods were respectively twenty-nine and thirty-two. At the March and November Examinations one undergraduate passed the first year's