

THE EDUCATION COMMISSION.

PROPOSED ENGINEERING DEGREE.

The Education Commission sat at Parliament House on Tuesday. Present—Mr. T. Ryan, M.P. (chairman), Hons. A. H. Peake, M.P., J. Cowar and A. W. Styles, M.L.C., and Mr. T. Green, M.P.

The Chancellor of the University (Sir S. J. Way) said he understood there was a proposal to amend the University Act in the terms of the progress report of the Commission, and when the Bill was going through the House provision should be made to enable the University to confer engineering degrees. The University had been teaching engineering for 11 years. Professor Chapman had been lecturing and conducting the school since 1900. If they were entitled to grant the degree there were 38 gentlemen qualified to take it. The council of the University desired that a chair of engineering should be established, and that they should have the statutory power to grant the degree. At present this power was not enjoyed, though they taught engineering as efficiently as any other University in Australia. The cost of the chair would be a capital sum representing the salary of the professor to be appointed. The engineering school was ever expanding, and its immediate necessities would be one of the subjects the University would have to deal with when discussing the allocation of the increased grant of £4,000 provided by the Government in the Estimates.

Mr. Peake—We have been told that there is a fine equipment for the teaching of engineering at the School of Mines. Is that so?

The Chancellor—I know there is an equipment there, because we had an agreement with that institution. We undertook to teach two technical subjects and they did likewise. The arrangement was carried out amicably. Apart from this, there is a great deal of teaching that is common to both and the bulk of that has been done generally by the University professors.

If the University establishes a chair of engineering will it not be necessary to avoid anything like a duplication of plant and equipment, because both will come out of the taxpayers' pocket? Have you had that in mind?—I may say that we have always endeavored to do that. We have lent our professors to the School of Mines to teach many of the subjects to their students.

When we were in Melbourne we ascertained that they have spent £30,000 in the development of the engineering school, and they must have spent an enormous sum in Sydney, so we want an assurance that in Adelaide there will not be a duplication of expense.—The agreement between the two institutions shows that there has never been a desire to duplicate the expenditure.

The Chancellor said he was satisfied that they would have to appeal to private bounty and to the Legislature for the expansion of the engineering school. However generous Parliament was as to the equipment of the University they could not expect finality, because of the progressive nature of the subjects taught.

Professor Chapman said it would be competent for the University to give degrees in engineering before they were in a position to have a professor of engineering. What they were asking for was permission properly to label the men the University were now turning out. Their students went through a four-years' course, the entrance qualification was quite as difficult, and the course of study as laborious as in the Universities of the other States, and what they wanted was a plain engineering degree such as was given elsewhere in Australia. They were not asking for any more powers than they really possessed at present. Provided the agreement were maintained with the School of Mines it would mean that for some of the work they would send some of their students to the School of Mines as at present. At the outset the engineering school must be well equipped, and at present the University had a very good physics and chemistry laboratory, also a fair electrical engineering laboratory, in which all the necessary experiments could be carried out as well as in Sydney. The cost of establishing such a laboratory would probably be £3,000 or £4,000. The lack of that laboratory,

however, should not prevent the University from conferring the degree. As a matter of fact, for many years the Melbourne University was not so well equipped as the Adelaide University was at present, and yet

that institution conferred the degree. Naturally they looked to the future, and hoped eventually to be able to do great things. But he was confident that with a modest expenditure they would be able to do a great deal. It did not necessarily follow that the school with the most expensive equipment would turn out the best students. At times it would be necessary to provide for experiments on a big scale. If the power to confer the degree were granted it would not affect the present agreement with the School of Mines. Generally speaking, the work done at the School of Mines should be the training of the artisan, and the work done at the University should be what might be called the training of the professional man.

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THE EDUCATION COMMISSION.

THE ENGINEERING PROBLEM.

The members of the Education Commission held a session at Parliament House on Tuesday morning. There were present the Chairman (Mr. Ryan, M.P.), the Hons. J. Cowar and A. W. Styles, M.L.C.'s, and A. H. Peake, M.P., and Mr. Green, M.P.

The Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way), who was the first witness called, took the opportunity to thank the Commission, in behalf of the members of the University Senate, and the professors, for its recent recommendation of an additional £4,000 to relieve the financial strain upon that institution. The Commission's recommendation would be for the furtherance of higher education in South Australia. He hoped, however, that finality in the matter had not been reached, because the University was a growing and ever-expanding institution.

The witness was questioned concerning his views regarding the teaching of engineering at the Adelaide University.

The Hon. A. H. Peake—You have a statute dealing with engineering?

Witness—We have been teaching engineering for 11 years at the University. Professor Chapman has been conducting a school of engineering since 1900.

We understand that at present there is no chair of engineering at the Adelaide University?—I understand Professor Chapman is professor of mechanics and mathematics.

The point we want settled is that at present there is no chair of engineering.—We teach engineering quite as efficiently as it is taught elsewhere in Australia. We have long desired to have power to grant degrees in engineering, as they are granted in Sydney, Melbourne, and in America. The time has not been opportune to bring the subject up.

Could you give some idea of the cost of establishing a chair?—It would be a capital sum or yearly grant representing the salary of the professor.

We have been told that at the School of Mines, adjoining the University, there is a very complete engineering equipment?—I can't say that. We have an agreement with the School of Mines to prevent overlapping in engineering. They teach two technical subjects, and we teach two. That agreement has been carried out amicably.

If the University is to establish a chair of engineering it will mean a further claim upon the State, and we want to avoid duplication of plant and equipment, both of which would have to come from the taxpayer.—We have always endeavored to do that.

On the question of degrees, the witness said the University was not there, primarily, for the granting of degrees, but for the diffusion of knowledge and for training in scientific, as well as art subjects.

The Hon. A. H. Peake—The teaching of engineering is going to be the beginning of very large expenditure. In Melbourne they are providing for an increased expenditure of £30,000 on engineering. We are anxious that everything possible will be done to prevent any duplication between the University and the School of Mines.—I have given my assurance that that is our desire also. I don't think it can be suggested that the University has at any time duplicated expenditure.

Will not circumstances force the Adelaide University to go in for expenditure on something like the same scale as they do in other States?—Very likely. It is wonderful how the University is growing. What is wanted is the degree of Bachelor of Science in engineering.

Professor Chapman, in the course of evidence, said it would be quite competent for the Adelaide University to give degrees in engineering before it felt ready to have a professor of engineering. He thought that a fair engineering laboratory might be fitted up for a sum between £3,000 and £4,000. At present the Adelaide University was better fitted up, both in regard to men and equipment, than Melbourne had been for many years during which engineering degrees were granted.

Mr. Green—Do you think it would be necessary to expend £30,000 extra on engineering at the Adelaide University, as is being done in Melbourne?—We don't anticipate such an expenditure here yet. It does not follow that the institution with the most elaborate appliances is best suited for the teaching of students. It is desirable, however, that we should have the means to provide experiments on a large scale occasionally.

Mr. Styles—If a degree of engineering was granted to the University, would that mean the abolition of the existing agreement with the School of Mines?—No; not necessarily.

Mr. Cowan—Do you consider that elementary engineering should be taught at the School of Mines and the higher grades at the University?—My own view is that the School of Mines should effect the training of the artisan, and the University that of the professional man.

The commission was adjourned at this stage.

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WOMEN LAWYERS.

The Attorney-General in the Assembly on Thursday introduced a Bill to enable women to practise the profession of the law. It states:—"1. Notwithstanding anything contained in any Act or any rules of Court, and notwithstanding any law or usage to the contrary, any woman shall be entitled to be admitted to practise as a barrister, attorney, solicitor, and proctor of the Supreme Court, on complying with the rules of Court in that behalf. 2. For the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of this Act, every word in any rules of Court, as well as in any Act, of or importing the masculine gender shall be construed as including the feminine gender."

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NEW GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST.

The Treasurer (Hon. C. Vaughan) remarked on Tuesday morning that the applications received for the position of Government Geologist would be submitted to the University authorities for advice. It was hoped that a decision would be reached early next week. "There is a splendid lot of applicants from most of the States," commented the Treasurer, "and some of the best qualified men in Australia are among them. When the new officer is selected we hope to have a proper geological survey of South Australia made. Geological parties will be equipped for that purpose on the same lines as is done in Victoria. We are now gathering marbles and other ornamental stones from all parts of the State with a view of having a collection."

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THE UNIVERSITY GRANT.

At the meeting of the Education Commission on Tuesday morning the Chancellor of the University (Sir S. J. Way) said that was the first opportunity he had had of meeting the Commission since the first progress report had been presented to Parliament. On behalf of the University, the council, and professors, he wished to thank the Commission and the Government for the increased grant of £4,000. It would be of great assistance to the University so far as the financial part of that institution was concerned. He hoped, however, that it did not represent finality, because the University was an expanding institution. The increased grant would be of very great assistance to the University and the cause of higher education.