

## THE UNIVERSITY SENATE.

On Friday afternoon a special meeting of the senate of the University was held, and the warden, Mr. F. Chapple, B.A., B.Sc., presided over a large attendance. The business of the day was the consideration of the proposals agreed upon by the council, making considerable alterations in the regulations concerning the B.A. degree.

Professor Mitchell, in moving—"That the regulations proposed by the council for the repeal of the B.A. regulations, and the substitution of others, be approved by the senate," said that the new regulations proposed had been formed by the council after much deliberation and discussion during the whole year. There had always been dissatisfaction with the curriculum, and there had not been an average of more than two graduates in arts annually from the foundation of the University. Arrangements had also been made by which State school teachers were to be taught at the University, and Greek was not necessary for their course. Six necessary subjects were prescribed by the old regulations, Latin, Greek, English, mathematics (pure and applied), logic, and physics. The change proposed would mean that there were no necessary subjects for the degree. There were now 15 subjects, of which six had to be taken, the only limitation being that three should be literary subjects. Great trouble had been expended to see that no inducement was held out to a student to choose certain subjects for any consideration other than a purely educational one. The yearly system of going through the course was abolished. Previously a first-year student had to pass in five subjects or not at all. A second year student had to pass in four subjects or not at all, while for the third year the undergraduate had to pass in a specified number of subjects. Under the new regulations the student could take as long as he liked to get through his exams. Greek was not neglected under the proposed laws. A candidate for honors in classics must pass the ordinary examination in Greek and Latin, while students submitting themselves for honors in other branches of study had to satisfy the examiners in either three or four additional subjects.

The Right Hon. S. J. Way seconded.

Canon Poole moved as an amendment—"That the consideration of the proposed regulations for the degree of B.A. be postponed until December 15, in order to enable the council, if it thinks fit, to insert Greek up to the present standard of the first year among the subjects in which every arts student must qualify before graduating."

This was seconded by Mr. F. Halcomb, supported by Professor Bensly, and eventually carried by an overwhelming majority. A number of other clauses which were proposed to be substituted for those at present in force were likewise shelved for a week, while a number of minor alterations were adopted.

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## THE UNIVERSITY AND GREEK.

To the Editor.

Sir—The refusal of the University Senate to approve of the proposed alteration, making Greek an optional subject in the B.A. course must be deplored by all who have the advancement of higher education at heart. Ever since the founding of the University one could not help being struck by the disparity which has existed between the numbers of degrees conferred in the faculties of science and art respectively. This may partly be explained by the fact that from a purely utilitarian point of view the subjects of the science course would as a rule be considered preferable to those of the corresponding degree in arts, which are chiefly studied as a means to mental discipline only; yet the chief reason for the paucity of students in the arts course has been the inclusion in the curriculum of Greek as a compulsory subject. I have personal knowledge of students with aspirations for University honours, who, owing to their inability to get to town to attend evening classes and laboratory work at the University, were obliged to take up arts. Most of them, however, had to give up all thoughts of a degree on finding that the acquisition even of only moderate skill in Greek involved more time and energy than they were capable of bestowing upon it; and thus the advantages of the H.P. Examinations were completely lost to them. The same disadvantage will also, to some extent at least, account for the fact that so far teachers under the Education Department have failed to make the most of the facilities offered under the same examination regulations, although these seem to have been purposely framed for their special benefit.

It is not my object to belittle the value of Greek as an educational instrument. Nor do I feel indisposed to endorse in the main what has been said at last Friday's meeting by the advocates of compulsory Greek, relative to a thorough training in the ancient classical languages and literature. Neither do I lose sight of the fact that in the history of western civilization and intellectual progress the part played by Greek and Latin can hardly be over-estimated, and for that reason they deserve some consideration at our hands. But it has lately been contended with truth that the time spent over the attainment of a thorough knowledge of the language—a mere smattering of Greek is worse than useless—is utterly out of proportion to the benefits gained. Only a few hundred years ago Greek and Latin were the keys to all learning, and a sound knowledge of them was, therefore, an indispensable equipment to all men of letters. To show that the condition of things is entirely changed to-day I need only refer to the developments within the last fifty years in all the higher branches of mental and physical science—to say nothing of modern historical critics and the fresh fields of enquiry opened up by philological study and criticism of the structure and history of modern languages, all of which studies afford excellent scope for mental culture, and ever press home the truth that a man might lay claim to a liberal education without a knowledge of Greek. I admit that it is the duty of a University to offer every encouragement to such studies as must be pursued as knowledge for its own sake without any ulterior motive or end. Of these Greek is one, and as such deserves encouragement. But the history of nearly all the English and Continental Universities shows too that, steadily but surely, a new principle has been evolved—that a University in deciding on any plan of culture should pay due regard to the requirements of the times as well as allow every possible latitude for individual tastes and aptitudes. In the light of that principle Greek must sooner or later pass from the compulsory to the optional list; nor need there be any misgiving that the result of such a change will be detrimental to the University or the cause of Greek. But, unless the alteration came soon, the faculty of arts will, as heretofore, produce on an average only about two to three graduates per annum, and the rising generation of teachers will for the most part have to take up science for study, or a special degree will have to be created for the latter class of students—a course which would be extremely undesirable.

I am, Sir, &c.,

J. KOLLOSCHÉ.

Public School, Carrieton, December 11.

To the Editor.

Sir—In your report of the meeting of the Senate, held last Friday, you credit me with having said—"The one thing which marked off a man of culture, educated at one of our great English Universities, from those who had possessed less advantages of an educational type was the undefinable grace and charm of mind he obtained by a thorough training and acquaintance with the litteræ humaniores." So far as I and others are aware I did not say this either in words or substance, and I shall be glad if you will give me the opportunity of saying so.

I am, Sir, &c.,

F. SLANEY POOLE.