

President's remarks at meeting
of advisory Committee of Carnegie
Corp. Nov. 11/32. Library Bldg.
Studley.

I have no general observations to make on this subject. I had much rather hear expressions of opinion from the rest of you here, who have so long attended this Committee.

But in order to break the ice, I think I may tell you of recent changes made in Dalhousie. This affects the B.A. degree chiefly. For many years, we had ten obligatory subjects, and ten optional (no coherence). Further we were quite frank in allowing students to take classes in any order. This produced rather extraordinary results, which were not contemplated, I fancy, in the beginning. Not only did it mean that students dropped subjects they had had at school, to resume them in their ^{third} and fourth years; not only did it mean a lack of any sort of progression of studies, in the case of many students; it also resulted in the fact that most professors had classes containing students from the first to the fourth years. We have abolished this condition of affairs. We aimed at three things (1) an orderly progression of studies; (2) continuity in those studies common to both school and college; (3) the completion of all obligatory subjects by the end of the second year, so as to allow the important third and fourth years for a cohering group of studies in which the student had shown an interest.

To achieve this reform, and we are all convinced that it is a reform, we had to adopt eight obligatory subjects instead of ten, (we dropped the second year of the modern foreign language, and we dropped the second science). Also it obliged the whole faculty to review carefully its opinions about required subjects, and about raising the matriculation requirement. We did raise the latter, insisting on six of the matriculation subjects, instead of five, as a minimum for entrance.

About required B.A. subjects, we came to this conclusion: to require, as before, two years of English, two years of Latin (or Greek), one year of Mathematics, and a second foreign language. We seemed to believe that this was the irreducible minimum guarantee of scholarship which should be connoted by a B.A. degree. Also we made History compulsory, instead of allowing Economics as an option for it. We were, I think, all reluctant to give up our former stipulation

that the second foreign language should be studied for two years. Our regrets were partly assuaged by the reform in the Nova Scotia schools which means that modern languages will be studied earlier in the course. The great majority of us were of the opinion that we should no longer insist, as we had been doing, on a course in either Physics or Chemistry, to the exclusion of other sciences, and a second course in Physics, Chemistry or another science. Instead we decided to insist on one class in science, meaning any of the sciences, Physics, Chemistry, Geology or Biology. We felt that a course so heavily loaded with science, as our former course was, belonged to the B. Sc. rather than to the B. A. degree.

Our obligatory subjects then are, two ^{years} of English, two of Latin, one of Mathematics, one of a foreign language other than Latin, one science and History. Also we have made it compulsory to wipe off these obligatories in the first two years. Further we have ruled that the remaining twelve subjects for the B. A. degree must not be made up largely of elementary courses, and must form a cohering group.

The discussion of these matters was very fruitful, and carried us beyond the single issue with which we began.

In the first place it drove us into a position where we saw clearly that for our best students even this reformed and strengthened pass course is not enough. Those of the faculty, for example, who were trying to provide the best possible course for students who excelled in modern languages, or in groups of studies such as English and History, or Mathematics and Physics, saw that really a four years Honour Course should be provided in these studies. (We have really had an Honours School in Mathematics and Physics for some time past.) And last year we decided to make provision for an advanced four years course in Pure Mathematics, and a similar one in Classics. These courses are open only to those who enter with high standing from Grade XII, and who pursue these special studies for four years.

In the next place, and some of us believe this is most important of all, we were led to consider the effect on the secondary schools of discrepancies, in various B. A. curricula, of required subjects. We felt, for example, that if

we gave up Mathematics as a required subject for the B. A. degree it would directly weaken the teaching of Mathematics in the schools. The ideal thing would be to have Mathematics taught in the secondary schools only by those who have done a special Mathematics course in college. But we are some years, possibly many years, from that ideal. But in the meantime to insist on at least a year's Mathematics for our B. A. students means that those of our graduates who enter the teaching profession, are at least one jump ahead of the pupils they are teaching in Grade XI.

In the B. Sc. course there were fewer changes, but we secured the same continuity and progression of studies.

Dalhousie University,
November 11, 1932.