

## The Legal News.

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### BAR EXAMINATIONS.

A voluminous discussion has taken place with reference to examinations for study and practice. The petition of the General Council of the Bar to the Legislature, in connection with this subject, will be found in the present issue. Clause 1 is misleading: "to admit to the liberal professions, without examination, holders of diplomas of Bachelors of Arts," should evidently read "to the study of the liberal professions." The Universities claim that young men who have received the degree of Bachelor of Arts should be allowed to commence their professional studies without examination as to their scholastic acquirements. This is so reasonable a request that it is strange the Council of the Bar should ever have opposed it. It may be proper that the Council should have the power to examine candidates in all cases, but where gentlemen come forward with documents which prove that they hold a degree in Arts from a University, further examination should be waived. That was the practice formerly, before the present system of examinations was established. Take the case of a student who has followed the course of a High School for half a dozen years, and the course of an Arts Faculty for three or four more, and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and then, before he is allowed to open a law-book, he is told that he must submit to a schoolboy examination by gentlemen who, in some departments of study, would readily be plucked in the examinations through which the candidate has already passed! This is a humiliation without any compensation that we can see. In fact, while we are very far from undervaluing classical training, it is unquestionable that the preliminary requirements for law students have been carried too far. They may have the effect of keeping out some who would bring glory to the profession, but who are turned away from the door by the con-

sciousness that their acquirements in some particulars are not of the order prescribed by the examiners. The late Earl of Beaconsfield, one of the greatest statesmen of the century, was never at a public school or college, and no doubt he would have been ignominiously rejected if he had ventured to present himself for admission to study law, in Montreal or Quebec. The same fate, we fear, would befall the learned members of the General Council of the Bar, for a school boy would be covered with disgrace if his composition revealed the faults of grammar which appear in the petition framed by that august body. However, without discussing at present the extension of the privilege to all youths of fairly good education, in the name of common sense let us not make ourselves ridiculous by setting up rules which do not exist in any part of the civilized world.

When we come to the consideration of the examinations for admission to practice, however, we are disposed to go even further than the General Council. At present, a bribe is offered to students to induce them to attend courses of lectures on the various branches of law. A year is taken off the term of study, if they have followed a prescribed course. Students are usually eager and impatient to obtain admission to the profession, and the inducement offered to shorten the time is potential. We are inclined to think that it would be better to do away with the bribe. The term of four years is all too short to enable the student to be thoroughly equipped for the part he has to play, and it would be an advantage to the great majority to make four years the minimum, and to exact attendance at lectures from all. At present the position of the General Council is hardly reasonable. They exact the degree as the condition of shortening the term, and at the same time they wish to control the Universities as to the number of lectures which shall be delivered. This would be all right if the degree opened the door to the profession, and rendered an examination unnecessary. But the Council have supreme control over the examination for admission to practice. While this is the case,—and no one pretends to limit their right in this respect,—it is no part of their