

saying to another, "it is lecture, lecture, all the time & there is no time for thinking."

I venture to think that in the first year students should not be required to take up more than five subjects at the most. All the ~~subjects~~ ~~six~~ six subjects laid down in the Calendar are in themselves so obviously useful, that I admit it is difficult to say what might be left out; but, useful as they are, there are so many that I doubt if even the best student can hope, with all his other interests, to obtain more than a superficial knowledge of some of them, as he has not time to think about them all for himself, but must accept what the lecturer ~~tells~~ tells him. He would have a better chance of learning something really well, & of so having a mind better equipped to judge on any subject, because he would have had a better chance of learning what real knowledge consists in, if his curriculum were less extensive. Within certain limits, which would have to be carefully considered, I would also suggest that he should have some choice in the subjects he **does** take up.

Further I suggest that students who are allowed to take up Honours in any subject or subjects in their first year should be excused one of ~~the~~ the pass subjects. It might be necessary to lay down, as is done at Toronto, that any ~~a~~ pass subject omitted must have been taken with credit in the university entrance examination, & no student would be allowed to take up Honours in any subject without the leave of the head of the department concerned.

If honour courses were instituted it would probably be necessary to increase the staffs of certain of the departments, to make it possible to have a wider choice of lectures to suit students of different attainments or who wish to pursue other branches of a subject than some departments with their very limited staffs can provide guidance in at present. That such a course would be the best policy for the university & would in the long run pay by attracting the best brains among the young in Canada, there can be little doubt. At present the better brains are handicapped by being kept back to a curriculum which may or may not be best for the ~~average~~ average student. But though the average student should by no means be neglected, the chief use of a university is to give the best opportunities to the best brains, who are the real makers of ~~a~~ a country.

Another suggestion I should like to put forward is that in the interests of education the number of compulsory lectures should be reduced. At present lectures tend to be regarded as the be-end & end-all of the university career, instead of the subjects, on which lectures should be one of several means of guiding the student to independent thought. So much is this the case that often the examinations are simply tests by the lecturer himself of the class's understanding of the lectures he has given, not of ~~the~~ the subject. If the lectures given by each lecturer were reduced he would ~~be~~ have more time for more individual tutorial work in small classes, which ~~is~~ would be useful to students in helping them to read & think for themselves. This, I believe, is especially necessary in the case of Honours students, & is, I gather, one the causes of the success of the Honours courses at Toronto.

In conclusion I should like to say that I submit this report, as instructed by the Faculty, with considerable diffidence. The short time I have been at McGill must be my excuse in any errors of judgment I have made on the present system, & for the crudeness of these proposals. I have deliberately avoided going into much detail, as I was called upon only to write a brief on principles; moreover if any such changes as I have indicated are further considered, the details would naturally have to be scrutinized carefully by members of the faculty well acquainted with all the conditions of the University.

24<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1921

Burt Williams