

NOTES ON UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS
AT MCGILL COLLEGE.

The representatives of the Committee are asking us for the very utmost that any College could be expected to achieve without interfering unduly with the work which every College of the premier class is expected to do at the present time for the preparation of students for professions and occupations other than the teaching profession. To offer two years of training in all the foundational subjects of a high school curriculum in a small school, two further years of training in special branches for the training of teachers in the larger and better equipped schools, and an adequate complement of Professional training in the Theory and Practice of education, all within the limits of four years of University study is the maximum that any institution could possibly be expected to undertake successfully. I do not think that McGill College can undertake so much as this, but I am convinced, on the other hand, that we can do vastly more than we have been doing, and I may add that the suggestions offered by the representatives of the Committee seem to me to point definitely in the right direction. I am sure, too, that these suggestions will be cordially received by the whole teaching staff of the College. One or two preliminary suggestions may be necessary.

If the course of study for the training of teachers at the University be made too rigid and exacting, it may only have the effect of greatly reducing the number of creditable candidates for teaching positions and so defeat its own object. This is always a danger where freedom of interest is unduly sacrificed.

It must always be assumed that local School Boards are capable of selecting their teachers with some reasonable degree of intelligence and care. The certificates and diplomas carried by licensed teachers should, therefore, show in some detail the subjects which each applicant for a position is probably able to teach and how successfully. It must also be assumed, I suggest, that teachers are to some extent willing and able to improve by self-study their knowledge of subjects in which their previous training has been inadequate. Indeed any University graduate who has acquired habits of thoroughness and care, especially in fundamental subjects, such, for example, as Latin and Mathematics, ought to be able to apply these same methods and habits to the study of other subjects to a sufficient extent to carry pupils as far as Junior Matriculation. Much more depends upon a few instrumental subjects done well than upon a large number of subjects done in a ragged and imperfect manner.

The scheme outlined hereafter represents the conclusions of the Faculty and the Special Committee working on this subject up to date. This course of study may be varied in some details by the Faculty itself before it is prepared to put its imprimatur upon a final plan, but the substantial outline of the plan is already pretty fully approved.