

TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL AGRICULTURE

By H. Barton, B.S.A., D.sc.A., Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture,
Macdonald College (McGill University).

Agriculture as a way of life is as old as civilization, but as a profession requiring university training similar to that required of aspirants to the professions of law, medicine and teaching, it is as yet comparatively young. For this reason, it is frequently overlooked by prospective university students in search of a suitable life work; and it is with a view to acquainting those who may be called upon for advice by such prospective students with the scope of the profession, and the type of training provided for those entering the field, that this short article is presented.

When it is recalled that the practice of agriculture involves not only a knowledge of the principles of breeding and growth of plants and animals, but also an understanding of the chemistry of soils and feeds, of the control of insects and diseases affecting crops and stock, and of the business principles involved in the production and distribution of foodstuffs in accordance with market requirements, it will be seen that the profession is large enough to accommodate, in addition to the general advisor, many specialists in various branches of science, as well as specialists in economics and business administration.

At Macdonald College, the Faculty of Agriculture of McGill University, provision is made for those taking the four year course, leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, to specialize in agronomy, animal husbandry, general biology, chemistry, entomology, horticulture, plant pathology and poultry husbandry, while, through the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of McGill University, courses leading to the degrees of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy are available at Macdonald College in agronomy, bacteriology, chemistry, entomology and plant pathology. For those seeking a high school diploma through agriculture rather than through arts, provision is made, as well, for a four year course leading to the degree of B.Sc. in Agr. (the usual degree given at Macdonald College is designated by the abbreviation B.S.A.), the first two years of which are taken in the Faculty of Arts and the last two in the Faculty of Agriculture (see Announcement).

Believing that the teaching, administrative and research posts open to graduates in agriculture require at least as high a standard of training as those open to graduates from other faculties, the Faculty of Agriculture of McGill University have planned their courses of study with a view to giving the candidate for a degree a thorough grounding in the fundamentals as well as specialized training in one or more branches of his chosen science. Entrance is by matriculation, and in the first two years of the college course a general training, similar to that given in the first two years of the arts course, is given. This includes, in the first year, agriculture (history and development of Canadian), botany (elementary), chemistry (inorganic), English (composition and literature), mathematics (mathematical analysis, elementary) and physics (mechanics, heat, sound and molecular physics,) and, in the second, chemistry (organic), economics (elementary principles of), English (literature), mathematics (calculus), physics (light, electricity and magnetism) and zoology (elementary).