

The Absence of Properly Qualified Students

The Honour students whom the Department might secure for graduate study are not likely to be of the quality requisite for genuinely advanced work. Two tendencies seem noticeable in regard to the undergraduate student. One is the imperfect cultivation of the student in the various branches of liberal knowledge, the other is his devoting himself rather exclusively to a single department, due, of course, to departmental policies which require the appropriation of all the student's courses. These are only tendencies, and they may have been imperfectly observed. But one thing seems clear that the Honours in a department are not really Honours in quality. To have taken Honours means for the most part that the student has simply concentrated upon one field - it does not signify that the student has felt any responsibility for relating the knowledge acquired in his courses to each other and to the whole subject. This responsibility will not be felt, nor action upon it ensue, until there is required for Honours degrees a comprehensive examination to test the whole of the last two years' accomplishment in the subject. A set of such general examinations would produce Honours students capable of going on to the Master's degree and beyond, either at McGill or at any other first-class university. In this connection it is important to recognise the value of competitive Fellowships and Scholarships. These act as inducements to promising students to think of a career of advanced study, and they raise up the ambition. If they were not limited to McGill or even to nationals they would surely provide a nucleus of first-rate students for the Graduate Faculty.

High School Teaching. The majority of students taking advanced botany in most universities do so with a view to science teaching in schools. Out of this body of students a few take honours and specialize for academic posts. Up to now this inducement has been lacking at McGill University since no botany is taught in the high schools of the Province of Quebec. It seems possible that this will be