

courses was for a time much larger than those entering for the full curriculum. Now, however, these "occasional" students form the minority. From the first there have been a considerable number of foreign students at the Institute. It is believed by many that this would also be the case in London if a similar institution were established here.

For a period, it is clear, the Antwerp Institute suffered the natural penalty of being a little before its time. It was, in a sense, a prophetic idea. The commercial world was hardly ready for it. The conditions which were to ensure its success had not been fully developed at the time of its establishment. As in other schemes of technical training, the pioneers had for a long time to be patient with apparently small results. I hardly think, therefore, that we can reasonably expect the Institute to have had a large part in the training of the generation of merchants now enjoying the highest places in the trade of Antwerp. Another twenty years must pass before any definite judgment can be passed on the influence of the Institute upon Antwerp or Belgian foreign trade. It is possible that, if the organization of the Institute embraced one or more Halls of Residence, where students might enjoy the disciplinary and other advantages of collegiate life, some parents might be more willing to avail themselves of its opportunities in the education of their sons. But a certain number of the best commercial families do, I am told, send their sons to the Institute. Two members of the present Belgian Ministry have thus shown their confidence in its work. At the same time, it is freely admitted that some leading Belgian merchants do not believe that such a training as the Institute affords is the best preparation for

business. There, as here, expert opinion is divided. Perhaps it will be fair to say that, while there is no general agreement on the subject, an increasing number of Belgian merchants are becoming convinced both of the value and necessity of special preparation of this kind for the higher branches of foreign trade; and the fact that the Antwerp Institute enjoys the full confidence of the Municipality and of the Belgian Government is proved by the large subsidies which both are making in furtherance of its work.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the growing influence of the Institute in commercial circles in Belgium is the growth and success of the "Cercle des Anciens Étudiants de l'Institut Supérieur de Commerce." This association of former students was established in May, 1873. Its aims are to promote friendly relations between the men who have been trained at the Institute, to encourage commercial enterprise, to stimulate a taste for commercial life, to study commercial questions, to establish scholarships tenable at the Institute, and to maintain the privileges which have been or should be accorded to the holders of its diploma. In 1876 the Government granted the degree of "Licencié en Sciences Commerciales" as a title attached to the diploma, and its later decision (in 1893) to reorganize the consular service in the interests of Belgian trade was regarded as, in part, the outcome of persistent efforts of the Association.* The Cercle numbered 390 members in 1893-4. It has published a long series of reports on various commercial subjects, among which may be mentioned the following:

*Cercle des Anciens Étudiants de l'Institut Supérieur de Commerce d'Anvers. Sa fondation et son développement jusqu'en 1894. (Antwerp, Theunis, 1894.)