

Mr. Beattie's Oxford Honor

Good in Mathematics

At this moment in the tribulations of the University of Manitoba immense gratification may be drawn from the brilliant success achieved by Mr. J. Robert Beattie as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford.

The promise shown by Mr. Beattie in pure mathematics at the University here, which must have guided his selection as a Rhodes Scholar, seemed a fortunate digression from the previous rather limited field of selection. The selection has been magnificently justified in an Oxford school which can claim a Cambridge man who is perhaps the world's champion mathematician.

The selection of Mr. Beattie brings credit on the University of Manitoba and provides a tribute to the faculty. Mr. Beattie has not alone secured a first-class in his school, difficult as that is to secure; but he is the first Rhodes Scholar from the North American continent to secure a first-class in mathematics. This fact alone reflects abundant praise of the academic excellence of our own University. Its standards are high when its honors students can proceed, as Mr. Beattie has proceeded, to take the highest honors at Oxford. Other Universities—the great and rich Universities—on this continent have had their better chance, but they have been unable to do just what Manitoba happens to have achieved in Mr. Beattie's distinction.

Though the distinction is not extraordinary among honor achievements at Oxford, it is rare enough to be prized. A first in mathematics is very stiff; a first in any school is always difficult. In twenty-five years (1905-30) of Rhodes Scholars, only 15 per cent of those who went into residence at Oxford obtained first-classes in final honor schools. The proportion is much larger than it may seem, for its largeness increases as the difficulty of securing the first-class is appreciated. The proportion becomes more accentuated too when it is known that only 27 per cent of the "hand-picked" English college scholars and exhibitors, and only 5 per cent of the rank and file of Oxford's undergraduates, obtained first-classes in the same period.

Every consideration of Mr. Beattie's success suggests the excellence of the standard that must be maintained in the honors courses given students by the faculty of the University of Manitoba.