

CHANGES IN
UNIVERSITY
CURRICULA

As a result of the impact of war university curricula have undergone a variety of changes. New courses have been added, and old courses accelerated.

In May, 1942, at a conference with the government, the universities were informed that the number of engineers and scientists being turned out was far below the needs of the immediate future, and it was agreed to speed up science courses. In the practical field of engineering and similar courses, it was decided that nothing could be gained by eliminating the training which the students obtain in the war plants, in the mines and in construction operations during the summer months. It was therefore impractical to accelerate the courses by eliminating the summer vacation. Another method was adopted. More students were admitted to the courses than is advisable under normal conditions, so that classes are now crowded to over-capacity. To obtain more engineering students, very able men with only junior matriculation standing are selected for an eight-weeks intensive summer course in mathematics, physics and chemistry. These students are then rushed into the first year of applied science. In this way a year is saved, since the admission to applied science is normally senior matriculation standing.

In February, 1942, it was decided to speed up medical courses by eliminating the summer vacation. In June, 1944, however, most universities discontinued the accelerated course in medicine beginning with those students who entered the course in the fall of 1943. Experience had shown that, in this field particularly, efficiency on the part of students and teachers was being sacrificed to speed. The accelerated course will continue, however, for those students who began the course before the fall of 1943.

At some universities other courses have also been accelerated. In the summer of 1941-42, one university instituted a special 12-weeks summer session, which began on June 15, and courses were offered covering a very wide academic range. It was provided by regulation of the faculty that students who successfully completed a full program of two courses in the summer session would be exempt from approximately one-half of a normal year's academic work. A student who attends regularly throughout three normal sessions and two wartime summer sessions would thus be enabled to fulfil all the requirements for a bachelor of arts, science or commerce degree during a period of three calendar years. At present many universities have adopted this method of accelerating arts courses.

Actual changes in university curricula effected by the war have been largely in science courses for the benefit of industry and the armed forces, but nearly every department in Canadian universities has related its work to the war effort. Medicine, engineering, dentistry, forestry, nursing, occupational and physical therapy are obviously so related. In the faculty of arts, the pure sciences and mathematics and physics, English, history and modern languages are definitely making a war contribution. Economics and commerce are linked with the home front as well as with certain phases of overseas activities. The faculty of education is seeking to supply the need for teachers in the schools. Special courses of lectures, in addition to regular academic programs, have sought to state the fundamental issues of the war, its ultimate causes and the economic and financial problems involved.

About one extremely important phase of university work in relation to the war effort, that is, research, little can be said.