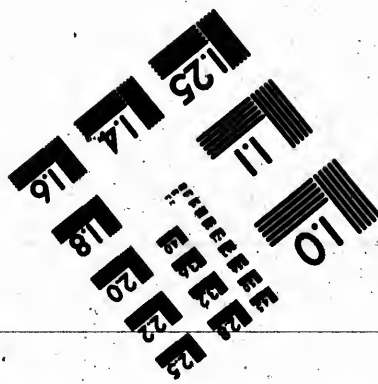
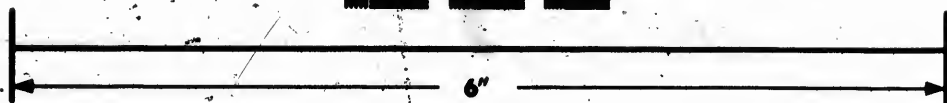
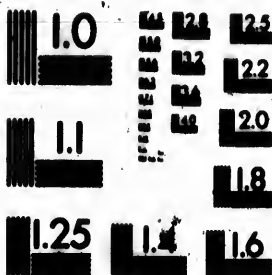


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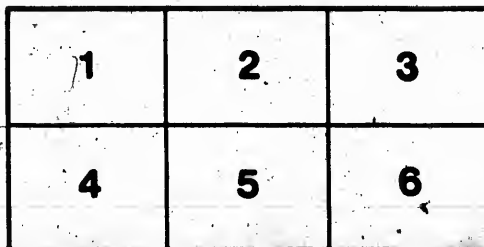
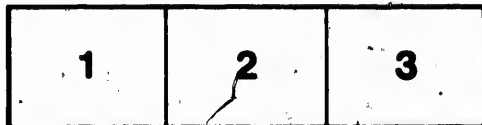
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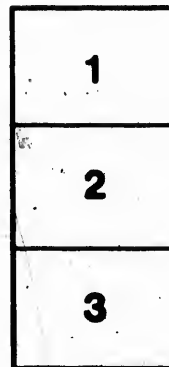
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PASS FRENCH AND GERMAN

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

PAPER READ BY MR. W. H. FRASER, B.A., BEFORE THE MODERN
LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO, APRIL 20, 1898.



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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PASS FRENCH AND GERMAN

IN THE

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BY W. H. FRASER, B.A.

The pass course of the University of Toronto forms the basis of the Arts curriculum of that institution. On the one hand, it represents the minimum requirements upon which the degree of Bachelor of Arts is granted, and, on the other hand, it is the common ground from which undergraduates enter upon one or other of the various honour courses. Owing to the fundamental nature of the pass course any changes affecting its prescriptions or the principles according to which it is framed are of peculiar importance to the educational system of this province. Changes of a very radical character have recently been made in that curriculum affecting the subjects of French and German, and hence I have thought that an inquiry into the past history and future prospects of these languages as university studies is one especially suitable to the present occasion.

From a very early date in the history of the University either French or German had a place as obligatory subjects of study on the pass curriculum. This position they retained with increasing importance until very recently. At the present date they are not recognized at all on the

curriculum as obligatory. Such, in brief, is their history. In detail it is as follows.

In 1849 the sectarian university known as King's College was secularized, and in 1853 it was divided finally into two institutions—the University of Toronto (a curriculum-making, examining and degree-conferring body) and University College (a purely teaching body), both entirely non-denominational. In other words, the University was secularized and became provincial, national. The curriculum was thenceforth made, and still continues to be made by the Senate of the University of Toronto. Before the secularization of the University the B. A. degree had been granted on a course consisting of Greek, Latin, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Natural Theology and Evidences, Logic, Metaphysics and Ethics. Shortly after the organization of the University of Toronto the curriculum was reconstructed. What took place is thus described in an editorial article of the *Globe*, 10th June, 1857:—"The Senate, as we understand, since it received its recent infusion of new blood, has considerably modified the course of study prescribed, giving a greater prominence to Modern Languages and the Natural Sciences than they have heretofore received, and thereby adapting the system of preparatory teaching to the wants of the province, where the old system of making everything subordinate to Greek and Latin was peculiarly out of place." The remainder of the article from which this is taken establishes beyond a doubt that the educators of that time realized fully what they were doing and why they did it. The changes were not made at haphazard, but were introduced with reference to a clearly defined principle. Further on in the same article the *Globe* says:—"Reform has begun in a wise direction, when it is no longer deemed indispensable to cram down our provincial throats a whole educational system for no other reason but because it has the time-hallowed sanction of Oxford and Dublin. What suits either of these localities admirably may prove very unsuitable for Canada." One may reasonably infer from the tone of the above utterance that the reforms were not carried out without opposition, as was indeed the case. The sturdy independence of thought and the vigour of

expression are characteristic of those days, but the most important thing of all is the incontrovertible principle laid down, viz., that the teaching of the national university ought to be determined by the requirements of the country. In other words, the university exists for the benefit of the country, and not the country for the benefit of the university. Further evidence that the framing of the University curriculum was a burning question at that time is gleaned from the convocation speech of the late learned President, the Rev. Dr. McCaul, delivered 30th Oct., 1857. Here we see more clearly in detail why the changes were made. Referring to the opposition which the reforms had met with, he said:—"Permit me now as briefly as possible to advert to a misapprehension which prevails in certain quarters; I allude to the objection which has been often urged, particularly by graduates of the ancient universities, that we have too largely increased the number of our subjects. Now, let us first of all understand what the objection is. In Literature we have Greek and Latin, to which no objection can be made; we have also French and German. As to Spanish and Italian, they are optional subjects; and we have also Oriental Literature. We have Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and in addition, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, Natural History, Mineralogy and Geology. These are the additional subjects, so that the objection limits itself to the Modern Languages and the Natural Sciences. Now, in the first place, I would observe that we have added only those subjects which within the last few years have made the greatest progress, or the utility of which has been so universally recognised that it is necessary to acquire them as the essential elements of a good education. (Applause.) Is it desirable that we should send forth our graduates without any knowledge of those Modern Languages, which are now so important,—or without a thorough training in their own vernacular tongue? Time was when learning and science selected Latin as the favourite vehicle of communication, but that time is now past. And so in other departments. There is no scholar, who omitted early to acquaint himself with the Modern Languages, but who has had cause for deep regret. What scholar, for example, ignorant of the

German, in which the very highest thoughts within the range of the human intellect are to be found, but has suffered from the loss?" and more to the same effect.

The basis of the reforms introduced could not be more clearly laid down, and we cannot but admire the breadth of view and intelligent foresight of the learned President at that early date, especially when we reflect that he had been reared as a classicist of the most straitest sect. The principle which he enunciated is a most important one in this discussion. The University, so to speak, made up its mind that in Upper Canada at least from that time forward a man could not claim to be called a scholar without a knowledge of at least one modern language, besides some knowledge of Natural Science. From reiterated enunciation of this principle it is quite clear that the University had laid it down as a fundamental one in its academic policy. For example, in his convocation speech of 25th October, 1861, Dr. McCaul says further:—"In a national college for such a country as this, the course of study must be adapted to the practical wants of the people. This has been done in University College by the introduction of the Modern Languages and the Natural Sciences; things of immediate practical importance, and which are known to be such in the business of life."

In 1860 the curriculum was revised, but the policy already defined was adhered to. I quote the following, bearing on these changes from Dr. McCaul's convocation speech of Oct. 25th, 1861:—"With regard to subjects of instruction, changes have been made since 1853-4 (the transition year). These changes were made by the University (i.e., the University Senate) . . . they are accepted by this College (i.e., University College). . . . It may be proper to mention, however, that the general features of the course are preserved though some changes have been made—the Greek and Latin classics, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, English and French, the Natural Sciences, including Zoology and Botany, Mineralogy and Geology, Metaphysics and Ethics and the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, forming essential parts of the course for those who are proceeding to a degree."

It will be convenient to state here that the only important changes in the pass curriculum from that time till now have been those affecting the relations of the foreign languages; hence, only such changes need be considered in this paper. It will be convenient also to note that, as a concession mainly to students having theology in view, the University has uniformly, since at least 1857, accepted Hebrew as an equivalent to either French or German. Further, note that until 1865 German began in the second year, and was an equivalent to French; from 1865 on it began in the first year. To complete the description of the early curriculum, it is essential to state a fact that is not generally known, and which is fitted to cause our friends the classicists to lift up holy hands of horror, viz., that from at least 1857 (earlier calendars are lacking), and continuously till 1877, in their third and fourth year, "undergraduates were not required to take both 'Greek and Latin' and 'French and German,' but either at their option." Nothing better illustrates the broad and liberal policy of those early educators with reference to the Modern Languages. The four languages were, in the third and fourth year, put on a basis of perfect equality, and the student could take his choice. The nearest approach to this liberality has been the curriculum of 1890, which said that an undergraduate should take any two of Greek, French, German, in any year of the course. In view of this fact, it is pertinent to ask who are the innovators—those who demand recognition of the equality of the languages or those who refuse it?

Revision of the curriculum took place again in 1865, when the pass course was arranged under the heads of "fixed" and "variable." From 1865 till 1877 there is hardly any change except in the wording, and in none of the revisions of this period was any substantial change made on the curriculum as already described.

In the revision of 1877, the whole form of the curriculum was changed; the pass and honour courses were laid down much as at present, and French and German took the first step in their downward career. Their position was still, however, honourable as compared with that which they now hold. This curriculum prescribes that a

pass undergraduate shall take four years of Latin and Greek, and two years of either French or German. The old principle of 1853, that a scholar must know something of a modern language, was still maintained, but the long-continued option between Classics and Moderns in the third and fourth year was withdrawn. In this form the curriculum continued till 1885, when a new and most important principle was introduced. The University in the 1885 revision not only still affirmed that a man must know French or German to be a scholar, but it went farther, and said that a man might become a scholar without a knowledge of Greek. These are the two essentials as regards foreign languages on which the curriculum was based up till March, 1891, a date to be referred to later. The 1885 curriculum prescribes four years of Latin plus four years of Greek; or four years of Latin plus four years of French and German (no Greek). But to make quite sure that no B.A. degree should be granted without a modern language, it further prescribed that every man should take two years (the first and second) of one or other of French or German, whether he took Greek or not. This obviously made a complication in the first and second years, so that, to balance matters, the curriculum said further that a man who took the French and German option should, in his second year, take not only pass but honour French or German (but with only pass standing). This regulation should be carefully understood. Put into other words it said: Four years of Latin for everybody; any two of Greek, French, German in the first year; any two of Greek, French, German (pass, and honour) in the second year; and either Greek or French plus German in the third and fourth years. This curriculum remained in force for five years.

In 1890 the curriculum underwent what at that time had become its quinquennial revision, and prescribed for 1890-1895 that every undergraduate should take four years of Latin, plus four years of any two of the three: Greek, French, German. Observe that this prescription is precisely identical with that of 1885 as regards the first year, and practically identical for the second year, and that the rule already laid down for two years of the course and actually in force during the previous five years, was merely

extended to the third and fourth years, making Greek equal to French or German in all years of the course instead of in the first two only—a very trifling change, when it is considered that a student who had availed himself of the option in the first and second years would almost infallibly continue to do so in the third and fourth.

The 1890 revision was made with great care. The curriculum, as passed by the Senate, was the result of numerous conferences between the Board of Arts Studies and the Faculty of Arts. The relations of the foreign languages were fully discussed and adjusted with the unanimous assent of all parties concerned, and it was hoped that a satisfactory and simple solution of a troublesome problem had been found. This curriculum, however, had been in force but a few months when, in March, 1891, on the eve of the annual examinations, a change was passed by the Senate declaring in effect that Greek should be considered equal to French and German, and not equal to French or German, as in the 1890 curriculum.

This change had been urged by the Ontario Classical Association, acting under the influence of the fear that the new curriculum would be fatal to Greek in the schools. Now, it is a fact that Greek has declined in the schools. According to the statistics of the Report of the Minister of Education for 1891 it has declined from 10 per cent. of the whole number of pupils in 1877 to 5.5 + in 1890, but surely only the most complete disregard of the facts would lead to the inference from them that this decline depended upon the prescriptions of the University curriculum. For example, between 1880 and 1885, when Greek was still required throughout the whole University course, it declined from 8.6 + of the whole number of pupils in 1880 to 6.4 + in 1885, whereas from 1885 to 1890, when the curriculum was in its effects precisely what was contemplated in the 1890 curriculum, Greek declined only from 6.4 + to 5.5 +—less absolutely, and less relatively. The causes for the decline of pass Greek are evidently to be sought elsewhere. Latin, also, declined from 50 per cent. in 1877 to 36 per cent. in 1890. French and German simply held their own. The total number of pupils in the schools working directly for matriculation is about 1,000, or 3 per

Of the high school work, the number of pupils who studied commercial subjects in 1890 was 14,261, as against 3,621 in 1877, and as against 482, who in 1890 passed a university matriculation. Here is another fact: The number of candidates in 1891 for high school primary and leaving certificate was 5,715 as against 500 candidates for matriculation certificate. Greek and Latin must seek in such facts as these an explanation for their decrease, rather than in the nature of the University curriculum, and so must French and German also for the fact that they too are at a standstill.

Granting, however, for the moment that the fate of Greek in the schools does depend upon the university curriculum, which is not the case, what is the position of those who urge the change in the curriculum on this ground? They hold that, in the hope of galvanizing into renewed life a subject of study which is expiring in the schools, the university course shall be distorted, and a grievous wrong done to university education in this province. Suppose that it were thought desirable to force Hebrew into the schools. A regulation which, in order to effect this, should make Hebrew in the University an option as against Latin and Greek would be a parallel absurdity.

It is time now to inquire into the various consequences of the statute referred to. They are much more serious than might appear at first sight. First of all, the standard for the pass degree has been lowered, and this in face of the fact that the standard was already lamentably low. From its organization until March, 1891, the University had demanded a knowledge of either French or German from every pass-man, whether he took Greek or not. This is no longer so: The student who takes Greek now grad-

statute has disturbed the arrangements of the various honour departments which had prescribed any two of the three, Greek, French, German, as pass work. Fourthly, a most serious wrong has incidentally been done to the department of Oriental Languages. As already noted, the University has uniformly accepted Hebrew as an equivalent for either French or German. What has been the effect on Hebrew? It has become a purely optional subject. Before the passing of the statute, the students with theology in view naturally took Greek and Hebrew. Now they may omit Hebrew, and most of them do so. To such an extent is this the case that the classes in Hebrew are almost disorganized. Lastly, the new statute in its statement that Greek is an equivalent to both French and German makes a disparaging and misleading comparison, which is properly resented by Modern Language teachers, and which adversely affects the status of those languages and the status of those who represent them in the schools and elsewhere.

Of these consequences, the most serious is undoubtedly the lowering of the pass standard. The Senate's action is, in this respect, most difficult to account for. Of the two principles upon which, as already shown, the prescription of foreign languages on the curriculum depends, the Senate repudiated the one which it had affirmed more than thirty years before, and which it had constantly reaffirmed up till March, 1891. Had the Senate repudiated the 1865 principle, viz., that a B.A. degree may be given without Greek, it would have been less surprising. Everything appears to indicate that the Senate legislated hastily either in ignorance of the question before it, or in disregard of the interests of the University, or both.

make the 1890 curriculum, they should also be consulted regarding such a radical change in it. The Board of Arts Studies refused to consult the Faculty, and reported the statute favourably to the Senate. Along with the report was a minority report on behalf of Professor Loudon and Professor Galbraith, in substance as follows: 1. That the clause in question had been unanimously adopted by the Board of Arts Studies and the Senate after increase of the work in French and German with due regard to equivalences. 2. That, in view of this fact, change before the next regular period of revision would be inadvisable. 3. The change would give rise to embarrassing complications. 4. That in educational value, French or German are each equal to Greek, and that so fundamental are they that the question of making one of them obligatory at matriculation would soon arise. On motion of Professor Hutton, seconded by Rev. Dr. Sheraton, the statute was passed; a motion for adjournment and also an amendment by Mr. Houston and seconded by Mr. Embree, to re-commit the two reports and the letter of Messrs. VanderSmitsen and Squair to the Board of Arts Studies with instructions to consult the Faculty, were voted down. The letter referred to was a strong protest on behalf of French and German, and pointed out the difficulty as to equivalences in such a way that in all fairness further delay should have been granted. But in spite of a reasonable request for delay, and in spite of the proposal to consult the Faculty, the statute was at once pushed through. So strongly did the Faculty feel in the matter, that at its next meeting a request was sent to the Senate that no changes should be made in the Arts curriculum without consultation with the Faculty. Although

tuted authority in such questions). An amendment to the amendment by Professor Reynar, seconded by Mr. Embree, disapproving of the lowering of the standard and expressing approval of the long-established policy of the University demanding French, German, or Hebrew of all pass men was lost on the following division: Yeas—Dr. Aikins, Professors Galbraith, Loudon, Reynar, Dr. Dewart, Messrs. Embree, Spotton, Houston, Torrington, (9). Nays—Sir Daniel Wilson; Professors Hutton, Ashley, Baker, Drs. Caven, Sheraton, McFarlane, Aikins, Cameron, Rev. Father Teefy, Messrs. Aylesworth, Barwick, Creelman, Moss, Maclean, MacMurchy, King (17). The special committee reported to the Senate in June, and the report, which is as follows, is still in the hands of the Board of Arts Studies:—

"Your Committee to whom was referred the question of the relations of Greek, French and German in the pass course beg to recommend as follows: (1) A final satisfactory solution of this question will not be attained in their opinion, until pass Greek is required of honour students in Modern Languages. If this change were made, the curriculum of June, 1890, as it stood previous to the amending statute of last March, could be again enforced, and the amending statute could be properly struck out. (2) But, inasmuch as any such change could not come into operation until at least two years' notice had been given to the schools, your Committee recommend, as the best immediate settlement of the question, the prescription of the following options for candidates taking Hebrew:—Page 5 of the curriculum, instead of present note, read as follows:

to the Committee, viz., the relations of Greek to French and German on the pass course, but merely postpones it. It postpones it until a certain condition entirely without bearing on the pass course should be fulfilled. What is that condition? That pass Greek be imposed on honour students in Moderns. The important question as to whether the pass standard is to be permanently lowered is made to depend not on its merits, but on whether a few more pupils in the schools could be secured for pass Greek by imposing it on Modern Language students. I shall not stop here to show that, for certain reasons which this special committee was ignorant of, the very remedy proposed is impossible of application, but I shall merely point out that the whole original contention of Professor Hutton and those who thought with him, that Greek was equal in difficulty to French and German, is here entirely abandoned, and that consequently the whole argument on which the change was based was vicious. Surely a Senate committee could hardly succeed better in stultifying itself and the Senate.

Further in Nov., 1891, the Faculty passed by a large majority the following resolution: "That the Faculty having considered the report of the Committee of the Senate (see above) are of opinion that the best solution of the difficulties created by the late changes in the curriculum affecting the relations of Greek, French and German is to require all pass undergraduates to take in each year of their course any two of the four languages: Greek, Hebrew, French, German." The Faculty thus re-affirmed its opinion of 1890, and even went a step further in the direction of simplification. This recommendation, together with a motion by Mr. Houston to require Greek, French

1. It may continue the present situation.

Serious objections to this have already been referred to — the lowering of the standard, the absurd so-called equivalence, the overturning of arrangements relating to honour departments, the crying injustice done to Hebrew, the gratuitous slur cast upon French and German. I shall deal here with only the first of these. If, as was so forcibly urged by Dr. McCaul in 1857, a knowledge of French or German was at that time essential to a liberal education, what shall be said of the year 1892? The University of Toronto was perhaps the first English-speaking university to demand this. So well has its example been followed that, if the Senate holds to its reactionary position, the University of Toronto will be the only university of any standing on this continent in which French or German is not required for the ordinary B.A. degree. For example: Columbia College (1890-91) requires two years of French and one of German; Cornell (1889-90) requires one year of French and one of German; Harvard (1891-92) requires both French and German, one being required at matriculation; the Michigan State University (1888-89) requires French; Princeton (1891-92) requires two years of either French or German; Yale (1890-91) requires either French or German at matriculation and for two years of its course. For similar grades of instruction in Europe (in Germany, France, Italy) one or more of the foreign modern languages is everywhere obligatory, except in Great Britain and Ireland. In fact, the world over, with the above exception, it has become a recognised principle that the first requisite of a liberal education next to the mother tongue is a knowledge of a foreign modern

of university education, which it has not been in this province since 1885. In Ontario, to restore Greek now means (see statistics of Educational Report) that of the 19,166 high school pupils, only 1,071, or 5.5 + per cent., may look forward to a university education, whereas at present at least 41 per cent. may aspire to a university course. The University exists for the province, and not the province for the University. To make Greek obligatory would be a huge and useless sacrifice of the province to the doubtful advantage of higher learning. Besides, the whole tendency of the times is in the other direction. Toronto is not the only great university which gives the B.A. degree without Greek; and even in England, with still 50 per cent. of the boys in the great public schools studying Greek, the fate of that language as an obligatory university subject hangs in the balance. If, instead of 50, the percentage was 5.5 as it is here; if, instead of 50 per cent., 95 per cent. of secondary pupils were shut out of the university, there would no longer be any question even at Oxford. In some other European countries Greek has already gone by the board; in others the question is still a burning one, with concessions year by year in favour of the modern learning.

3. The Senate may re-affirm the original curriculum of 1890, and prescribe any two of Greek, French, German.

When the Senate finally becomes seized of the question, if that ever happens, it will be found that a decision in this direction will be largely determined by the impossibility of any other course of action. The present situation can scarcely continue, and the restoration of Greek is hopeless. In other words, the Senate cannot well stay where it is and it cannot retrogress. It must of necessity go forwards. All the objections I have already noted

there, also, two languages out of the three should be required.

Another important matter is this: French or German (one or both) is required as a pass subject in all honour courses, except Classics. The teaching of the elements is not properly University work. In fact, it is suggested, in the Senate's late report on University requirements, "that provision should be made by the University to check the practice of students taking up French and German without proof that they have already acquired an elementary knowledge of them."

What the Senate will do remains to be seen. It is possible that the present Senate will do nothing. Admission of blundering is doubtless disagreeable to a corporate body, as it is to an individual. It may even be that the changes required will be the result of "an infusion of new blood," just as was the original recognition of the claims of French and German away back in the fifties; but in any case it behoves the Modern Language Association not to acquiesce in an act of injustice done not only to important languages, whose interests are its especial care, but an act of injustice done to the educational system of this country.

