

We draw attention to the fact that the Council expended in the erection of buildings for the Medical School no less than £14,000, and that £15,000 has been borrowed, upon which the Council has to pay interest.

To further the object in view we believe it would be wise to enlist the support of the members representing Dunedin and surrounding districts, and recommend the Council to ask for a conference with these members.

The following are the reports referred to:—

(1.)

GENTLEMEN,—

University of Otago, 28th June, 1898.

My last year's report concluded with a short paragraph in which I drew your attention to the fact that, while the school is growing in numbers, little or nothing is being done to secure a corresponding growth in efficiency, and warned you that, if the present state of matters were allowed to continue, it would soon be impossible to meet the requirements of modern teaching. You asked me to give you for your own private information a detailed statement of what are, in my opinion, the defects of the school. Before doing so I consulted my colleagues on the teaching staff, and the opinions that follow are not mine alone, but are held by all the teachers in the school. I must ask you to believe that the standard of excellence we all have in view is not that of any of the older European schools, but that of a young colonial school honestly trying, in accordance with modern ideas, to fit its students for the duties of general practice. That the pecuniary circumstances of the University make it useless for us to suggest the cure for much that is amiss is greatly to be regretted; but that is no reason for shutting our eyes completely to unpleasant facts.

1. *Teaching Staff*.—This requires strengthening. It is needless to do more than note the fact that in all schools of good standing the Professors of Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology are assisted by one or more demonstrators. Such a wholesale addition to the teaching staff is not possible here, nor is it so very necessary, as the classes are not large. It is certainly sometimes difficult for one unaided man to carry on his work in the practical way that is now required, but so long as the classes are moderate in size the difficulties are not insuperable, provided that each of these subjects has its own special teacher. That is not so with us, however, and the subjects that are duplicated are unfortunately anatomy and physiology, perhaps the heaviest and certainly the most important, of the studies on which a scientific knowledge of medicine and surgery is based. When the school was founded nearly a quarter of a century ago, this combination of anatomy and physiology in one chair was not unsuited to the conditions then existing. But it is to be regretted that this arrangement has been allowed to continue unchanged to the present time, when the school is giving a five-years course qualifying for degrees in medicine. I cannot say positively that there is no other school in the whole world where this combination is still to be found; it may exist in one or two as a relic of the past; but I can assert without any hesitation that in none but this is one man expected to give complete courses, both theoretical and practical, in both subjects without assistance. As a matter of fact, the task is an impossible one: the hours of daylight are too few; and one or other subject must suffer. Here it is physiology that suffers most.

The teaching at the Hospital is also still to some extent unsatisfactory, because the outpatient department is left entirely to the house-surgeons. Much valuable teaching is in all schools carried on in this department by the assistant physicians and surgeons, men qualifying themselves for posts on the important staff of the Hospital.

There are no assistant physicians or surgeons attached to the Dunedin Hospital, and, though the good that would accrue to the Hospital and to the school from their appointment has been pointed out to the Trustees of that institution, they decline to make any change.

2. *Subjects Taught*.—No special instruction is given in diseases of the throat and ear. Courses in these subjects are included in the prospectuses of most modern schools.

Ophthalmology is taught, but the lecturer receives no salary; and the same remark applies to the teaching of mental diseases. This is not at all a desirable arrangement.

3. *Teaching Accommodation*.—Laboratory accommodation generally is somewhat deficient, but perhaps the physical laboratory is the most defective in this respect. The want of an additional class-room is also felt, as classes in physiology and surgery have to be held in the same room during consecutive hours, an arrangement which makes the proper setting-out of apparatus impossible. The small size of the rooms in which the Anatomical Museum is lodged is also a great drawback. It is not possible to display the specimens so as to make them thoroughly useful to students. It is at the Hospital, however, that the want of room is most seriously felt, and where, in consequence, teaching is most seriously interfered with. Much money has no doubt been spent in adding to the Hospital during the last few years, but provision for the accommodation and teaching of students is still in many respects unsatisfactory.

The room in which the *post-mortem* examinations are made is still what it was before a Medical School was thought of. It is a little shed, 12 ft. by 8 ft., with the narrow floor-space still further diminished by the necessary table, sink, and shelving. In this fifty or sixty students are expected to learn the very important lessons in pathology there taught. Of course not a fourth of them can get inside the room when a *post-mortem* examination is being made, and still fewer can see what is going on at the table. As a consequence, and through no fault of the teacher, this very necessary part of the course on pathology is to most students an utter sham. Time and again the Trustees of the Hospital have been begged to build a suitable room, but they will do nothing, in spite of the fact that they receive more than £100 a year in students' fees. Proper waiting-rooms for students, and a room in which the necessary writing-up of case-books can be done, are also much required. The present students'-room is quite unsuited for its purpose.