

III. COLLEGE CLASSES. (REGULATION 47.)

(a) All the subjects in Divisions (1), (2), (3), (4) of clause 43 will be recognised as subjects of technical instruction in college classes; also

(b.) Chemistry or any other science treated practically with immediate reference to agriculture, horticulture, or dairy work, or to any other industry, or to manufactures or commerce.

(c.) Commercial law; industrial law; economics of industry, or any other branch of political economy; actuarial arithmetic, including the use of logarithms; commercial history; industrial history; higher commercial geography.

Although the time may not yet have arrived for the establishment of a Degree of Commerce in connection with the University of New Zealand, yet it may be worth the while of the Senate of the University to consider whether by granting certificates or diplomas in "Commerce" it might not accord to it in some degree the recognition already given to law, medicine, engineering, and agriculture.

Hon. W. C. Walker.

G. HOBGEN.

THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM:
ITS PURPOSE AND PROGRAMME.

THE Faculty of Commerce, created in the University of Birmingham, will begin its work upon the 1st October, 1902. That work will be the provision of a course of training suitable for men who look forward to business careers. Its object is the education, not of the rank and file, but of the officers of the industrial and commercial army: of those who, as principals, directors, managers, secretaries, heads of departments, &c., will ultimately guide the business activity of the country.

The establishment of such a Faculty—the first in England—is the outcome of motives similar to those which are leading to the creation of like institutions in the two other great commercial countries of our time—the United States and Germany. It is believed that a training can be devised which, while strengthening the powers of judgment, widening the sympathies, and stimulating the imagination—the ends of all really liberal education—will yet be of real value as a preparation for the practical duties of later life. It is felt that if the universities are to maintain their position in the modern world they must have regard to the dominant interests of that world; that they must not be content simply to prepare men for what it has been customary to call the "learned professions." Some universities have, indeed, already taken steps towards meeting the new needs of the time by the establishment of schools of engineering; but hitherto the much wider need of *commercial* education—an education of benefit to those who will have to assume responsibility, to take the initiative and to control men in the ordinary conduct of trade or manufacture—has been well-nigh disregarded. And yet the time is ripe for an effort in this direction. The world has now had a long enough experience of modern means of production and modern means of communication for the accumulation of a large fund of experience: and the man who proposes to engage in a business career can now be put in possession, not only of systematic information as to contemporary conditions, but also of a body of principles of policy deduced from current practice. The place of the academic teacher is not to elaborate some *a priori* theory, but to gather, arrange, and present the lessons of practical experience. He has to explain the inter-relation of those conclusions which, in actual affairs, are arrived at singly and in isolation, one from another; and to show that they are not merely accidental happenings but the natural outcome of the situation.

No system of education, however well designed, can, of course, take the place either of natural ability or of experience. But this is equally true of medical training. No medical-school discipline can create a great physician or surgeon, unless the student has exceptional natural qualities; and yet this is not regarded as a fatal objection to medical schools. It is felt that a systematic medical education will, in the first place, give even exceptional ability a better opportunity to make itself manifest, and, in the second place, raise the general level of efficiency among the ordinary members of the profession. The parallel is evidently not a complete one; for, under modern competitive conditions, there is far more room in business for new combinations, and far more demand for enterprise and for power of organization and administration than in the career of the medical man. Yet the analogy is valuable up to a certain point. A systematic business training would certainly raise the general level of efficiency in the ordinary management of commercial affairs; and, though it cannot create geniuses, it may direct into the paths of commercial life a great deal of ability of a high quality which at present goes to waste.

Education, as before remarked, cannot take the place of experience. The attempt in certain continental institutions to reproduce the course of counting-house procedure may, perhaps, be a useful preparation for the lower grades of service; but, for the higher, nothing can dispense with the actual bearing of responsibility and incurring of risks. No curriculum can possibly be devised which will enable the commercial graduate to step at once into positions of leadership and authority; but, nevertheless, much can be done to enable the young man of business to profit by his early experience more rapidly and less painfully than is commonly the case.

It is sometimes objected that "business can only be learnt in business," and that "college life unfits a man for business." As to the latter objection, all that need be said in this place is that the writer of this paper by no means maintains the desirability of any and every sort of college life for every future business man. He is concerned only to maintain the desirability, for most business men of the higher grades, of a training specially adapted to their needs, and carried on in an active business atmosphere, such as that of Birmingham or other great provincial cities. Whatever disadvantages a great industrial city may present as the home of a university, it has this enormous advantage from the present point of view that a student therein will be far less likely to lose touch of the future needs of active life. As to the former objection, he is bound to recognise that only actual trial can determine how far men can be definitely prepared in college for commercial life. But there are several considerations which make it worth while to try the experiment.