

PUBLIC EXAMS BEGIN

More Than 1,000 At Physics Yesterday

Ink flowed freely and pens flew fast when the annual public examinations began at the Exhibition Building yesterday. Almost all ages were represented outside before the doors were opened—some confident of success, others fearful of failure. Suddenly the doors were opened. The fatal moment had arrived. The candidates hurried to their seats, scribbled with shaking hand their number at the top of the first "book" and waited with bated breath for the appearance of the paper. When the "bulldog" handed it to them at last, many dared not look at it for fear of its diabolical substance. Others scanned it eagerly, and a bright smile immediately illumined their features as they discovered questions which they had had the good fortune to look up the night before. More than 1,000 candidates sat for Physics yesterday morning, 608 of these participating in the Intermediate, English, however, has so large a candidature that the building has not the capacity to hold all the students at once. In the Leaving Honors English examination yesterday afternoon, 198 took part; in the Intermediate, tomorrow morning, there are 1,524 candidates, and 744 will sit for Leaving English next Tuesday morning.

Preventing Cheating

Almost every field of possible cheating is covered by the University authorities. They hold out threats of dire punishment—too dire, apparently, to stipulate—for those who see fit to take into the examination room notes, or give assistance to or accept it from another candidate, or by any other improper means obtain help.

Pass in six subjects is necessary for the candidate to obtain the Intermediate certificate, provided that they include English, five for the Leaving and four for the Leaving Honors certificate. In the case of the last-named, it is essential for the candidate to have passed the Leaving.

If a person obtain four subjects in the Intermediate or Leaving examinations, those subjects are counted when he next sits for the examination, and if he gain two more subjects, provided, of course, that English is included, he will be entitled to the certificate.

A supplementary leaving examination will be held in February, 1933, at which only those who are undergraduates, or intend to enter upon a course of study at the University, will be allowed to present themselves.

The control of the examinations lies in the hands of the Public Examinations Board, which conducts the administrative work, nominates the examiners, and reports the result to the University Council.

For those who wish to enter the Public Service, it is necessary to produce one of the above certificates, provided that the applicant has passed both English and arithmetic, and that his handwriting, in the opinion of the Public Service Commissioner, is satisfactory.

"Howlers"

The examiner's tedious task of wading through books and books of work is often alleviated by the spasms of unconscious humor with which the candidate decorates his pages.

History is usually a prolific source of merriment, and it would appear that the authors of "1066 and All That" have many rivals in the realms of bowdlerised history. A number of candidates last year confused Wellington with Nelson, and Stephen Langton with Simon de Montfort. Some called the Crusaders "holy pilgrims," others "uncivilised savages."

"Avant-veille" was translated in Leaving French last year as "the young old man," while "Un chien qui tirait la langue" was rendered in various remarkable ways, such as "the dog who dragged his leg," "who was drawing his cart," "who was blistering his tongue," and "who was swearing about it."

Referring to an extract from Milton, a candidate in Leaving Honors English said that the "rhythm of the line sways from side to side even as Satan did."

OVER-PRODUCTION

EMBARRASMENTS OF SCIENCE

To The Editor

Sir—In these days of so-called over-production some large factories have closed and others have worked at half time till there was more money about to buy the surplus stocks. On the same principle could not the physics department at the University be closed, say, for two years, or give leave of absence on no pay, to the professors and students thereof, as a chance to enjoy a change on the land, where the surplus theory could be used up in practical application, even if the labor were manual? Of course, if no such work were available, they would be unemployed, as some other worthy men are. Laborers, once loud in their praise of labor-saving machinery, are now kicking at the (to them) delusive results this University science offers them. A reaction has set in, and the disappointed men declare there is a tremendous over-production of University science, and the "factories" from which it emanates should be closed! As the Americans have discovered, in tons of gold there is a suspicion that perhaps we might have too much of a good thing, and squirm with indigestion from lack of assimilation. Now the man in the street is angry with science, because (hence these tears) it has not eliminated work, perhaps not even lessened it, or given more pay for less work; rather, only made conditions for the laborer more devitalising because of the world-wide stereotyped mass production. Ah! but scientists, while admitting the "goods" they turn out are not all free of adulteration—even the theories of Darwin or Einstein—never promised, probably never thought, science, per se, was ever to be the panacea for humanity. The silly portion of the public expected, because they so desired, that science could shower on them all sorts of unearned blessings, which, before long, would allow everybody to live without work or worry, or, at any rate, revel (and rot) in a universal "soft job;" and the Devil stimulates that afternoon feeling of the lotus eaters, as he sees big business is to be done with his huge stocks of mischief in a world of idleness.—I am, Sir, &c.,
CHARLES SAWTELL, North terrace.

FORESTRY IN SOUTH RHODESIA

Twenty Thousand Acres In Five Years

Mr. T. L. Wilkinson, senior forestry officer in Southern Rhodesia, who returned to Adelaide yesterday by the Anchises to spend his furlough with his parents at Koorlinga, said that during the last five years more than 20,000 acres on private and Government land had been planted with trees, and the department's staff had been increased from two to 27.

"In the forestry reserves we are planting principally eucalypts and soft-wood trees," Mr. Wilkinson said. "About 75 per cent. of the plantations are eucalypts, which are showing wonderful growth, and are used for general timber purposes, as is the case in Australia. Southern Rhodesia has about 1,000 species of native trees, which are widely scattered throughout the country. Teak from Southern Rhodesia ousted Jarrah for several seasons on the South African market for railway sleepers, but Rhodesia lost the last contract, and Jarrah sleepers are again in demand.

Mr. Wilkinson, who left South Australia seven years ago to go to Oxford, is accompanied by his wife and two children.

And Ten Years Ago

At a meeting of the Senate of the University of Adelaide, Mr. Justice Poole was elected Warden.

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LIGHTER SIDE OF EXAMINATIONS

Examinations are in the air from this time onward, and few households can be free from a haunting anxiety as to where some junior members will appear in the lists. Ironically, summer is in the air, too. All outdoors may invite, with an endless variety of pastimes. The sea calls from Adelaide's front door, the hills from the back. Wireless is constantly retailing intensely interesting instalments of cricket news, yet the examinee must echo the bitter cry of the Cambridge poet, who asked scornfully: "But what does all this matter unto me, Whose mind is filled with indices and surds? — x squared plus 7 x plus 53 Equals eleven-thirds."

The candidate has to cut out delights and live laborious days (and evenings), and at the end his efforts may be ruined by some trifling malady. The ideal would be that he should present himself at any time, whenever feeling particularly fit for the ordeal. But examiners have to be considered, and they "call the tune." Bulk handling is their only safety. Though their struggles with an immense body of routine work do not gain any general sympathy, very severe must be the task of checking an endless repetition of shots at the same thing, and doing justice, not merely rough but precise, remembering always that any error will bring to some unknown youngster, and in some unknown home, a pang as keen as when a giant dies—as another poet puts it. The infinite number of atoms building up the mass; sensitive individualities by the hundred rolled out flat in the mill—such is the examination system.

Yet it is merely libellous to suggest—as was once the habit of University humorists—that examiners enjoy playing the part, not merely of stern Destiny, but of Fate the Avenger. Possibly the best parody in the language is one on "The Walrus and the Carpenter," concerning the Vulture ("which plucks its prey") and the Husbandman ("who makes his living by ploughing"); the capital letters refer to sections of an examination paper:—

"If seven A's and seven B's Were set to all the crowd, Do you suppose," the Vulture said, "That they would then be ploughed?" "I think so," said the Husbandman; "But pray don't talk so loud!"

"Examination fever" is the only fitting term for that strange cramping of the reasoning powers which can come with this kind of ordeal; as with an Adelaide student, dealing well and confidently—till the finish—with an easy simplification of fractions. They boiled down to 2,250 divided by 1,125—obviously 2, at a glance. But this was a solemn occasion, not one for glances. He proceeded elaborately by long division; it went once, and again exactly once—answer, as handed in, 11! It can only be hoped that, in such cases, the examiner plays the part of a kindly Providence, and regards the intention and the performance, as well as the actual result. For much still depends on the individual administering the system. One examiner might fairly just strike out that answer of 11 as worthless. Another might consider such apparent ignorance of the rudiments as damaging the whole paper. Another might scan the steps leading up to the stumble, the virtuous life before the arithmetical sin, and might allow a measure of merit and

of marks.

The modern tendency is to encourage this wider survey, to take into account the general performance of a child through the school career, of an undergraduate in the university course, instead of making all-important the test of a single sitting. This lessens the element of luck, but may bring back the old possibility of favoritism. In the days of viva voce examination, the English universities were full of stories of young noblemen whom sycophantic authorities felt bound to pass through somehow. The best of these tales usually refer to Divinity questions. One such "tenth transmitter of a foolish face" had been urged to recall any of the plagues of Egypt, and at last dredged up Locusts. "Yes, yes; the plague of locusts. And how was it abated—removed?" "Er—er" (with a flash of association), "John the Baptist?" On the other hand, a dull candidate with no aristocratic connections, having long been badgered by three examiners across the table, was asked at last, with savage irony, if he knew any Scripture at all, and replied desperately, from Revelation, "And behold! over against me were three great Beasts." Then there is the smart young man who had been advised by a crammer to make sure of the Kings of Israel and Judah, as the major and minor prophets, the other great stock question, had been set last time. But somehow the examiners asked for them again, major and minor. "Far be it from me," he said, "to draw such invidious distinctions between holy men. It is, however, a matter of plain historical certainty that the Kings of Israel and Judah were—" and he ran them off neatly. This anxiety to show that one knows everything but the question one has had the bad luck to meet is natural enough. The standard example is that of the boy asked, "who was it that never told a lie?" and, frankly puzzled, replying: "But I know any quantity of fellows as ain't him, Miss!"

At the other end of the scale is the weird legend of an English judge, of determined friendliness. "I always," he explained afterwards, "give a pass if half the questions are answered correctly. I asked him the riddle in Shelley's case. He said it was something to do with poetry—which was, of course, quite wrong. I then asked him the law of contingent remainder; he said he hadn't the slightest idea. This was obviously correct; so I passed him." Equally fantastic, but American and quite modern, is the son of a man with political "pull" being steered through elementary science. "Name the unit of electricity." "The watt, sir?" "Yes, the watt; quite right. And how is electricity usually conveyed?" "Why—er—". "Wire, yes; quite right. I think that will be sufficient." But the classic instance of personal prejudice is said to be true, of an eccentric but kindly judge who long ago was understood to be testing the fitness for admission, to the South Australian bar, of a youth destined for fame later "Charles Cameron Kingston? What are you the Kingston that plays football with my boy Ted? Oh, you'll do all right." And—as it chanced—he did. The modern examination has done away with all that kind of thing. It provides the acid test to which any individual can submit himself with confidence of a fair field and no favor. It allows comparison between schools widely scattered, and great or small. But it is still itself on trial; for nobody will suggest that the system is so perfect as not to be capable of further judicious and sympathetic amendment.

No Peace Prize This Year!

OSLO, November 26. The Nobel committee is not awarding a peace prize for 1932. This prize is awarded for distinguished work in the cause of peace.