

MAINSBRIDGE, Professor Bruce

Saw the Uni. of Tas. change dramatically in late fifties when Federal funding arrived - the whole character of the University changed. Prof. M. is very critical of quality of teaching during his undergraduate period.

Undergraduate 1947-51 approx. Science.

1947 a bumper year for ex-servicemen.

"If you read the Murray Committee Report in retrospect you realise there were doubts about [the quality of courses in] all post-secondary institutions in those days". M. is critical of the quality of Tasuni then. All the universities had taken on far too many students at short notice. Murray did a great deal to pull all universities out of the "post-war mess".

030 J.C. JAGER an international standard scholar but "teaching in general was atrocious - no, thoughtless". i.e. no thought for the students.

035 illust. of new chemistry laboratory and inadequacy of demonstrators. "1st year chem. clearly taught on the factory lines". The Professor's lectures (Kerr ??) were bad. Illustration of (Professor) Polya's teaching methods; also methods students adopted to pass exams.

070 Students were "not encouraged to complain". [Note: people's experience apparently different from M's]. Criticism of tutorials which followed on from JAGER's brilliant lectures. "No real interaction".

085 The Physics Department had no tutorials "but they were more interested in us. There was a very strong evangelical group PLYMOUTH BRETHREN. F.D. Cruickshank was the leader ... once saw him preaching in the street on a Sunday night, "and nearly passing out with embarrassment".

100 The ex-servicemen did have - through Federal funding - access to tutors that we didn't have.

It didn't impress me as a university - except for JAGER and S.W. CAREY. Tribute to Carey "he ran us over the hills and mountains of Tasmania at the rate of knots", had brilliantly illustrated lectures; had a keen feeling for the physical situation in systems.

[M. introduced Carey for Hon. Doctorate of Papua N.G. University]. Carey revived continental drift theory when he was a young man in New Guinea.

MAINSBRIDGE, Professor Bruce (contd.)

- 120 Cruickshank and the Optical Annexe.
 Q. Was the 3rd year Physics course too specialised on optics?
 A. Perhaps during the war. Details.
- 130 "The Fenton brothers" arrived back in Tasmania. Course reasonably balanced.
 "Very inefficient dissemination of knowledge" in Tasuni at that time. Found it hard to believe this due to increase in numbers to a mere 800. Perhaps the country was suffering from post-war exhaustion.
- 160 Discounts concept of Tasuni as small and isolated. re ORR case: "had the awful feeling that this was the sort of thing that would happen in Tasmania."
 Federal funding made ALL THE DIFFERENCE. Uni. of W.A. had similar problems.
- 180 Involvement - not in politics - but in very active S.C.M.
 Vice-President of Christ College in last year. There were much older ex-servicemen, cynical etc. - they were more politically aware than raw school leavers of which he was one. But Australia as a whole was politically quiet then - before PETROV affair.
- 210 Australia as a whole provincial then and now.
- 215 Escape from Australia. "My general education started then". Not interested in a specifically academic pursuit at that stage. Had pretty poor degree from Tasuni.
 Teaching in Tasmania briefly then in N. London. Staff there more intellectually alive". It was there he realised he would like to do research.
 Worked at Harwell; did Ph.D. at ANU, then left Australia immediately, and had no wish to come back. Good impression of ANU - did not feel he was back in the colonies while there. Would never have returned to Tasuni.
- 285 Life in Christ College.
 Didn't get in in first year (1947) because of rush of ex-servicemen.

MAINSBRIDGE, Professor Bruce (contd.)

Lived in 'digs' for a year. "That was dreadful".

(Query: Would ex-servicemen have had priority over school leavers?).

[Brief excursus on parents' EXCELLENT attitude to education].

Warden was Canon Barrett, nicknamed Baron Carrot (or Barren?).

Elderly retainer called Robbie who smelt, but made your bed. "Quaint European cooks" - a new thing in Australia in those days.

How traditional was Christ College?

It was on the surface. Chapel not compulsory but strong pressure from evangelical ex-servicemen.

Formal college meetings. New warden "a frightful prig from Cambridge" more interested in students than Barrett, but unable to cope with rough Australians.

There was a feeling of "academic activity" at CC "It had the germs of a real traditional College in it ... but it was pretty half mast".

385 Establishment of Jane Franklin Hall - involvement of the church and the S.C.M. - role of Canon Barrett very efficient, ended "all too quick" - apparently no querying of OFF- CAMPUS site, "as University of Tas. was already schizophrenic". - JFH half way between the two campuses.

425 The first pantie-raid (as it were) - Dinner swapping - all men at dinner at J.F.H., no women. Aplomb of Principal. "What have you done with my girls?"

465 Group spirit of Christ College "as a country boy it helped me enormously". Point system: honour system: fines for being out after midnight. Privileges of senior students.

In favour of collegiate system. Best time for young to leave home. But lack of privacy - college life not all good.

550 Summing up: In the forties most Australian universities were not achieving very highly.

Aust. universities do not/did not have enough variety - disturbing uniformity.

Contrast with American university system.

Tribute to Murdoch University, because of its attempt to be different.

END