

Legal Education

The Council has invited Mr. Justice *Sugerman* to be the Chairman of a committee appointed by the Council to consider a number of important questions in the field of legal education. This committee, which was appointed upon the recommendation of the Council's representative on the Faculty of Law, Kerr, Q.C., consists—in addition to Mr. Justice *Sugerman*, who has accepted the Council's invitation and Kerr himself—of the Chairman of the Council's committee administering the Reading Scheme, Reynolds, Q.C.; the Council's representatives on the Council of Legal Education, Robson and Henderson; and two of the part-time lecturers at the Law School, Hutley and Needham.

A number of important matters concerned with legal education and in particular with the relations between the legal profession and the Law School were discussed by Mr. Justice *Windeyer* in his paper "Learning the Law" at the recent Law Convention. His Honour dealt with questions such as whether the legal profession is recruiting new members in sufficient numbers to keep pace with the growth in Australian population; the nature of articles of clerkship and the desirability of their running to some extent concurrently with formal University instruction; the high failure rates and the contents of the Law School curriculum; the future of the part-time teacher, and the tendency to estrangement between teachers of Law and the profession.

All these matters are important at the present time because the Law School itself is entering upon a new phase of its development. Within the next few years, it is to move to a permanent site within the University grounds. A number of other developments of importance have taken place this year, including the establishment of a new curriculum; the decision, that students who fail a year more than twice, are to be excluded unless they can show good cause to a Faculty Sub-Committee; and the restriction being placed upon entry of students into the Law School.

There is also some concern about the quality of students entering the Law School by comparison with those entering other faculties, and the relationship between this situation and the high failure rate in the Law School. The effect of the adoption of the Wyndham Report upon the choice of an Arts-Law combination will also be of some significance.

All of these matters, including those raised by Mr. Justice *Windeyer*, indicate the desirability of the Bar, which has always been substantially recruited from graduates of the Law School, giving careful thought to its relations with the Law School and the law graduates seeking to practice at the Bar. Connected with this is the position of the student-at-law doing the Barristers' Admission Board course. The Bar has to consider whether it can be of any help to the student-at-law, both during his studentship and afterwards.

A compulsory Reading Scheme has been established, and a committee chaired by Reynolds, Q.C., has been organising lectures, the programme of which for the current half-year is printed below. What to include in these lectures is not unconnected with the question whether the modern degree course needs to be supplemented by further instruction in practical subjects and techniques, and in fields of law of a specialist kind needed in practice but not covered in the Law School.

Another matter of some importance is the role of the Bar in relation to post-graduate studies. Post-graduate studies will doubtless continue to be fostered in the Law School. Mr. Justice *Windeyer* elected not to discuss this matter of post-graduate studies in his Convention paper, but he did refer in passing to the precedent of the Committee for Post-Graduate Studies in Medicine, and one matter to be considered is whether this precedent may provide an indication of an approach to the problem of post-graduate legal studies in which the Bar may play a role.

The Council has also been considering ways and means of fostering learned discussion on legal topics, one possibility being that a learned oration might be arranged once a year. Other possibilities included lectures, seminars and discussions on specialist problems at advanced levels. Another proposal was to consider commissioning from time to time a series of lectures on selected topics.

All of these possibilities have been discussed. Some doubted whether busy practitioners would find time to participate. The Council has not crystallised any point of view on these matters up to the present time. However it appears to the Council that now is the time thoroughly to review the whole range of matters of educational significance to the Bar, including in particular its relation with the Law School and the Faculty of Law. The Council's view is, of course, that a close and co-operative relationship should be maintained between the Bar and the Faculty, and it is in the hope that it can make a contribution to this end that the committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice *Sugerman*, has been established. Elsewhere in this issue reference is made to the donation by the Association of a prize to the Medallist in Law each year. This will symbolise the close connection between the Law School and the Bar.

The committee has begun to meet and will, in the course of time, submit to the Council its proposals on all the matters mentioned above.

The Council feels that it is fitting for the Bar, at a time when it is taking fundamental steps to house itself for professional and communal purposes upon an adequate scale, to give careful attention to the education both of students and practitioners, which will go to determine the quality of the Bar in the years to come.