

Legal Education

This year, for the first time, the number of students desiring to enrol for first year at Sydney University Law School has been limited. The number of such students for 1963 was fixed at 350. Limitation on student entry has been applied to all faculties at the University with the object of ensuring that the total enrolment does not exceed a number which the Senate regards as the maximum which can be handled by the facilities of the University, present and contemplated.

The limitation of numbers at the Law School has resulted in applicants for enrolment being rejected this year.

The possible results of limitation of entry to the Law School upon the numbers of aspiring lawyers seeking entry through the Barristers Admission Board and Solicitors Admission Board courses was adverted to in the last issue of the Gazette (No. 5, December, 1962, page 4).

It is interesting to note what has happened in a similar situation in Victoria. There is, so far, no Faculty of Law at Monash University. In 1961, a quota was fixed for entry to the University of Melbourne Law School at 330 students. Some 360 students sought enrolment and of these some thirty were rejected. In 1962, 182 students seeking enrolment were rejected. This year, the number of rejections is about 250.

Following the dramatic rise in numbers of aspirants for enrolment in 1962, the Victorian Council of Legal Education decided that to maintain the standards of the profession, it was essential that the surplus not catered for by the University of Melbourne should be provided with a professional education and not left to rely upon their unaided efforts to pass the preliminary examinations without which they could not enter into articles. The formal fusion of the two branches of the profession in Victoria means of course that all practitioners are required, for admission, to have served articles.

A Legal Education Committee was therefore constituted by the Council of Legal Education, and was chaired by Mr. Justice Smith of the Supreme Court of Victoria. By 30th April, 1962 it had made arrangements with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to provide tuition on a basis similar to that of the Faculty of Law at Melbourne University in four subjects. This has, for 1963, been expanded to seven subjects.

The course so provided was in 1962 taken advantage of by fifty-one of the 182 rejects and nothing is known of the fate of the remaining 131.

In New South Wales, there has not yet been the explosion of numbers which took place in Melbourne, but no doubt it will occur here, too, and, in addition, with the imposition of quotas in all faculties at Sydney University, it may be expected that some students rejected in other faculties will seek to enter the Law School and so exclude students otherwise qualified. This would throw an increasing number of students into the Barristers' Admission Board and Solicitors' Admission Board courses.

As previously noted the Bar Council, acting in the knowledge of what happened in Victoria last year, has made and repeated strong representations for the estab-

lishment of a Law School at the University of New South Wales and awaits the outcome with an interest which is tempered by concern for those who fail to gain admission to the Law School.

There is general agreement that education for the law should as far as possible be conducted through one or other of the Universities and that the self-taught lawyer is deprived of advantages and associations which can be absorbed only from the atmosphere of university life.

The problem of increasing university facilities for the teaching of law needs to be tackled before the effect of the heavy post-war increase in the birth rate hits the profession, a threat which is in fact inevitable and imminent.

The N.S.W. Bar Association is becoming more interested in the welfare and education of students at law than has been the case in past years. It is at present considering admitting to student membership senior students who indicate that they have a real intention of practising at the Bar. These student members will probably be afforded limited privileges of lunching and dining in the Common Room and certain other privileges. Attention is also being given to the extension of some assistance to students at law in relation to their studies and to the need for them to become acquainted with the way of life at the Bar. These new developments will embrace both senior University students and senior students reading law for the examinations of the Barristers Admission Board provided they intend to practise.

Mena House Chambers

Chambers will be opened shortly for thirty-six barristers in Mena House, Macquarie Street where the Equity Courts are now housed. As a result of the acute shortage of chambers a meeting of the members of the junior bar without chambers and others wishing to begin practice was called by the Bar Council in November, 1962 after shares in the new wing of Wentworth Chambers were allotted. At the invitation of Meares Q.C., the meeting elected a committee of five comprising three practising barristers, (Traill (President), Sully (Secretary) and McNally) and two practitioners intending to come to the Bar during 1963 (B. Mahoney and C. Crawford).

A survey was made of all available accommodation in the area bounded by Phillip, Macquarie, Elizabeth, King and Bridge Streets. Both leasehold premises and freeholds were considered. In December, 1962, a scheme for the leasing of the ground floor and basement of Mena House was outlined to those counsel requiring chambers. The proposal received the strong support of the junior Bar and 65 applications for chambers were received.

The directors of Counsel's Chambers Limited were approached and the details of the scheme were worked out with the Board of that Company and in co-operation with the accommodation Sub-Committee of the Bar Association. At a conference attended by Kerr Q.C. and Reynolds Q.C., a suitable rental was negotiated with Mr. N. Clarke, the Managing Director of James Wallace Pty. Limited, the owner of Mena House. Counsel's Chambers Limited agreed to take a lease of the two floors for a period of ten years with an option of a further ten years. Counsel's Chambers Limited