

Prexy Speaks on The Emerald Isle

Probably you all know by now that our Prexy had the opportunity of visiting the British Isles, particularly the Land of the Shamrock, this summer. Although the main purpose of the trip was to visit friends and relatives, he also made a study of the educational situation there.

Great Britain, in the last two years, has been placed under a new educational law. The educational law. The educational system has previously been run by the privileged class with a curriculum designed to train men to be gentlemen of leisure. Now, that empire has become aware of the need of adding vocational courses to its curriculum and of offering education to all classes.

The older universities of Cambridge and Oxford are still in existence, but now many new provincial colleges have sprung up. For instance the ones at Manchester and at Leeds. The British call these "red-brick colleges." There are also so-called "peoples' colleges" and technical schools where training is offered at night to those who must work during the day.

The result of this change is that Great Britain now has a very democratic organization in its educational system. An amazing step forward in their system is their attitude toward religion. It is now compulsory to teach religion and morals beginning in the primary schools and continuing throughout the system. They do this by local educational units. These local units work out (in cooperation with all the churches) an agreed syllabus. Dr. Martin believes that this has "great possibilities" and also that they are "ahead of us" in working this out.

England has always had a system of scholarships offering opportunities to those who had ability but lacked money, but this only helped a few. The new system opens the door of opportunity to countless more since the fees are kept low in the new colleges.

As yet the colleges are not open completely to civilians. They are

(Continued on Page Two)

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(Continued from Page One)

made up of only 20% civilians and 80% veterans. Although the British Isles furnish no government aid the veterans are flocking to the universities. Very few of these vets are married, partly because there is no provision for housing married students.

Academic work in the colleges of the British Isles is on a higher standard than ours. A B. A. degree from a British university being about equal to our graduate work. The social program is not emphasized at all and the athletic program is limited almost entirely to intermurals. They are much more serious in their outlook on education. Their main emphasis is on the humanities. A small amount of sociology and psychology are offered but the British don't have a wide variety of courses. They just don't believe in them. And, Dr. Martin says, "I don't either!" He believes its better to really know a few things.

The purpose of the British Universities, now, is threefold: first—to reach as many as possible; second to develop citizenship and moral and religious life; and third—to give vocational preparation.

Great Britain (and some agencies in the U. S.) is very anxious to en-

courage graduate work there. However, with the housing problem as is there and because of other factors, there is some doubt as to whether or not American students would enjoy it now. (Perhaps work under those conditions would be good for luxury-loving Americans.)

While in the British Isles, Dr. Martin visited Queens University in Belfast and Trinity College in Dublin. He also had contact with the University of London and with several of the provincial colleges. He met a few students, but most of his contacts were with faculty members. He found that one or two of his Irish classmates are now faculty members. One is head of the department of Bio-Chemistry at Queens University.

Dr. Martin feels that whereas years ago we looked to Europe for the best educational system, now this country offers the best opportunities.

It is interesting to note that there are very few women in the British colleges and universities although there are more now than there used to be. The older universities still don't offer degrees to women; however, some of them allow the women to attend some classes. As a whole, the English still don't believe in co-education. They are rather slow in grasping the idea of equality of men and women in the field of education.