

accurate summary of the petition presented by the Society against the grant of the Charter sought for by the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons.

"The facts therein stated are the main grounds on which, without again repeating them, the Society contends that a very strong case is made in its favour for representation both in the Senate and the other departments of the Teaching University.

"The Society is aware that the report of the Commissioners does not specially assign a representative to the Society on the Senate of the proposed University, but it is urged that such report did not profess to lay down any hard or fast lines on which the Senate should be framed, and further, that the University of London has itself departed from the suggestions of the Commissioners by increasing the number of proposed members of that body.

"The very fact that the University of London feels itself at liberty to alter the scheme of the Commissioners in this respect, gives the Society the opportunity of pressing its claim that the scheme should be still further amended by giving representation to the Society.

"The Society feels that it has been placed somewhat at a disadvantage by what occurred before the Royal Commission. The origin of that Commission was mainly the consideration of the petition for a charter for a Medical University presented by the two Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons.

"The whole weight of the Society's petition and evidence was directed against such charter being granted, and in that respect it entirely succeeded. But it was not specially invited to give its views, and never, in fact, did give its views in any way on the constitution or function of a general Teaching University for London. Had it done so it would, doubtless, have been able to show effectually that a very close analogy exists between the position held by the Incorporated Law Society (to whom the Report of the Commissioners has assigned representation) as regards the Law, and that of the Society as regards Medicine. The solicitor may be termed the 'general practitioner' of the Law, and if the body which represents him is to be entitled to representation, and to all the advantages arising therefrom, there would seem to be the strongest reason for placing the Society of Apothecaries of London in an equally good position.

"Lastly, if the Senate, or committees formed out of the Senate, as suggested by the Report of the Commissioners, are to elect the examining boards for the various faculties, the exclusion of the Society from the Senate of the proposed University seems still more difficult to understand. The Society urges with confidence that a Teaching or Examining Board in the Medical Faculty, from which any influence of the Society is to be absolutely and altogether excluded, would be imperfect, unpractical, and wanting in that liberal and broad basis which is essential to its efficiency.—I have the honour to be your lordship's very obedient servant,

"EDWIN CHABOT, Master."

"SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 9th with copy of a letter addressed by your Society to the Lord President of the Council, and I will submit these communications to the Senate in due course.—I am, etc.,
Burlington Gardens, W. "ARTHUR MILMAN."

INTERCHANGEABLE EXAMINATIONS.

SIR,—Reading Mr. Edward Tenison Collins's letter on the above has induced me to write a few lines. As a student of University College, London, I went through the same curriculum as the London University men; I had passed the Oxford Senior Local with honours, but this did not exempt me from the Matriculation. Therefore I was obliged to be content with the M.R.C.S.Eng., L.S.A.Lond. Then I went up to the University of Cambridge; here neither the Mathematics, French, nor English of the Senior Oxford was of any use, so I had to do the "Little Go" in Classics and Mathematics at 25, that is, do schoolboys' work again. Why are not the subjects at one examination, if passed, exemptions for the exactly identical subjects in another examination? This curse of modern education—the multiplication of examinations in name, number, and standard—has spoiled the chances of many a good man for his M.D. degree; by the

time he has satisfied the examiners on the same subjects twenty times his health and pocket are wrecked. If the exemptions were allowed many a man would be happy, before launching on private practice, to devote at any university two or three years to original research for his M.D. or M.S. degree, provided that the three years were clear of this vexatious repetition of examinations.—I am, etc.,
Bexhill-on-Sea.

EDWARD H. RYAN-TENISON.

MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH AND PRIVATE PRACTICE.

SIR,—In an annotation under this heading in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of May 2nd, approval is expressed of the principle that medical officers of health in the metropolis should give the whole of their time to their official work. Allusion also is made to a West End district which has recently appointed a medical officer of health at a salary of of £350 a year, but has not asked him to devote his whole time to his duties.

Now, I think the position of the vestry of this district is perfectly intelligible. Their late medical officer of health did not devote his whole time to his duties, yet his work was productive of such excellent results as the steady diminution of the death-rate and the elevation of the parish to quite a front rank amongst metropolitan sanitary districts for its good sanitary condition and sound methods of administration. The vestry, therefore, was perfectly satisfied with the conditions under which such work had been done, and determined to appoint his successor on the same lines. It was recognised, also, that to obtain a successor of the calibre of their late medical officer it would be necessary either to offer a large salary for his whole time, or to appoint at a smaller salary giving him leave to retain such private work and emoluments—not being general medical practice—as would make it worth the while of such specially qualified men to offer themselves for the post. Is it wonderful if the vestry, believing that by the latter method they could get as good a man who would do as much good work, should prefer it as being far the most economical?

On the general question I have always been of opinion that medical officers of health of large or populous districts should not be in ordinary medical practice. Public health work and medical practice are incompatible. One or the other is sure to suffer, more especially the former than the latter. But medical men who look for their future to sanitary work are now receiving a very prolonged and expensive training in this branch of science; they are obtaining posts as professors, lecturers, and examiners to the medical schools, colleges, and universities, and in some cases obtain lucrative practice as sanitary experts in the investigation of infectious disease outbreaks, and in reporting upon the sanitary conditions of hospitals, schools, institutions, etc. Is it not desirable that medical officers of health should be recruited from the ranks of those who by training, by their position as teachers and examiners, and by their special experience, are taking a leading part in their own department? And yet they will not be attracted to the public sanitary service if they are required to resign their appointments and are debarred from all private work, for the vestries are not in the least likely to offer salaries sufficiently large to compensate for the loss such men must actually sustain.

It also must not be forgotten that a medical man who engages to devote all his time to the duties of a medical officer of health becomes at once a vestry official pure and simple, and loses in the eyes of his board much of his independent position as a man of science first, an adviser of the board after that. There is also this to be said, that a medical officer thus tied down loses those opportunities of acquiring a wide and varied experience and a mature judgment in sanitary matters generally, which consulting sanitary work outside his parish and contact with the outer world give him, and a tendency would in time be produced towards a narrowing of views and a condition of unprogressiveness from the limitation of his experience to a certain prescribed area on the map of London. Such a result, in its way, would be deplorable and antipathetic to real sanitary advancement in his own parish.

I venture to think that the subject is not yet by any means