To make this study more complete one would need to show the tendency, that is, whether the custom of setting senior finals at the same time as the finals for other students is increasing, or *vice versa*, and whether excusing seniors from finals is becoming more or less prevalent. The questionnaire did not provide for this aspect of the matter. It was arranged so as to elicit the information sought speedily, and with the least amount of effort on the part of college and university registrars to whom it was sent. This much, however, may be said. Three eastern institutions, each with an income of at least $175,000 a year, have tried the method of earlier examinations for seniors and have abandoned it. This was learned from other sources. One of the cards, also, indicated that an eastern institution in the $100,000 income class, which is now following that practise, is seriously considering a change to the method of scheduling the final examinations for all students at the same time.

In regard to excusing from examinations, it may be said that the return postals from two institutions indicated that they are contemplating adopting this method, but both are in the class with an annual income of from $5,000 to $25,000, and in the North Central section. Fifteen postals, rather evenly distributed throughout the country, indicated by such expressions as "Never," "All stand examination," "Not excused under any condition," "All must take both mid-year and final examinations," a decided opposition to any such practise.

A few institutions indicated that the difficulty of grading seniors carefully, when their examinations come at the regular time, just before commencement, is met by putting senior subjects, so far as compatible with a rather wide range of electives, early in the examination period, which, it was shown, extends through one or two weeks.

In attempting to state briefly what this study has shown, I may not assume that there is any method that may be regarded as absolutely best. A practise which is generally favored may not be the best. It is the small group of institutions, or a single institution, which *may* by experiment discover a method superior to one long tried and approved. None the less, the practise of a decided majority of the better equipped institutions, judging from their annual income, is very significant. That majority is 48 to 25, as given on page 182. While not final, their insistence upon scheduling senior examinations at the same time as for other students, and their tendency not to excuse seniors from the second semester or spring term examinations, the majority against being about the same as in the other case, would seem to indicate what is best at present.

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WILLIAM McMURTRIE[1]

WILLIAM MCMURTRIE was born on March 10, 1851, on a farm near Belvidere, N. J. He was an active, energetic lad at school and at Lafayette College, where he entered in the mining engineering course in 1868, graduating in 1871. While in college he was a member of the Franklin Literary Society and of the Zeta Psi fraternity. Among his classmates were the late John Meigs, proprietor of the famous Hill School of Pottstown; Dr. W. B. Owen, a well-known and influential member of the faculty of Lafayette College; D. B. King, of New York City, and H. P. Glover, of Mifflinburg, Pa.

In 1872 McMurtrie became assistant chemist in the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., Dr. R. J. Brown being the chief chemist. Dr. Wiley says:

[1] Several biographical notices of Dr. McMurtrie have already appeared—one by Dr. C. P. McKenna in *The Percolator*, issued regularly by the Chemists' Club of New York City (June 20, 1913), a more extended notice by Dr. H. W. Wiley in the *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* (July, 1913, p. 616). The last named contains a bibliography by Douglas C. McMurtrie. I have drawn upon both these sources. The dates are from Dr. Stonecipher's "Bibliographical Catalogue of Lafayette College" and from "Who's Who in America."

On entering the laboratory, I found one assistant at work; a young man with jet-black hair and pleasing appearance, seated on a high stool before a desk, attending to some of the details of an analysis. . . . This was my first meeting with Dr. McMurtrie and the beginning of a friendship which continued unabated until the time of his death. . . . Within the next two years from the time of which I speak, Dr. Brown retired from the position of chief chemist of the Department of Agriculture and Dr. McMurtrie took his place. He was at that time, though only twenty-one years of age, well trained in chemistry, as training was regarded in those days. . . . When he entered Lafayette College there was no special course of chemistry, so he took mining engineering because in that he could have the best chemical training which the college afforded.

The story of how he was selected for the succession to Dr. Brown reveals one of the characteristics of his whole life, namely, unselfishness. Judge Watts was at the time Commissioner of Agriculture. When Dr. Brown retired a number of applications for this position came in. Commissioner Watts called young McMurtrie into his office and asked him what he thought of the qualifications of the applicants. He said he did not think any one of them was properly qualified for the position. Commissioner Watts then asked him if he thought he could do the work and would like the position. He replied that the idea of succeeding Dr. Brown had never entered his mind, but he thought he could do better than any of the men who were being considered.

In 1876 he married Helen M. Douglas, who with his son, Douglas C., survives him.

In 1878 he became agent of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and superintendent of the agricultural section at the Exposition Universelle at Paris. His account of the work is contained in the first volume of the Report of the U. S. Commissioners, page 113. An interesting confirmation of Dr. McMurtrie's modesty is to be inferred from a certain letter contained in the volume just cited from Mr. McCormick, Commissioner General, to Secretary Evarts, in which he states that "there is an eager movement upon the part of certain Americans here to secure decorations from the French government." Dr. McMurtrie's name does not appear in this list, but in 1883 he was made a Chevallier du Merite Agricola "because of service rendered in agriculture."

From 1879–1882 he was special agent of the Department of Agriculture in agricultural technology and wrote several valuable reports, only a part of which were published. Among these were reports on "The Mineral Nutrition of the Vine," "A Report on the Culture of Sumac in Sicily," on the "Culture of the Sugar Beet," on the "Examination of Raw Silks," and "A Report upon an Examination of Wools and other Animal Fibers." His reports upon "Sugar Beet Culture" and upon "Wool" are considered especially valuable. The subject last named he returned to, publishing two further reports in 1887 and 1901.

In 1882 McMurtrie became professor of chemistry at the University of Illinois at Champaign, in 1884 chemist of the Illinois State Board of Agriculture and in 1886 chemist of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

In 1888 he came to New York as chemist of the New York Tartar Company. He took charge of their factory in Brooklyn and revolutionized the methods of manufacture, trying one method after another until he finally succeeded in making perfectly pure cream of tartar and tartaric acid on a manufacturing scale at a reasonable cost. In further prosecuting the work of the Royal Baking Powder Company he organized a complete factory for making tin containers for their product. This was highly successful and is still considered a model factory for this purpose.

Dr. McMurtrie was very much interested in the reorganization of the American Chemical Society, which was undertaken in 1893 when Dr. Wiley became president. I was then editing the *Journal of Analytical and Applied Chemistry* and Dr. Wiley came to me with the suggestion that I had better either give up my own journal and run the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* as editor or edit both journals. I told him at once that I would decline the second proposition but would hold the first under advisement, and I finally consented. When the arrangement was concluded it was June. We had two papers and were six numbers in arrears. By the end

of the year twelve numbers had been issued and the membership had begun to increase. At that time, if my memory is correct, there were less than 500 members, many of whom were in arrears for dues. During my editorship, which continued for nine years, Dr. McMurtrie was a very active member of the council and in 1900 became president. He was ready to sacrifice his time and means in the service of the society and expected the rest of us to do as much. The salary list during these years was ridiculously small, yet a tremendous amount of work was accomplished.

Dr. McMurtrie was a man of fine presence, agreeable manners and great kindness of heart. He died May 24, 1913.

EDWARD HART

PUBLICATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE Secretary of Agriculture has announced new plans of publication work for that department. There has been an independent series of bulletins and circulars in each of the thirteen publishing bureaus, divisions and offices of the department. These have been discontinued and will be superseded by the *Journal of Research* for printing scientific and technical matter, and by a departmental series of bulletins, written in popular language for selected and general distribution. By this plan the confusion that has resulted from the multiplicity of series of publications will be avoided, and the saving of a considerable sum will annually be effected.

Under the new plan the department will discontinue the general distribution of matter so scientific or technical as to be of little or no use to the lay reader. It will supply technical information only to those directly interested and capable of using scientific analyses, and of understanding the results of research work couched in scientific terms. A larger amount of information in popular form which the average reader can immediately apply to his own direct advantage, and thereby increase the agricultural productiveness and the health of the nation, will hereafter be distributed.

The highly scientific matter heretofore published indiscriminately in bulletins and circulars will hereafter be published only in the newly established *Journal of Research,* which will be issued about once a month. It will be royal octavo, of the scientific magazine type, from 75 to 100 pages, 12 numbers to constitute a volume. Such of the matter in the *Journal* as seems to merit additional circulation may be issued in the form of reprints or separates. The *Journal,* for the present at least, will be limited to the publication of the results of research made by the various bureaus, divisions and offices, but it may be extended to include the scientific research work of the state agricultural experiment stations, in which event two editors representing these stations will be added to the editorial committee. Extensive scientific articles, embodying a complete report of research investigations, will be considered as monographs, and may be published as supplements to the *Journal.*

Permission will be given to specialists to publish technical reports or even monographs in journals of scientific societies or technical magazines specializing in highly restricted fields of scientific endeavor.

The *Journal* will be distributed free to agricultural colleges, technical schools, experiment stations, libraries of large universities and certain government depositories and institutions making suitable exchanges; also to a restricted list of scientific men. Copies of the *Journal* will be sold to miscellaneous applicants by the superintendent of documents, Government Printing Office, and possibly an annual subscription price will be affixed, as is done with the *Experiment Station Record.*

The *Monthly Crop Reporter* will no longer be published. The crop statistics will be collected as heretofore, and telegraphic and news summaries of these statistics will continue to be issued to the press. The printed *Crop Reporter* was discontinued because it did not bring the information into the hands of the recipients until from 10 to 17 days after the really important news had been circulated by telegraph and printed in the daily press throughout the United States and Europe, the statistical information, therefore, reaching the