

examine the qualifications and continuing development of engineers throughout the world. The ultimate aim, still a long way off, is international recognition of qualifications, so that an engineer from Poland, say, can have his qualifications recognized in Ethiopia. This committee will also help to speed the exchange of ideas in the education of engineers, and should help developing countries which are setting up departments of engineering. The other project started by the federation is to examine the possibilities of a world-wide information system, for dissemination and retrieval. This committee will be collaborating with the abstract board of ICSU. The federation has also started on a more abstract project, that of drawing up an international code of conduct for professional engineers.

The general work of the federation will be financed from contributions from member countries. The special committees, on the other hand, are each charged with responsibility for finding sources of funds for their investigations. Dr Gainsborough is hoping that Unesco, OECD and other international organizations will see the federation as a body worthy of support. There seems every likelihood that this hope will be justified.

No Student Power at Oxford

from our Oxford Correspondent

It was too much to expect the Hebdomadal Council to comment other than adversely on the petition submitted to the Privy Council for various reforms in government of the University of Oxford. One of the three chief proposals of the petition, intended to give undergraduates direct representation in university affairs, would indeed have been without precedent in many less staid institutions. In its letter to the Privy Council, the Hebdomadal Council took an optimistic view of relations within the colleges between undergraduates and senior members, and justified its rejection of the proposal because the Student Representation Council is not highly regarded by the undergraduates themselves. The argument is circular; the SRC is not even recognized by, let alone allowed to participate in, the university government. Its lack of prestige among students is a reflexion of this. But in any case, the council's dismissal of the proposition will doubtless be justified shortly by the anarchic demise of the London School of Economics whose Board of Governors has decided to admit students to certain committees (see *Nature*, 217, 699; 1968).

A second proposal in the petition is that the convocation of the university's MAs should be made into an active forum, rather than consigned to impotence as it will be under the Franks Commission's recommendations. This proposal indeed seems "unnecessary and undesirable". As the Hebdomadal Council points out, many members of convocation live abroad, and most are too busy to attend sessions.

The rejection of the third proposal of the petition, outlined at some length in *Nature* (217, 500; 1968), is not so easily defended. The Hebdomadal Council does not deny that, in the disciplinary procedure of the university, the proctors act both as judges and policemen, so that there is a possibility of bias in the judgment of students' misdeeds. Yet the council (which, it is worth noting, includes proctors) announces its satisfaction with the present arrangements. The

council's claim that students are made aware of their right to appeal against proctorial decisions to an independent committee is indeed true. But this has no bearing on what is requested by the petition. If the proctors confined themselves to the carrying out of petty university regulations, such as the licensing of student's cars, then the reform of proctorial procedure would scarcely be worth the attention of the Privy Council, but the Oxford proctors, unlike their Cambridge counterparts, show little reluctance to act in cases where junior members have broken the law of the land, rather than simply that of the university. The proctors' terms of reference are wide and their punishments sometimes severe, and it is only reasonable that the slightest possibility of bias should be eliminated.

Among the signatories of the petition, senior members of the university outnumber juniors by 101 to 29. In its letter to the Privy Council the Hebdomadal Council doubts whether the request of 100 out of the 1,600 members of the congregation (the "parliament of senior members") is enough to justify discussion of major constitutional changes. Yet it is well known that few senior members attend the congregation. Important issues have been decided with less than 200 people present. Outside observers might be expected to be surprised that so great a demand still exists for new reforms 18 months after the Commission of Inquiry issued its report. It will be interesting to see how this consideration weighs with the Privy Council as it studies the petition and the reply.

More Teachers

THE latest volume of *Statistics of Education*, 1966 (published by HMSO, price £1) starts on a cheerful note, for between October 1965 and October 1966, the number of students training to be teachers in England and Wales rose by more than 12,000, bringing the total to 88,823. This represents an increase of nearly 75 per cent over the figure of 50,942 for 1962. In addition there were 1,308 men and 654 women in one-year supplementary or advanced courses, and courses of one year for the teaching of handicapped children also showed a marked increase for the same period. Less reassuring is the decline in the proportion of students successfully completing training in both junior and secondary courses, even though the numbers and proportions in infant/junior and junior/secondary courses increased. Another unsatisfactory trend was the fall between 1963 and 1966 in the numbers of courses for secondary school teachers and students for them.

The increase in the total teaching force from 321,000 in 1962 to 349,000 for 1966 was most striking in the colleges of education, where the number of teachers was more than doubled. A 70 per cent increase for further education establishments is also a striking feature. Up to March 31, 1966, 20 per cent of teachers in maintained primary and secondary schools were graduates—the proportions ranging from 75 per cent of teachers in grammar schools to some 4 per cent in primary schools. About 33 per cent of teachers in establishments of further education were graduates, and graduates also accounted for more than 60 per cent of teachers in direct grant grammar schools.

But the figures showing the wastage of qualified teachers are dismally high. Thus between 1965 and 1966, 9,000 qualified men teachers entered maintained