

UNIVERSITY FEDERATION IN TORONTO

SIR ROBERT FALCONER

President of the University of Toronto.

THE question of university federation has for the past two years been engaging the earnest attention of those who are interested in the higher education of the Maritime Provinces. Now its realisation is partially effected by the decision of the Governors of King's College, Windsor, to unite with Dalhousie University. It is to be hoped that before long other Maritime universities will join their forces, and help to create an institution the united strength and quality of which will be worthy of the traditions and potentiality of this part of the Dominion.

University federation is a distinctly Canadian creation. There is nothing like it in the United States, though students of the academic problems of that country have often expressed the opinion that some of them would be solved were a similar system to be adopted in their State universities. The closest approach is to be found in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge with their constituent colleges, though the parallel is not very close, nor were these the historical exemplars. In Canada ideas that originated in different British universities took shape under the pressure of local necessities to produce federation as it now exists in Toronto, and to a lesser degree in the University of Manitoba.

The essential character of university federation is a co-ordination of colleges, each preserving its own freedom and character, within and under the limitations set by the university. These limits are in the main the standards required for the degree of Bachelor of Arts which are determined by the university Faculty of Arts and the Senate. The college provides instruction in the languages for which the necessary outlay is smaller than for most other departments, but—being given as it is chiefly in the earlier years of the course—this instruction is a sufficient nucleus to form the type of teaching that the college wishes to make influential in the character of its students. The object of the college is to preserve within the university a society which will perpetuate the definite ideals of its founders. Hitherto these have been those of the Church which

established it. But there is no reason why in the future a college should not be founded by some wealthy benefactor or group of persons, unaffiliated with any religious denomination, and thus approximating more to the Oxford or Cambridge type. Its administration might be in the hands of a body of Trustees or Fellows, who in admitting students would make their own selection in such a way as best to preserve the atmosphere of their community life. The federation system is thus very elastic. Coming from the society of his own college the undergraduate in Arts receives instruction, along with those from other colleges, in the university subjects such as history, economics, and the sciences, for which expensive library and laboratory equipment is required. He shares in the larger life of the university, his interests are broadened, his sympathies enlarged, but the most distinctive element in his education may be the spirit which he receives in his own historic college—his most intimate academic home. In this respect the federated colleges of Toronto fulfil a similar function to those of Oxford and Cambridge, in that they are the hearths of the humanities and the chief sources of literary influence; while the university, with its modern equipment, is the centre of scientific inspiration and the foster-parent of research.

I have already remarked that the federation idea originated and has been developed in Canada. A review of the history of university education in Ontario will show how it came into being. Not the least interesting phase of that history is the reflection in the academic sphere of the wider struggles of the political arena. Frequently ecclesiastical leaders are seen standing by, earnestly encouraging the contestants who have espoused their views, for they were able to persuade themselves that things spiritual would be likely to strengthen or decay according as Tory or Reformer was in control of the affairs of the Province. This earnestness had its noble impulse in the conviction of the value of education which the leaders of the earliest settlers brought with them, and also in their belief that education should be directed by teachers with definite religious views. Each Church also felt constrained to provide facilities for the education required for its own clergy, which naturally became the controlling influence in the Arts curriculum; though it should be borne in mind that in the early part of the nineteenth century the course for the Arts degree had been for many years almost standardized both in Britain and in America.

As early as 1798 the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, on the advice of Governor Simcoe, set apart 500,000 acres of Crown lands for the support of four grammar schools and a university. The

schools were established shortly afterwards, but the university did not begin to take shape until Dr. John Strachan obtained a Royal Charter creating the University of King's College in 1827. Instruction however did not commence until 1843, when the college was opened with a staff of four competent professors. Ever since the teaching of Arts has continued unbroken with increasing effectiveness. Though Dalhousie's charter was granted in 1819, and McGill's in 1821, in neither university can continuous instruction in Arts be traced back as far as in Toronto. King's College, Windsor, and King's College, Fredericton (now the University of New Brunswick), are the only two institutions which have a longer active life than Toronto or Victoria College, now federated with it, which was opened in 1841. Dr. John Strachan stands forth as one of the most influential figures in the educational and even the political life of Canada. He brought with him the academic standards of Aberdeen and St. Andrew's. He was a great teacher in the grammar school of Cornwall, where he moulded with his own views at least one other man who became prominent in ecclesiastical and educational affairs; but of even greater importance was his advice to his friend, James McGill, to devote his fortune to the founding of the college which to-day bears his name. He was a man of intense convictions. What he saw, he saw very clearly. But the range of his vision was too narrow, and the charter which he secured for King's College, Toronto, would have made it almost exclusively a preserve for those who belonged to the Church of England, though it was to be supported out of revenues derived from lands that were set aside by the Province.

From the day the charter was granted, troubles began. After a few years the restrictions were modified, and when teaching commenced in 1843 the institution was very different from that described in the original charter. But these changes were not considered sufficient by the other Churches, so the Methodists under Dr. Ryerson established Victoria University at Coburg in 1841; the Church of Scotland was granted a charter for Queen's University at Kingston also in 1841; and the supporters of each claimed that they had a right to Government support. Then came Robert Baldwin at the head of the Reformers who hoped to solve the university question by secularising King's College. This was done in 1849, and in 1850 King's College became the University of Toronto without any denominational affiliation. With heroic determination and quenchless ardour Dr. Strachan started out upon a fresh crusade, and raised funds in Canada and England for a new university to be connected

with the Church of England. He was successful, and in 1852 Trinity University was opened in a beautiful building set in a spacious park two miles west of the site of old King's College. The Methodists and the Church of Scotland were not satisfied that the secularized University of Toronto should receive all the revenues from the original endowment, and that they should struggle along without similar help. A new University Act was therefore introduced in 1857, in the hope that they might be pacified by inclusion in a State system. By this Act the University of Toronto was separated from University College and modelled upon the University of London; it became simply an examining body with the power of conferring degrees in all faculties. The Government took over all the university endowments and used them for the maintenance of Arts instruction in University College. Help was withdrawn from the professional faculties of Medicine, Law and the Department of Engineering, which had always been connected with the university, and they had to go their own way, to the great detriment of the professions in the Province. Medical men created three competing medical schools, attaching them to Trinity, Victoria or Toronto; engineering dropped out for a generation; legal teaching came under the Benchers who establish a school in connection with Osgoode Hall, and it has ever since remained so. While McGill kept on developing its great faculties, which for a generation have enjoyed a reputation far beyond the bounds of Canada, professional education received little university support in Ontario until the Act of 1906 put it on a new basis; and to-day the professional faculties of the University of Toronto have taken the place they should have occupied long before.

In the Act of 1857 the possibility of federation was provided for. But for a generation it remained little more than an idea. Neither Victoria nor Queen's would become a constituent college of the University of Toronto along with University College, and of course Trinity University would have scorned the thought. University College, however, was made secure of most of the endowment by the erection in 1859 of the magnificent Norman building which is still one of the noblest academic structures on the continent.

During the generation subsequent to 1857 vast changes took place in western civilization. Science rose majestically, with imperious demands which startled those who had taken for granted that true education should not depart far from the old paths. Nor was she contented with one ultimatum. Decade after decade her confidence increased, and her spirit and methods have revolutionized the teaching of even such subjects as history, political thought,

philosophy; they have almost called modern economics into being. This meant that the universities were faced with enormous expenditure for the construction and upkeep of libraries and laboratories. The extent of these changes is shown by a comparison of the report of the Royal Commission on Oxford and Cambridge issued in 1853 with that issued in 1922. Almost a new world has come into being in the interval. The same result is seen as one passes from the Harvard of the middle of the nineteenth century to the new Johns Hopkins University in the eighties, to the Harvard of the end of the century and the modern State universities in America. Denominations could not meet the cost of adequate university instruction in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Larger sources for income had to be discovered, whether in the State or in vast private wealth. An incidental but important factor in the situation was the change that had passed over denominational prejudices. In the Protestant Churches religion had come to be less rigidly dependent upon doctrinal expression. The air had become softer and more genial; differences of opinion did not take on quite as sharp and clear-cut an outline as in the earlier Victorian period. All these elements were paving a way on which the advance of federation might again be attempted with greater hope of success.

In the eighties the pressure of finance and a wider educational vision led to the revival of the question of federation in a changed atmosphere. Victoria University, under the direction of Dr. Nelles and Dr. Burwash, but not without serious opposition, left Coburg and came to Toronto in 1890. As is the case in all important advances, the initial difficulties were not a few, but as the years passed these for the most part disappeared. The new policy proved so successful that in 1904 Trinity University, under the leadership of Provost Macklem, again not without opposition, entered federation; and in 1908 St. Michael's College, which belongs to the Basilian order, became a federated college. These three institutions teach students in Arts. The other federated colleges, Knox and Wycliffe, are entirely theological schools. Their relation to the university is closer than that of the "affiliated" colleges in Dentistry, Agriculture, Veterinary Science and Pharmacy.

The federated Arts colleges maintain their own institutions, appoint and support their own teaching staff, and have their students under their own discipline throughout their academic career. Also to meet their desires an option in religious knowledge is offered in every course for the Arts degree. In the Council of the Faculty of Arts, with which originate all courses for the B. A. degree and all changes in any of these courses, the teaching staffs, including perman-

ent lecturers of all the colleges and of the university itself, have equal rights. From this Council recommendations are sent up to the Senate, which is a final court of review and which gives authority for their promulgation. If there is doubt as to the wisdom of any change, the Senate refers the matter back to the Council, and it never takes final action of its own on a subject concerning any faculty without that faculty having had the fullest opportunity of expressing its opinion in regard to it. The Senate is a large body on which every department of the university and even outside institutions of higher education have their representatives. The Head of each federated Arts and Theological college and the Dean of each faculty has a place *ex officio*, and in addition to other representatives from the colleges and faculties, the affiliated professional colleges, the Law Society, the high school teachers of the Province and graduates of all departments are duly represented. Thus in that body questions of large educational policy get discussion from a variety of points of view. If a change in Arts or Medicine, for example, is proposed, other departments which may be affected may ask the reason and if necessary have it delayed for further consideration. The idea of inclusiveness is a ruling feature of the Senate, which has proved to be a most useful body for interchange of opinion and for testing proposals by an appeal to a wide educational constituency.

For sixteen years I have presided at nearly every meeting of the Council of the Faculty of Arts and of the Senate, and I have never seen any division on any academic question decided upon college or denominational lines. Within that unity I have observed great diversity of opinion and perfect freedom of expression, but also the utmost courtesy in supporting variant views, and respect for the aims and ideals of the constituent colleges, faculties and departments.

Each undergraduate must register in his own college and also in the university and so is a member of both, but his fee for instruction goes to his college, that for examination to the university. The students play on their college teams from which the best athletes are chosen for the university teams, and all men meet in common in the Hart House. Examinations are conducted with pseudonyms by the university, and any college may carry off the first honours; but the degree is that of the University of Toronto, though the name of the college from which the graduate comes is also engraved on his diploma.

It may be safely affirmed that instead of the rivalry of colleges leading to a deterioration of standards, the Arts degree of

the university has never stood higher than it does to-day. Federation, moreover, has resulted in a great development of the professional faculties. The constitution of 1857 led to the injurious disassociation of professional education from the university; but the unification of college interests has again brought together competing schools of Medicine, and has formed such a consolidated interest behind the provincial university that the successive Governments have been able to give it during the past seventeen years remarkable and increasing support. For three years the Legislature has made an annual grant of nearly \$1,500,000 for maintenance, with additional large amounts for new buildings. What this generous support has made possible is best appreciated by those who know the present condition of the professional faculties of the university.

Federation has resulted in each of the constituent universities benefiting by this Government support, directly through the strength of the Faculty of Arts and the development of graduate work and research, and indirectly through the better opportunities afforded their students for professional education. Nothing has emerged to suggest that it will lead to the suppression of the purpose and ideals of the founders of the different colleges as these avail themselves of such resources of the Province as are placed at the disposal of the university. That federation in Ontario has been a great success I cannot for one moment doubt.