

COMMERCE SCHOOL HAS PLACE WITHIN UNIVERSITY'S FOLD

Dr. Sherwood Fox Shows
Business Has Now Reached
High Plane

REPLIES TO CRITICISMS

Law and Medicine Patently
Vocational Departments,
Says President of Univer-
sity of Western Ontario

Should a school of commerce be included within the precincts and faculties of an university?

This question has been the subject of no little controversy in educational circles of the continent. An important contribution to the problem was advanced by Dr. W. Sherwood Fox, president of the University of Western Ontario, last night when he addressed a dinner of the School of Commerce of McGill University, which was held in the Queen's Hotel.

Dr. Fox's answer was an emphatic affirmative. The president of the University of Western Ontario believed law and medicine quite as vocational as commerce and showed how commerce, with the expansion of industry, had been raised to an international status; required great intellectual qualifications and elevated the business administrator to a position of high social importance.

"Business" he quoted, "fails little short of being as broad, as inclusive as life itself, in its motives, aspirations and social obligations."

Dr. Fox, who is president of the Canadian Universities Conference, quoted many educational authorities. He outlined the changing trend of the world since mediaeval times when many universities were constituted; stressed the value of university influence upon a school of commerce, but warned commercial graduates that they must start, like all others in business, at the bottom with humility and the will to work.

He said in part: "Of all the departments of education none has been more vigorously criticized than the department often designated by the name of Commerce and Finance. To such a degree has it become a football kicked back and forth between opposing sides that one begins to wonder whether those who kick it are more interested in the game of kicking than they are in the thing they kick.

"The most severe censure of schools of commerce are that they are trade schools and that, as such, they do not belong properly within a university. For trade say 'vocational' or 'occupational' and you do not change the meaning a whit. In the light of this meaning I wish to ask two questions: Upon what authority would occupational schools be excluded from universities? Since when have universities ceased to be occupational?"

Here Dr. Fox proceeded to deal with a book written by Dr. Simon Flexner, of the Rockefeller Institute, which insisted upon a certain university ideal and called for the closest scrutiny of the claims of a department or school to admission within the gates of an university.

RELIC OF MEDIAEVALISM.

"Dr. Flexner takes it for granted," went on Dr. Fox, "that law and medicine, for instance—patently vocational departments—are natural parts of the university. But upon what grounds would he lower the bars for these departments and raise them against others. Surely dignity is not an argument in the case. And as for the length of time they have been associated with universities this has little force for it is only the old appeal to numbers and bigness in another form.

"Why cannot other professional schools, if worthy, derive a similar inspiration from an association with the liberal arts and thereby experience a like development? Even since the beginning of formal education its materials and methods have been drawn from, and modified by, the conditions of contemporary society. The relatively simple phase of university studies that we call 'liberal' got its traditional form from a relatively simple and primitive society. It is a relic of an era when manufacturing and trade were almost wholly domestic and local and, ordinarily, called for no outstanding qualities of mind and training."

The bread and butter phase, said Dr. Fox, was a difficult problem in commercial courses. Many students expected too much from a commercial course; regarded it as a royal speedway into business and had sad heartbreaks when crisp diplomas did not automatically gain them executive positions. Educators also claimed too much for the commerce course and business men sometimes insisted that business couldn't be taught in schools but, though practical experience was undoubtedly needed, why should not business, as well as medicine and law, be taught?

FORMS HAPPY MINGLING.

A school of commerce must prepare not only for business, but also for the broader life and give a diet of balanced variety of activities outside one's vocation.

Dr. Fox concluded his address with the sentence: "I believe that, if business and the universities of Canada can continue to develop the type of co-operation that they have enjoyed for the last decade, business courses will be steadily improved and the university will be able to send out graduates possessing in even greater degree a happy mingling of genuine culture and a practical training for business."

J. G. Fulcher, student of the School of Commerce, presided in the absence through illness of Lee Hollingsworth, president of the students' society. The speaker of the evening was introduced by Lieut.-Col. Wilfrid Bovey, of McGill, and thanked by Prof. R. M. Sugars, head of the McGill School of Commerce, who allied himself with Dr. Fox in his opinion of the role and status of a school of commerce. Toasts to the University of McGill and to the School of Commerce were proposed by Gibson Craig and Stuart Ebbitt.

At the head table, in addition to those already named, were Prof. Ira Mackay, dean of the faculty of arts; Lieut.-Col. R. R. Thompson, Dr. J.

P. Day, Dr. Villard, Prof. H. Tate, D. R. Patton, lecturer of the School of Commerce, McGill.