

THE UNIVERSITY OF CANADA.

During the recent meeting of the Canada Medical Association at St. John, the topic which excited the most interesting discussion was that of reciprocity in medical practice. Not that the subject is by any means a new one—on the contrary, it has been discussed at every meeting for several years past, but always with the same result; a committee has been appointed, which has practically done nothing. As the matter stands at present, the province of Ontario has a Medical examining board, before which every one must pass in order to obtain a licence to practise; no matter whether he be the gold medallist from the best University or the last man in the pass-list of the weakest medical school, he must pass an examination before examiners who are not professors of that subject in the province. This is a single portal for all who wish to enter. This system has its hardships; but, on the whole, it is the best possible one under the circumstances. It does not, however, please either the Medical Schools of that province nor of the other provinces, who would prefer to see no barrier thrown in the way of the great army of young men which they annually turn out. The Medical Council of each province represents the general profession and not the Medical Schools, the interests of each not exactly coinciding, for the ranks of the profession are comfortably full, having already reached the one to a thousand of population limit, and any great increase in the numbers of practitioners over and above those necessary to fill vacancies caused by death or to attend the increased population would lead to an unnecessarily hard struggle for existence. The province of Ontario is the richest province of the Dominion, and it is to it that the graduates of the schools of the other provinces naturally direct their footsteps; and were it not for the very high standards, both preliminary and professional, which it has set up against them, it would soon be over-run.

It is therefore useless for the Canada Medical Association or any other body to attempt to arrange reciprocity, the condition of which would be the lowering of Ontario's high standard, while without this condition reciprocity practically exists. Even the little province of British Columbia away out on the Pacific Coast

declines to be flooded with the overflow from the East, and it too has a Medical Council to protect its physicians in the peaceful practice of their profession. Then again there is the question of reciprocity with Great Britain which is constantly looming up. At present the graduates of Canadian Medical Schools cannot obtain a licence to practise in the Mother Country which replies to their demand for reciprocity by saying: We cannot recognize your diplomas when you do not recognize them among yourselves.

We have always opposed reciprocity either between the provinces or between this country, and Great Britain, for the reason that it is not for the best interests of the profession of Canada that it should be exposed to the danger of overcrowding, which would almost surely follow the throwing down of the barriers which at present exist. For it must be evident to anyone that if fifty doctors in British Columbia for instance are at present barely making a comfortable living by hard work, those same fifty would have their earnings reduced by half if another fifty doctors were admitted without a corresponding increase in population. In our opinion, it is more just and reasonable that each country and each province should decide for itself how good or how bad a doctor it will receive, or, in other words, how many physicians the population can support. If any Canadian desires to practise in England or France, let him do as many others have done, pass the examinations imposed by the authorities of that country for its own citizens.

As all are not of our way of thinking, but on the contrary maintain that one who is fit to practise in one part of Canada should be entitled to practise in any part of Canada, and that those who are fit to practise in one part of the British Empire should be entitled to practise in any part of it, we beg to offer a suggestion for the only practical solution of the difficulty.

This solution is nothing more nor less than a University of Canada, not a teaching body, but an examining body only, founded by Royal Charter on exactly the same lines as the University of London. Its examiners could be chosen by the Universities and other scientific bodies, so as to remove them from the blighting influence of politics, and they could meet at Ottawa.