

giate faculty or faculties as an initial step—the policy of erecting expensive and imposing buildings, or of waiting until the staff of the college should be efficiently organized—the proper form and constitution of the governing body—were all of vast importance, and all of such a character, that gentlemen interested in education, and regarding the subject from different points of view, might be expected, previous to experience, to answer them differently. They were here, as in most similar cases, slowly and painfully worked out by long discussion ; and the present position of the university owes much of its stability to the fact that the ground has been prepared by this long conflict of opinion.

With respect to its religious aspect and its form of government, it is remarkable that this university has, as the result of these controversies and experiences, arrived at a position not precisely identical with that of any similar institution in British America. Two of our universities, that of Toronto, and that of King's College, New Brunswick, are altogether national in their character. The others are all connected with special ecclesiastical bodies. McGill College occupies an intermediate position. Under the control of no particular church, and perfectly open in the offer of its benefits to all, it is recognized as an institution concentrating the support of all the Protestant denominations, and representing their common views as to the nature of the higher education. I confess that on many grounds I prefer this basis, both to those that are narrower and those that are wider. It is exempt from the contracting influence and limitation of field incident to the former, and from the opposing opinions and interests that are so liable to clash in the latter ; and it is especially suited to the present condition of society in Lower Canada, where the Protestant minority is united on this subject by being imbedded in a Roman Catholic population, which provides for its own educational wants on its own principles.

The form of government of this university is another result of long trial of an imperfect system. The Governor-General of Canada is Visitor of the University on behalf of the Crown. The management of its financial affairs by a resident body of educated and business men, who have associated with them, in the more purely educational business, representatives of all the faculties and departments and affiliated institutions and also of the body of graduates, affords a