

in congress, a fact quite intelligible when we consider that the king was, as far as the old colonists saw, the controlling power in the nation, and that parliamentary government, as we know it in these times, was not understood by the Americans. The framers of the American constitution knew that among the royal prerogatives was the right of veto, although they forgot it had not been exercised for one hundred and seventy years; but they gave it to the president chiefly because they thought it would be a valuable check on the otherwise arbitrary power of congress. If I should pursue this subject still further, we would see throughout the political system of our neighbors many other evidences of their desire to reproduce British practices and rules when consistent with the system of republican liberty they were attempting to establish. Canada, on the other hand, has remained a dependency, and has necessarily kept pace with the progressive stages of parliamentary and responsible government of the parent state. Our government has always closely followed the important rules and maxims which make up the British constitution. Our statutory law is drawn in a great measure from that of England. It is then most advisable for us to consider in what respects, if any, the United States system is an improvement upon our own. Whilst it is very interesting to note the differences in the working of the two systems of government, it is still more important to observe the operation of their federal system from which that of Canada is taken in essential respects. In short, an elaborate series of lectures fully dealing with the nature and working of the political institutions of our neighbors should necessarily form a prominent feature of any course of Political Science, if it is to be made of practical and real value to the students of a university.

I might dwell at considerable length on the many subjects that naturally suggest themselves to my mind in connection with so suggestive a theme. Our own system of government itself, drawn as it is from the constitutional and political experience of England and of the United States, is replete with matter for study and reflection. Of Canada and her institutions (particularly her local government, and her federal system), it may be truly said, she "is the heir of all the ages." For instance, the federal idea is one which originated with the leagues that existed in ancient Greece, with those famous Achaean and Lycian federated nations which played so important a part in the history of the ancient world. We can trace its principles, according to the French historian, Guizot, in the working of the feudal system, and in the relations that existed between the rude communities of Europe and the feudal king or chief to whom they professed to pay a modified homage. We can see that it has been the source of security upon which the Swiss Cantons have relied for centuries, though surrounded by hostile and jealous nations. It is a system which rests on the basis of local self-government and a central authority, and it is interesting to trace its development through all times until at last it has found its most perfect realization in the United States, Canada, and the remodelled Swiss Confederation, as well as in the Empires of Germany and Austria, where the machinery is in a measure more complicated than in the American example of federation.

All these subjects to which I have very briefly referred, as immediately associated with, and indeed falling naturally under, the generic term of Political Science, are important to us inasmuch as they bear more or less directly on the development and operation of the elaborate system of federal government which we possess at last as the results of more than a century of political struggle and achievement.