

The Educational Weekly.

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THE MEMORANDUM of the Minister of Education to the governing bodies of the different universities and colleges that are included in the proposed scheme of university confederation, which we give in another column, is the most important educational document that has appeared in our times. It is the agreement which has been arrived at by the Minister of Education representing the Government of Ontario, and the accredited representatives of the University of Toronto, University College, Queen's University, Victoria University, Trinity University, Knox College, St. Michael's College, Wycliffe College, and McMaster Hall—a *basis of confederation*, or agreement contemplating the establishment of one grand Provincial University, with a cluster of magnificent colleges around it, providing for the completest academic training, the highest type of collegiate influence, the granting of scholastic honors of indubitable value, and the training of the flower of the youth of our country within halls, and amid associations that will guarantee, as far as human contrivances can guarantee, the establishing of principle, and the development of character in the best possible way. We confess to an enthusiasm which can hardly be kept in check;—it *would not* be kept in check were it not for the fear—a fear that dashes the ardor of every thought,—that, through the prejudice, or mistaken conscientiousness, or caprice, or selfishness of *some one*, this grand scheme, so big with possibility, may even yet fail.

AN excellent feature of the scheme is its extreme adaptableness and practicableness. Each denomination may go on devoting its money as it pleases:—this one to the maintenance of a theological institution alone; another, more wealthy, to the maintenance not only of a theological school, but of a complete faculty of arts also. But there it will be—close beside the central institution; and if at any time it prefers to avail itself of the resources of the Provincial University, and use the saving for any other purpose, it may do so.

BUT the central beauty of the scheme is that it preserves the autonomy of each federating institution, and therefore, perfectly does away with the danger of divorcing higher education from training of the moral faculties, and an inculcation upon the minds of students of the truths of Christianity. Each college may lay down what

course of moral instruction and Christian teaching it pleases, and demand from its students whatever examination in the subjects of this course it pleases; and, moreover, it may derive from the Provincial Senate that such examination shall be accepted by the Senate as an equivalent for examination in some purely secular subject, thus securing religious and moral instruction as an integral part of higher education. And in addition, each college can maintain over its students what discipline it pleases, and throw around them what influences of life and character it may possess.

THERE can be little doubt that the scheme, if adopted, will be followed by an increase of college residences. The residence system, is in our belief, necessary to the full attainment of the benefits of college life. It, as nothing else can, develops and strengthens character: but rightly or wrongly, according to the residential government, Knox College has always maintained its residence, and the result is that the Knox students have a character unmistakably loyal to their church, and to the principles of their church. Of St. Michael's the same may be said. Of McMaster and Wycliffe, though newer institutions, as far as we have had opportunity of judging, it can be said that their founders were wise in including residences within them. Trinity, if it joins the confederation, will retain its residence system also; not merely as a convenient appendage, but as the very life and heart of itself. If Victoria comes in, it must in self preservation, erect and maintain a residence. The Methodist students at the present University of Toronto have never had the same loyalty to their church institutions, the same *esprit du corps*, as the students attached to other churches. The reason has been not from insufficient numbers, but from a lack of anchorage, and from that sense of homelessness, that feeling of being adrift from authority, which the want of a residence of their own certainly inspired in them. Queen's, if it comes, will also establish a residence. An alumnus of Queen's would feel that his *Alma Mater* were no more if her resident system were abandoned. University College residence will have to be enlarged. To destroy it would be to deprive students who can not find entrance into some one of the denominational colleges, of the influences and training that resident life gives. It is so small that to make it pay its own way, causes it to be very expensive, while so large is the whole number of students attending that its influence is limited, and

it provokes a party feeling which neutralizes the good it otherwise might do.

AN important feature in the basis is the virtual promise of the Government to enlarge its support of higher education, now languishing for lack of funds. The basis makes a more liberal provision for the teaching of subjects to be taken in University College than ever yet has been made, and the University College Staff with the University Professoriat will constitute a teaching body quite worthy of the Province. The confederating colleges can each furnish a staff the equivalent of that in University College, and the University Professoriat will as much form the complement of their staffs, as of the staff of University College.

THE Senate of the University of Toronto has with perfect unanimity accepted the basis, and has pledged itself to do "everything in its power to make it a success." The words are simple but their meaning is full.

THE Board of Regents of Victoria University have not adopted the scheme in its entirety, but have accepted it with amendments. The principal feature of the amendments is that the confederating colleges shall receive compensation for their losses incident to removal to Toronto. This refers particularly to Queen's and Victoria. These institutions must remember that if the Government should compensate them for their losses by buying their present buildings, or otherwise, they could no longer expect to enter Confederation as partners-at-will, having the right to retire and exercise once more their degree-conferring powers, which, for a while, they hold in abeyance.

BUT logically the position taken by Victoria is correct. There were reasons for the establishment of Victoria and of Queen's, which rose from the unfair legislation of the day. Victoria and Queen's have each a moral claim on the Government for compensation; but if they once accept it they ought not to be allowed to retire, at their own motion, from the proposed Confederation, which cannot be accomplished unless with great expense on the part of the Government. On the other hand, the authorities of Queen's and Victoria are morally bound to restore to the donors, the sums paid by them for the erection of their buildings, in every case where the donation was conditional upon the University site being unchanged.

KNOX COLLEGE and Wycliffe College have each accepted the basis.