

A GLIMPSE AT THE UNIVERSITY SITUATION IN ALBERTA

By Walter L. Raynes

A sojourner in Alberta is not allowed to forget, even for a day, that this province is divided into south and north. (The real geographical north is as yet, in a large degree, an unknown quantity). The interests of the south are apparently distinct from those of the north. Where the line of demarcation is drawn is very difficult for the stranger, and probably for an old-timer, to discern.

Calgary is the champion city of the south, and upon Edmonton devolves the task of dominating the north. Shortly after one's arrival in Alberta, he may expect to be told by some scrupulously honest person not to believe anything about Calgary which he might see in the Edmonton papers, or hear from people of the northern parts. Another person equally kind and just as honest hailing from the north, may whisper to the same newcomer, that he is not at any cost to listen to any reports concerning Edmonton which might appear in the Calgary press, or be made by those whose home is in the south. To the outsider, at least, the rivalry between these two parts of the province is very keen, and not altogether wholesome. This competitive spirit, which doubtless is a good thing, if not over-done, seems to have permeated and influenced, what should be the great common activities of the province.

Its business, its political, its higher educational interests smack too much of the combat. Of course, the Maritime Provinces have their St. John and Halifax; Ontario its Hamilton and Toronto, and British Columbia its Vancouver and Victoria. But there is more of sameness in the cities of the

northwest. Calgary and Edmonton might be called, with little injustice to each, great distributing centres, commercial cities. The spirit of commercialism which is so prominent in these centres should not be allowed to infect and dominate the higher education of the province which it threatens to, or may accomplish. Unity in all walks of higher life is commendable and desirable, and one sees the truth of this especially in a comparatively new province.

One of the defects or dangers of our party system of government, which has many virtues, is that a great number of the people expect the Opposition to oppose tooth and nail every large measure or scheme put forth by the existing government, whether that proposition be right and feasible or not. The McBride Government in British Columbia, to a large extent, overcame that danger when it delegated the choice of a university site to a non-partisan committee. Alberta did not. The present university site was chosen by the provincial legislature. The place selected was Edmonton South Side, or what was then known as Strathcona, across the river south of old Edmonton. Consequently not a few of Calgary's most enterprising citizens are not pleased. Calgary is to have a university of its own. The provincial legislature, by the narrow margin of two (the vote being seventeen to fifteen, some of the members refraining from voting) this last session decided not to grant the proposed new institution degree conferring powers. But it is conceded by a great many of those opposed to the establishment of a university in the city