

STATE AID TO COLLEGES.

NOW that we have learned on good authority that the Ontario Government is not prepared at the next meeting of the Legislature to "put in the estimates an additional grant to University College," it seems almost superfluous to say another word on the general question of Government aid to colleges. Our apology for referring to the matter at all is that, even after the very full and explicit statements of Principal Grant and others, the position of the friends of the Colleges in Ontario improperly called "denominational," is not even yet understood. It is assumed that no objection has been made, or can reasonably be made, to the granting of additional aid to University College at some future time; and it is further assumed that to claim such aid in behalf of the other colleges is a "retrograde" step which no one would ever dream of taking. Neither of these assumptions is correct. Let us make one more attempt to state the case. There are two, and only two, logically consistent views which the Government may take: it may either decide to give aid to *all* the colleges which are doing good work, or it may conclude to assist *none* of them. Certainly all lovers of higher education will desire to see University College well equipped for its work, but they will desire not less strongly to see the other Colleges relatively as well equipped. All are doing the work of the State, and not merely one of them. All are needed, as was practically admitted when the University of Toronto was established to serve as an examining body for the various colleges expected to be affiliated to it. If a grant is given at all it must be given to all its servants and not simply to a single favorite. If it is said that University College, as a State Institution, occupies a unique position, the answer is that the other colleges will become State Institutions when they are benefitted by the

State. Whether a college which receives State aid must submit to a "uniform" test of efficiency is another question, and one which, as we take leave to say, is eminently disputable. There is no necessary connection between the two things, as is shown by the fact that German and Scottish Universities, which have received aid from the State, do their own examining. That the State must exercise some sort of control over the institutions it fosters is true, and no doubt the representatives of the different colleges will be prepared to consider any reasonable proposal when it comes from the proper source. But if at any future time, instead of giving aid to all the colleges the Government should single out one college as the sole recipient of its benefactions, the measure will certainly not meet with approval.

We have dwelt on this aspect of the question, because it has been so persistently ignored. For ourselves we should prefer that the other of the alternatives mentioned above should be adopted. It seems to us much better for each college to look for its increased efficiency to the private benefactions of its graduates and friends, than to the precarious and uncertain aid of the Government of the hour. Some of the supporters of University College talk as if that institution had a sort of "divine right" to State aid. Is it really a law of nature that any college should be upheld by the State and nothing but the State? That is no doubt a very pleasant doctrine for those who have not had to put their hands in their pockets for its support, but not so pleasant for those who have put their hands in their pockets for an institution which they have thus shown to be dear to them in a very convincing way. Of course it will be said that University College is on a different footing from mere "denominational" colleges. We confess that we do not under-