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DR. BOURINOT'S LECTURE.

The Political Science Association are to be congratulated on having made such a successful beginning to the comprehensive programme which has been prepared for the year. A larger audience was never seen at the meetings of the Association than the one which confronted Dr. Bourinot on Thursday in the Students' Union. The chair was occupied by President Loudon. Dr. Bourinot spoke on the English Principles in Canadian Government, and began by a pleasing reference to the distinguished scholar and genial gentleman who was for so many years President of University College, and did so much to add to its usefulness by his great learning and conscientious zeal in everything that might promote its interests as a centre of intellectual thought and culture. Like another great scholar, Professor Seeley, who had also joined the ranks of the great majority, Sir Daniel Wilson believed that it should be among the principal objects of a university "to give coherence, connection, and system to the thinking of the nation; to extend its action over the whole community by creating a vast order of high-class popular teachers, who should lend their aid everywhere in the impartial study of great questions, political or other, and to play a part in the guidance of the national mind such as had never been played by universities in any other country."

No course of studies, continued Dr. Bourinot, was better calculated to profit the student than political science, when it was fully and faithfully carried out. It was one inseparably connected with the vital interests of the whole community. Every man, woman and child had an interest in the efficient administration of government, and in the impartial execution of the laws. These were matters which related immediately to human happiness, and those studies which taught the principles on which all good government should rest, the respective duties, powers, and privileges of the different executive, legislative, and judicial authorities, and the eternal maxims of civil liberty, were studies which, when taught in the spirit of a judicious and honest historian, were well worthy of the name of a science, and should obtain a pre-eminence over all departments of thought and study, except the teachings of the true lessons of Christianity.

Canada presented a very interesting field for the student in this department of study. Though not a national sovereignty like the United States, and therefore probably inferior to it in that respect, as an object of contemplation and reflection for European statesmen, its political history, its fundamental law and constitution, its economic system, its social institutions, and the racial characteristics of its people were worthy of the close study, not only of Canadians, but of all persons who wished to follow the gradual development of communities from a state of cramped colonial pupilage to a larger condition of political freedom, which gave it many of the attributes of an independent nation never before enjoyed by a colonial dependency.

As we looked back for the one hundred and thirty-three years that had passed since the concession of Canada to England we could see that the political development of the provinces now constituting the Dominion was owing

to the passage of certain measures and the acknowledgment of certain principles which stood out as so many political milestones in the path of national progress. Briefly summed up, these measures and principles were as follows:—

The establishment of the principle of religious toleration, which relieved Roman Catholics of disabilities which long afterwards existed in Great Britain.

The establishment of trial by jury and the right of every subject to the protection of the writ of habeas corpus.

The guarantees given to the French-Canadians for the preservation of their civil law and language. The adoption of one system of criminal law in French and in English Canada.

The establishment of representative institutions in every province of Canada.

The independence of the judiciary and its complete isolation from political conflict.

Full provincial control over all local revenues and expenditures.

The initiation of money grants in the people's House.

The right of Canadian Legislatures to manage their purely local affairs without any interference on the part of the English officials in the parent State.

The establishment of municipal institutions and the consequent increase of public spirit in all the local divisions.

The abolition of the seigniorial tenure and the removal of feudal restrictions antagonistic to the conditions of settlement in a new country.

The adoption of the English principle of responsibility to the legislature, under which a Ministry can only retain office while they have the confidence of the people's representatives.

All these valuable privileges were not won in a day, but were the results of the struggles of the people of Canada up to the time of the establishment of the Federal union, which united the provinces on the basis of a central Government, having control of all matters of general or national import, and of several provinces having jurisdiction over such matters of provincial and local concern as were necessary to their existence as distinct political entities within a federation.

In all essential features necessary for the administration of public affairs the Government of Canada was conducted on the well-understood principles of that remarkable system of charters, statutes, conventions and usages to which the general name of the British constitution was given, and which give at once strength and elasticity to the English constitution.

When we reviewed the political and judicial system of the Dominion we could see that there were certain broad principles which, above all others, illustrated in their practical operation the "pre-eminently English" character of our institutions, and which might be briefly summarized as follows:—The supremacy of the law; the influence of the common law; the independence of the judges; the controlling power of the Commons' Houses; the principle of Ministerial responsibility; the permanent tenure of the public service.