

UNIVERSITY CONFEDERATION IN ONTARIO.

ABSTRACT OF A PAPER READ BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE BEFORE THE ATHENÆUM, FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 8TH.

THE proposal to bring the various Universities in Ontario together in a federation in Toronto has been discussed within the Province with great earnestness, and has awakened considerable interest among the friends of education in these parts. The plan contemplated the union of the several Universities and colleges in a system of affiliation with the Provincial University, the affiliated colleges and Universities retaining a staff of instruction to deal with particular subjects, the Central University maintaining a professoriate to give instruction in other subjects,—all being regulated by a Senate which should determine the various courses of study and have the power to confer degrees. The plan has not been received with universal favor. The University of Trinity College, Toronto, and Queens, of Kingston, decided not to adopt it. The Baptists have petitioned that they may unite their two colleges, one in Woodstock, the other in Toronto, under one charter with University powers. The application will probably be granted. The proposed confederation, therefore, chiefly affects the denominational colleges in Toronto and the Methodist University in Cobourg. The Regents of Victoria University, being inclined for the most part to accept the plan proposed by the Government, agreed to refer the matter for final decision to the Quadrennial General Conference which met in Toronto last September. The question of removal and federation was discussed in the Conference for four days. The debate was represented by the daily press, as one of the most important that have taken place in Canada. In favor of removal and federation, it was held that this would involve less expense than to remain in Cobourg; that a great University could not be developed except in a great city; that the denomination were unwilling to contribute the needed endowment for Cobourg. It was said to be the duty of the state to aid the higher education, and this could be done consistently only on the proposed plan, and that, as the Methodists were already one third of the population, they could safely adopt the plan; that it would be better for the denomination to come into contact with other people; that

in federation their influence would be greatly enhanced; that if modern secular education tended to scepticism, it was their duty to counteract that tendency, and federation was the only way open to them by which they could have a controlling influence over the higher education of the country. It was said that federation would open a wider curriculum for their students, that, if education were to be conducted according to the old methods, they might remain in Cobourg, but as in these days there is a demand for extensive systems of options and a large variety of courses of study, the combination of various institutions to form a common university is the most reasonable method of meeting the popular demand. The plea was made that in these days young men were unwilling to give as much time for general culture as was formerly given, and therefore it is necessary that general and professional studies should be blended. It was said that they were not now holding their young men to their own university, but that a large number of them were in attendance in University College. The hope was expressed that the formation of a great university in Toronto would prevent their young men from going to universities in foreign countries. It was claimed that a degree from a central university would be considered more valuable than one from a denominational college, and that the plan of federation presented the only opportunity possible to them by which their young men could receive the full benefit of the higher education, and at the same time be kept under the influences of christian truth.

In opposition to the plan, it was stated that contributions had been obtained for the University in Cobourg, as if that were to be its permanent location; and thereby a legal and a moral obligation had been created, which should prevent removal,—that by the admission of competent judges only four more professorships were needed to make the university, where it is all that could be desired,—that in these days there is a tendency to found fancy chairs at extravagant rates, while the necessary equipments of a first-class university can be had for much more moderate sums. It was urged that no government could bind its successors in the matter of grants for higher education,—that if grants should be made for this object, the amount would have to be divided between several universities, as several of the denom-