

THE VARSITY

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events.

VOL. XXIII.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, JANUARY 20, 1904.

No. 13

THE ALLIED COLONIAL UNIVERSITIES CONFERENCE.

R. A. REEVE, M.D., DEAN OF FACULTY OF MEDICINE.

THE Allied Colonial Universities Conference, held in London last July, was a notable gathering and unique of its kind. It was the writer's privilege to attend, in company with his confreres, Professors I. H. Cameron and A. McPhedran. It proved to be the first occasion upon which the representatives of all the universities of the Empire (save Melbourne) formally met to discuss matters of common interest. A peculiar distinction was given it by the presence of such university men as Lord Kelvin (Glasgow University); Prime Minister Balfour (Edinburgh); the pro-vice-Chancellor, and Professor James Bryce (Oxford); the vice-chancellor, the master of Trinity College, and Professor Ewing (Cambridge); Rt. Hon. C. T. Ritchie, Chancellor of the Exchequer (Aberdeen); Principal, Sir Arthur Rucker (London); Rt. Hon. Jos. Chamberlain, Chancellor, and Sir Oliver Lodge, Principal (Birmingham); Professor Mahaffy (Dublin); Lord Stratheona (McGill); Sir Gilbert Parker (Trinity).

To Sir Gilbert Parker are due the conception of the idea and very largely the successful conduct of the Conference.* It was owing to Sir Gilbert's influence that the delegates, who in large numbers attended the luncheon given by him in the House of Commons, had the pleasure of hearing a short address by the Colonial Secretary. Mr. Chamberlain spoke in an earnest and persuasive vein of the important work of the Conference and of the valuable results likely to flow from it. It would tend to promote a desirable community of interest and most useful co-operation amongst the widely separated parts of the Empire. He did not neglect the opportunity to urge the imperial idea, addressing, as he said, men who exercised so beneficial and widespread an influence in their respective communities. He believed it would be an advantage if universities would adopt the policy of making a speciality of one or more of the departments.

The first session was presided over by the Rt. Hon. Prof. James Bryce. His address had the ring of the

*He was ably seconded by the Hon. Secretary, C. Kinloch Cooke, Esq., M.A., LL.M. (Cambridge), editor of the Empire Review, which furnished the official report, and from which the writer has refreshed his memory. Donald Armour, M.A., M.B., Tor., and Drs. Ferguson and Cochrane, Trin., also did good service.

scholar, historian and statesman. He dwelt with pride on the grand mission and function of the British race in diffusing science and learning in distant lands. A high place was given to the university in the spread and advancement of civilization.

The benefits of the proposed scheme would not be one-sided. The weak side of British universities, in the comparative neglect of post-graduate work, was admitted. The great importance of promoting original investigation, and of cultivating theoretical and fostering applied science in its widest sense by universities, was warmly advocated. The interchange of students and teachers between the mother country and the colonies would tend to dispel that ignorance of one another which had been a source of weakness and irritation. The problems solved and the experience gained by the younger members of the Imperial family would be helpful at home.

Lord Stratheona, who presided at part of the second session, expressed his sense of the importance of the movement, and as a representative Canadian his sympathy with the aim to knit more closely the universities of the mother country and of the other parts of the Empire.

The business part of the Conference only occupied one day, and consisted in the discussion and adoption of two resolutions, in connection with which there were twenty-five speeches, inclusive of some set addresses.

The first resolution was: That in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that such relations should be established between the principal teaching universities of the Empire as will secure that special or local advantages for study, and in particular for post-graduate study and research, be made as accessible as possible to students from all parts of the King's dominions.

Second resolution: That a Council, consisting in part of representatives of British and Colonial universities, be appointed to promote the objects set out in the previous resolution.

The vice-chancellor of Cambridge urged the gain to learning and the Empire itself by mutual recognition and co-operation on the part of the universities. There were and should be different types of universities, and their autonomy should not be interfered with. Cam-