

ARE MCGILL'S BEST DAYS OVER?

The Canadian Press service carried a despatch from Moncton, N.B., of an interview given by Prof. Leacock of McGill last week after he had toured the Maritime provinces. Here are a few of his choice bits of wisdom:—

"I am strongly opposed to further expansion of Canadian universities." "At Montreal and Toronto I already see the folly of ever-expansion." To the friends of old McGill this must be most disconcerting. He also said that the small university can do "far better work than can a large institution."

The conclusions to be drawn from this latest Leacock spasm are that the people of this Province would be far wiser to send their sons and daughters to a small university like we have at Lennoxville than to over-expanded McGill. We have always been enthusiastic about the life and work at Bishop's College, Lennoxville, and agree that there is some sense in this conclusion. The other conclusion is that it would be utter folly to add to McGill's endowment or equipment and that millionaires and the Quebec Government must find some other outlet for zeal in higher education. It must be so for McGill suffers already from "over-expansion," according to her own Prof. Leacock. But that is not all.

While in the Maritimes Prof. Leacock has been lecturing at so much per night and has doubtless been dined and wined by hospitable people. He now offers them another pearl of wisdom, drawn from his experience with over-expanded universities, and he condemns the proposed university federation scheme down there. What his recent hosts will think of this advice gratis from their guest from McGill we can almost guess. We have never accused Prof. Leacock of being an authority in matters of good form and this interference with Maritime educational problems on his part advertises his innocence of the ordinary proprieties of polite society. When he ventures to congratulate two Maritime institutions for their stand on this matter he simply becomes impertinent. Because McGill is failing or falling down in its work is no reason why the proposed Maritime university should not succeed. It might even get professors who attended to their work instead of becoming professional buffoons running all over the land and doing the stunts of a lone end man escaped from a minstrel troupe at so much a stunt.

On this latter point we strongly suspect Prof. Leacock has a sinister motive that is not confessed. Does he dread the proposed university federation in the Maritimes because it keeps in the East the clever students that now come to McGill from down there by the sea? Is his economic soul stirred by the prospective absence from McGill's coffers of the considerable fees paid by such students? We wonder. A glance at almost any graduation list at McGill shows that her prize men and honour men come largely from the East and we have a haunting suspicion that the wily Stephen has conjured up this "over-expansion" bogey to frighten the Maritimes and save McGill the loss that the projected central university would entail. Unhappily his wit is not so nimble as it might be. As he springs this sensation we can almost see him leading the audience in laughter, as he is wont to do when delivering his pearls (or clods) of merriment, and so his published interview leaves us guessing. There must be something to explain his execrably bad taste. He cannot have interfered in the educational situation down East just to earn the title of a bounder. He cannot have realized the blow he was dealing to McGill by exposing her weakness and warning against further support of her appeals. Perhaps he is just trying to be funny and fool the people, but this time he has succeeded even the wide bounds of his accustomed horse-play, and perhaps we should apologize to our readers for paying so much attention to his spasm.

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