

IS UNIVERSITY QUESTION TO BE REOPENED? 11

AN APPEAL TO THE LEGISLATURE.

It was at this juncture that the Provincial University began its appeal to the Legislature for a modern and adequate university equipment. That appeal was both just and patriotic. It was a plea for justice to the Provincial University, since the Government had thirty-four years before assumed in the name of the whole people its direction, and hence, the responsibility for its proper maintenance. It was patriotic, inasmuch as, through lack of the highest facilities at home, our best young men were drifting to the United States, the majority of them not to return. I need only mention such names as Schurman, Patton, Gould and Osler as examples. No young country can long afford to be thus drained of its richest blood. But however just and patriotic the appeal, it brought about at once a political deadlock. The Government, stronger then than it is now, was yet not strong enough to face the opposition of the denominational colleges, towards whom the Provincial University had from the beginning occupied the unfortunate relation of rivalry. When I say this I am speaking rather of her misfortune than her fault.

THE FEDERATION MOVEMENT.

At each of the great points of evolutionary change, the opportunity for that unity and co-operation which alone could meet the country's educational needs had been missed. Sir William Blacklock, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Toronto, with the breadth of view which has characterized all his work, fully grasped the situation, and approached the denominational colleges with the single question, "Is there no way in which we can co-operate to meet the pressing needs of the country?" It would have been worse than disgraceful, it would have been criminal, had the authorities of the existing colleges turned a deaf ear to this broad, patriotic appeal. They did not do so, but meeting in Toronto early in 1884, they began the discussion of the question on the basis of an outline scheme of federation presented by the late Chancellor Nelles, and drawn up largely by the present writer. At the first conference there were historic names present: Sir Daniel Wilson, Chancellor Nelles, Principal Grant, Dr. Castle, Father Vincent, with the younger men who still survive. Of all these not one questioned the desirability of some basis upon which we could unite to build up a truly Provincial University, worthy not only of our Province, but also of our Dominion. But to find such a basis was a problem of extreme difficulty. Each college was rightly conservative of what