

(March 25, 1907.)

Education and Business.

By PRINCIPAL W. PETERSON, OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject, "Education and Business," Principal W. Peterson, of McGill University, Montreal, said:—

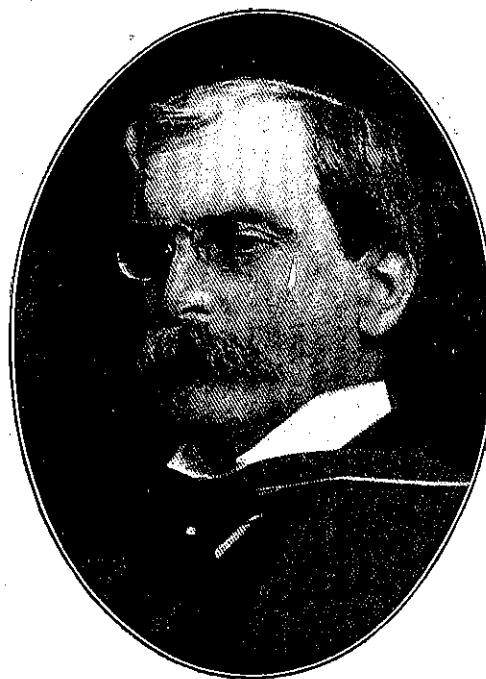
Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club of Toronto,—It is a very good thing, in my opinion, for professors and persons engaged in theoretical work to meet and compare notes with practical business men. To me it is a personal pleasure to have the opportunity of meeting so many of the business men of Toronto. There surely should be a proper bond between the academic world and the commercial world of action. You perhaps realize this, and so you ask us professors to talk to you about our hobbies, and you take what we say "with your meals." That is, I understand, the prescription.

What is business? Well, business is—business. Do we know what education is or ought to be? Shall we view the educational side of business or the business side of education? Cecil Rhodes did not know the whole truth when he said the college man was a child in finance. You cannot be the head of a great university in these times and neglect finance—high finance, as high as you like!

University education—the ordinary course—by aiming at the general development of the faculties, is, in its own way, no unfit preparation for a business career. Special development has, however, recently taken place in England and the United States, and to some extent also in Canada.

In these times there is a growing demand for a higher education in business life. The business colleges, which seek merely to develop fitness for some special branch, some technical facility, are inadequate to grapple with the larger question. Development should rather be along the lines adopted by such cities as Birmingham and Manchester, where faculties of commerce have been established, where lectures are given in commercial law, finance, the theory and practice of accounting, economics, etc.

A very large proportion of college students are now entering business instead of the professions, and it seems to me that efforts should be made to give those who desire it a higher



PRINCIPAL PETERSON.
McGill University, Montreal.

training in commercial subjects. Perhaps an ideal arrangement would be an adjustment of the first two years of the ordinary arts course, so as to lead up to a diploma in commerce.

Such a course might be advantageously developed still further, on the lines which now obtain in law. Students work in law offices at the same time they are studying, and also in engineering students work a certain part of the year in the shops or in the field, and during the remaining part of the year pursue their studies in the lecture room and laboratory.

It is the mission of the modern university to relate its teaching to the needs and requirements of society, in addition to cultivating learning for its own sake, and this is one of the lines in which the universities can give real practical service.

Their curricula furnish, or ought to furnish, a training in citizenship; they are the source of supply for all forms of national activity that call for intellectual power.

We must remember, however, that success in business does not necessarily mean success in life. The spirit of commercial enterprise has been one of the greatest factors in human progress, but it must not be allowed to dominate and absorb everything else. We must not exalt the material and mechanical over the intellectual and spiritual. We must build up and around commerce and industry other elements of thought and feeling and aspiration—literary, scientific, philosophical, artistic. As a means towards this end the college course may be commended to all who are able to avail themselves of it. It stands for earnest ideals and also for efficiency in practice.
