(October 8, 1928)

The Higher Education of Canada

By Sir Robert Falconer.

President Daly:—Gentlemen, at this first meeting of the Canadian Club in the regular season for this year we are glad to welcome here today the President of the University of Toronto, the President of an institution of which the Government and the people of this province may well be proud. I can quite easily remember when Sir Robert was the youngest president of any great University, when he was invited to assume his new duties at the University. For his appearance at the University happened to coincide with my own. As I remember it, his arrival and my arrival as a freshman failed to create quite the same enthusiasm and the same spirit. Throughout the period of his administration during which the University has exhibited such sound and vigorous progress, he has, without stint, devoted himself to the interests of this great institution, and it is due to this devotion, and to his scholarship and administrative ability, and his fine sense of honor and justice that the University is greatly indebted for the position of honor and dignity and prestige which it enjoys not only among the educational institutions of Canada, but among the great Universities of the world. I have great pleasure in introducing Sir Robert Falconer.

Sir Robert Falconer:—Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, and fellow members of the Canadian Club, I am greatly honored by the invitation that you and your committee have extended to me to speak again before my fellow members of the Canadian Club, and also to those gentlemen who, out of a very busy life, have done me the honor of coming to listen to what I may have to say. The subject is a hackneyed one, but, nevertheless, I think that when one speaks at a Canadian Club probably one should

stick to one's last, and I hope that the recalling of some of these facts to your attention will do something to stimulate your patriotic interest on this side of our country's life.

In 1925 and 1926 there were twenty-three Universities in Canada, six of them state-controlled. There were twenty-nine professional and technical colleges, including three classical colleges in Quebec which are affiliated with Laval and Montreal. In these institutions, according to the last statistics I could get from the Canada Year Book, there were about 25,300 full-time students and over 23,000 part-time students including those in vacation and extension courses. The total assets of twenty-two out of the twenty-three universities of Canada at June 30, 1926, were $87,466,600 and of the twenty-nine colleges, $14,937,000, a total of $102,404,000, exclusive of Laval and the classical colleges of Quebec, which make no returns. The annual expenditures of these same institutions for that year were just about $13,000,000. Now it is very difficult indeed to make any basis of comparison with other countries, the facts on which statistics are founded vary so completely. Therefore I cannot do more than generalize in respect, for instance, of the United States. But, at the end of 1924 there were over four hundred universities and colleges recognized by the American Council of Education, in addition to a large number of other professional schools, over four hundred—I suppose nearly five hundred—as against our—well, twenty-three and thirty, about fifty-three or fifty-four. And the annual expenditure of these universities and institutions for the year 1924 was $341,000,000 as against our $13,000,000.

Now I don't say anything about students because we have really no basis of accurate comparison. All I can say about these figures is that our neighbor to the south gives us a wonderful example in the zeal that they show for higher education and the generosity in which they spend their money for higher education.

In Great Britain there were in 1925-26 47,500 full time students in attendance and that would be against our 25,000. But even there the figures are not such that I should like to base any very accurate comparison in attendance upon them. However, as far as I can judge I should think that in English-speaking Canada our attendance in the higher institutions of learning, both universities and professional schools, is comparable to that of Scotland. That is about as close a comparison as I have been able to make and I think that is probably fairly accurate.

Prior to 1889 the English Universities and Colleges were dependent for their income on endownments, subscriptions and students' fees, but now parliamentary grants are made to the various institutions of Britain which amount each year to about £1,550,000. Those are the last figures I can get. These are striking figures and, when you survey the century through which we have come as a people, I think you will agree with me that we have every reason for great encouragement. Just a year ago today we were celebrating at the University the one hundredth anniversary of the granting of the charter to old King's College in 1827. And on that occasion we received telegrams from 250 institutions from all over the world, the delegates bringing addresses from their institutions in many cases; other addresses came without the delegate. The tone of appreciation of the work that was done in Toronto, universally expressed by them in the addresses and by the delegates, was such as to make us very thankful for the progress that had been made in our own university in the past one hundred years. Other universities are older than ours and they also have records that are very highly gratifying to any Canadian. Therefore, when I ask you to consider for a short time this afternoon the higher education of Canada I am asking you to dwell for a while upon a side of our life that is not only financially of great importance but has given us a position in the eyes of the world that is worthy of the position that we hold in it commercially, politically and socially.

I have used the term higher education *of* Canada in slight modification of meaning that there might be in this departure, as compared with higher education *in* Canada. I am not prepared to say there is very much. I have definitely intended it to indicate as showing in my judgment that in Canada we have made some definite contribution

of our own to higher education, and that I wish to consider for a few moments.

Any one who is going to deal with any subject in Canada must remember that there are two races. And this is as obvious in higher education as in any other department of our life. There are two sources from which our higher culture comes; there are two very distinct temperaments, intellectual attitudes, represented in this Dominion, arising from the two greatest factors in Western civilization, the Anglo-Saxon mind and the French mind, and the best representative, I suppose, of the Latin mind. And historically these have been separated, and I think have been separated in our own minds. That they exist is evident to anyone who is present at a gathering of representatives of science or of learning in this Dominion, for example, at the annual conference we have of the Universities of the Dominion there are the two sections. We work together but there are definitely two ways of looking at things. It is the same in the Royal Society of Canada. There are two sections, French and English. We have made provision in all our gatherings for these two representations. Now the French mind in Canada, today as I see it, is becoming more and more influenced by Paris. Educated men from Canada, from Montreal especially and other cities, go to Paris and the University of Montreal and also Laval bring out every year quite a number of visiting professors from Paris and the French Universities. Two years ago one of the most distinguished of Montreal professors, Dr. E. Montpetit, was asked to lecture in Paris; and especially in medicine, for instance, the ties are very close between Paris and Montreal. That is the French-speaking side, and as higher intellectual life develops this will increase. You know there can be no greater offence given to an educated French-Canadian than to say his French, his power of speech, is different, his utterance is different, from that of the cultivated Parisian. The aim of the French section of the educated people of Canada is to maintain this intellectual connection and as I see it, it is strengthening. Now that means a very definite enrichment for us in Canada. Perhaps we often do not consider what it really does mean to us. It involves constant

necessity for translation of ideas from one to the other, the ideas of the two outstanding sections of Canada, the one into the other in our midst, and any process of translation or interpretation is an intellectual exercise as well as a moral exercise of high value, and the understanding of any other civilization besides our own means a great deal for us as Canadians. Difficulties will arise, of course, but there is no doubt about it, that there is more interest in our Canadian lives just because within the one country we have in the higher education the two types of mind and of attitude and of thought.

However, I am going to confine my attention this afternoon in what relates chiefly to our English-speaking higher education and I would ask you to consider whether we may not divide the period of our English-speaking higher education into three areas, the first up to Confederation, the second from Confederation to 1906, and the third from 1906 to the present time. The first period is that from the year in which King's College was founded in Windsor, N.S., 1789, to 1867, the longest period. To understand that period there are a few remarks that I must make briefly. One is, we must bear in mind, to understand the origins of our own higher education, what kind of life the institutions of Great Britain were living in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth. It was a period in which Oxford and Cambridge were slumbering. That is a commonplace. There had been very little change almost for centuries. And these sleeping giants every now and again seemed to wake with a spasm as some radical provided them with a reform. Scotland was much more awake at that time. The great professional schools of Edinburgh in science and particularly medicine were then as good as any in the world. It was not until about in the first quarter of the nineteenth century that England began to wake in its higher education. The University of London which is mentioned in our own statutes (we took it for a model at the University of Toronto) soon began to get a power it never had before. Prophets of all kinds were talking to the people of England and arousing them through the first half of the nineteenth century, and the

great Universities Commission of 1850 which reported in 1852 on Oxford and Cambridge meant a transformation of those great universities. The honor schools were called into existence. They had begun to come into existence at the beginning of the century but they came into power after this commission reported. And in the last half of the nineteenth century, Oxford and Cambridge were quite different places. The most glorious period of their history was the last half of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century. Higher education began to be established here before the English higher education came into its own. There were occasionally movements in Canada but the waves did not really break on our shores in strength until after Confederation.

Now what about at home? The first people who wanted higher education were the loyalists and they wanted higher education not merely because of what it would do for their sons but also as a bulwark against the republicanism which they so much feared and which they saw to be growing like a green bay tree south of the line. But the point was this, that among these loyalists the leaders wanted to introduce English education, English higher education, as a stabilizing of the English ideals of life, the only higher education from England was, of course, what existed there. Higher education in England at that time was confined almost entirely to a certain social strata of the people. Dissenters were not allowed into Oxford and Cambridge. When that education was brought into this country what was not realized was this, that what might at the time be suited to older civilization would not suit the new conditions in this country and so there was a great deal of struggle. Here, dissenters were very largely in the majority and of them a great number were Scottish and of course the Scottish Universities had always been democratic. In addition to that there had been an independence of life created among our people by our frontier conditions that made on their part a demand for a new condition and for a higher education that those in charge of higher education were not willing to hold out. It was a perfectly natural situation and if we study conditions historically we shall see exactly why things were as they were, led of

course by strong-minded men, and if the strong-minded men had not been there perhaps the higher education would not have come into being as soon as it did. It strikes one in our eastern provinces, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Lower and Upper Canada. The result of it has been the development of what we are now enjoying as the system of federation of Universities and Colleges, wrought out for the first time here in Toronto and since adopted more or less closely in our western provinces.

Now, it has been a great result to have grow from all our earlier struggles. During that period there was consolidated in our provinces an ideal of higher education that has never left us. The heart of our higher education is the old Arts Faculty with its training in humanities and the pure sciences. That came to us from Britain. We had very strong men bringing it to us. That was impressed upon our country in its plastic stage and around it have been built the faculties for more recent developments. That was the first period.

The second period, from 1867 to 1906, is one in which Canada began to realize that a new life existed in her midst. This young people drew together and we know from the celebrations of two years ago what a very important movement was inaugurated at Confederation. We really became a new people at Confederation. In this new period the Canadian people themselves were realizing their responsibility for higher education. For the first time I suppose after Confederation some of the leading positions in professorial ranks began to be occupied by native-born Canadians. Up to that time they had been held almost entirely by men from the old country. The first man who ventured into this new field was a man of some boldness. It had to be shown that the Canadian mind and character were equal to those of the lands from which we are derived. And that went on throughout the second period. That it has been successful is obvious to anyone who picks up and runs through the calendars of any of our Canadian universities. You will find there that a majority of the teachers, now a great majority, are of Canadian birth. Of them I am thankful to say that a very large number came to us, and are still coming to us, from the universities of

the old land and I hope will continue to come to us. But our Canadians began to see that there was a future for them at home in higher education. They went abroad for post-graduate work. First they went to the old land and to Europe and then when Johns Hopkins University was established in 1876 a number of our most brilliant men went there, led by their valuable scholarships which the founders of Johns Hopkins opened to them with great generosity. One was our own Professor W. J. Alexander, who retired a year ago, and who after he studied in London came back to Baltimore and took his degree there under the celebrated Dr. Gildersleeve. Johns Hopkins has meant a very great deal for our own higher education, inasmuch as through our own Canadian graduates the ideals of post-graduates, the finest in the United States, have been mediated to our own people. This was the second perdiod, the period in which the Universities began to become a very real expression of the ambitions and hopes of the Canadian people. We began to put our own contribution into the life of the people, although of course the earlier period was one in which it was very difficult to distinguish the man who came from the old land and brought these ideals from his son, for instance, who was born here. In a certain sense it is rather a fictitious division. We know what our origins are. But what had to be proved was that the same stock remained strong in a new environment. And it was proven in that period.

The third period was the period from 1906. The reason I take that date is this, that at that time Sir James Whitney had the new act passed for the University of Toronto, a very epoch-making measure. From that date the province—and following the example of this province the western provinces—undertook definite financial responsibility for the state institutions of higher learning. Now that was a tremendous step. The magnitude of that step is only realized when you show what has been done in the last twenty years. If you are astonished sometimes at the growth and development of the University of Toronto you will not account for it unless you realize that during these years while there has not been all that we should desire in the way of support, still there has been a generosity on the part of the governments, (and by none greater than the government that the Hon. Mr. Ferguson has made possible), which has allowed forces that were latent there to come to the surface and express themselves.

Immediately after that date the new universities of the west sprang into being—Saskatchewan, Edmonton and British Columbia. Manitoba had been founded in 1871 and had struggled along, but that example of Toronto meant a very great deal also to Manitoba. The new universities further took their constitutions in part from the new constitution of this university and also persuaded the leaders of public life in those provinces that it was their duty to support in a considerable measure higher education of the people who were coming on. That is the reason I have chosen that date. From that period to the present the Universities of Canada have developed very rapidly and there are just two things I should like to say about that. The one is this, that the undergraduate degrees have been winning the respect of the world. That is a very important result. All over this continent a graduate of Toronto, and also I think of other Canadian Universities, is received as one who is supposed to be well grounded and fellowships are thrown open to our graduates. Similarly one hears from Oxford and Cambridge constantly that Canadian graduates—I hear it more definitely about our own—are giving a good account of themselves and we are told that they are willing to receive our own graduates and if possible make places for them even ahead of others. That is a great accomplishment, Mr. Chairman. The same thing has been happening in regard to our professional degrees. A Canadian physician, a Canadian dentist, does not need to apologize for himself anywhere in the world today. He is recognized. That is a large accomplishment.

The third thing is this. Within the last twenty years the whole problem of research has been pressing itself in upon the universities of Canada. The demand has been made first of all that we shall provide at least in some centers in Canada the opportunity for the young Canadian of brilliant parts to go as far as is required in perfecting himself in any one branch of science or higher learning.

The necessity should no longer be laid upon any Canadian of having to leave the borders of his own country to go south or across the seas in order to get a very highly qualified post-graduate degree and to be instructed in the most modern methods of research. That is essential. That is to say we have not only to pick our own best people for our own service but we have to train them mainly at home. If they can go abroad, all the better, because I believe a great deal in variety of education. But the majority are unable financially to go abroad. Therefore we must provide at home the opportunities for our selected people to rise as high as possible in order that they may fill our own positions at home. That has been extremely important and it has been one of the points of progress in the last era.

Wherein are we different in Canada? What is our contribution? We are different from the Americans in this, that we believe to a certain extent in selective education. We take those students who have the aptitude and we put them into special courses and we provide what we call honor courses for them, to allow those who have gifts to develop their gifts and so to become specialists on certain lines. Now the Americans have not done that but they are beginning to. We got that from Britain and that type of education is being obtained by this steady stream of young men who come to us from the old country every year to fill so many of our positions on our staffs. It is a great encouragement to us. On the other hand the American will tell you that he looks after his average. So do we. The American allows greater freedom. But from our schools right up to the universities we lay even upon the average a large measure of restraint and say "you must be educated in this direction, you are not yet able to have the full choice that will come to you later." So while we do allow a certain measure of choice to the average student it is not, I think, quite so broad as in the United States and I believe we get better results. At any rate we are different.

Now what about England? Where are we different? England is a country with a great background of inherited culture. Now we haven't got that yet. Out of that inherited culture there come year by year to the universities

of Britain young men and young women from homes where they have been taught to speak the English language in its perfection, to write it as no other people can write it. Their literature is one of their greatest inheritances, and to an extent their history is part of it. And in Scotland there has been for centuries a passion for education in itself on the part of all classes and conditions, poor and rich. Now those two conditions that you get in the old country are conditions that do give a student from there the tremendous advantage at the very beginning. But we are getting on. Our people are beginning to write more; they are beginning to speak the English language better. They are beginning to write with a greater degree of precision and mastery than they did before. They believe and they know that in English literature they have an inheritance that is unsurpassed. And I am sure that our litterateurs are improving, although it may be slowly, in this appreciation of what I may call the humanistic side of higher education.

In the matter of historical and scientific research, the investigation of our own history on its political, constitutional and social side, our own historians have made and are making great contributions. They are winning the respect of the historians of other parts of the world; and in the natural sciences as well our own Canadians in our universities are certainly holding their own in a manner of which we do not need to be ashamed. On that side things come to us more easily because, Mr. Chairman, we Canadians, in our northern climate, are a virile people with a vivid and virile intellect. There is no doubt about it, we have a good mind and the bent towards the great realism of science perhaps at the present time appeals to us more. We are certainly getting returns from it. What we have to cultivate more is the humanistic side.

Let me add another thought before I sit down: the great institutions of higher learning in Canada are fortunately for us established in great cities—Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, (Hamilton is to be congratulated on getting McMaster), London, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Vancouver—all cities and growing cities. It means a very great deal for those cities

and for this country. Will you allow me just in the briefest way to outline what Toronto owes to our University? Take the lowest ground, take finance; I could prove to you that we are worth five million dollars in cold cash to this city every year, easily. I could prove to you that millions of dollars have come into this city from outside by benefactions in the last twenty years that the city would not have got if the University of Toronto had not been here. I could prove to you that thousands of people have come into this city in order that they might get education for their children in the higher institutions who would otherwise have had to go somewhere else and carry their money away with them. There is one big school, the University School, with five hundred boys, which is provided for the youth of this city almost entirely, and if it were not there it would be necessary for the city to have built another school. I could show you a park up there used by the city which we police ourselves and maintain ourselves. I do not mean Queen's Park but I mean the park in which our buildings stand. The city says we pay no taxes. Well, we give the whole park to the city throughout which people move, and we maintain that there the year round, and all that we get from the city for Queen's Park and the Avenues is $6,000 a year, on an old bargain made many years ago. That is the sole contribution we get from the City of Toronto. Think further what it means on the other side. You have a population coming into this city, securing for their children advantages that the University offers. You have in addition opportunities opened up, not merely to graduates but to the whole population of this city. During this winter there will be an average of two thousand people taking one class or another at night on every night of the week, on five days of the week at University College, in addition to the undergraduates. That means a good deal for this city at such a low cost. We bring the most distinguished men of the world in their subjects to this city, some of them every year, who lecture on their subjects free, an opportunity that this city has which no city in the Dominion has, an opportunity, that I am often told when I go to England, even Manchester and Birmingham and Liverpool do not

get because Toronto has become a focus. We draw them from everywhere. Look at the museums, the greatest Chinese collection of the world, one of the greatest collections of the prehistoric art of man to be found anywhere across all this continent, a great field to stimulate intellectual activity and the aesthetic taste in people. We make a tremendous contribution to this city and the name of the city is carried far and wide over this world by the University of Toronto, as it could not be carried by any other means, and reaches circles where it would not otherwise be known. And yet we are the University of Ontario, the Provincial University of Ontario, though we bear the name of Toronto.

Now I say any city that has a university is fortunate. It helps the city save its own soul. It stands as a witness for this: the search for truth in itself is one of the interests of the life of civilized man. It stands for this: that discovery in itself, apart from any money that it may bring, is a glory. It is a tribute to man's intellectuality that he can explore the unknown and rise a greater man when he has made such discovery. It also stands for this: that the greatest riches that human beings have are the transmitted inheritances of literature, of scientific attainment, of the knowledge that is given to the race, through the greatest men of the past. And that is preserved in a University and the rising generation are brought to slake their thirst, yes, to grow under the influence of what is transmitted from that great past. Any city, then, that has a great university may be proud of it and I believe, Mr. Chairman, the University has a right to expect the appreciation which I am glad to say, as far as I am aware, this city has always been glad and is now glad to give.