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Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Bill.

WHEN some three years ago the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge applied to Parliament for an annual grant to meet recurring expenses it was obvious that such aid could be given only after due inquiry. Accordingly a Royal Commission was appointed on November 14, 1919, "to enquire into the financial resources of the Universities and of the Colleges and Halls therein, into the administration and application of those resources, into the government of the Universities, and into the relations of the Colleges and Halls to the Universities and to each other." On March 24 of the present year the report of this commission was published, and as a direct result we have the Bill which was introduced by Mr. Fisher, president of the Board of Education, into the House of Commons on July 24.

The Bill is short, consisting of ten sections, with a schedule embodying certain provisions of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877, adapted for present purposes. Two bodies of commissioners are to be set up, styled respectively "The University of Oxford Commissioners" and "The University of Cambridge Commissioners." The commissioners are named and comprise men representative of the varied aspects and interests of university life. Their tenure of office is temporary and will normally expire at the end of the year 1924, but may on the application of the commissioners themselves be continued by His Majesty in Council for other two years. From and after January 1, 1924, these commissioners will "make statutes and regulations for the University, its colleges and halls, and any emoluments, endowments, trusts, foundations, gifts, offices, or institutions in or connected with the University in general accordance with the recommendations contained in the Report of the Royal Commission, but with such modifications as may, after the consideration of any representations made to them, appear to them expedient."

After the termination of the powers of the commissioners the universities and colleges will again assume their own government, but notice of any proposed statute for a college must be given to the university before it is submitted to His Majesty in Council, and any college statute which affects the university may not be altered without the consent of the university. Again, except with the consent of the trustees or governing body, no trust may be altered "unless fifty years have elapsed since the date on which the instrument creating the trust came into operation." This, however, will not operate against increasing the endowment of any emolument. Further, the contributions of the colleges to university purposes must be assessed in

the first place with regard to the needs of the colleges themselves.

The schedule deals with such questions as the interim powers of the universities and colleges; the provision that the commissioners in framing statutes "shall have regard to the interests of education, religion, learning, and research; the election of college representatives as commissioners; and procedure generally and other matters of detail.

Obviously the Bill must be read in the light of the Report. The institution of two bodies of commissioners is the result of a recommendation in it "that a Statutory Commission should be set up to carry out the changes recommended," and the powers of these two bodies are defined, except in special circumstances, by it. As we have remarked in a previous article in these columns the Report is distinctly conservative. Similarly, the Bill, for example in its provision for dealing with trusts and endowments, shows clearly that there is no intention of making sweeping changes. The new commissioners hold office for a season; the suspension of the autonomy of the universities is merely temporary.

The new bodies have no easy task before them. The problems will demand knowledge, skill, and tact. The question of the reform of the government of the university requires delicate handling. The colleges must be brought into closer relationship with the university. The teaching will have to be reorganised and co-ordinated, and proper provision made for research and advanced work. Fellowships, scholarships, extramural education, cost of living in colleges, non-collegiate students, and entrance examinations are some of the questions to be dealt with. In addition, there are the twin problems of salaries and pensions. Here it may be expected there will be difficulties. Notwithstanding all that has been done in recent years in the modern universities these are problems still unsolved there. The question is not an easy one. For the Cambridge Commission there is the further question of the position of women in the university.

The projected reforms can be effected only by a large increase in the income of the two universities. The Report recommends an annual Parliamentary grant of 100,000*l.* to each university. Such a sum is none too great for carrying into effect its financial proposals. At present the grant is 30,000*l.* to each, and doubtless a further instalment in the immediate future is contemplated. This raises the important question as to whether or not Oxford and Cambridge should have separate and individual consideration in the matter of State aid apart from the modern universities. In some respects it is right and proper that separate and individual consideration should be given to these ancient

institutions, particularly if due respect is to be paid to the conservation of the best of their traditions. But the case is not on all fours where finance is concerned. Until recently the modern universities had been treated somewhat scurvily by the State, and even now they receive only 1,200,000*l.* of an annual Parliamentary grant for allocation among something like sixty institutions. The largest individual grant for the year 1921-2—that received by the Imperial College of Science and Technology—amounts to 67,500*l.*, a sum in our opinion quite inadequate for the expansion and development of an institution of this standing. Moreover, when the amounts allotted to the other institutions of university rank are considered in detail, it is clear that a sum of 200,000*l.* for Oxford and Cambridge is quite out of proportion. The modern universities are not receiving the financial help from the State to which they are entitled, and, in particular, at the very time when Oxford and Cambridge are receiving for the first time an annual grant of 60,000*l.*, they are being deprived of an annual grant of 300,000*l.* This withdrawal cannot be justified. In point of fact the financial difficulties of the modern universities are equally as great as, if not greater than, those of the two older universities.

The question of Parliamentary grants to our universities should be considered as a whole and not piecemeal. In the light of seemingly contradictory statements made in public regarding State aid given to the modern universities it would appear that the whole question should be discussed in Parliament. It is not true, except as a mere technicality, to say that the annual grant to the modern universities will remain at its present level. Any one who takes this statement at its face value will have a rude awakening in the coming financial year. In our opinion, in such circumstances, it would be a mistake to consider the financial needs of Oxford and Cambridge apart from those of the modern universities. The position of the whole of the universities in the United Kingdom should be considered together, and not simply the position of two of them however ancient and honourable their traditions.

Paracelsus.

Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, called Paracelsus: His Personality and Influence as Physician, Chemist, and Reformer. By Prof. J. M. Stillman. Pp. viii + 184. (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1920.) 10s. net.

AS is well known, it is the customary lot of revolutionaries, whether in politics, religion, literature, or science, or indeed in any department of intellectual activity, to be both vilified and extolled, and the