

**DR. RYERSON'S REPLY TO THE
RECENT PAMPHLET OF MR.
LANGTON & DR. WILSON, ON
THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION**

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Dr. Ryerson's Reply to the Recent Pamphlet of Mr. Langton & Dr. Wilson, on the University Question by Egerton Ryerson

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EGERTON RYERSON

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University Reform.

DR. RYERSON'S REPLY

TO THE

RECENT PAMPHLET OF MR. LANGTON & DR. WILSON,

ON THE

UNIVERSITY QUESTION,

IN

Five Letters to the Hon. M. Cameron, M.P.C.

CHAIRMAN OF THE LATE

University Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

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"A writer who builds his arguments on facts, is not easily to be confuted. He is not to be answered by general assertions and general reproaches. He may want eloquence to amuse or persuade; but speaking the truth, he must always convince."—*Letters of Junius*.

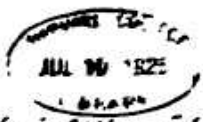
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Charles William Platt fund

UNIVERSITY QUESTION.

Dr. Ryerson's Reply to a Recent Pamphlet of Mr. Langton
and Dr. Wilson.

TO THE HON. M. CAMERON, M. L. C.,

&c., &c., &c.

LETTER I.

(Petitions and Parliamentary Investigations on the University Question.)

Sir,—To you, as an old friend of Victoria College, and an avowed advocate of the views of the Wesleyan Body on the University Question, was confided last year for presentation to the Legislative Assembly the memorial of the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada in behalf of Victoria College, and in favour of a national University on a national basis. On your motion, that Memorial, with various others on the same subject, was referred to a Select Committee, of which you were Chairman. That Memorial alleged, that the national objects of the University Act of 1853 had been departed from in the nature and prodigality of expenditures, and in lowering instead of keeping up the standard of University education as prescribed by the Statute. That these allegations were proved to a demonstration, I believe neither you nor any other persons who witnessed the investigation, or have read the Minutes of it, have ever for a moment doubted, whether they agreed in the theory or prayer of the Petitioners or not.

(Effect of the Investigation at Quebec.)

The Committee, by the close of the Session, ceased to exist without reporting; but the convictions produced by the investigation in the minds of the members of the Legislature were amply attested by the fact, that the Parliamentary grants to the two Colleges of the Petitioners, which had never before passed the Legislative Assembly without some debates and divisions, were not only continued, but increased £500 to each College, and passed without division or objection—a proceeding unprecedented of its kind in Canada, and illustrative of the irresistible power of the truth, justice and patriotism involved in the Christian principles and national views of the Petitioners when brought into contact with the minds of intelligent men of all parties. And the effect has been and will be the same wherever the same principles and views are brought into contact with enlightened Christian minds.

(Dr. Ryerson's Position and Proposal at Quebec.)

You will recollect that I appeared before the Committee in no official capacity, but as an individual witness in obedience to your summons; that I was subsequently thrust into an unusual prominence by the the attempts made to break down my evidence. You know I gave Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson the advantage of the last word, without rejoinder, though it was my right.

You will also recollect that, at the close of the investigation, I said, so far as I was concerned, I was for peace, and willing to let the Legislature and country judge and decide by the publication of what had been recorded in the minutes of the Committee on both sides; but that if my assailants were still resolved on war, they should have it to their heart's content.

(Each party left to publish its own Evidence.—University propagandism.—Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson renew the late contest with Dr. Ryerson.)

Only about 50 copies of the Minutes of Evidence before the Committee having been printed for the use of members and witnesses, it remained for each party to publish and circulate its own evidence at its own discretion and in its own way. I had my defence of the Petitioners, in reply to Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson, printed without note or comment, just as it was recorded in the minutes of the Committee, without the alteration or addition of a sentence. Mr. Langton did the same in regard to his speech. Dr. Wilson, not being satisfied with what he had laid before committee in writing, and which was recorded in its minutes, wrote out, a month after delivery, a pseudo version of it under the *nom de plume* of a Mr. A. K. Edwards. A system of Toronto College propagandism was set on foot, and openly proclaimed at a public University dinner at Toronto, the Chancellor enjoining each of the faithful to execute his mission on the house tops and in the streets throughout the land. This challenge was answered by the speeches and proceedings of the Wesleyan Conference, held in Kingston in June, and various public meetings. Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson have lately renewed the contest with me by publishing a closely printed pamphlet, (with copious notes) of 90 pages, and entitled "University Question. The statements of John Langton, Esq., M. A., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Toronto, and Professor Daniel Wilson, LL.D., of University College, Toronto; with notes and extracts from the evidence taken before the Committee of Legislative Assembly on the University."

In reply to that pamphlet, or rather to the notes of it, I now desire to address you. The speeches, or text, of the pamphlet are those to which my Defence of the Petitioners was a reply; and I should deem it superfluous to add a word to that Defence, were it not for the numerous notes in which Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson have spared no pains to impugn me and misinterpret the facts of the question. At this busy season I will answer them as briefly as possible—first correcting the misstatements of each, and then stating and establishing the general facts and principles of the question,—the question of questions for the progress and welfare of Canada.

(Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson publish a combined edition of their pamphlet at the expense of the University Funds.)

Before entering into particulars, I beg to make three general remarks:—The one is, that this pamphlet, (if not the preceding ones also,) has been published at the expense, not of its authors, not of the College whose monopoly it advocates,—but at the expense of the Funds of the University, of which the parties whom they assail are as much members as themselves,—a fact which I should not have known had not Mr. Langton been rejected from continuing Vice Chancellor. While in that office, Mr. Langton could come to Toronto and provide for any sort of expenditure out of the University Funds, and then go to Quebec and audit and pass the accounts of them. In the investigation of this public question, the Committee of which you were Chairman, ordered that the expenses of both sides should be equally paid; but Messrs. Langton and Wilson have resorted to the University chest for supplies in their renewed effort to assail me and defeat the advocates of University reform. Mr. Langton, who is known to be the greatest pluralist in Canada—having filled four offices besides the one which is supposed to occupy him fully, and for which he receives a full salary—might, I think, have spared the University funds in this instance, if Dr. Wilson had no such sense of propriety and fairness. Of this I am confident, that had I proposed to do the same thing as to my speech in behalf of the petitioners, Mr. Langton would have held it unlawful, as is his and Dr. Wilson's proceeding in publishing their speeches and notes out of the income of the University. They may pervert the University Act to such a purpose, as it has been to many similar purposes; but such clearly was not its design. And it is an insult as well as a wrong to the petitioners of University reform and their representatives, for Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson to assume a right and use of University funds for their personal and party purposes against others equally and more disinterestedly concerned in the National University than themselves.

(Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson's Amalgamation Speeches.)

My second remark is, that these speeches are the same which Messrs. Langton and Wilson published last May and June. They were then published separately and without notes; but they seemed to fall still-born. The authors appear at length, to have thought that the two abortions might, by incorporation together, and by swathing the feebler parts with the bandages of personal and vituperative notes, be metamorphosed into a very Hercules of strength to crush the Chief Superintendent of Education. The thought was an ingenious conception of necessity; but the new-born amalgamation seems not answerable to the labour of bringing forth. The law of nature is still too strong for the feeble artifice of the ex-Vice Chancellor and his attendant Professor; for even "in this Canada of ours," two blacks cannot make one white, or even chemical affinity add to the weight of volatile particles.

(Origin of Personalities—Summary View of the Question.)

My third remark is, that this discussion ought never to have been encumbered with personalities. This feature of the discussion was introduced by Dr. Wilson, and has been pursued by him and Mr. Langton

with relentless tenacity in order to divert attention from the great principles and merits of the question. Dr. Wilson in his last paper laid before the Committee, says, in reference to his speech, (which commenced the personalities of the discussion) "On obtaining permission to address you," "I felt it to be my duty to show to the committee that, neither by previous education, by special training or experience, nor by fidelity to the trust reposed in him as a member of the Senate of the University, does Dr. Ryerson merit the confidence of the Committee, or of the Province, as a fit adviser on a system of University education." This is Dr. Wilson's own admission and avowal of having turned attention from the merits of the question to the demerits of Dr. Ryerson. Hence the painful necessity of my answering these personal attacks (which are renewed in the notes of the new pamphlet by Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson) while discussing the general question. But that the reader may, at the outset, understand the whole question, (apart from any personalities,) I will conclude this introductory letter by giving a summary view of it. The advocates of University reform maintain the following positions:

1. That there shall be a National University for Upper Canada, as was contemplated by the University Act of 1853,

2. That the Senate of the University shall be under the control of no one college more than another; shall be independent of all colleges, and prescribe the standard and course of studies for all colleges (except in Divinity), and direct the examinations, and confer the University honors and degrees on the students of all the colleges.

3. That no college connected with the University shall confer degrees in the Faculties of Arts, Law, or Medicine; that no college shall receive any public aid for the support of a Faculty or Professor of Divinity.

4. That each college connected with the University, (whether denominational or non-denominational) shall be entitled to public aid from the University Fund according to the number of its students matriculated (not by such college but) by the University, and taught in the course of studies prescribed by the University: provided that a stipulated sum adequate for the efficient support of University College at Toronto, as the college of these who wished to have their youth educated in a non-denominational college be allowed; and provided that no denominational college shall receive more than half the amount allowed to University College. This last is a generous concession on the part of the advocates of denominational colleges, upon the ground that those colleges will do as much work at half the public expense as a non-denominational college will.

5. That the public provision for University (as for Common or Grammar School) education, whether arising from the sale of lands or parliamentary grants, or both, shall constitute one University Fund, and distributed, as in the case of Common and Grammar Schools, to each college according to its works in imparting the education prescribed by national authority.

The advocates of University Reform complain that the present system of college monopoly at Toronto is at variance with the intentions of the University Act of 1853; that most extravagant expenditures of the University endowment have been made, while the standard of University education has been greatly reduced, instead of being kept up as intended

by the act. They claim that the reform which they advocate is but the faithful carrying out of the avowed intentions and provisions of the University Act of 1853; that it provides one high standard of education for all the colleges, and recognizes the equal rights of all classes according to their works; that it combines the efforts of all denominations, as well as those of no denomination, in the great work of liberal education; that it will contribute greatly to the extension of University education, while elevating its character; that it is in harmony with the fundamental principles of our public school system—the state aiding each section of the community according to its works in teaching the prescribed subjects of public education, and providing that parents and the clergy of each church can in the one case as well as in the other, according to the nature and circumstances of each kind of education, provide for the religious instruction and oversight of their sons while taught the secular branches of education. The illustrations and proofs of these statements will be given hereafter.

The sole plea for the present system of monopoly is the pretext of keeping up a high standard of University education, while the whole course of the proceedings of its managers has been to lower that standard beyond all authoritative precedent or parallel, as I shall *demonstrate* in my next two letters.

I have, &c.,

E. RYERSON.

Toronto, March 26th, 1861.

LETTER II.

SIR,—I now proceed to particulars, and address myself first to the notes appended to Mr. Langton's speech, which occupies (with its appendices) the first fifty pages of the pamphlet.

(*Misstatement as to Dr. Barrett representing Victoria College in the Senate.*)

To all that Mr. Langton has said in the first twelve pages of his speech about the intentions of the University Act as to buildings, other Colleges, Library and Museum, I have fully replied in my Defence of the Petitioners; but in a note on the 8th page, in regard to Dr. Barrett (of U. C. College) sitting in the Senate as a Representative of Victoria College, Mr. Langton says—"Dr. Wilson and Mr. Langton never said that he (Dr. Barrett) now represents Victoria College; but they said that he first took his seat and for some time sat there as President of the Toronto School of Medicine, which was at that time the Medical Faculty of Victoria." And on page 62, Dr. Wilson says, that "Dr. Barrett, it is well known, never had a seat in the Senate in any other capacity than as Dr. Rolph's or the Toronto School of Medicine; and who as such took his seat for the first time to represent the Medical Faculty of Victoria College at the meetings of the University of Toronto, while its students were systematically prevented from graduating there." The character in which Dr. Barrett took his seat in the Senate is not of the least importance to the University question; but Mr. Langton and Dr. Wilson both magnifying