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Reconstitution of the University of London.

THE Government has redeemed its pledge to introduce legislation "to make further provision for the University of London." The University of London Bill, which, on the motion of the Earl of Balfour, was accorded its second reading in the House of Lords on June 29, proposes to appoint eight commissioners with plenary powers to draft statutes for the University "in general accordance" with the recommendations contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee of the Board of Education appointed by Mr. Trevelyan in 1924, subject to any modifications which may appear to them to be expedient. Thus the procedure is assimilated to that adopted in the recent reconstitution of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. There are, however, important differences between the two cases. Whereas the reconstitution of the ancient universities was based on the recommendations of a Royal Commission of great authority, presided over by Mr. Asquith (now Lord Oxford)—recommendations which were unanimous save for some relatively unimportant reservations by individual members—the proposed reconstitution of the University of London is to be based, not on the recommendations of the Royal Commission, generally known as the Haldane Commission, which reported in 1913, but on the recommendations of a Departmental Committee of the Board of Education. Conditions, it is true, have changed since the Haldane Commission reported. The reception accorded to the Departmental Committee's report has been comparatively friendly, but it cannot be overlooked that the constitution proposed by the Committee differs essentially from that suggested by the Royal Commission.

Another difference relates to the historical development of the universities in question. Broadly speaking, Oxford and Cambridge have retained their traditional constitutions, based on the University of Paris. They remain corporations governed by their graduate members. Certain internal reforms, such as the abolition of the celibacy of college fellows, have been effected by the pressure of public opinion. But external control in any form has always been resisted, notwithstanding acceptance of generous financial aid from the Government. The presence of outside representatives on the Council, the Royal Commission reported in 1922, "would hamper the Council in its work without securing as a rule any compensating advantage"; and the objection to representatives nominated by the Government appeared to the Commission "particularly strong."

The University of London was established by Royal Charter in 1836 with a Senate nominated by the Government to administer its educational affairs, the Government retaining full financial control. It was not until

1858 that the graduates secured a share in the administration of the University, when the privilege of nominating for a limited number of seats on the Senate was conceded to Convocation under a new charter. Forty years later the teachers of the colleges and medical schools in London were accorded a similar privilege, the Act of 1898 reconstituting the University as a teaching university. The reconstitution now under discussion in Parliament derives its motive force from the demand of the Government, voiced by the University Grants Committee, for an improved financial and executive control.

The schedule of the University of London Act of 1898 gave to the Commissioners named in the Act detailed directions for the constitution of the Senate. It enforced the 'advisory' character of its chief councils, provided safeguards for religious and sex equality, prescribed the radius for the recognition by the University of public educational constitutions, insisted that the internal and external degrees of the University should represent "as far as possible the same standard of knowledge and attainment," and gave instructions on several other matters. These provisions were fully discussed by Parliament. If the present Bill passes, Parliament will abrogate its right to discuss the details of academic organisation, reserving only the right to reject statutes. Government of a university by statutes without rigid and permanent directions from Parliament offers certain obvious advantages, provided fundamentals are safeguarded. Statutes can be amended to meet changing conditions without cumbersome Parliamentary procedure. Under the present Bill, statutes for the University can be altered or supplemented by the University, except statutes, if any, that the Commissioners may consider ought not to be altered by the University. The Bill directs the Commissioners, before adopting statutes, to receive representations "by or on behalf of the Senate or Convocation or any fifty graduates of the University, or by or on behalf of any other bodies or persons appearing to the Commissioners to be directly affected by the proposed statute"; and there are the usual provisions for the approval of statutes by the Privy Council. Thus the arrangements for publicity and for preliminary discussion by those specially qualified are adequate.

This is not the occasion for a detailed discussion of the recommendations of the Departmental Committee, either at large or in relation to the promotion of scientific education and research. Controversy has so far centred—as was to be expected—round the status and powers of the proposed Council which is to be given financial and executive control. This reform is fundamental; but the question of the

relation of the Council to the Senate, the body responsible for educational policy, will have to be closely examined by the Commissioners. Presumably all the proposed Commissioners are already in agreement as to the creation of the Council. On other matters, the Commissioners can adopt modifications of the Departmental Committee's recommendations, and no doubt many suggestions will be forthcoming in due course in regard to such matters as the number and mode of election of heads of colleges as members of the Senate, the devising of some method more dignified than co-option of appointing a number of members of the Senate as independent experts or on grounds of services rendered to the University—the elder statesmen or aldermen of the University—and the appointment of the Principal as a member of Senate and Council *ex officio*. Statutes should also authorise the payment of fees to members of the Council, thus emphasising the serious nature of their duties and the demands on their time and energy.

The important question of the relation of the University to its affiliated colleges is a matter which will be within the competence of the Commissioners, who may make statutes for the colleges, subject to the consent of the respective governing bodies. Their powers appear to extend to the incorporation or disincorporation of colleges in the University, a subject of acute controversy within the University. Under the present statutes, colleges were affiliated to the University without any clearly defined privileges and obligations, and it will be of great advantage both to the University and to its colleges if their relations are placed on a firmer basis.

The personnel of the Commissioners has been selected with care and judgment. The chairman, Mr. Justice Tomlin, will ensure judicial treatment of the questions to be considered. Two graduates of the University, Sir Josiah Stamp and Prof. T. P. Nunn, and the present Principal Officer, Sir Cooper Perry, who will retire from his University office shortly, may be deemed to represent the University. The point of view of the Board of Education and the London County Council will be represented by Sir Amherst Selby-Bigge, the late Secretary of the Board, and Sir Cyril Cobb respectively. Oxford contributes a representative in the Master of Balliol (Dr. A. D. Lindsay), and the special interests of women will find a natural protector in Miss Philpotts.

Past history has shown that the University of London through its graduates can exercise powerful political influence. Will that influence be used on the present occasion against the Bill? Convocation, at a sparsely attended meeting held during the strike, adopted three resolutions declaring that the creation of a Council to control the finances of the University would have

"prejudicial effects upon the University"; that the reconstitution of the Senate in accordance with the recommendation of the Departmental Commission would be "a grave error"; and, finally, strongly deprecated the setting up of a Statutory Commission. The Senate has adopted a resolution declaring its opinion that as regards the relative positions of the Council and the Senate, the scheme proposed by the Majority Report of the Departmental Committee should be rejected on the ground that it will be found to be unworkable in practice, that it will deprive the truly representative body (the Senate) of all effective control, that it will not clear the body charged with control of finance from any possible imputation of partiality; and finally, that it will complicate further the already too complicated machinery of the University. The Senate further offered to submit a scheme of agreed reforms. The inference to be drawn from this resolution is that the Senate would prefer that the Council, if created, should have the status of a statutory finance committee.

One final suggestion. Would it not be well for the Government to make some announcement as regards increased financial aid for the work of the University, if and when reconstituted? The great developments in university education, which London, as the capital of the Empire, urgently needs, cannot be accomplished, however perfect a constitution may be provided by the authority of the Government, unless the money is forthcoming. The University may reasonably expect the Government, which has shown so much solicitude for its spiritual welfare, to contribute generously to its material needs.

T. LL. HUMBERSTONE.

Eugenic Reform.

The Need for Eugenic Reform. By Leonard Darwin. Pp. xvii + 529. (London: John Murray, 1926.) 12s. net.

THIS is in every respect a notable book by a most distinguished author. Major Darwin has now for fifteen years occupied the presidential chair in the Eugenics Education Society, and comparatively few realise the services which he has rendered towards making clear the social implications of the results of the scientific study of heredity. The word 'Eugenics' signifying 'the study of the agencies under human control by which the human stock can be improved' was coined by Galton, as most people know. Most are also aware that it was associated in the public mind with a number of fantastic projects for the compulsory mating of specially selected specimens of opposite sexes in order to improve the race. For this conception of the subject Galton is directly responsible; it has led to eugenicists being regarded as a collection of

faddists, and has drawn on to the whole subject the sharpest shafts of ridicule and sarcasm. G. K. Chesterton has said of eugenic reform that it could be imposed only on slaves and cowards, and it is, no doubt, of 'Galtonian' reforms that he was thinking when he made this statement.

The present reviewer is forced to confess that he formerly shared the common attitude towards the subject, an attitude which, as he must regretfully admit, is still maintained by some of his most admired scientific friends. It was in 1913, when he had the good fortune to listen for the first time to a presidential address by Major Darwin, that the reviewer first saw that a wholly different interpretation could be given to eugenic reform, an interpretation calculated to appeal strongly to the common sense of all who take the trouble to give their attention to the subject. This interpretation, which, though theoretically admitted, was not regarded as of practical importance in comfortable Edwardian days, is now forcing itself on the attention of every one who has to deal with social affairs. Major Darwin pointed out that, if we went on fostering the unrestricted multiplication of the least competent members of the nation by continually increasing doles extracted from the pockets of the more competent and therefore well-to-do, we should inevitably lower the quality of the race. It is a sinister portent that the large families which were reared in our rectories and in the manses of Scotland in Victorian days, from which we gathered so many distinguished and able men, have disappeared, whilst there is no serious diminution in the offspring of our dock labourers and unskilled workers. Major Darwin's conception of eugenics was essentially the extension of his father's doctrine of natural selection to human affairs.

The book which we are considering opens with a biological introduction which deals with the Mendelian theory of heredity and discusses the inheritance of acquired qualities and the Lamarckian theory of evolution. This part is by far the weakest section of the book, for Major Darwin labours under the disadvantage of not being a biologist, and this disadvantage is increased by the fact that, as he admits in the preface, he has relied for assistance and advice mainly on Mr. R. A. Fisher and Mr. C. B. S. Hodson. Of these the first is a mathematician, and the second name is obviously a slip for Mrs. Hodson, the respected assistant secretary of the Eugenics Education Society, who undoubtedly has had some training in biology, but is scarcely fitted to give serious criticism in this subject.

Major Darwin accepts the extreme Mendelian view, namely, that the whole force of heredity in any individual is capable of being analysed into a series of units or 'genes,' and that a chance assortment of 'genes' is