

The Relations of the Land-Grant Colleges to State Universities

(Synopsis of a paper read by President W. J. Kerr at the 19th Annual Convention of the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations held at Washington, D. C., Nov. 16, 1905.)

FROM the time of the establishment of the land-grant colleges the question has been agitated, in one form or another, as to the extent and character of the field these institutions should occupy; the relations that should exist between them and other colleges and universities. During recent years the people have become better acquainted with the work the agricultural and mechanical colleges are accomplishing in promoting industrial education and the development of the industries and resources of the country; and, consequently, there is a better understanding regarding the functions and scope of these institutions.

Even yet, however, there is a divergence of opinion on these questions. In some of the states there is still an agitation of the question as to whether the land-grant colleges should be primarily or exclusively trade schools, their object being to train farmers' sons for the practical work on the farm, and tradesmen in blacksmithing, carpentering and other handicrafts; or whether they should be strictly educational institutions of college grade. If the latter, should they be schools of agriculture only, or should their scope be broadened to include other courses? What place should these institutions occupy in the public school system of the country? What relationship should they bear to the state universities?

That these important questions are not yet definitely settled, and that there is no general agreement upon them, even among educators, are conclusions justified by the recent controversies in a large number of states about the distinctive character of college and land-grant colleges; and the widespread agitation, throughout the middle and western states at least, of the question as to the policy that should be pursued in the development of state institutions of higher education. For example:

In South Dakota, last year, the Governor, in his message to the State Legislature, recommended that the university for unduly emphasizing, as he thought, the work in engineering; and censured the Agricultural College for offering courses in Latin.

In North Dakota, two years ago, the Governor recommended to the Legislature that unnecessary duplication of courses in the State University and the Agricultural College be avoided, and that "each institution should be kept within its special sphere."

LEGISLATIVE INTEREST.

In Iowa, the Legislature appointed committees to visit the different state institutions for the purpose of investigating their needs and reporting on the appropriations required. The committee appointed to visit the University recommended that the engineering courses offered by that institution be discontinued, and that all engineering work be concentrated in the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts. However, the Legislature made the usual appropriation to the University for the maintenance of the engineering courses and a special appropriation for an engineering building, but appointed a committee to consider the advisability of putting all state educational institutions under a general board of control.

In Colorado, a bill was introduced in the legislature providing for the appointment of a commission to adjust the work of the state university, the Agricultural college, the state school of mines and the state normal school. The introduction of this bill was the result of the agitation that had continued for a number of years regarding the respective fields that these institutions should occupy in the higher educational work of that state.

THE STRUGGLE IN UTAH.

In Utah, after a protracted struggle between the University and the Agricultural College, the latter has been placed under the entire session of the last Legislature, over the question of uniting these institutions, or of transferring all engineering courses from the college to the University, a bill was introduced providing for the appointment of a commission to investigate the question of college and university work, and to report, with recommendations, to the next Legislature.

For a number of years the people of Montana were agitating the question of the advisability of consolidating the university, the Agricultural college and the agricultural college. In 1902, under the authority of the legislative assembly,

the state board of education carefully investigated the work of these institutions and the conditions relating thereto, and by unanimous vote declared that it was not feasible to attempt consolidation. The governor in his message to the legislature in 1903 expressed the belief that a further agitation of the question would accomplish no good, and would "be altogether harmful to the state and detrimental to the cause of higher education."

SITUATION IN IDAHO.

On the other hand, in Idaho, where the land grant college and the state university are united, a strong effort was made to secure the passage of a bill separating these institutions. While no definite action was taken at the last session of the legislature, there is still a strong feeling in favor of separating the people of Idaho in favor of separation.

In Wyoming, also, there is talk of dividing the state university, and maintaining the agricultural college as a separate institution. In California, \$150,000 was appropriated by the last legislature for the purchase of a farm and the establishment of a college of Agriculture, suitable land, it is said, can be secured in sufficiently large quantities in the immediate vicinity of the college. The legislature is taken of this to agitate the question as to whether the land-grant college should be separated from the university.

IN OTHER STATES.

In some states, where the land-grant colleges are associated with the state universities, difficulties have arisen over questions relating to the rank of the colleges and departments of agriculture and mechanic arts with the other colleges or departments of the university. This was particularly true during the earlier history of these institutions.

The conditions affecting the work of the state universities and the land-grant colleges are so diverse, and depend largely upon local environment, that it seems impossible to work out a general plan that shall be applicable throughout the country. But it should not be impracticable to reach an agreement on a number of the important matters bearing upon this question. In order to determine the relations that should exist between these institutions, it is necessary to consider their origin.

The origin of the state universities and the object in view in their establishment; second, the function and scope of state universities prior to 1862; third, the origin of land-grant colleges and the purpose of their establishment; fourth, the concurrent development of state universities and land-grant colleges since 1862; fifth, the present scope and character of these institutions.

The limits of this paper preclude anything like a complete discussion of these questions. As a basis for the conclusions which are to follow, however, it is important that brief reference be made to at least a few of the leading features.

ORIGIN OF STATE UNIVERSITY.

The origin of the state university dates back to the famous ordinance of 1787 for the government of the northwest territory. This ordinance declared it to be the duty of the nation to support education, and reserved two townships of public land in each state for the maintenance of seminaries of learning. The states which were subsequently organized out of the northwest territory carried out the educational provision of the ordinance, and, through 32 separate acts of Congress, passed largely during the first half of the last century, all of the states west of the Mississippi received similar land-grants for the endowment of universities. Under these acts, approximately 1,500,000 acres of land were granted for the endowment of institutions of higher education in 22 different states and territories. The purpose in view was the establishment of a university in each state under the control of the commonwealth to promote, in the language of the ordinance, "good government and the happiness of mankind." The character of the work contemplated for these institutions is indicated in the provision of the ordinance, which declared that the land granted should be used for the purpose of "establishing a university, to be applied to the intended object by the legislature of the state."

MORRILL LAND GRANT ACT.

At the time of the passage of the Morrill Land Grant act in 1862, the history of higher education was the four years' course of the old classical college. The conventional courses in

Owing to the fact that during the week the commission appointed by Gov. Cutler to investigate the duplication of studies in the University of Utah and the Agricultural College, have been in session, and the further fact that some of the matters considered, are dealt with in the paper from Prof. Kerr, it is herewith reproduced. Its publication will be timely, too, for the reason that the State Teachers' association will meet in this city next week. The subject is one that is now attracting a vast amount of attention throughout the country. At the convention of the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations held in Washington, D. C., recently, three entire days were devoted to discussing it.

Act with those of the Ordinance of 1787 and the supplementary acts of Congress for the establishment of state universities; but most of the states kept the Morrill grants separate and established special colleges of agriculture and mechanic arts. There are 65 land-grant colleges and universities established in all the states and territories except Alaska. Of these, 59 are united with state universities, and 15, including the Morrill act of 1862, are maintained in the southern states for colored students.

In 1903 the aggregate income of the state universities was approximately \$2,750,000, and the value of their equipment and permanent funds was nearly \$55,000,000. More than 45,000 students were in attendance, and the number of persons in the faculties exceeded 3,600. In connection with the above, it is interesting to note that the 15 universities which do not have the benefits of the acts of Congress of 1862 and 1890 had a total income of less than \$3,000,000, with equipment and permanent funds estimated at less than \$15,750,000; while the attendance was 15,400, and the number of instructors about 1,200.

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As has been stated, the first universities which were established under the Morrill act of 1862 were in the agricultural and mechanical departments, or colleges, of the state universities. Since that time, however, the number of these institutions has increased, and the work of the land-grant colleges has become more diversified.

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NEEDS TO BE MET.

It was to meet these particular needs of the people in the development of a new and rapidly growing country, that the Morrill act of 1862 was passed. Under this act, nearly 11,000,000 acres of land were granted to the different states for the endowment of colleges. The purpose in view was "to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." As explained by Senator Morrill, "the object of the act was to provide an opportunity in every state for a liberal and larger education to larger numbers, not merely to those destined to sedentary professions, but to those engaged in the higher instruction of the world's business, for the industrial pursuits and professions of life." It is clearly evident from the provisions of the Morrill act, and from all the subsequent acts of Congress relating thereto, that the object was to provide for a new type of institutions, occupying a distinctive field, as scientific, technical colleges, adapted to the needs of the rapidly growing country, the development of the industries and resources of the country. But it is also to be observed that a liberal as well as a technical education was contemplated for the education of the industrial classes, but for culture as well. The purpose, therefore, in the establishment of the land-grant colleges was to provide an education, to quote again from Senator Morrill, which should provide "a great building up a great nation in its resources of wealth and power, but greatest of all in the aggregate of its intelligence and virtue."

GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

The development of state universities and agricultural and mechanical colleges since 1862 involves largely the history of the growth of higher education in the United States under federal and state control. While great interest had previously been taken in higher education, there was special emphasis, at this time, upon the necessity of colleges and universities affording opportunities for the special training required in the development of the civil institutions, and particularly of the economic life of the country. The passage of the Morrill act gave new impetus to educational endeavor, and resulted in a general effort to secure the establishment of a college or university in every state and territory. During the first decade, no fewer than 24 state institutions of higher education were established. As the country developed, and states and territories were organized, colleges and universities were founded, until at present every state and territory except Alaska maintains at least one such institution. In 1903, the combined land grants of the Morrill

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state universities are maintained separately, particularly in the newer states; with comparatively small population and limited revenues, it is important that the respective functions of these institutions should be clearly defined in such way as to avoid, as far as practicable, the duplication of expensive courses, and to prevent either institution from encroaching unnecessarily upon the distinctive field of the other.

THE UNIVERSAL AGITATION.

6. After all, the question which is being agitated in different states regarding the relations which should exist between the land-grant colleges and the state universities, is largely a question of income, and can not be settled merely by legislative enactment or other means, which each institution should offer. So long as these state colleges and universities are dependent for support upon local appropriations from the legislature, there will always be controversy as to the amount to be allotted to each institution, and the state will be entitled to receive from the state. These wide and divergent opinions are not only expensive but also to the interests of higher education. It is important, therefore, that the state should be guided by which to establish more harmonious relations between these institutions. In connection with the foregoing, the following plan is suggested:

(a) That a thorough investigation be made under legislative authority to determine the proportion or amount of the annual state revenue that can be devoted to higher education. (b) That a similar investigation be made of the work and requirements of the higher educational institutions to determine the proportion of the amount provided by the state for higher education. (c) That a statutory levy be made on all the assessed valuation of state property sufficient to provide each institution with the required annual income. If this plan were adopted as a permanent policy, (1) it would provide a regular and certain source of income for the growth of the state, and would enable the boards of control to know approximately what their income would be for years in advance, and thereby to plan their expenditures more wisely and more systematically. (2) It would add stability to the policy of these institutions, and insure the steady but healthful growth of each; and finally, (3) it would relieve the state of the embarrassing and expensive contentions at each recurring session of the Legislature over the question of appropriations, and the attendant controversies regarding the proper allocation of the work of the college and the University.

(b) The state universities, in such states, should give prominence to the work in the sciences, philosophy, and such professions as law, medicine, etc. It should be recognized that one of the chief functions of the university is to encourage literary and scientific investigations to discover truth, for its own sake, to increase knowledge independent of the question of its possible applications.

(c) The logical division of work between these institutions would be to have all the technical courses in the college, and the literary, classical, and professional work, in the university. But this plan would not be feasible in all of the states. Local environment and policies would affect the distribution of this question. For instance, in some of the states certain engineering courses might be given more advanced treatment in the college. But in the case, in the states under discussion, the same expensive technical courses should not be given in both the college and the university.

(d) Whether the division may be made of the engineering courses, the work of the college should be that which related most directly to the development of the resources, and industries of each state; such as the engineering of agriculture, the mechanical arts, the English language, and the physical, natural, and economic science, with special reference to their applications in the industries of life.

(e) The function and scope of the land-grant colleges are defined in the federal law, which declares that "the leading object" of these institutions shall be, "without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military instruction, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts." In order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life. The supplementary act of Congress of 1890 further emphasizes the character of the work that shall be provided for in these institutions, and declares that the money appropriated shall "be applied only to instruction in agriculture, the mechanic arts, the English language, and the physical, natural, and economic science, with special reference to their applications in the industries of life."

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