

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### CONFERENCE NOTICE.

The Sixty-fourth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will convene in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 o'clock on Friday morning, April 6th, 1894.

The officers and members of the Church generally are cordially invited to attend the meeting of the Conference.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,

GEORGE Q. CANNON,

JOSEPH F. SMITH,

First Presidency.

### THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH.

Near one of the entrances to the grounds of Harvard university is a tablet bearing an inscription in which words something like these occur: "For they feared to trust the people to unlearned teachers when the ministers who led them should slumber in the dust." The solemn pathos of this memorial is a tribute to the love of intelligence and abhorrence of ignorance that characterized the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, between whom and the founders of Utah many parallels have been drawn.

The latter are pre-eminently a temple building people; and yet before a step was taken toward erecting such a structure, and while their only form of political government was one that had been improvised for temporary needs, they, through the Provisional Government of the State of Deseret, enacted, on February 28th, 1850, an ordinance incorporating the University of Deseret, their great leader, Governor Brigham Young, not only officially approving but earnestly and staunchly advocating its establishment.

In the days of their poverty—and such poverty as was then almost universal is not now known in these valleys, even in the present time of distress—and when they were so overworked that, as a historian says of them, they scarce had time to pray, they planned a great university, intending that it should become a seat of learning, famed throughout the land.

Their poverty made progress slow; but what we now know as the University of Utah was organized and entered upon its mission. Orson Spencer, A. M., its first chancellor, took the position with faith in the great future of the institution, a faith which was held by his successors, Orson Pratt A. M., Hon. D. O. Calder, and Hon. Daniel H. Wells—to mention only those who are dead—who held the position many years. The period covered by the terms of the chancellors here named was one during which the people were

too poor to build up a great university without endowment, and with no aid save taxation and tuition; but they never lost sight of the object in mind, and by their representatives they never treated it in other than a friendly spirit. From the time when Dr. John R. Park became its president, in 1869, it grew with a steady, solid growth; and as the years went by it became more and more an object of love and pride among the people. Parents strained their resources to send their sons and daughters to the University, and successive Legislatures went to the limit of prudence to furnish means for its support and growth.

It has been singularly honored as the subject of weighty, stubborn legislative consideration in days gone by—not such, however, as has been accorded it by the session just closed. Let us look back a single decade. An item of \$50,000 was placed in the appropriation bill for a new building for the University. The question of the Governor's right to appoint all Territorial officers not specifically named in the Organic Act as elective, was still pending in the courts, and the Legislature determined to wait for a decision before receding from the position that such autocratic power was never designed to be conferred upon one man, himself not chosen by popular suffrage. The executive on his part was equally firm, and he refused to approve the appropriation bill containing this item, unless given power to name the men who would expend the money. A deadlock between the Assembly and the Governor ensued, and for days and nights the strain was terrible; for the Legislature had reached the limit of time and was obliged to remain in continuous session until a decision should be reached. At length both branches met in caucus to solve the question: Shall the University be crippled, or shall the general appropriation bill fail, through our insisting that the liberties of the people be not surrendered to the one man power. It is of interest to note that the University was looked upon as being of importance great enough to rank with the other two elements of the grave problem.

The conclusion reached, after one of the most pathetic and patriotic debates in all our legislative history, was that the Assembly would not betray what its members believed to be the rights of the people, nor were they willing that other Territorial needs should be unprovided for through wilful defiance of the Governor's demands in this one particular. They eliminated the University item, and, thus amended, the appropriation bill passed.

But though the Governor might veto a measure to give money to the University, he could not veto the University itself. A wave of popular sympathy swept over the Territory for the stricken institution. The legislators, the regents, the professors, the public—all felt that it called for their most disinterested and substantial support. Should it be allowed to fail? The thought was royally repelled. Regents and other prominent citizens drew from their

own pockets the sum necessary to give it the building. Professors announced their willingness to serve on half salary or without pay if the institution could be saved in no other way. The result was marvelous; and at no period of its history was the University so closely in touch with the affections and feelings of the people as at that time. That a subsequent Assembly reimbursed those who had come forward with means at this crisis, does not in the least detract from the patriotism of the deed itself. Men were willing to trust a future Legislature to round to them, but if that failed, they were content to await the reward of Providence.

Ten years have passed—and again is the University placed in a position where its needs appeal eloquently to the love and sympathy of its friends. At the session of the Legislature just closed it was betrayed. It was stabbed in the house of its pretended friends. For when it was earnestly pointed out that the sum given for its support would mean its starvation, the sneering reply was made by a legislator—referring to the normal department: "Oh, well; we can import more teacher; the Utah-taught teachers cannot compete with the Eastern article, any way!" Talk about conspiracy, and plots, and trades and treachery! What do the people of Utah think of this utterance, and of the spirit which controlled the action of other legislators who, perhaps innocently, were led into this great crime!

Again the question confronting us as a commonwealth is, Shall the University of Utah be allowed to dwindle and die? Again we hear the answer from every patriotic heart in every valley of Utah, "No! We'll heap shame upon the heads of its detractors and its foes; we'll unite in one grand rebuke or chicanery, trickery and petty or political sectionalism!"

And the NEWS, as the representative of the Latter-day Saints, who founded this institution in their poverty, and who, with love, pride and solicitude have watched its growth during nearly half a century keep pace with theirs, now calls upon them to rally to its rescue. We are confident that we do not call in vain. Even in the present time of financial stringency we believe the necessary relief will be forthcoming, and that the conspiracy to cripple or destroy it, for this is what the action of the Legislature amounts to, will be defeated. This was the people's course when money was far less plentiful in Utah than it is now. But money is not the only necessity; surely public spirit has not waned, nor the disposition to patronize and support an institution so distinctively our own. The calls of the district schools for more and better teachers, the demands of parents for increased educational facilities, and the cry of the rising generation for instruction, are all louder and stronger than ever before, and the necessity for a response is the greatest and most peremptory which the people feel, aside from the actual necessities of life.

Hence we appeal to the people of Utah to come to the rescue of their principal seat of learning! It must be saved from the destruction, or, still