

UNIVERSITY DEVOTED TO

SERVICE OF THE STATE.

President Van Hise Talks on Mission of the State University.

STATE EDITORS BANQUETED.

Speeches by Ex-Senator William F. Vilas, Governor La Folle,
and Senator Whitehead at University Armory.

Madison, Wis., Feb. 15.-- The several hundred members of the Wisconsin Press Association now meeting in this city, and the members of the state legislature were entertained at a dinner given at the University Armory by the citizens of Madison. The hall was elaborately decorated for the occasion and presented a brilliant appearance when the six hundred guests were seated. There were a number of after-dinner speeches, Hon. William F. Vilas acting as toastmaster, and among those that responded were Governor La Follette, President Van Hise, Senator J. M. Whitehead, Ex-Gov. W. D. Hoard, and Professor J. C. Freeman.

President Van Hise spoke briefly on the relation of the University to the state and emphasized the idea that to be truly successful the influence of the University must extend to every home in the state. "I shall never be content," he said, "until the beneficent influence of the University reaches every family of the state. This is my ideal of a state university.

If our institution reaches this ideal, it will be the first perfect state university". Continuing, he spoke in part as follows:

"The University of Wisconsin is a state, not a local institution. In many states the funds which are devoted to higher education are distributed among two or more foundations. In such states the various divisions of the university, such as the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Agriculture, the College of Law, the College of Mines, and the College of Medicine, are local institutions, at least in part. But the builders of the state of Wisconsin at a time when subdivision in higher education was rife so clearly recognized the future importance of its university, so clearly saw that this university must be a state institution, that they placed in the framework of the state, the constitution, a provision for the founding of one university at the capital city; thus forever providing against subdivision and localization of the state's higher education.

The only other state which determined that its university work should be done at a unified state institution, located at the capital, is Nebraska. All other states, even those that had the wisdom to concentrate their higher educational efforts, have to some extent recognized local interests by locating the university at some other point than the capital city.

UNIVERSITY AND THE STATE GOVERNMENT.

"It seems as if the framers of the constitution besides appreciating the advantages of concentration in university education must have understood how mutually helpful may be the university

and the government of the state. The university is an institution devoted to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. The government of the state is devoted to formulating into written law and putting into practice of this knowledge. In Germany the relations of the university and the government are most intimate. Each great scholar has some recognized official duty as adviser of the state upon the subject in which he is an expert. The advantageous relation between the university and government may be illustrated by the College of Law and by the departments of law, history, political economy, political science, and sociology. The old unsolved laws, economic and social problems and the new problems arising because of changing conditions are investigated by these departments, - without partisanship, without bias, with no personal end, but with the sole idea of finding the truth, the path which leads to peace and prosperity for the people. Thus these departments are in the service of the state. In a similar way it can be demonstrated that every other department is working effectively for the people. This is easy to show for the College of Agriculture, which by its discoveries has returned to the state many-fold in wealth the entire cost of the university. In all other departments the relation of service is as certain, although not so easy to explain in a sentence. So profoundly does the faculty believe in the university as an institution in the service of the state that it had placed upon the medal struck for the Jubilee the words, 'The University of Wisconsin commemorates fifty years of service to the commonwealth'.

MUST MAINTAIN HIGHEST STANDARD.

Each person that comes into the world is born wholly lacking in knowledge save of a few simple instinctive actions necessary to maintain life. The knowledge and wisdom of mankind are the slow accumulations acquired through the ages by the expenditure of uncounted sums, inestimable labor, and infinite pain. He who hopes to do any large thing in the world must spend from one-fourth to one-third of his life in hard labor, acquiring the knowledge of the past. And for many a large fraction of this time is spent in the university. It is therefore imperative that the university be of the highest grade in order that the time there spent shall be most fruitful. The greater the efficiency of the university the more thorough will be the preparation for life work. Failure on the part of the university to afford opportunities the equal of the best handicaps each individual. Hence a state which fails to keep pace in its university development with surrounding states places its sons and daughters at a disadvantage. If, therefore, the state of Wisconsin is to take and hold a leading position among the states, its university must not be inferior to those of its competitors.

MUST BE OF SERVICE TO STATE.

"If at the outset it was not clear, I hope it is now plain that the university is a state institution not supported in the interest of or for the professors. They are merely tools in the service of the state. It is not even mainly supported for the direct benefit of the students who take advantage of its opportunities. It is supported that they may become better fitted

to serve the state and the nation. It is supported that the knowledge and wisdom of the generations as well as the achievements may reach all parts of the state, thus securing larger returns from the soil, the scientific development of mineral resources, the expansion of manufactureries, the improvement of the social and economic conditions of the masses, and the enjoyment by the ~~XXXX~~ people of the great intellectual and moral experiences of the race. I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the University reaches every family of the state. This is my ideal of a state University. If our beloved institution reaches this ideal it will be the first perfect state university."