

To the HON. _____, SENATOR.

DEAR SIR:—It had not been the purpose of the undersigned, the Regent of the Illinois Industrial University, to enter into the discussions which would arise upon the proposition to change the name of that institution, believing as he does that this proposition when fully understood would commend itself to all unprejudiced minds. But the turn which the discussion has taken and the assertions freely made, that the change proposed is the offspring and the evidence of a covert purpose to change the essential character of the University,—a change from a school of science bearing practically upon the varied industries of the people to a "mere literary and classical college"—leads me to trespass briefly upon your attention. This duty seems incumbent upon me because, standing as I do between the Trustees on the one hand and the Faculty on the other, I may be supposed to know, if any one knows, the facts as to their purposes and wishes in this matter.

I desire, therefore, formally, with emphasis, and without any reservation, to assert that neither heretofore has there been, nor is there now, any purpose or wish to change the character of the University, as suggested, in the minds of any persons intrusted with the conduct of its affairs. The original law of Congress is the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, guiding in all the plans and designs of Trustees, Faculty, and Regent. "Its LEADING OBJECT shall be to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, * * * without excluding other scientific and classical studies, * * * in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." Act of Congress, 1862, Sec. 4.

But as this purpose is charged as a *covert* purpose, a simple denial, however complete and emphatic, may not be enough. The only other answer that can be made is an appeal to the acts of those whose designs are questioned—to consider what has been done during the five years in which the University has been under its present administration. For this entire period we confidently affirm that the whole of both effort and result has been to develop and strengthen the technical or industrial side of the University.

1. As to students. In 1880, 60 per cent. of the students were engaged in technical courses, to 40 per cent. in other courses. In 1885, 68 per cent. are in technical courses to 32 per cent. in other courses. As about 20 per cent. are women, nearly all of whom are in literary courses, it follows that 68-80ths, or 85 per cent., of the young men now in attendance are pursuing technical courses of study. Moreover the essentially scientific character of the instruction is defended and guaranteed by law—a guarantee which no one seeks to remove. The law of 1873 prescribes that *each person* shall be taught and shall study such branches of learning as are related to "agriculture and the mechanic arts," and consequently the Trustees have provided a list of such studies, one of which, at least, each student must pursue in each term of his residence at the University, and this rule is enforced.

2. As to facilities for instruction. All advances made have been such as have aided the technical studies. Among these may be noted: The tools and machines in the shops have been duplicated during the last two years and are yet insufficient. More will be bought with the next means furnished. The working space in both shops has been enlarged about one-third. A blacksmith shop has been added, and this may be changed into a foundry at a half hour's notice, where the students are employed in moulding and casting iron.

A small observatory has been arranged for the use of instruments for advanced students in civil engineering. A dairy-house for the proper handling and experimenting on milk and cream. Laboratories for botanical, zoological, and microscopical work have been arranged for the practical instruction of students in these several departments. The intent is to fully organize a school of mining engineering at the opening of the next year, and also to reorganize the department of veterinary science at the same time. We are doing all the work of a thorough school of pharmacy, except that of attendance behind the counters of an actual drug store.

These and these only are the steps by which the present administration of the University is seeking to convert it into a "more literary and classical college."

3. Much labor has been expended to bring the work of the University before the public by exhibits of its actual and practical results. These exhibits have been of its technical products, partly because these tangible things are more easily shown, but chiefly because we wished the public to see in these the leading work of the University. Many of you will remember the striking display made in the state house two sessions since. At the great educational congress held at Madison, last year, this University occupied a very prominent place with its manual training work alone. At New Orleans the University may claim to have done more, with its varied and elaborate technical exhibit, to save the credit of the State of Illinois than any other interest, and almost as much as all others combined.

If, farther, the opinions of the undersigned are sought as to the true aim and scope of this and kindred schools of learning, they will be found in a paper read before a convention of agriculturists at Washington, January, 1882 and printed in the report of the University for that year,—a paper listened to by one of the most distinguished members of your body, and by him at the time most unqualifiedly endorsed and approved.

Is it possible, my dear sir, for us to meet more fairly and conclusively these imputations against our "covert intentions"?

Two points, only, as to the name.

1. We have no objection, *per se*, to the name as it stands. Its intent was good. But we know, from the practical working of seventeen years, that this name is, and from the associations which even the legislature itself has unintentionally united with it, will continue to be a serious obstacle to the success of the University, in that it deters many of the best youth of the state from entering our doors, and that it too frequently casts an aspersion upon those who hold our certificates of proficiency. Whether this is right or not, IT IS. Why need it continue?

2. The founders and builders of this institution have honestly and earnestly labored to develop an institution which they have fondly hoped may be worth the affection, the pride, and the support of the grand state of Illinois, and they have placed as its corner stone—Scientific Education. This stone, which so many others had in a measure rejected, we have made the head of the corner. We have joined with it such other elements as seem needful to a broad and wisely symmetrical culture. With no antagonisms, or jealousies, or heart-burnings we are trying to show in this broad prairie land the virtue and the force of the "New Education." In this we shall claim no more of success than others are willing to concede to us. But will not those who believe in the dignity and the grandeur of scientific training consent that our and their University shall be as worthy of a noble name as those other schools which have built on the chief corner stone of classical learning, but are themselves fast discovering, from their and our experience, the equal if not superior power of scientific training in moulding and developing human and scholarly character?

I therefore beg leave to present as the deliberate and concurrent judgment of the Trustees and Faculty of this University, their opinion that the best interests of the people of the state of Illinois will be served if you will permit this institution to assume the title named in the bill now pending before the Senate.

I remain ever your most obedient servant,

SELIM H. PEABODY, Regent Illinois Industrial University.

Urbana, May 30, 1885.