

Ontario Begins Inquiry Into Philathea College

By DEIRDRE CARMODY

The Minister of Colleges and Universities in Ontario has begun an investigation of Philathea College, an unaccredited religious college that has been granting doctoral degrees, to determine if its charter should be revoked.

"The investigation is to satisfy ourselves that the institution isn't exceeding its authority under its charter," the Minister, George Kerr, said, in an interview. "If the story in The Times is correct I would think the institution will lose its charter."

He was referring to a New York Times investigation earlier this week revealing that a number of persons in the New York area with "doctorates" from Philathea were in responsible academic positions or were involved in mental therapy or counseling.

Mr. Kerr said the charter would be canceled if the de-

grees were "being flouted and misused so that people are able to hold themselves out and misrepresent what they have achieved by way of education."

He added that Philathea graduates "aren't getting anywhere in this province, mainly because the institution is here and we know about it."

Philathea was chartered in 1946 in London, Ont., as a religious training school empowered to offer "all things necessary for a theological education." It was licensed to grant such diplomas as "licentiate of theology," but was not given degree-granting power.

Last April, Philathea asked to have its charter amended so that it could give out degrees. The request was denied, and at that time Mr. Kerr referred to Philathea publicly as "something of a joke."

There is no law in Ontario preventing unrecognized or nonaccredited institutions from issuing degrees, although Mr. Kerr suggested that "maybe this type of law should be in effect."

Neither does there seem to be anything illegal in citing a Ph.D. from an unaccredited college in a résumé.

But Dr. Morton Schillinger, incoming executive director of the New York State Psychological Association, termed the matter "a serious professional and ethical problem" and a "significant hazard to the consumer."

Spokesmen for several of the universities that either have or had Ph.D.'s from Philathea on their faculties said they had been aware of the reputation of the Philathea degrees.

In each case, however, the holding of a Ph.D. was not a criterion for promotion, so the universities took the position that the degree was irrelevant.

Irrelevant for Promotions

City College, in its School of General Studies catalogue, lists both a Ph.D. and a Litt.D.—in this case an honorary degree—from Philathea for John M. Lowe, the school's assistant dean. Mr. Lowe, who is editor of the catalogue, holds the rank of assistant professor in the classics department.

I. E. Levine, the college's public relations director, said City College had been aware that these were Philathea degrees.

But he said that because the degrees were not factors in any of Mr. Lowe's promotions, the fact that they came from an unaccredited college was irrelevant. Members of the classics department had read Mr. Lowe's Philathea dissertation and found it acceptable, he said.

Asked whether the college was misrepresenting the degrees by listing them in the catalogue, Mr. Levine likened them to degrees from foreign universities, where "we only know that the degree was given and earned, but the quality of the degree cannot be checked."

He distinguished between cases involving "phony" degrees, where the recipient has done little or no work, and Mr. Lowe's case, where there was an opportunity to examine his dissertation.

Mr. Lowe is out of the country on vacation and was not available for comment.

In the last few years, unaccredited colleges have sprung up throughout the country, according to the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education. The most effective remedy is generally considered to be legislation by individual states.



To all Who Shall See These Presents: Greetings

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, UPON THE NOMINATION OF THE FACULTY, IN RECOGNITION OF THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE REQUISITE COURSE OF STUDY AND BY VIRTUE OF AUTHORITY GRANTED BY THE CHARTER OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

CONFERS UPON

THE DEGREE OF

WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND HONOURS THEREUNTO APPERTAINING

IN WITNESS WHEREOF THE DULY AUTHORIZED OFFICERS OF THE COLLEGE HAVE SIGNED THE DIPLOMA AND AFFIXED THE COLLEGE SEAL IN LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA, ON

President:

A form from Philathea College, which is situated in London, Ontario