

THE 'VARSITY:

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EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY POLITICS AND EVENTS.

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This number closes the first volume of the 'Varsity; for the academic year is finished. To those who have helped to nurse our journal through its babyhood we give our thanks, and ask for a continuance of their support, conscious of the fact that we have never intentionally done anything to render us unworthy of their further confidence. It has been said that the 'Varsity has at times laid itself open to criticism. Minor faults have no doubt been found in our pages, but we claim, and feel sure the public will admit, we are entitled to claim, that our journal shall be judged as a whole by its general tone and tendency. Any real faults are open to correction, and to kindly admonition we have listened, and to legitimate authority we have deferred, but neither directly nor indirectly is it our intention to give up our rights. For the 'Varsity we have not the vanity to claim perfection; but we do claim, that if the hand has been partly inexperienced the heart has been right. On our own work we will make no eulogy; but if it has awakened a determination among the men of this University to assist us in the future more than in the past, we are satisfied.

A PLAN OF UNIVERSITY REORGANIZATION.

We propose in the following lines to sketch briefly our present University system—to point out some imperfections, and to suggest measures of reform. We hope they will be received and considered in the spirit in which they are offered, namely, that of affection for the University, and a sincere desire to see her assume her true place as the head of the educational system of the Province and Dominion. Our views are not put forward as being the only correct road to success in achieving such an end, but we believe they contain at least the germ of truths which vitally affect the University, and of reforms which would benefit her. In that belief we submit them.

By the University Act in force until 1873, the Corporation of the University consisted of a Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor and such number of other members of the Senate, not less than ten, as the Governor, or in certain cases the members of the Senate themselves, might appoint. The Senate thus formed had the management of and superintendence over the affairs and business of the University. Power was given to the Senate to make statutes for promoting the purposes of the University, and touching all matters regarding it or its business.

By the Act passed in 1873, as amended by the Act of 1881, the Corporation of the University consists of the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and members of the Senate and of Convocation for the time being. The Senate, as the Act now reads, consists of the Chancellor and twenty-four elective members, and in addition *ex officio* members. Of the former class fifteen are elected by Convocation and nine appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor. The *ex officio* members of the Senate are certain official persons specified, together with all former Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors. The fifteen elective members hold office for five years, retiring three in each year. The Act states that the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and members of the Senate shall, subject to another Act respecting the income and property of the University, have the management of and superintendence over the affairs and business of the University. The Senate has also the same powers of making statutes as under the old Act.

By the new Act it will have been observed that the Corporation of the University was changed by the addition of a new body called Convocation. This latter body is now composed of all graduates. The powers of Convocation are:

(1.) Electing the Chancellor and fifteen Senators as above stated.

(2.) 'Discussing any matter whatsoever relating to the University, and declaring the opinion of Convocation on any such matter.'

(3.) 'Taking into consideration all questions affecting the wellbeing and prosperity of the University, and of making representations from time to time on such questions to the Senate, who shall consider the same and return to Convocation their conclusions thereon.'

(4.) Of discussing, upon such terms as the Senate shall propose, the affiliation of any college or school with the University.

(5.) Requiring a fee to be paid by members of Convocation as a condition of being placed on the register.

With other minor powers.

It is then expressly provided that, except as set out in the Act, Convocation shall not be entitled to interfere in or have any control over the affairs of the University.

The result of this system is that the Senate, which is largely composed of men over whom the graduates have no control whatever, is the executive body, not accountable for its actions; while Convocation, which comprises the men who of all others are the most capable of forming a correct judgment as to the wants of the University and the most interested in her welfare, is merely a legislative body without any power of enforcing its views except by the unsatisfactory method of voting out any retiring members of the senate, three at a time—at all times an unpleasant step to take, and often, owing to combination, a difficult one.

Having thus briefly stated the existing scheme of management, we propose to point out some results which are to our mind defects, and which may be stated as follows:

First. As to Convocation. It is composed of men who live in all parts of the Province, who have all an equal right to be heard, and the *consensus* of whose opinion it would be most beneficial to obtain. But at present we do not obtain it. Something very special is required to induce A, who lives in Sarnia, and B, who lives in Ottawa, to attend at Toronto at their own expense to discuss any University question, no matter how great their interest in it. The expense puts it out of their power. Here there is a difficulty, and a very serious one, in dealing with Convocation as it stands. It is easy enough for men in Toronto, or within a limited distance in its vicinity, to attend. Nobody can fairly expect all those living at a distance to come; and yet their voices should be heard.

Next. As to the Senate. We have a constituency at present some eleven or twelve hundred strong, composed of educated men—men filling the higher walks of life—presumably well able to give a correct opinion on matters affecting public interests, and especially qualified to deal with University questions. Out of the number, fifteen are elected to form a Senate—three each year—to hold office for five years. In the election of these Senators there is no restriction as to residence, no attempt at representation, no system of election.

Third. Convocation and the Senate being thus constituted, what are their relations? Convocation can discuss any matter whatsoever relating to the University, and declare its opinion about any such matter. It can represent to the Senate its opinion on all questions affecting the wellbeing and prosperity of the University, and the Senate has to consider the representations of Convocation, but may either reject or accept the views of Convocation as it sees fit. Can anything be a more striking instance of the divergent courses taken by the Senate and Convocation than what occurred during last session, when members of the Senate who did not attend Convocation exerted their whole influence in a backstairs way to defeat the moderate reforms asked for by Convocation. Why should there be any *Imperium in Imperio*? Why should not Convocation deal with University matters without having to filter them through the Senate? Why should it be specially prohibited from interference in, or from having any control over the affairs of the University except in the limited way prescribed?

Thus three objectionable features seem to present themselves as matters stand:

(1.) Convocation is not a fair exponent of the opinion of University men on University matters.