

# THE VARSITY.

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## THE UNIVERSITY COMMISSION.

It is by no means a pleasant duty to have to record the fact that it was found necessary to appoint a commission to investigate the state of affairs recently existing at this University. For, aside from any notions one might entertain concerning the relations which, in an ideal University, should subsist between the student body and the faculty, a request by both the President and students for a commission might lead the public to doubt the efficiency of the apex of the educational system of this Province. It might be unreasonable to expect complete harmony always to prevail in an institution of this kind, but it is truly deplorable when matters reach such a stage that an appeal to outside authority has to be resorted to to restore amity—or at least the appearance of it, for time and tact alone can restore complete confidence where it has been so rudely shaken. Discipline there certainly must be; but discipline is most complete where the evidences of its exercise are the least appreciable. Mr. L. A. Selby-Bigge, late Proctor of the University of Oxford, in discussing the question of college discipline gives it as his opinion that the immediate control of students should be vested not in a *body* of men, but in an individual whose most essential qualification should be that of consummate tact and a thorough intimacy with the character of the men with whom he has to deal. The advantages of such a method must be perfectly obvious, one would think. In the first place, it is recommended on the ground of expedition. In the second place, it is almost impossible for a *body* of men to understand as a whole the intricacies of any difficulty which may arise, and such understanding is absolutely essential to proper action. The above mentioned writer, whose opinion is based on years of experience, maintains that there can be no such thing as a *system* of discipline, that it is a purely *personal* matter, and sums up in the following words: "You must give your disciplinarian a free hand and if he is a failure there is no remedy except to get another man."

We do not propose to relate all the events which culminated in the commission. To most of us they are but too well known. We merely intend to give a brief account of the general procedure and findings of the commission.

The commission, composed of Chief Justice Taylor (chairman), Judge Senkler, ex-Judge Kingsmill, Mr. B. M. Britton, Q.C., and Professor Campbell, was appointed by the Provincial Government from whom it received the

following instructions: "To inquire (1) into all complaints that may be submitted by any student or by any person on behalf of any student, in respect to the discipline or exercise of authority by the Councils of the University of Toronto and of University College, and (2) into all causes that led to the friction alleged to exist between such students and the said councils, and into all matters bearing thereon, and also (3) into the qualifications, conduct, teaching and efficiency of any member of the faculty of the University of Toronto and University College against whom any charge or complaint may be laid before you, and (4) to inquire into the respective powers of the various governing bodies of the University of Toronto and University College with respect to the students of the said University and, College and (5) so far as may be deemed necessary into all matters bearing on the administration

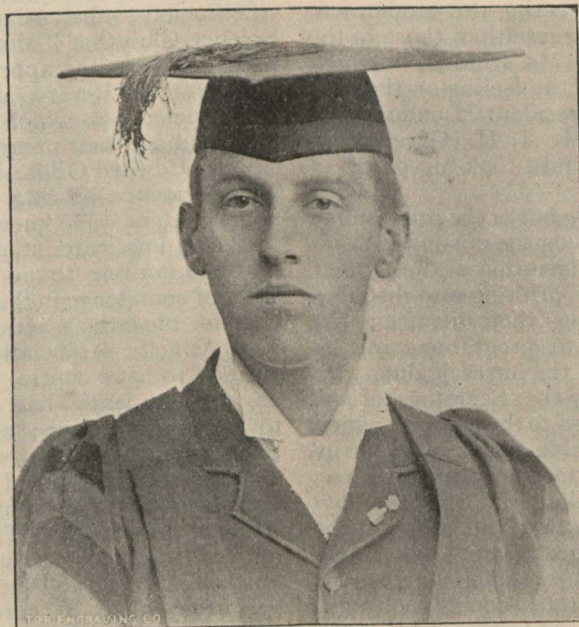
of such bodies since the date of the proclamation of the University, October, 1887, R. S. O. Cap. 230, including their dealings with the discipline of students and the various societies and associations of students, and to report to the visitor of the University of Toronto and the University College, with all convenient speed, the evidence respecting all these matters, together with such findings and recommendations as to you may seem just and proper."

The commission was unquestionably composed of eminent men, but it may seem to some rather extraordinary that of the five only one had by his vocation personal knowledge of the esoteric working of a university or college. Mr. Blake evidently recognized this fact, for it was at his request that Mr. Goldwin Smith consented to confer with the commissioners.

The counsel employed in the investigation were Mr. W.

R. Riddell, representing the students; Mr. S. H. Blake, Q.C., representing the councils of the University and of University College; and Mr. H. J. Scott representing members of the faculty. Mr. Riddell was assisted by a committee of students among whom were Messrs. Tucker, Greenwood, Megan, Gillis and Paterson. These gentlemen deserve the hearty thanks of the whole student body for the zeal with which they watched their interests, heedless of their own, and sacrificing the short time, every moment of which, in view of the approaching examinations, was of the utmost value to them.

The sessions of the commission were held in the amphitheatre of the biological building. Ranged behind the red-covered, counter-like table were the five commissioners. In front of them to the right was placed a table, round which were seated the newspaper reporters. The arena to



JAMES A. TUCKER, '95.