

# The Varsity

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TORONTO, FEBRUARY 28, 1912

## THE ISSUE

In this issue we print a letter from President Falconer in which he sets forth what he earnestly feels to be the attitude of the Caput towards student government.

The students, if they care to assume powers of self-government and control of discipline, will have every encouragement from the authorities in their enterprise. It is of course necessary, the President points out, that discipline should be maintained, and there would certainly be intervention on the part of the present governing bodies in event of failure or misuse of power among the undergraduates.

It is probable that student control could be tried for a year or two with practical assurance that no finding would be immediately over-ruled. The authorities would not take action unless a series of decisions with which they did not agree proved conclusively to them that the experiment was a failure.

The present time offers an unparalleled opportunity to the men of the University. Changes in the constitution of the Parliament have brought its numbers down to a point where rapid accurate work is possible. The factor of continuity which has had so much to do with the success of the Athletic Directorate has been secured in that body by the presence of two members of the staff. The new Parliament will in all probability have an advisory committee of one professor, and should the plan for engaging a permanent secretary carry, there will be two individuals whose memory of events and conditions will be of untold benefit to the incoming Parliament each year.

It should be possible to carry on a strong government if the students will merely place all their knowledge, their faith, and their enthusiasm in the hands of the men they elect to Parliament.

The Varsity does not want to be understood as forcing the adoption of student control. The question lies open, and it is hoped that both sides will be urged with equal zeal by men of conviction. In this issue there are articles setting forth opposite views. The Varsity urges all students not to be rash in their decision on the question which will be put in the referendum on the 6th of March.

The argument for letting severely alone all government affairs are very weighty. Consider the constant worry over detail, the endless difficulties of administering justice to our peers! The student body would be stepping in and appropriating for themselves functions which they never could hope to discharge with absolute fairness.

On the other hand it may be urged that it is only natural and right that those who are close in touch with all the goings-on, and who have, it is quite fair to say, a greater degree of mutual understanding than exists where the disparity of age and

viewpoint is liable to be great, should have the reins of government.

The time has come, however, when we must decide on one course or the other. We can not, must not, go on as in the past couple of years, uncertain as to where responsibility lies. Let us accept it or reject it, and play the man whichever way we determine.

There is attached to this whole matter of the Parliament a much more vital issue even than that of the constitutional form of our government. It is this: Men of the University of Toronto must be brought to a greater realization of their responsibilities. We must wake up to the fact that with all the good spirit which exists—and we doubt if any other University can boast of as great a latent spirit—the connection between our spirit and our institutions has been rather strained. We have neglected our Parliament, we have been involved in financial difficulties and have not taken very great pains to extricate ourselves, we have let several organizations perish on our hands and permitted several others to exist in abject misery—as witness the Union and Torontensis—and we have substituted for an enthusiasm for the University as an end in itself, a halting faith in this grand institution and an abnormal desire to see the interests of self advanced.

Men of Toronto, forget the word "they." WE—each and every one of us—are the "they" to whom we have been looking for so long to do something in the affairs of government. "What a man soweth that also shall he reap." If we sow nothing, if we put forth no effort to make this University as an institution mean something beside a collection of buildings with books and apparatus in them, then we shall find at the end of our four years that our harvest is nothing but a dim recollection of dusty books and apparatus.

This is a time above all others when a man can make his personality tell. This is a time when we are to make history, when we shall take a step which will have an immense significance in the years to come.

On the men whom we choose for our representatives in this next Parliament and on the general ideas we give them on the subjects of discipline and finances will depend the course of the undergraduate body for years.

Our duty is before us, let us do it.

EDITORIAL NOTE—The Varsity regrets exceedingly that the name of Mr. F. M. Bell Smith, the noted artist and literary and dramatic critic, who so kindly wrote us a letter on the subject of the Cook controversy, should have been misspelled in our last issue. The error was, of course, purely one of proof-reading.


## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of The Varsity:

Dear Sir,  
For two reasons that I have not seen suggested before, real student government by parliament must take the place of the present system.

First the proposed reform will be simply the final step of graduation from the school-boy stage. Take any case of student rowdiness now reported in the papers; the average citizen smiles grimly as he reads it and then remarks to his wife, "Just wait till those head-men of theirs catch them; they'll fix 'em." You notice, there is no idea of the possibility of an intelligent Public Opinion in the Undergraduate body; the student is regarded merely as an overgrown school-boy, who needs a more refined punishment than caning by the Caput, because he might turn, like the proverbial worm. Needless to say, such incidents are decidedly lowering to the dignity of a university. But let the general public once realize that the "fixing" is conscientiously done by the students themselves, and the whole situation is changed. We shall be considered, more as the raw material for respectable citizens, and less as the product of skilled antediluvian professors in a factory of education. The man on the street will know that we are here to learn to think—and act.

Second, and closely connected with the first reason—is the fact that we shall be far better prepared for life in a world of law, if while at college we are governed by



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In spite of the many difficulties that present themselves, absolute self-government by the student body is the most practical solution of the problem we have attacked. "Self-reverence, Self-knowledge, Self-control; these three alone lead life to sovereign power." Through these alone can each undergraduate feel the dignity of being an intelligent part of an intelligent, organized, and progressive whole. Thanking you for space, I am,

Yours, etc.,

PAUL GOFORTH.

To the Editor of The Varsity:

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Following our conversation of this morning I wish to take this opportunity of putting into more definite form my ideas as to self-government among the students. I feel sure that both the Caput and the Faculties of the University desire to entrust to the students as much self-government as they show themselves willing and capable to administer, because if they seriously undertake

Continued on Page 3, Col. 3.

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