## The Varsity

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TORONTO, FEBRUARY 23, 1912

#### **ORGANISATION**

If one excepts athletics, and considers the general modus operandi of student activities at Toronto, one cannot but be struck by the hap-hazard, hit-and-miss method, or rather lack of method, of controlling these activities. The result everyone is familiar with, but only a few have interested themselves sufficiently to find a cause. To us, at least, it seems that the lack of interest in the non-academic activities of the undergraduates, and the generally unsatisfactory condition of them, is due very largely to lack of adequate organisation.

Let us take, for example, Dramatics. There is a Women's Dramatic Society. which is, and for some time has been, excellent. But for the men, dramatic activity, beyond a few French and German plays in University College, is practically confined to our annual Theatre Night, which beyond filling the coffers of the Undergraduates' Parliament, has no usefulness that we can see. A play presented by undergraduates would have far more interest for the student body than any play at the Royal Alexandra, to which any one may go at any time. Besides that, it would help to develop a better idea of criticism among the undergraduates generally than is at present possible, and would be of inestimable benefit to those who possess sufficient histrionic talent to win a place on the boards. But the present method of having any organisation to be carried out by a few interested individuals "on chance" practically precludes the possibility of any such development of dramatics. More organisation is absolutely necessary.

In debating and oratory, too, there is great need for more thorough organization. What a lamentably small proportion of undergraduates have ever made any attempt at public speaking! There must be many men in the University who would make excellent speakers, if they could be encouraged and persuaded to make a start. The present system of selecting representatives for the inter-college and inter-University contests is very unsatisfactory, undoubtedly because of lack of adequate machinery by which the best speakers can be selected.

The same lack of system prevails in Music. There is an excellent Glee Club, and several college organisations of a similar nature, which are all that could be desired; but the instrumental side of music is practically neglected, though there is plenty of first-class material in the University. McGill has a mandolin club; other Universities have orchestras and mandolin, guitar, and banjo clubs. There are enough players, and lovers of music, in the University to ensure the success of such organisations, if properly managed; but the organisation is left to individual enterprise, and it is not surprising that with no encouragement such organisations prove very ephemeral, or never come into existence at all.

And in what is perhaps most important of all-the expression of University opinion-the same condition of affairs exists. In theory, "The Varsity" is the mouthpiece of the student body. In practice, under the present system it can only be the means of making known the opinions of a few -a very few-men, who are to a very slight degree responsible to anyone, except for financial matters, and who cannot, try as they may, satisfactorily guage and express the general sentiment of the University,

The whole circle of "outside" activities of the undergraduates needs a thorough overhauling. It needs even more; it needs revolution. The present state of things is impossible.

## History of The Parliament

Continued from Page 1.

tary-Treasurer should such seem fit to

In regard to the Varsity, the Editor-in-Chief, Business Manager and President of the Parliament appoint the new Editorin-Chief, Business Manager and Associate Editors.

The Business Manager signs an agreement with the Parliament to the effect that the paper will be brought out and financed in a suitable manner. All standing profits at the end of the year are divided thus: 20% to the Editor-in-Chief and Business Manager, each 15% to each of Managing Editors, 10% to the Associate Editor, and 20% to the Parliament.

In the case of the Union the Parliament appoints a Secretary who receives a salary of \$100. All financial responsibility rests with the Parliament, the receipts arising from membership fees.

From the origin of this body it will be seen that there are certain precedents and associations connected with the Parliament which are items that tend to minimize business efficiency, and the Parliament has suffered, all through its career from just these same precedents-the tendency of members to "orate" and the insufficient study of the business details of measures coming before he body-are two illustrations. Our houses of parliament either at Ottawa or Toronto do not give results that compare with the amount of work involved, and the Parliament of the Undergraduates is no exception.

Another great defect in the Parliament, is its lack of financial support. In the beginning it had no yearly income and no field from which to obtain the same. The first expenses were met by voluntary contributions by the members themselves, and ever since that collection it has been one continual fight to keep the wolf from the door. It was this fight for money that led the Parliament into the purchase of artistically designed and correctly colored royal blue and white rugs. However these did not sell well among the students or graduates, because it meant remodelling the house to suit the rug. The University Orchestra is another such venture, financed in the beginning as a possible source of revenue, but which returned nothing but debts to the treasury. Of course, not all the ventures of the Parliament went astray; fortunately some came back laden with the necessaries of

But the point is just here, that instead of being able to devote its time to the solving of student problems, the Parliament has had all its energies sapped by this fight for life. Now then this unequal fight for life plus progress, cannot continue if the Parliament is expected to be an efficient organization.

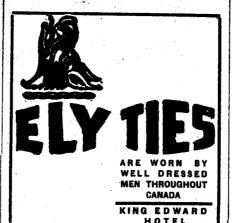
Sometimes the Parliament is criticized for not having made more progress during its existence, but those who criticize thus have never considered the almost impossible business conditions under which this organization has had to work. With an entirely new and inexperienced executive coming into office each year, with a new and entirely inexperienced set of officers controlling its different ventures, there could be no business continuity whatever. Furthermore this yearly change of executive means a yearly change of aim and the result is that in the Parliament there has been no continuity of purpose. This constant change of policy is the most serious defect, in the whole make up of the Parlia-

With continuity either in business or purpose, the Parliament might have overcome most of its other difficulties. Continuity is the key to the situation.

This lack of continuity is evinced again in the laxity of some of the Parliament's business arrangements with the bodies which it controls. Business arrangements have been entered into which are very detrimental to the Parliament while if an experienced advisory board had been created undoubtedly the members would have been able to avoid one sided agree-

With its unwieldy representation of 3 per cent, as mentioned above, what was every persons business became only the business of the executive. The executive found it had to condense all matters coming before the Parliament in order to save time, and gradually the executive absorbed power, and the Parliament as a body, which had now no responsibility discolved into nothingness. This is where the interest in the doings of the Parliament began to wane, for naturally it had lost its function in this process of spoon feeding.

Five years ago the new University Act came into force, and when a trouble grose



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the matter was referred to the Parliament, as the central student organization, and since then other questions of discipline have been referred to it for adjustment. On the first occasion and also in subsequent gases, the executive of the Parliament assumed the responsibility and acted on its own initative, without referring the question of student government to the student body, consequently it has never received the moral support which it ought to have had. The contention is that the students have never sanctioned this step and the point seems well taken.

The question now is shall this authority be assumed?

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