

THE VARSITY.

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All communications should be addressed to THE EDITORS, University College, Toronto, and must be in on Wednesday of each week.

No notice will be taken of anonymous contributions.

THE DUTY OF CONVOCATION.

Two months have now elapsed since Mr. Thomas Hodgins placed before the readers of THE VARSITY a valuable synopsis of the claim which the University of Toronto has upon the Provincial Government in respect of that part of the former endowment which has been expropriated as a site for the Legislative Buildings, now in course of erection in the Queen's Park. This article, as well as Dr. Wilson's address on the same subject at the last College Convocation, were reproduced by the daily papers of this city, and the position taken by these two gentlemen was very generally approved. By these means the members of Convocation were put in full possession of all the facts of the case, upon which is based the claim of the University on the Government. There is no excuse, therefore, for the extraordinary and altogether unaccountable inaction of Convocation on the subject. What is the Executive Committee of Convocation thinking about? Does it not consider the question of sufficient importance to bring under the official notice of Convocation? The question concerns the University very deeply indeed, since it is one of endowment and if the demeanour of Convocation is an evidence of the interest which the graduates of the University take in her welfare, then the University has no very great reason for congratulation. It is true that the Board of Trustees are moving in the matter, but the influence of that body with the Government would surely not be lessened by the unanimous approval and active support of Convocation? There is no occasion to set out again the University's claim; it is well-known to Convocation, and has been known to it for a long time past. We may, therefore, reasonably demand of the Executive Committee to show cause why it has failed to do its duty in this case. We call upon it to summon forthwith a general meeting of Convocation, in order that the graduates may be afforded an opportunity of bringing to bear upon the Government, by means of petitions and deputations, the full and authoritative weight of their influence respecting a question of very great importance to the University.

THE REPORT OF THE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE.

For his admirable report on the present condition and pressing needs of the School of Practical Science Dr. Wilson deserves the thanks of all friends of scientific and technical education in this province. We regret that there is nothing which can be reported as having been done for the school since the former report was made. The one before us goes over much the same ground as that traversed last year, and is simply a detailed statement of the absolute needs of the school, the great lack of accommodation, and the insufficiency of laboratory room and supplies. In every department the same complaints are made, and in that of Engineering the necessity for an addition to the staff is again insisted upon. In the departments of Biology, Chemistry and Mineralogy, more class-rooms and laboratories, with a separate and adequate equipment for each, are the chief requirements. That these are badly needed, any one can see for himself if he chooses to visit the school on any regular working day.

But it is with regard to the department of Engineering that we wish more especially to deal with in the present instance. There are now about 55 students pursuing the regular course in Engi-

neering, and 5 taking a special course. For the instruction of these students in the strictly professional work of their department there is only one Professor—assisted by a graduate of the school—to give instruction in the subjects embraced under the following departments:

I. Mechanical.—Applied Statics and Dynamics, Strength of Materials and Theory of Construction, Hydraulics, Thermodynamics and Theory of the Steam-Engine, Principles of Mechanism and Machine Design.

II. Geometrical.—Geodesy and Practical Astronomy, Surveying, Descriptive Geometry (including the principles of Mechanical Drawing, Map Projections, Topography, Stone-cutting, Lineal Perspective, Shades and Shadows, etc.), Spherical Trigonometry.

As the report very truly says:

"It must be evident to any practical teacher that the work comprised in the above list of subjects is far greater than should be required of one Professor, in justice either to his students or himself. To serve the purposes of the School these subjects cannot be treated in an elementary or popular way. On the contrary, to teach them properly necessitates unremitting study and investigation on the part of the teacher, and abilities of as high a class as are required of a University Professor. An Engineering Professor must also be a man of large practical experience in his profession.

"The Board would, therefore, strongly urge the appointment of an Assistant Professor to take the subjects under head II. (Geometrical). The requirements are that he shall be a good mathematician and draughtsman, and also a practical surveyor. As a mathematician he must have a thorough knowledge of the Differential and Integral Calculus and the Theory of Least Squares. If this appointment were made the Professor of Engineering could devote himself to the subject under head I. (Mechanical), institute ordinary and advanced classes in these subjects, and also organize, in addition to the department of Civil Engineering, a department of Mechanical Engineering which would be thoroughly efficient."

The Report goes on to show the unfortunate results which have been caused by the utter inadequacy of the present staff:

"The reason why a full course in Mechanical Engineering has not been instituted, is simply that there is a sufficient amount of difference in the work of the two branches to render it impossible for one professor and his assistant to undertake both courses with any chance of efficiency in either. Applications from students who wish to become mechanical engineers are being continually refused by the Professor of Engineering for the above reason. Three of his former special students in Mechanical Engineering have gone this year to other universities—one to McGill College, one to Lehigh University and one to Cornell University—in order to obtain that systematic instruction in Mechanical Engineering which they could not get here. As far as can be judged from the number of applications, the school might have as many students in Mechanical Engineering as it now has in Civil Engineering, provided there was a sufficient staff."

While we are not inclined to share altogether the view enunciated in the Report, viz., that workshops are not a necessity, we are, for the present, content to support the plea for the establishment of an Engineering Laboratory, as, perhaps, the best compromise under the circumstances. As the Report states:

"All the great schools of Europe and the United States are supplied with such laboratories. They are fitted with various machines and instruments for determining the strength and other qualities of materials which fit them for the purposes of construction, with instruments for experimenting on the flow of liquids and gases, with special application to hydraulic and sanitary work, with experimental engines for making all kinds of engine tests, etc., etc. Such a laboratory may be begun on a small scale at little expense, and added to year by year, and would be of immense advantage to students."

We are well aware of the great difficulties in the way of the Government in dealing with the many educational institutions of this Province, and the care which is necessary to be observed in dealing with each in a fair and equitable manner; but we are convinced that the time has now come for the Government to do some-