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WHAT POWER SHOULD PARLIAMENT HAVE?

HISTORY OF THE PARLIAMENT

Need of a Unifying Force Felt Among the Different Colleges

ORGANISED IN 1905

Membership Gradually Decreased—Present Make-Up and Relation to Student Activities

The history of the Students Parliament dates back from the fall term of 1905 when a suggestion emanated from J. P. McLean, B.A., lecturer on Public Speaking that some effort should be made to provide a common meeting-ground where men from all the affiliated colleges could assemble and discuss topics of general interest. In such a cosmopolitan institution as the University of Toronto great need for a unity of feeling or purpose was felt which was to counteract the many decentralising tendencies inevitably making themselves felt, accordingly the Students' Parliament the membership of which embraced all the students was organised. The meetings took the nature of a debate on some question which at that time was prominent in either Dominion or Provincial politics. On one occasion the immigration policy of the Liberal Government formed the subject of debate and such leading men as Hon. R. L. Borden and Hon. J. J. Foy were among those who were present and took part.

Before long however interest which at first was intense over this new protegee of student activities began to wane. The attendance began to diminish and in a short while the main item of business became the passing of resolutions. It was soon realised that the basis of membership was not a practical one, there being either too many present thus making it unwieldy or too few thus making it unrepresentative.

The next step in the evolutionary process was that which was brought about during 1906-7, at which time the University Act was passed. A new system of representation was adopted in which the number of members elected from each faculty was 5% of the number of men registered in that faculty. The different colleges represented were, University, S.P.S., Meds., Knox, Victoria, Wycliffe, Trinity and Dents. From these members was elected an Executive Committee composed of one man from each college chosen by his fellow representatives. The usual offices President, Secretary, etc., were filled by members of the Parliament with the exception of that of President which was filled by one of the Faculty. The same purpose was kept in view with perhaps a greater attention directed towards matters of strictly University interest. This step towards a closer union of the students in their activities and the Parliament was greatly facilitated by the creation of the above Executive Committee.

Now arose the problem of student discipline, hitherto wholly controlled by organisations of exclusively academic members, and a request was made by the Parliament to the Board of Governors to recognise its Executive Committee as a body to act for the undergrads until a scheme regarding student control of discipline had been evolved. This the Board of Governors consented to pending the adoption or rejection of a more detailed scheme.

Further history of the Parliament leads us down to the organisation as it exists to-day. The representation from the several colleges and faculties has been reduced from 5% to 3% of the men registered making the membership now 21. The different years in a four-year course send the representatives according to the following plan: fourth year 40%, third

An issue is about to be put before the undergraduate body of the University of Toronto the importance of which will probably not be realized until the history of the next decade has unfolded itself. The students of Toronto will have to make a decision which, right or wrong, will be largely instrumental in moulding the destiny of the Parliament that controls the men of the University.

The Undergraduates' Parliament has long felt that it does not occupy the position in relation to the student body and the various student organizations that it should and might. Two defects in particular have forced themselves on the notice of the members of the present Parliament and for each of these they have evolved a remedy.

It has become apparent to many undergraduates that the Undergraduates' Parliament is not representative of the men of the University in the truest sense of the word and to no class of students has this unfortunate state of affairs been more obvious than to the various representatives who make up the parliament. The cause of this defect is not hard to find. It lies in the lax methods of electing members to the Parliament that have sufficed in the past. It is common property that many of the men in each electoral division do not even know who represents them in the Parliament. It is not so well known that a freshman in the class of '11 was a member of the Parliament for a whole term and did not know it. However, conditions in this respect are so well known as to make further examples superfluous.

The remedy proposed by the Parliament is as simple as the defect is obvious. The elections which are to be held on March 6th will be advertised in such a way that no man can fail to know exactly when and where he is to cast his ballot. As soon as the nominations are all in the hands of the secretary they will be announced in these columns so that every man may have time to consider who he thinks is the best nominee in his constituency. Thus the members returned are bound to be representative.

Another, though less serious, fault in the relation between the Parliament and the men whom it represents is the fact that grave confusion has arisen with respect to the assertion of disciplinary power. Disciplinary authority in the University is vested in the Caput by the University Act but it is provided that the Board of Governors may at its own discretion hand over these powers to any representative body of Students. In practice the Caput has shown itself willing to give over this power of discipline to the Undergraduates' Parliament and in many cases this has actually been done. The confusion arises out of the fact that the Parliament has never been authorized by the men of the University of Toronto to accept such authority. Consequently the Parliament is likely to find itself in a very delicate position at any time.

To obviate the possibility of such a state of affairs the Parliament has decided to place the matter before the students in the form of a referendum at the same time that the elections for the Parliament are being held. The question will probably be asked in this way. "Do you believe that disciplinary power over the students of the University should be in the hands of the Undergraduate Parliament?"

It will be readily seen that these two innovations, namely, a new system of elections and the referendum are interdependent for a Parliament accepting such grave responsibilities as the Board of Governors is willing to give it (providing the outcome of the referendum warrants such a course) must be a truly representative one. By remodelling the system of elections the present Parliament has done its share towards bringing about this end, by delegating large authority the Board of Governors has made the honor of being elected to the Parliament a high one. The rest lies with the men of the University. By intelligent and serious use of his franchise every undergraduate must do his share toward making the next Parliament a representative body and one worthy of accepting and capable of properly using the broadest power over the students.

There is another and most important reason why the coming Parliament should be a recognized authority among the students. In a very short time the new Students' Union will be completed and it is absolutely essential that the Undergraduates' Parliament should be the united head of an united body of students in order that they may take over the affairs of this new building and develop the possibilities of the future Union in the best interests of the University.

The Parliament is trying to remodel itself, the Caput is glad to help, The Varsity is doing its share in putting all the facts before you. YOU must do the rest by voting intelligently on the Referendum and by seeing that the best and worthiest men are nominated and elected to the coming Parliament.

year 30%, second year 20%, and first 10%.

The officers are President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Secretary of Committee, Treasurer and Representative on Musical Organisations. All of these with the exception of President are filled by student members. The Executive Committee is composed of the President and one member from each college or faculty. Instead however of the student members of the Committee being chosen by their fellow members, they are elected by the representative society of their college or faculty.

The Parliament at present numbers among the organisations it has under its control, Torontonensis, the Glee Club, the Varsity, the Union and Theatre Night.

Reports regarding Torontonensis must be made by the Editor-in-Chief and Business Manager at least once a month during the academic year and the Executive of the Parliament deals as they see fit with these reports subject to the approval of the Parliament. All financial responsibility in connection with Torontonensis rests with the Parliament and all net profits arising from it are divided equally among the Parliament, the Editor-in-Chief and the Business Manager.

In regard to the Glee Club the officers are required to enter into a written agreement with the Parliament. The Business Manager renders an account to the Parliament of all monies received from the concert and all profits arising from con-

cerns become the property of the Parliament to be used for the purposes of each individual organization.

The Executive of the Parliament have it within their powers to dispense with the services of the Business Manager or Secretary.

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Elections to the Parliament are to be held on MARCH 6, nominations one week earlier, February 29. Nominations to be made in writing to the Secretary, H. W. Lyons, Knox College, signed by one nominator and one seconder.

The representatives are distributed as follows:
University College: 4th year 1; 3rd year 1; 2nd year 1; 1st year 1.

Applied Science: same as above.
Medicine: 4th and 5th together 1; 3rd 1; 2nd 1; 1st, 1.,
Dentistry: 3rd and 4th together 1; 1st and 2nd together 1.

Victoria: 3rd, 4th and C.T. together 1; 1st and 2nd together 1.
Trinity, Knox, Wycliffe, Forestry, Education, each 1.

Where a joint representative is to be elected, the present years make the choice at this election. In all other cases the incoming years are meant. A bye-election for 1st year representatives will be held in the fall term.

The referendum will be held on March 6, election day.

CAPUT CONTROLS DISCIPLINE

But is Willing to Delegate Power to Representative Student Body

The University Act gives supreme power to the Caput to maintain discipline or to delegate that power to any governing body of the University.

The Caput is composed of the President of the University who is Chairman, the Principal of University College, the heads of Federated Universities and Colleges, and the Deans of the Faculties. Five members constitute a quorum.

Ss. 94-100 provide for the maintenance of discipline and the control of College Associations. Responsibility for and disciplinary jurisdiction over the conduct of students is vested in the Council of University College or the governing bodies of the Federated Colleges in regard to matters occurring in their respective buildings, grounds or residences. Similar powers are granted to the Councils of such Faculties as have separate buildings assigned for their use.

In all other cases, such authority is vested in the Caput, which also determines jurisdiction in case of dispute. The Caput also may delegate its authority in any particular case or by any general regula-

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MANY PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

Incoming Parliament Will Have Important Duties

FINANCES IMPORTANT

General Question of Continuity, Permanent Secretary, "The Varsity," and Other Problems

Changes in University life and alterations in the constitution of the Parliament have brought about certain new conditions which must be met by the members of the Undergraduates' Parliament in the coming year.

One of the main issues, and perhaps the most pressing, is that of finances. At no period in its history has the undergraduate body been particularly opulent, but the year 1912 finds an unusually pressing stringency.

There are those who maintain that a financial success is all that is necessary to make the Parliament as strong as any one would want it to be. A prestige, a grip on the undergraduate body, would without doubt be the main desirable accompaniment of a fairly large central fund.

It is quite evident that there are numerous ways in which money can be used, but a recital of the most urgent requirements will show that a constant and permanent income is something which the undergraduates should endeavor to place in the control of its representative body without delay.

In the first place, and above all, it is absurd that the students of the University as a whole should not be in such a position that they cannot respond to any emergency when funds have been necessary. There has been in the past, and doubtless there will be in the future, a good deal of discussion over the settlement of liabilities connected with student celebrations, and while we do not anticipate any trouble of this kind, it is only right that the Parliament should have money, and power to hand over at any time whatever sum is necessary for the adjustment of claims against the student body.

But it is because of what might be done which is not done at present, that we should have a central fund of fair proportions. The students should be in a position to invite guests, show appreciation of the attentions of great men or bodies, and make improvements in their own machinery, with a greater degree of assurance than now.

More money means more self-expression. Why should we have to hesitate to place our undergraduate publications upon a proper footing, why be harassed with the worries of a splendid organization such as the Glee Club when money in the hands of a central body would insure against failure of such an enterprise for financial reasons? A very promising orchestra went to pieces in our midst a couple of years ago for the simple reason that backing in a period of stress was not to be had. In all probability, had funds been available, there would be to-day in our midst a musical organization which would reflect credit on the name of our University.

A good amateur production at the time of Theatre Night is a crying need of the University, but cannot be fulfilled until a good financial support is assured. A University Dinner, to replace several of the less successful functions now undertaken, is dependent, in the last analysis, upon a good central fund, which, unfortunately does not exist.

To secure continuity in its work and to relieve the undergraduates of heavy business duties which should be handled with the highest efficiency, a permanent Business Manager is needed. His duties would embrace the affairs of The Varsity, Torontonensis, the present Union, Theatre

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