

The Advertiser

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WHEN Locke congratulated William III., of pious and immortal memory, on the glorious and happy revolution which he had effected, the great thinker added, "But the good effects will be lost if no care is taken to regulate the Universities." Those ancient corporations, however, were left to their own devices till Parliament was roused into action some five and thirty years ago, when reform, or as the more Conservative Heads of Houses termed it, revolution, came up like a lion from the swellings of Jordan. The University of Adelaide can make out no such case as Dr. Coplestone, the famous Provost of Oriel, could advance on behalf of Oxford against the "calumnies" of Edinburgh reviewers. Our University owes its origin to the public spirit of private citizens, who never regarded themselves in the light of pious founders or grave scholars. It has been richly and liberally endowed by a Parliament elected by the widest suffrage. It exists to supply a local want. It may be said to be a University of the people, by the people, and for the people. It has a very practical work to do in a well-defined field. And though we should deprecate anything like unnecessary State interference, so long as it answers the end for which it was created, we should never hesitate to invoke such interposition, if experience proves that the University is not working smoothly, as the result of some defect in its organisation or constitution. And that is undoubtedly the case just now. "*Et spes et ratio studiorum in Cesare*

tantum.' The controversy about the Hughes Professor of English Literature makes it very clear that there must be an appeal to Cæsar. We have discussed the merits of this case on more than one occasion. It is sufficient now to say that the Council of the University have acted within its statutory rights. That fortunately is beyond dispute. Outside that *colluvies gentium* the Senate, every person of common sense approves the action of the Council. The rule it has laid down is one which can only be obnoxious to any future professor whom it is not desirable to retain.

A certain tenure of five years, to be succeeded by what is in effect a life appointment, subject to six months' notice of determination, is as much as any reasonable person can expect, and quite as much as the Council in the interests of undergraduates and the public has a right to offer. University professors are after all fellow-creatures, and have no special immunity from that liability to lethargy which the absence of incentive, created by absolute fixity of tenure, promotes. We do not expect to convert Dr. Smith and his following in the Senate. A gentleman who believes, and expects others to believe, that such terms of office would not be offered to the lowest clerk in the Civil Service must be left to enfold himself in what theologians call "invincible ignorance." Dr. Smith is right if his words be taken in one sense; but that sense is just the opposite to the meaning he would convey. As matters now stand the Senate and the Council are two hostile forces. This state of things cannot be continued without prejudice to the interests of the University. And we entirely agree with the Senate that the solution lies in Parliamentary action. The idea of an amending Act

has suggested itself to certain members of that body. The best advice we can give to the Council is to acquiesce in this proposal. In any such Bill, we believe, it would be for the true interests of the University and for the public to strengthen the position of the Council. And the proper and only way to do this is to provide that the Council shall not be solely elected by the Senate. At the recent meeting a ridiculous analogy was set up in an attempt to compare the Senate to the House of Assembly, and the Council to Ministers. We question if the House of Assembly would recognise an effigy of itself in a body which can only reject or pass legislation sent to it from elsewhere. For the rest we may assume that the Council of the University would not object to the right occasionally accorded to Ministers to dissolve the body which does not happen to be in agreement with them. The Council must be the governing body. But the Council must cease to be simply the chosen of the Senate. There is no objection to leave to the Senate a fair share in electing members to the Council; but it is self-evident if things remain as they are that sooner or later—and sooner rather than later—the Council will be solely elected from members of the Senate. In spite of contemptuous references to men who have graduated with distinction in a wider university than that of North-terrace, and who will not be forgotten till their censures are remembered—a very good prospect of immortality, by the way—the Senate does not include within its ranks all the ability and educated intellect of South Australia. We wish to do the Senate every justice, and we cordially thank them for the proof they gave at their last meeting that they are not fit to be the sole electors, or constituency if they prefer the term, of the Council.

In any amending Bill provision must be made to change the existing constitution of the Council. The wisdom of Parliament will no doubt be equal to the task of giving effect to what is so palpably a right reform. It is one which the people of the country have a right to demand as contributors to the resources of the University. That public which is outside the Senate ought to be represented in the Council. There would be no risk of weakening the governing body, in view of its academical duties and functions. There would be no danger in leaving to the Governor in Council the right to appoint a certain number. His responsible advisers would be just as likely to make a wise choice as the Senate. A Council so constituted might very properly have the entire management of the affairs of the University. And, like Convocation in the London University, the Senate could be debarred from any interference or control. There are one or two other points in which the present University Act requires amending. There are at least two sections which it is difficult to construe together and reconcile. But the most urgent matter requiring reform is the provision which leaves in the hands of a body, such as the Senate, the sole right to say who shall constitute the Council. One of two things is necessary. Either some other authority should have a share in the constitution of the Council, or if it is left in the hands of the Senate a provision should be introduced into the new Bill enacting that a certain proportion of the Council should be selected from that large body which is outside the Senate, and which can show in its ranks not a few of far higher attainments than the proud possessor of a mere pass degree. This is a question for the public and Parliament, and the sooner it is grappled with the better.