

Register April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1888.

Prof Rennie's letter also appeared in the Advertiser of the same date

PROFESSOR BOULGER AND THE UNIVERSITY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Will you allow me space for a few words in reply to Professor Boulger? I quite agree that it would be "neither manly nor straightforward" to make insinuations. It is not a thing I am accustomed to do, nor did I so act at the meeting of the Senate.

I stated in the broadest way the general proposition that any executive body, whether committee, Board of Governors, Council, or what you will, must of necessity have cognizance of many matters which are not within the knowledge of outsiders. I expressly disclaimed any personal reference, and the Professor admits that he did not take my remarks as applying to himself. Under these circumstances, I submit that I am just as much and just as little blamable as if I had quoted one of Euclid's axioms.

I am, Sir, &c.  
JOHN A. HARTLEY.

March 31.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Referring to Professor Boulger's letter in your issue of this morning, permit me to say that inasmuch as I did not make the statements I am reported to have made in the Advertiser of the 29th, I fully concur in Professor Boulger's remarks so far as they relate to what took place at the committee meeting to which he refers. The Professors concerned were not asked to recommend anything, and certainly did not do so. What I did say was to this effect, that Professor Boulger, Professor Bragge, and myself were present at that meeting, and that Professor Bragg and myself consented to the proposed tenure because we believed it to be the best attainable, failing a life tenure.

I am, Sir, &c.  
EDWARD H. RENNIE.

The University, Adelaide, March 31.

✓ The Register March 29<sup>th</sup> 1888.

THE UNIVERSITY SENATE.

Yesterday's meeting of the Senate of the University was most important, whether gauged from the point of view of the number of members present or of the intrinsic interest of the measures proposed for discussion. In the books of the University there are, we believe, some 120 members of the Senate, of whom upwards of twenty have left the colony. Taking, then, into consideration the fact that many of the country members of the Senate cannot find it convenient to come into town, it shows how much interest is attached to the proceedings when sixty-nine gentlemen were present to record their votes. Readers will observe that the Graduates' Association broke down lamentably in one particular. Only one of its nominees obtained a seat; and though it must necessarily be gratifying to Dr. Smith to know that he gained 60 out of the 69 available votes, whereas the two other successful candidates had only 47 and 41 votes respectively, the Association as a body must accept yesterday's election as a decision against them. They certainly made a mistake somewhere, and whether that mistake was in the selection of candidates or in the management of the election they themselves can best decide. There is one thing, however, in this connection which, though plainly noticeable, does not receive the attention which it demands. This is the prevalence of what may be called cliquism. Out of the three gentlemen elected yesterday two were medical men, which, since Dr. Cockburn magnanimously withdrew his candidature, means 100 per cent. of the medical men who offered themselves for election. There can be no doubt as to the high qualifications of Drs. Stirling and Thomas, but there is a danger of professional feeling counting for too much in our new University, and of the thirty odd graduates in medicine deeming it incumbent upon them to vote for their brethren irrespective of anything but the school in which they gained their degrees.

The two motions which were considered yesterday are of very great importance. We cannot but think that the first, which would open the way to the government of the University for undergraduates of tender age, was rightly rejected, and our only regret is that the majority against it was not larger. The mover made the best of a bad case, and possibly he was weighted with the conviction that it does not become a University which has yet its way to make to introduce innovations on the system of University government. It is an instructive circumstance that the strongest objection against his first motion was the strongest point he could urge in favour of his second, which condemned the Council's action in altering the tenure of professorships. It is to be regretted that much of the personal element was introduced into the discussion on this point. The case of the opponents of the new departure is strong enough without the laudation of individuals affected, and it would have been in better taste if the personality of the occupant of the Chair which is immediately concerned had been left out of consideration. Besides this, the mention of his name and services must be distasteful to him, whilst it cannot but have placed his friends in an unpleasant position. The strongest point against the alteration in the tenure is undoubtedly the fact that it has not received the sanction of experienced Universities; not that it will bear hardly in any particular case, however iniquitous. If the Council thinks for a moment that it is setting an example with regard to the tenure of Chairs which other Universities will follow it is very much mistaken. With all respect to it, its knowledge of University procedure does not qualify it to assume the character of guide to the practice of Universities in matters of vital moment. For a time at least our University, which is learning to walk, should not attempt to lead the way over fences. In another generation or two we may be able to give the cue to Oxford and Cambridge, but just now we may safely be guided in matters of procedure by the precedents they have established.

The Senate understands these things better than the Council. The logic of facts was on their side as well as the logic of numbers, and none of the apologists for the Council could give a reason of any weight for the faith which is in them. Archdeacon Farr, who was the nominal author of the new tenure regulation, made a speech which carried its own refutation with it. "It was within his own knowledge," he said, "that we had persons sent out from England—not necessarily the Professors—who had not come up to the mark." This is quite true, so far as it goes; but the instances are exceptions. Are we not right in saying that the rule is otherwise, and that in the Archdeacon—who was himself imported from England—we have an example of it? Before leaving the subject we have to protest most strongly against the unkind tactics to which one or two defenders of the Council had recourse. They mysteriously assured the Senate that if it knew as much about individual actions and characters as the speakers did it would support the Council. Such a style of argument cannot be commended