

The Register.

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SENATORIAL VAGARIES.

The Senate of the University yesterday passed a resolution affirming that "there should be a limit to the number of members of the Council who hold offices of emolument in the University." It possibly escaped the notice of Mr. Hartley, who proposed this resolution as an amendment on Dr. Nesbitt's motion, that such a limit exists already. By the Act of Incorporation the Council is to consist of twenty members only—so that Mr. Hartley's motion comes to this: that not more than twenty Professors or lecturers or caretakers are to be members of the Council. For this relief we owe Mr. Hartley much thanks. In process of time, if the University goes on in the course which it has adopted, we shall have a noble army of Professors and lecturers whose chief duties will be to draw their salaries, to vote additions to them, and, if they are fortunate enough to secure seats on the Council, to appoint their friends to undertake for a pecuniary consideration, voted by benefactors, and a grateful country, their remaining duties. At the present moment the members of the Council, who are also its paid servants, form only the miserable proportion of one-fifth of the whole, but in process of time we may expect to see an advance. There is no reason, so far as the Senate sees, why the Professors should not increase and multiply until at last the University may, like its sister in Melbourne, have the proud satisfaction of knowing that its highest functionary is also its paid servant. And indeed it may very fairly be urged that as the Professors form the chief if not the only increasing class in the University, so they should have a large and growing interest in its government. What with members of the Council who know nothing

about Universities, and members who are pecuniarily interested in this particular University, there is a brilliant prospect before the highest educational body in the colony. Might we point out that, whilst the Arts School is represented on the Council by one Professor and the Medical School by three, the schools of Natural Science, of Music, and of Laws are unfairly left out in the cold? Would it not be a graceful action on the part of Archdeacon Farr, the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hartley, Bishop Kennion, Mr. West-Erskine, and one or two other gentlemen who represent no particular school, and are merely graduates in Arts of Universities, to resign their seats and use their influence to procure the election of Professor Tate, Professor Rennie, Professor Ives, Professor Phillips, and as many lecturers as these may choose to appoint? Then we should have everything all right.

If some such arrangement as that proposed by Dr. Nesbitt had been made the University would have been saved a trouble which is now bound to come upon it sooner or later. There is no necessity to suppose imaginary instances, for in Melbourne at the present time a very strong outcry has been raised against the presence of Professors in the Council.

To anybody who cares to think over the matter the danger is apparent. It may be that we are fortunate enough to have as paid members of the Council men who would scorn to use their power for the mere advantage of themselves or their friends. Nevertheless even in the nature of things are not above being influenced by their surroundings, and in other circumstances their places might be filled by unscrupulous men, whose chief aim in taking office would be the advancement of private interests. The argument stated by Dr. Whittell has been repeated so often that

some people are beginning to believe it. "They could not but remember," he said, "that the Professors rendered great assistance to the Council. He did not know how the Council could have managed sometimes without Professor Lamb and Dr. Stirling." This is in reality a reflection upon the ability of the Council to manage the affairs of the University. Supposing Professor Lamb or Dr. Stirling had been engaged in lecturing at the time the Council met, what would have been the result? Would they neglect their classes or their duties as Councillors? Possibly the former, but, as a matter of fact, could not all the information necessary be obtained from the Professorial Board by the Council? If a firm of merchants wants information from an employé he is not straightway made a partner. The principle of having paid servants of the Council on the Council is bad every way, and it is especially bad if it admits of indefinite extension. It is unjust to the other Professors, for these may not be really represented by their more ambitious or more successful brethren. It is unjust to the University, which it tends to make more and more of a clique-governed institution, managed mainly for the benefit and glorification of the Professors. It is unjust to the country which helps in supporting the University, for it indirectly favours the maximum of expense with the minimum

of good results, and it is bad in the interests of morality and justice, for it directly upholds the pernicious and utterly false theory that a man's best judge is himself. However, this cannot be helped. The Senate, which is omnipotent, has tied its own hands for a time, and has given its sanction to a practice which has wrought evil in the past, and is likely faithfully to continue in evil doing.

To turn from principles to persons. The public will notice with regret that Sir Henry Ayers refused to allow himself to be re-elected to the Council. Sir Henry has devoted much of his valuable time to the management of the University, and his efforts, whether as Treasurer or as Councillor, have been deservedly appreciated. The only new name on the Council is that of the Rev. Dr. Paton, who brings to the service of the University a high reputation for scholarship and practical common sense. Of the remaining business nothing much need be said. Professor Ives took occasion to assert his position in a manner which was hardly necessary. He must know that South Australians are particularly proud of their possession of the one Musical Chair in Australia. Certainly Mr.