

DEBATING ORGANIZATION.

**President Boise of the Union Speaks—
A Great Advance Made.**

Debating at Yale is no longer a lost art. The sudden burst of enthusiasm which resulted in our first victory over Harvard passed as quickly as it came. But its place was taken by an awakened general interest which has deepened steadily until the revival in Yale debating is to-day an accomplished fact.

Side by side with this steady growth in general interest, however, was an equally steady decline in the Union. As activity increased in the University, it decreased in the Union. The growth of outside interest continued, debating became more and more recognized, but attendance at the Union steadily diminished and its future looked dark.

This paradox continued until some action became necessary. It was felt that the University debating organization should attract the University debating interest, or its usefulness was gone. Unless the Union could meet the new conditions which confronted it and could, as a University organization, furnish an adequate field for University activity, it was a failure. It had failed to do so in the recent past. Could it do it in the future?

The discussion of this question in the College press and elsewhere established two possible causes for the failure:

First—It might be due to carelessness and neglect in the Union itself, or

Second—It might be due to radical and inherent defects in its structure.

Opinion was somewhat divided as to which was the more likely cause. But the wisdom of trying to revive the Union by careful attention and a strict enforcement of all its rules and regulations was admitted by all. With this in mind, a plan was outlined which, it was hoped, would be capable of adjustment to the various circumstances as they arose, and give the best results in the safest and most conservative manner.

Resolutions were adopted by the Union, at a recent meeting, providing for the strict enforcement of the Constitution in all respects particularly in regard to those provisions relating to attendance and the payment of dues. Comparatively regular attendance is now required of all members, and dues must be paid regularly or membership is forfeited. These regulations had for some time been allowed to fall into disuse. Although it is yet too soon to judge of their full effect, the increased attendance and greater interest attest their value.

POWER OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE.

The more important provisions of the present plan, however, relate to the formation of an Administrative Committee which shall have charge of University debating. This Committee is to be composed of three delegates from the Yale Union, and of one from each of the recognized class and department organizations. It will thus be a representative body, in touch with all branches of debating activity and able to gauge more correctly the wishes and needs of the University in regard to matters which come under its jurisdiction. This Committee is to have all power of arranging intercollegiate debates. In its character of a representative body, it is felt that it can express more truly the real sentiment of the University in its relations with Harvard and Princeton. All departments of the University will thus have a voice in such arrangements as concern them all. Its decisions will be the voice of the University and not of any one organization within the University.

This Committee is also to have the power of arranging inter-club and inter-department debates between the organizations represented upon it, as these organizations themselves may see fit. A series of systematically arranged inter-club debates would, it was thought, unify and stimulate debating interest both in the clubs engaged and in the University at large.

But the peculiar value of the Administrative Committee does not lie in its ability to arrange debates. It rests upon its capacity for organization. The most prominent feature of the recent debating renaissance has been its

evident neglect of the Union and its equally evident preference for class organization. This departure has been justified by its success. The numerous smaller and more informal clubs which have sprung up through the University have diverted attention from the Union, but they have themselves shown an active interest which the Union never exhibited in its palmiest days. This may be due, in part, to their novelty. It is due, in large measure, to the closer bonds of personal acquaintance and personal interest which unite their members. The social factor has secured more prominence and has strengthened debating in consequence.

SUPERVISION BY THE UNION.

Desirable as these organizations may be in their ability to encourage and promote debating, in general, they have serious defects. As a University system they lack centralization and the sense of responsibility which close connection alone can give. They come and go, rise and fall according to the sentiment of the moment. And while provision has been made for handing them down from class to class, their restricted horizon and lack of Union must necessarily lessen the effect of their efforts. The Committee of Administration is designed to meet this need. It is essentially the product of present conditions, the result of the peculiar features of the debating renaissance. It draws its strength from the class organizations, and upon the continuance of these organizations its existence depends. It exercises over them no control; they are left to their own devices. But by judicious supervision it may supply their inevitable, inherent defects, focus their efforts, increase their number as occasion offers and gradually round out and perfect a system of class debating which shall have the essential elements of vitality and stability—a system which shall meet the needs of the University.

The place of the Union in such a system is, at present, in doubt. The encouraging revival of interest in that body has demonstrated that it meets a recognized need. Class organizations may vanish as quickly as they have appeared. The Union will remain. It is the one element of stability, the one known factor, in a shifting and complex situation. But how best to adapt it to the present emergency, how best to utilize its reserve power to solidify the whole, is a problem which time and experience alone can solve. The machinery for such a solution has been provided in the Administrative Committee. And this Committee fills the paramount need of the present hour in Yale debating—the need of an organized system.

EDWARD B. BOISE.

For Corporation Nominations.

Prof. Franklin B. Dexter, Secretary of Yale Corporation, has just issued the following circular to Yale men:

NEW HAVEN, CONN., March, 1899.

Sir:—By the provisions of [an] Act of the Legislature of Connecticut, you will be entitled to vote, on the 27th day of June next, for one member of the Corporation of Yale University, to fill the vacancy caused by the expiration of the term of the Hon. Frederick J. Kingsbury (who declines to be a candidate for re-election); also, for one member, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Edward G. Mason, Esq.

By order of the Corporation you are invited to send to the undersigned, a nomination for each of these vacancies, it being intended that the names of all persons who are nominated by as many as twenty-five electors shall be announced, as soon as possible after May 1, in a circular sent to the electors, with a form for a ballot.

A blank is enclosed for convenience in sending nominations.

By order of the Corporation,
FRANKLIN B. DEXTER,
Secretary.

The Class Deacons for 1901 S., who will have charge of the religious interests of the class during the remainder of the course, were chosen on March 15. They are Southard Hay, Allegheny, Pa.; Frederick Rust VanVechten, Little Falls, N. Y., and John Farewell Ferrey, Lake Forest, Ill.

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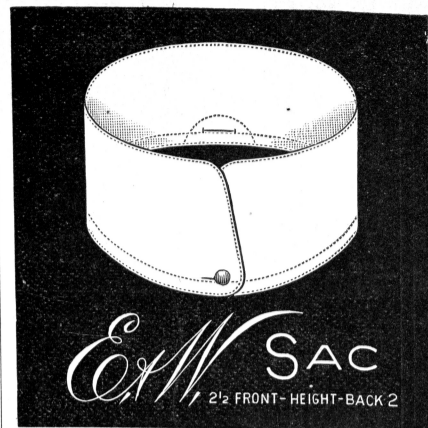
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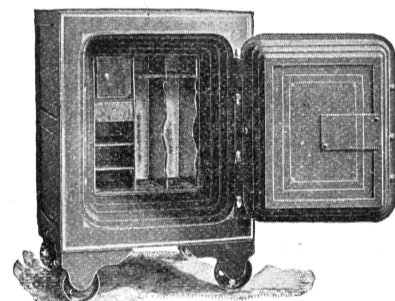
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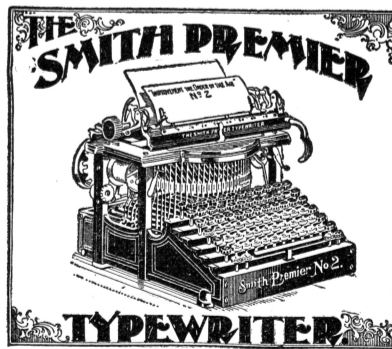
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