

The Tar Heel



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Saturday, April 27, 1929

Do We Have a "Perfect" Student Government?

During the past several weeks a bewildering succession of student government reforms have been proposed through the Open Forum columns of the TAR HEEL and in the meetings of the two literary societies. The great number of these proposed reforms attests to the fact that there is something definitely wrong with the system of student government here. A wide variety of changes in the existing system have been suggested in the plans advanced, but they have all failed to penetrate to the core of the problem.

Considered entirely from a standpoint of theory, the student government system now in existence here approaches the perfection claimed for it by Jeff Fordham and others of its more ardent proponents. The trouble is that the present system, in common with many other things based primarily upon theory, is not working. Wholesale cheating is not at all rare on examinations here, as any student with ordinary powers of observation will attest.

The honor system has broken down insofar as examinations and quizzes are concerned. A large majority of the members of the student body have been aware of this fact for some time, but little has been said concerning it. In the past three years there is only one case on record in which a student at the University has reported a fellow student for cheating. A conservative estimate places the number of cases of cheating actually tried by the faculty executive committee and the student council during this period at about 150. Out of 150 cases of cheating 149 were reported by members of the faculty, who should never be forced to report cheating cases, in accordance with the theory of the system in existence here. The number of instances of cheating actually detected by students here is probably so large that an accurate estimate would appear to the outsider almost incredibly high.

Nothing is to be gained by ignoring the present conditions and distorting the facts by insincere praise of the local student government. If a solution is to be found for the student government problem here, the facts must be faced frankly.

Fraternal Responsibility

With the adoption of the new rushing regulations by the Faculty Committee on fraternities, the fraternities and especially the Inter-fraternity council assume a more definite responsibility than they have had formerly.

In the past, it has been customary for the fraternities to extend the "courtesy of the floor" to fraternities violating rulings of the council. No reports of infractions have been made heretofore, for "courtesy" has restrained fraternities from doing so. However, the adoption of the new rules places upon the fraternities a duty they cannot well escape.

The new rules provide for a ten-day period in which the freshmen are to be free from the pestering of fraternities. This period is theirs. A violation of this period should be ten-day silence real rushing will commence. For two weeks the fraternities will have opportunity to impart to the bewildered young men all the information they desire. After the two weeks of rushing another period of silence will exist for two days and then the freshmen will make their choice.

This plan, while not the best in the world or the best which could be adopted here, should prove beneficial to the freshmen. It will prove of advantage to fraternity men if they observe it. But we have our doubts. The tendency here is to break such rules. No specific example can be quoted but violations are known to have existed and very probably they will exist this fall.

But there is no doubt that the rules can be enforced. It is a matter in which all fraternities will have a part. A fraternity may not favor it. Many of them do not. But it was adopted because of the fact that the Inter-fraternity Council found itself unable to agree on any one rule twice in succession. Our understanding is that they adopted three rules in three successive meetings, submitted the three to the faculty committee, and left that committee to do the best they could.

Since it is likely that the new plan is to be used we urge all fraternities to study it and make an effort to enforce it regardless of the relationship existing between some fraternities on the campus.

—W. H. Y.

Signs of The Times

(H. J. G.)

An edict recently issued by the town councilmen to the effect that billboard signs are to be removed causes a focussing of attention on a recent sign arrival on the campus.

Students whose daily program leads them to Murphey, Saunders, or the Law building yesterday saw a familiar notice propped up alongside the path between Murphey and Saunders. There it lay, seeming much larger on the ground than in its accustomed place high in the air, an imposing gold announcement on a black background of a well-known girls' college situated not many miles from Chapel Hill. It had been gathered in the night before by a group of convivial students and carried back with them in triumph to the Hill.

Just what is there about sign-collecting that appeals to the collegiate mind? It isn't the mere joy of possession, for signs are generally worthless in themselves. It isn't the thought of the consternation of the owner when he sees his sign gone from its place. It is more probably the sense of the ridiculous that is touched, the idea of a notice in new surroundings, totally out of place. It touches the sense of humor, and whatever else may be said, and there is plenty, about the flighty present generation, it must be admitted that a sense of humor is prevalent.

It isn't a particularly good practice to take signs, but it is also not a terrible crime, as crimes go. We trust the owners of the sign now reposing in a prominent position on the campus will not feel too harshly toward the gentlemen who filched it. They won't if they understand the underlying reason for its having been taken, any

more than the owners of the celebrated Atlantan sign were outraged when they found out what had become of their property.

It seems that there was a drive for members recently by a church in Atlanta. During the time of the drive Georgia Tech. And so, the story goes, students and passersby were delighted one morning to see the large sign from the church fluttering proudly across the front of the S A E house. It read, "10,000 By Next Saturday."

Open Forum

REGARDING THE GRAIL

Editor of the Tar Heel:

It seems to me that something other than fun has cropped out of the recent affair at the banquet of the Order of the Grail. Reading the account of the fray in the Tar Heel, several things stand out prominently in my mind. First, is the "slam" against the North contained in it. It is peculiar that the "visitor" who insulted our University and the Grail is a Northerner, is it not? The implication being, of course, that no man from any of the Southern schools would forget himself so far as to speak as the "visitor" spoke. But the Northerners are used to doing such things, of course, so take them as a model! It is rather hard for one who has lived in the North to read such implications with patience, especially since one knows that no such "slams" are ever read in Northern papers of Southern Universities. Perhaps some will think that I am making a mountain out of a mole-hill, but not so! Such things are the causes of dislike between the sections of our country, and as such should not be allowed to occur.

Another significant thing is the reception given the visitor's remarks. It is noticeable that the spirit of those attending the meeting was sufficient to drive the so called "visitor" from the room. Since most of the members who denounced him were unaware of the nature of the affair, they acted as they would act if such an affair were to actually happen. As said a speaker in the middle of his speech! Yet the University has the temerity to take the negative side of a debate of the question "Resolved, That Loyalty is the Curse of the American College." An order which allows the above significant things to take place surely shouldn't be held up as representative of our University.

JULIAN IMPERATOR

ENTHUSIASTIC OVER PRESENT STUDENT GOVERNMENT

To the Editor:

Hearing a few discussions, picking up bits from here and there pertaining to student government have caused me to give the matter a great deal of thought. It seems that there are some who want changes made in the Student Government at Carolina.

The Student Government, as it now stands, and the Honor System at the University of North Carolina are outstanding points which Carolina boasts to the freshmen each year as a distinction between her and many other colleges and universities. "As long as a man conducts himself as a gentleman he is one of us" seems to be the attitude of the Carolina student. That impression is made deep on the minds of the freshmen during the first two or three weeks of the fall quarter. The fact that they are left upon their honor gives them a feeling of pride and a desire to uphold that which has taken the University of North Carolina years and years to develop.

If a man is not gentleman enough but what he has to have a code of written laws and rules, a constitution and a powerful executive to see that he abides by them, before he can be turned loose among the other students, then we do not want him. Let him go to school where there are professors who do the chastising and deans who do the expelling.

The thing necessary is that the students be a little more enthusiastic over the system we already have. The students in general should get a little more of the Carolina spirit which is to uphold the system for which honor stands.

E. F. F.

"Law and Freedom"

Dr. W. S. Bernard, teacher of the Student Bible Class at the Methodist church, announces that the topic of discussion for Sunday, April 27 will be "Law and Freedom."

The students are referred to an article, "Our Lawless Heritage," by James T. Adams in the February issue of the Atlantic Monthly, page 732. President Hoover's speech before the Press Association, as published in the papers of Tuesday, April 23, will also be used as reference.

Clipped

ARE THEY SO BAD

Fraternity politics. Everywhere we hear the present system of fraternity politics in the modern university talked about, hashed over, and disparaged. It is ever the object of adverse and unfavorable criticism. Never once have we encountered a single word of encouragement of defense of its existence; but, in the belief that politics are justifiable, in collegiate as well as municipal governments, we shall speak in their behalf.

In many of the colleges of today, where there is a flourishing system of fraternities, zealous attempts are made by administration authorities to eliminate entirely any combines or agreements between the various groups in student elections. At least one large university which has come to our notice requires each student, upon his entrance, to sign a pledge to the effect that during his stay at college he will be a party to no political combinations. Probably the desired result is obtained, or at least approached. But are the officials right in their conception of the desired result?

Every election ever conducted in municipal, state, or national government is preceded by a more or less active political campaign, and is contested between at least two well defined parties. In fact, there could be no real competition if there were no declaration of policies by the candidates and subsequent campaigns. The institution of political parties is absolutely indispensable in the selection and backing of the most logical man for the office. And it seems to us that the analogy between municipal and student governments is very close.

It cannot be said that by the operation and manipulation of fraternity politics the most capable person is often kept out of office. It is only reasonable to assume that each combination will support its strongest candidate, and thereby the field will be narrowed down to the three or four most logical choices.

Many college officials evade the question of fraternity politics, and state that their institutions are free from such practices. And all this merely because they do not want to meet the problem face to face. These officials are comparable with the strict parent who, after forbidding his son to smoke, finds out that he does, but, fearful lest he shall be forced to inflict the threatened penalty, evades the question and ignores the fact that he is being disobeyed.

But we do have fraternity politics, and we have them wherever we have fraternities and student government. And in colleges and universities where there are no fraternities, we have other political combinations which amount to the same thing. It is only natural that factions will be formed in any sort of government where there are no fraternities, we it is one of the primary points of human nature to unite for strength.

Prize Offered for Engineering Thesis

The annual prize offered by the North Carolina section of the American Society of Civil Engineers will be awarded sometime in the summer to the graduating senior in Civil Engineering who presents the thesis which, in the opinion of the judges, is the best on any one of a group of selected subjects. The prize consists of a free junior membership in the society.

Each year the section presents the prize to that graduating senior presenting the best thesis on a subject selected by the two latest past presidents of the society. The contest is open to all graduating seniors in Civil Engineering who are members of either of the two student chapters of the society in North Carolina. Student chapters are located at State College in Raleigh and at the University.

The subjects selected for the thesis this year are: "Ethical Importance of the Code of Practice of the North Carolina Society of Engineers"; "Benefits That May Accrue to Young Engineers through Observance of the Code"; and "Necessity for Observance of the Code from a Business Viewpoint."

All these must be submitted by June 30 to Professor Thorndike Saville, secretary of the Society.

A special committee has been formed to study the question of the age limit for the students of the University of Montreal.

"I" Dormitory Men To See Free Show

Occupants of I Dormitory in the Triangle are the recipients of the courtesy of Manager E. C. Smith of the Carolina Theatre this week. They will see the 7 o'clock show Saturday night free if they will assemble at the door with their dormitory president at that hour. Manager Smith will be host to a fraternity group next week.

House Makes Talks

R. B. House, executive secretary of the University, delivered an address before the Rotary conference of the fifth and sixth districts at the Sir Walter in Raleigh Wednesday night. Mr. House spoke again Thursday at Wakeleton, where he delivered a high school commencement address.



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