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Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

Trinity College

Report

of

The Acting President

October, 1916



Hartford

Printed for the College

1916



ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

To the Trustees of Trinity College:—

Gentlemen:

In presenting the report of the College covering a year's absence of the President, as observer of its progress and present condition, I am conscious of both advantages and disadvantages in my position: advantages because one who undertakes unfamiliar work often sees certain new problems that may have escaped more accustomed eyes, or sees old problems in a new light; disadvantages because one short year of service as Acting President can hardly qualify one for the office of critic, a function demanding years of painstaking observation and ripe experience.

The most gratifying circumstance connected with the past year is the fact that the President will find the College and Faculty practically as he left them. The Christmas Term will open with the same men directing our work of education as were with us last year, unless, indeed, the trouble with Mexico should continue. In that case, we may have to secure temporary substitutes for Professors Galpin and Barrows who are now serving their country at the border with the Connecticut National Guard. Our one loss is that of the Assistant Librarian, Mr. Howard Hill, also in Mexico whose office has been discontinued in the interest of economy. Professor Arthur Adams will continue his work as Librarian for at least one more year, and Professor McDonald has been reappointed for the same period. It is a pleasure to report that Professor Adams has fully justified the President's expectation in his capacity as Librarian, and the fact that he wishes to reserve his decision one more year, arises only from his very natural hesitation to give up his work as a teacher of English, after years of preparation, both in study and practice.

It is also most encouraging to report that on account of the small number of men dropped for low stand during the past year, there will be fewer absent from the ranks of the students than has recently been the case. The total number thus disciplined was only twelve during the entire year, as against twenty-three the year before. This improvement cannot be due to any change

in policy or method of teaching, but is doubtless the cumulative result of several years of consistent rigor on the part of Faculty and President in holding the students to a very reasonable scholastic requirement, and to the ruthless weeding out of the dull and the lazy who are not themselves benefited by a college course and who retard those who are. It requires a certain amount of genuine work to hold one's place in Trinity, and any policy aiming to increase numbers at the expense of this spirit of work would be a great calamity, especially at a time when our country needs, as never before, educated men who are both industrious and thorough.

Closely related to the importance of holding the students to their scholastic obligations is the question of assistance in the form of scholarships or loans. As a great majority of our students come from families of very slender means, the remitting of at least part of their dues seems to be a necessary condition of their being in college at all. This need has, to some extent, been met through the generous endowment of scholarships; and the college has granted others, especially for Hartford boys, thus enabling us to be peculiarly liberal in this respect. During the past years, however, it has become apparent that the holders of scholarships were becoming forgetful of the obligation they were under to maintain a creditable rank and so justify the assistance they were receiving. They were accepting the help in the spirit in which a large number of people today accept privileges without a compensating return; in other words, expecting something for nothing. To counteract this tendency and to utilize, so to speak, the very necessity of these young men as an incentive to study, as is common in Europe but rare in America, new conditions have been imposed upon all applicants for financial aid. Holders of scholarships must now maintain a stand somewhat higher than the minimum required of the rest, and they must in other ways show themselves thoroughly deserving as well as actually needy. Though this policy does not formally go into effect till next September, it has really been in practice during the past year. It would seem then that sufficient warning has been given; and that this assumption is justified is apparent from the fact that very few holders of scholarships will lose them in September because of unsatisfactory reports in June.

Another, and a somewhat similar problem, is the financial management of student organizations and class enterprises. The various extra curriculum interests bring an increasing and often excessive drain on the undergraduate purse, and many a boy whose family is making great sacrifices to put him through College gets into debt because of the quasi-obligatory dues,

assessments, and subscriptions levied upon him. The harm is two-fold. Not only does the student himself suffer, but, as such subscriptions are often hard to collect, the bills incurred by classes, societies, and other organizations remain long unpaid. Consequently the College itself gains a most unfortunate reputation among local tradesmen, as well as among business houses elsewhere, with whom the somewhat irresponsible student bodies have their dealings. Of course many of these activities lie outside the legitimate sphere of Faculty supervision, but it would seem that at least the class undertakings and those of the musical and dramatic clubs, and the tennis and hockey teams could be regulated in somewhat the same way as are the major athletic organizations. The real difficulty to be met is that each new class tries to excell all previous classes in its undertakings; moreover the Committee attempting this is quite devoid of experience, and apparently does not even profit by what may have been learned by the preceding class. To meet this problem there might be appointed one or more members of the Faculty to form the nucleus of a permanent board having supervision of all obligations incurred in the ways mentioned. There would undoubtedly result considerable saving to the students themselves with an improvement in the relations of business men to the various student organizations. Many other colleges have been forced to adopt such a plan in view of the increasing cost and importance of the extra-curriculum activities and apparently with the best results. A general "truing up" seems to be needed by the student of today, not only in financial matters, but in his regard for appearance, his dress, his room, and for college property. Apparently the student bodies at most colleges go through a period when disreputable clothes, disorderly rooms, and a cheerful disregard of each other's possessions is thought to be a sign of manliness. They usually outgrow this somewhat callow phase, and it is hoped that it is only a passing one at Trinity.

Although athletics lie outside the scope of the usual President's report, circumstances this year seem to justify at least a brief comment. Last Autumn Trinity was the object of an unusually bitter fire of criticism from a number of colleges with whom heretofore our relations have been friendly. Some of the criticisms were wholly unmerited and unfair; some were due to a frank difference of opinion; and a very few, unfortunately, were deserved. So far from any semblance of truth is the accusation that Trinity had lent itself officially to furthering athletic interests by the use of scholarships and other inducements to attract and retain athletes, that it calls for no further comment. Those attacks based upon our long-established practice

of allowing any bona fide student in good standing to play on our teams seem somewhat invidious, considering that our position has been thoroughly understood in the past. However, to avoid unnecessary unpleasantness in the future, new rules have been adopted calculated to meet at least in part the wishes of our opponents. We still, however, refuse to disqualify a player because he may have supported himself during the summer by playing semi-professional base-ball. As it is next to impossible to tell in many cases whether this has been done or not, it would seem more straightforward not to question this very common practice, than to lay claim to a practically unattainable degree of amateur exclusiveness. We thus avoid hypocrisy, and a vast amount of difficulty in attempting to enforce a decidedly artificial rule.

Although Trinity has always maintained an unusually high standard of sportsmanship on the field, it is an undeniable fact that of late years some of her alumni and undergraduates have lent themselves to dubious methods of attracting promising athletes, both from preparatory schools and from other colleges. Letters have been written, wholly without authority, offering scholarships, remunerative employment in College, and advantageous positions afterward. Such methods do the College and the young men themselves great harm, and it is no defense to plead that they are used elsewhere. The practice must stop if we are to retain our own self-respect and the position of high athletic morality of which we have been so proud in the past. It is, of course, perfectly legitimate to attract promising young men to the College, but unusual and unauthorized inducements to athletes are not legitimate and should be discouraged by all who have the reputation of Trinity really at heart.

The wide geographical distribution of our undergraduate enrollment has been in the past a cause of satisfaction to Trinity men, for in spite of their small numbers, our students have had the advantage of association with representatives of all sections of the country from all walks in life. This catholic grouping of many types of young men is particularly desirable if a college is to offer a real preparation for life in a democracy like ours. Any tendency to become a purely local institution or to attract exclusively one type of student is most undesirable and should be vigorously resisted. To see where we stand in regard to our present representation, I have made an estimate based upon our enrollment for the past ten years, giving the average percentage from the different states. The following are the results:

Connecticut	51.8%	Rhode Island	1.3%
New York	14.2%	Illinois9%

Massachusetts	6.8%	Ohio9%
Pennsylvania	5.1%	Maine6%
New Jersey	3.8%	Vermont6%
New Hampshire ...	3.0%	Kentucky6%
Maryland	2.4%	South Dakota6%
Michigan	1.5%	District of Columbia	.6%
Minnesota	1.3%	Washington5%
		China5%

The remaining three percent. or so come from twenty different states and territories and from four foreign countries; thus it is evident that the student body at Trinity still maintains its representative character. However, a comparison between the percentage of enrollment from Connecticut and from all the other states taken together shows a decided tendency to an increasingly local constituency. In the catalogue for the year 1864-5, the Connecticut representation was 32% of the total, New York 18.9%, Maryland 17%, Massachusetts 13.2% and that of six other states was 18.9%, with one student from England. In 1894-5 Connecticut had 31.7%, New York 22.8%, Massachusetts 7.3%, Michigan 6.5%, and eighteen other states 31.7%, with one student from Japan. In the year just closed Connecticut had risen to nearly 59%, New York had fallen to 11.3%, Massachusetts had only 4.8%, and Pennsylvania had 5.2%. The remaining 19.7% is distributed over seventeen states, with two students from China.

While the College is deeply appreciative of the growing confidence exhibited by the people of Hartford and the State, and gladly welcomes all who come to us from this region, still it would be much better, not only for Trinity, but for the local boys themselves if the representation of other states could keep pace with the increase nearer home. It is not easy to suggest a way to bring this about, but certainly new emphasis on, and a wider circulation of our peculiar claims to consideration and our advantages would be of great assistance.

The plan adopted by your honorable body at the last meeting to co-operate with the Government in offering a course in Military Science may have an excellent effect in attracting young men from a distance. If the War Department grants the application and such a course is successfully established, it ought to appeal to young men who wish to combine with their regular academic work such an amount of military training as would fit them to serve their country as commissioned officers in time of war. Such an ideal is typical of Trinity, as our motto indicates, and as is shown by the record of our students during the Civil War. Today we are well represented on the Border of Mexico

and at Plattsburg; so that everything seems to promise a hearty response to the opportunity we hope to offer. Further the unusual military advantages offered by Hartford, in which the college might share, ought to make ours one of the most desirable institutions in which to acquire training for a commission in the reserve army.

The new plan for Commencement may be called an almost unqualified success. The importance of having more of the alumni back for this annual reunion has been increasingly evident; and with practically the whole programme concentrated into Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, it is obvious that a greater number of our graduates will visit us in future. The result last June was most satisfactory, the attendance having been much greater than for many years in spite of the disagreeable weather. Slight changes will doubtless be made in the programme next year as a result of this year's experience, but in the main the arrangement of the various events was satisfactory. The experiment of holding an open-air service Sunday morning was a pronounced success, and it is safe to predict the permanent establishment of this stirring and beautiful ceremony. The general satisfaction expressed by every one with the new programme would seem to indicate a larger and an even more enthusiastic gathering in 1917, especially because of a growing feeling of obligation on the part of the alumni to return more frequently than in the past, not only that they may renew old friendships and show their loyalty, but also to induce in the undergraduates a spirit of solidarity and sense of participation in the continuous life of the College, and to encourage the Faculty and officers by showing an interest in what is being done to maintain the dignity and to promote the prosperity of their alma mater.

The most important matters considered at the Alumni Meeting were the creation of an Alumni Council and the intention of the Board to raise a million dollars. These two plans go hand in hand. The purpose of the first is to keep the alumni in constant touch with the College, to organize a system of annual subscriptions according to the plan in use in most other institutions like ours, and to assist in interesting young men all over the country in Trinity. The object of the other is to provide a much needed increase in our endowment in order to eliminate the deficit, to make possible larger salaries for the professors who even now receive less than the modest compensation given by others of the colleges in the East, and to add to our equipment a beautiful chapel, a modern gymnasium, and a new dormitory, all of which are vitally essential to our continued growth and prosperity. The raising of that sum is going to be no easy

matter and can be accomplished only if every alumnus will show the same spirit of devotion to the college that your board has just exhibited in temporarily assuming the burden of the deficit. It seems almost like a sordid admission, but it cannot be denied that the problems now facing us really depend almost wholly upon money for their solution. We have to compete with other colleges more richly endowed or having a wealthier student body, and the boys of today, especially those who go to the larger preparatory schools, look for certain external inducements that were unheard of when our present buildings were completed. Swimming pools, indoor tennis courts, modern conveniences in dormitories have little to do with education, but they are becoming an accepted feature of the college of today ; moreover, though school boys do not consciously select a college for its Faculty, there is no doubt that frequent changes in that body have a harmful influence on the students, and that in the long run the college which has a stable and efficient corps of teachers will attract a better class of boys in ever increasing numbers. Such a Faculty is possible only where adequate salaries are paid.

In closing, let me assure your honorable body of the earnest co-operation of the Faculty and other officers in your arduous task of setting the College upon a firm foundation, from which God willing, she shall continue unhampered to exert her ennobling influence upon young men for many generations to come.

All of which is respectfully submitted

HENRY A. PERKINS,
Acting President.

August 3, 1916.