

"Rowdyism" Hit at Pretoria Students Denied UNIVERSITY IS "NEUTRAL"

Plea for Direct Representation In Parliament

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PRETORIA, Saturday.

THE University of Pretoria is politically neutral. Every one of its members is entitled to his own political opinions. Mr. Gerhard Moerdyk, chairman of the University Council, said this in his speech at the opening ceremony of the university year in the Pretoria City Hall last night.

More than 1,000 people, the majority of them students, were present in the hall. The Rector of the University, Mr. C. F. Schmidt, and the heads of Faculties, were on the dais.

Mr. Moerdyk welcomed new students to the university and said that since it had become an Afrikaans-medium institution the university had expanded steadily each year. The only difficulty the authorities had to face was lack of accommodation. This difficulty was being overcome.

He pleaded for direct representation of universities in Parliament. This, he said, would not leave them entirely in the hands of a Cabinet Minister.

"The university," he said, "is a free institution in which every professor and every student is entitled to form his own judgment and to belong to any political party.

"The University cannot, however, tolerate any of its staff taking an active part in politics by becoming a candidate, or by making propaganda, for any political party. Neither will it encourage, or even tolerate, such a thing as rowdyism among students."

Mr. Moerdyk strongly denied that any students had taken part in the hooliganism at Mr. Adolf Davis's meeting in the Pretoria City by-election campaign a fortnight ago.

"THE ROWDIES"

"According to a certain newspaper," he said, "some of the rowdies at this meeting were the students. The meeting took place a fortnight before the beginning of the university year and the students were not even in Pretoria."

The incident, Mr. Moerdyk said, indicated how certain newspapers, whose attitude to the university was an unsympathetic one, did everything in their power to sow suspicion in the country and to create division among the university's supporters.

"It is beyond all doubt that students had nothing whatever to do with the rowdyism," he said.