

Varsities debate

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Ayer Itam), in supporting the Bill, congratulated the Minister for moving quickly to nip the student uprising in the bud.

He urged the Minister, however, to exercise understanding and tolerance when suspending or expelling a student charged with a criminal offence.

The victim may be "just one of the many innocent ones caught in the net," he said.

Dr. Hee also urged vice chancellors to use their discretion fairly and justly in allowing "deserving and genuine" students to join societies and associations within or outside the universities.

He also felt that more students should be allowed to sit on the university councils.

Dr. Goh Cheng Teik (NF-Nibong Tebal), who is also the Parliamentary Secretary in the Prime Minister's Department, said that the amendments were the Government's response to declining discipline in some university campuses.

Dr. Goh said that when he was a University of Malaya lecturer students had easy access to the rostrum where they verbally attacked their lecturers, professors, deans and vice-chancellors.

The students could demand — and often their

demands were met — "that lectures and tutorials be cancelled in order to enable them to hold mass rallies during lecture hours."

Protection

Students with loud-speakers had occupied lecture halls, preventing lectures and had issued ultimatums to heads of departments, faculties and the vice-chancellor threatening them with demonstrations if their demands were not met.

"Ordinary members of the teaching staff, like me, were completely helpless," he said.

"We could not look to the vice-chancellor for protection because we were told that he did not have adequate power to deal with the situation.

"It was also believed that the demonstrating students enjoyed support from influential political groups outside the university.

"The climax to this growth of illegal student power occurred in September 1974 when a student faction 'seized' the University of Malaya, 'deposed' its officers and 'appointed' their own vice-chancellor deans of faculties, masters of colleges and the like."

Dr. Goh said the Government was not afraid of student criticism.

"However, this House

must distinguish freedom of expression from plain hooliganism," he said.

"What the present amendment seeks to do is to empower university administrations to deal with students who demand a licence to practise hooliganism in the name of academic freedom."

He advised students to apply their intellectual skills in analysing rational problems and to write up papers on what the Government can do.

Dr. Goh urged students to retain their idealism

after their graduation.

"I can cite examples of former student leaders who championed the cause of peasants and workers and condemned the Government for its 'reactionary' policies when they were at university, but who are now very busy making money for themselves," he said.

He hoped members of the university teaching staff would understand that the vice-chancellor's new powers were necessary to prevent disorder on the campuses.

He urged them to co-

operate with the Government to restore discipline so that "these unpleasant measures" be only a "temporary necessity."

Dr. Goh said that since the vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors and members of university councils would be vested with enormous powers, the right men must be picked for these jobs.

The Minister was urged to make doubly sure that only the best were appointed to the key positions in our universities.