

Under Rule II is provision of members each year of persons of distinguished eminence in science literature or the arts.

In Rule 2 the club - a 1200 ordinary members ^{and} of honorary members, honorary & foreign, under on the basis of W.O.S. 1916 Rules & Stat of Member is this note:

An Election at the Athenaeum, 12. III. 17.

Some months ago Donald Armour (an old friend, a Canadian, son of the late Chief Justice Armour of Toronto), wrote asking if I would put my name in the Nomination book of the Club vice Edmund Owen deceased. His election came up to-day. I warned him to abstain from any canvass of Members which is rarely of any use and sometimes irritates a member.

Then, his seconder, and I wrote to our friends asking them to sign his paper which is hung in the public room for one week before the election. About 30 names were on it. Ten men are balloted for 4 times a year (see p. 14). One black ball in ten rejects. I feel pretty confident about A. as he has a good name but he is not connected with any of the big Hospitals except Queen Square. Four members of the profession were elected at the last ballot and three were in this list - I was just a bit fearful lest the Club might feel it was getting a too medicated and do a little blackballing. It was a large vote - above two hundred. The ballot boxes are arranged at the N.E. corner of the Library - 10 in a row on a table behind curtains. The names of the candidates are in front while at each ballot box is the paper with name of candidate, proposer and seconder, and the names of the members who sign his paper (which is in one of the public rooms for a week before the ballot) either from personal knowledge or knowledge of his works. Friends of candidates ask members to vote or put in a good word. Many distinguished men were present, Kipling, Asquith, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Crookes, Lord Bryce and Lord Haldane. Behind the screen sits the secretary, a clerk who writes the names of the voters and one of the stewards who hands the ballots. There was a good deal of suppressed excitement, not unexpected as I felt certain there would be opposition to one candidate, Sir Guy Laking, Bt son of the late Apothecary to the King's Household, who played his cards so well that he rose to be physician to the household and a great favorite with King Edward., who tried in vain to have him elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians. Sir Guy is Keeper of the Royal Armoury and a well known writer on weapons and armour. Sir James Reid, Dr Norman Moore and others were active in statements that he was an unfit person, as he had had to give up his apartments at St James' Palace for special reasons while another member in my hearing called him a boulder of the first water. It was very awkward as he was proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and seconded by Sir Thos. Barlow. At six o'clock the curtains were drawn aside and two senior members of the Committee superintended the counting of the ballots, which was done by the steward, who picked out two balls at a time, first the yeas and then the no's. The figures were called out and the candidate was declared elected or rejected. The first man, called Woodd, who had only half a dozen names on his paper, got 120 yeas and 2 black-balls. Copeman, a doctor, 181 and one blackball,

Armour 184 yeas and 3 black-balls, Laking 143 yeas and 33 blackballs, so that he was rejected. I was a bit afraid too for my friend Dr John Scott Haldane the Physiologist, and brother of Lord Haldane, against whom there is in many quarters a strong feeling. He got 212 yeas and 9 blackballs, everyone, I am sure, cast against his brother. The Club is a very sensitive body reacting promptly against any suspicion of bad breeding or poor morals on the part of a candidate. Many men have been stupidly put up by their friends who should have known that they had not the ghost of a chance, such as a few years ago Dr Smith and Sir Henry Burdett. I tried to induce a friend of the latter to withdraw his name. I could never get anything specific against either of them, but "impossible" - not up to Athenaeum standards and so on. Some have regarded rejection as an honor; e.g. the late Henry Stevens of Vermont, the founder of the well known house of booksellers Henry Stevens & Son. In his recollections of Mr James Lennox 1886 on the title page, among his distinctions occurs "Black-balled Athenaeum Club London."

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W. OSLER.

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