

Laying of the Corner Stone of the Gymnasium.
Address by President C. W. Stanley.

Mr. Chairman:

I think that all of us here are impressed by the determination of the University Governors - in these difficult times, when manna no longer falls from heaven, so to speak - to see that we do not lack gymnasium accommodation. True, the building rising here will be used in several ways, as is to be expected in this thrifty community. But it is a gymnasium. The Governors cannot brook a university without a gymnasium.

Already in my brief sojourn here, I have heard much talk of this building. I am convinced that no sooner had the old gymnasium been destroyed than the Governors began to lose sleep until plans for a new Gymnasium were under weigh.

Now, why is this? From all that I have heard - and as I say I have had many conversations on the subject - the Governors seem to believe, as I firmly believe, that the health of the young men and women under our care, comes first, first of all things. And not only so. Even before I came here I was told of the great efforts that had been made by the University on behalf of the Public Health Centre. And one of my first visitors when I came to my desk in August was the Provincial Minister of Health, the Hon. Dr. Murphy, who is one of the professors of Dalhousie University. He said bluntly: "I think the University, besides being healthy itself, should take a lead in the matter of Public Health." And he asked my assistance.

All of us who are students, all of us who use our minds, indulging in the fatiguing exercise of thinking, know that our kinds are never in tune, never keyed up, unless at those splendid moments when we rejoice in springing, abundant health of body. Most of us, fortunately, are young and blessed with bodies that can be kept fit and strong, and ready servants of the human will.

A gymnasium, fended against our winter climate, is indispensable to that end. It enables a greater number to be healthy. So far as I understand their beliefs, the Governors are not thinking merely of a team or two. They are thinking of the whole student body, men and women; all of whom can, several times in the week, make use of this building. It is not their object that a few may have genuine exercise, and all the rest no exercise beyond cheering. They are not thinking of athletics as an advertisement of the University. They are thinking of the health of the students at large. Having had experience of semi-professional athletics in other Canadian universities, where athletics is not a blessing but a curse, where paid coaches and highly developed athletic machinery have swept aside real sport and sportsmanship, and half-obliterated the entire purpose of the university, I cordially commend my predecessor and the present Governors of Dalhousie on keeping first things first, and on maintaining the relative importance of things.

The field yonder, - with its simplicity, its abundant lack of organization, its absence of a costly stadium, its likeness to Edinburgh and Oxford, yes, and its likeness to Olympia and Delphi of old, and its unlikeness to Chicago and the professional slave-gladiators of Rome, - is a monument to your common sense. Long may you and your successors continue to be blessed with common sense.

And remember, I beg of you, that health in the individual is a matter of daily exercise and daily avoidance of excess either in work or in play; just as public health is a matter of eternal vigilance on the part of us all.

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