

President's Address
to Alumni - Lord
Welson Hotel - May 14/54

Alumni

I once before expressed my admiration of this institution: the dinner annually given by the Alumni Society to the graduating class of the year. It is a symbol of the torch-race of life. To me, just at this time, it seems to have a special significance. Dalhousie University is a much greater thing than any generation of students, than any generation of professors, or even than any sum of its generations represented at any time by its alumni. It is a greater thing than any of the charters which it received from time to time from the Governments of Nova Scotia. It is greater than its buildings or endowments. Dalhousie is a living and a growing idea.

There is one thing, of course, which Dalhousie has never out-grown, and that is the ringing prophecy of its founder. It was 114 years ago

this month that the Earl of Dalhousie, in laying the corner stone of the first college, said: "This College of Halifax is founded for the instruction of youth in the higher Classics, and in all philosophical studies (- a pretty comprehensive phrase that -); it is founded upon the principles of religious toleration (- please note that: Dalhousie was the first Canadian University to write religious toleration into its constitution -). From this college every blessing may flow over your country..... May it continue to dispense them to the latest ages. Let no jealousy disturb its peace; let no lukewarm indifference check its growth."

That prophecy we have never outlived, and we never shall. For that statement is instinct with the idea of the progress and expansion of the human soul. But the author of these words; and the "onlie begetter" of Dalhousie, was not merely an idealist. He knew the dark places. He warned us of the

pettiness and jealousy which lurk in the human heart. And the chequered history of Dalhousie is eloquent testimony to his wisdom. But I want to say here that I have never had any reason to doubt the loyalty of Dalhousians to Dalhousie. ~~Mischief-makers~~ ^{Doubles and} self-seekers, there will always be. ~~Life is~~ ^{They exist} ~~everywhere~~ ^{in our case} like that. But for every one of these there ~~has~~ ^{have} sprung up, to the defence of the Earl of Dalhousie's great philosophy, and for the carrying on of the torch, hundreds of loyal Dalhousians. So it has been, so at this time it is; so, pray ~~God,~~ ^{Heaven,} it ever shall be.

I think perhaps that you, the Halifax Alumni, and you who tomorrow become Alumni, will perhaps be interested in the financial position of the

University. Whenever I go outside Halifax, interested friends of the University ask me, in a sort of bated breath, "How are your finances?" Well, with one single exception, Dalhousie has fared through the depression more prosperously than any other Canadian University. This is very largely ^{owing} due to the care and caution of the Governors in the present and in the past. You know perhaps that two universities in this country have been almost disrupted by the depression. You know that many Canadian Universities have cut professors' salaries to a shocking degree. You know that many have raised students' fees to such an extent that the gravest social injustice has been done. Now I am not going to bore you with the details of Dalhousie's financial losses, which have been heavy, nor with our measures to meet those losses. But three points I will ask you to remember:

1. We have not cut professors' salaries: 4 reasons.
2. We " " very much raised students' fees: some of you, I know, think we have raised the fee too high.
3. Though we have not cut salaries, nor very much raised fees, we shall have the lowest deficit this year, as in 1929.

Now that is easy to describe in words, but it gives you no idea of the labours we have had. In the past three years, I have had to think about..... I should like, however, to testify that the Board of Governors have shown the greatest patience, and magnanimity and courage, and also to the willingness of the staff to cut down all fringe expenses and to work harder than ever before. *Moreover our Teaching faculty and our educational facilities are unimpaired.*

Indeed our facilities - Library. A matter of common remark that in the last two years it has grown without precedent, and that without a penny of cost *to the University.*

Scholarships (greatest pressing need)

However, these are after all relatively unimportant matters.

The important thing after all is whether we resemble what I called at the outset a

living, growing idea. The important thing is whether we are remembering that we are an educational institution, and moreover, in view of our proud traditions, a first-rate institution. Our Medical Schools was publicly classed, by authorities competent to do so, an AI institution some years ago. But medical science is growing and expanding at a great rate. We must keep up. As was said by some of you medical graduates on Saturday evening, improvements have been made in the last year or two. We are on the eve of making another very considerable improvement. In this, and in the other professional schools, we cannot do everything at once.

What of the Arts Faculty which is, after all, the very core of the University? Has the Arts and Science Faculty been sitting still, or has it been adjusting itself to a rapidly changing world? When I say "a rapidly

changing world" I am not speaking merely in general terms; I am speaking of the striking improvement in educational facilities in the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland. How many people realise that the Carnegie Foundation have spent over three million dollars on education, in these provinces in the last twelve years? The money has been carefully spent, and the improvements are extraordinary. The schools of Newfoundland have changed out of recognition. It is almost impossible to overstate the improvement there. The change in P. E. I., though just beginning, is profound. Nor is it merely what the Carnegie Corporation has endowed. It is the stimulus they have given, and the enthusiasm shown even in places which they have not directly touched. While they have been helping Charlottetown, the town of Summerside has built and staffed for itself a complete high school, the like of

which never previously existed on the Island, outside of Charlottetown. Kentville, New Glasgow, St. John, N. B., have built themselves schools and high schools such as no one ever dreamed of ten years ago. True, there backward places; the most backward of all being the City of Halifax. But several of our professors have been in close touch with the forward looking places, and with the forward looking teachers in the backward places. In New York, three weeks ago, I was told by two different departments of the Carnegie Corporation that word had reached them from schools in all three Maritime Provinces that there was a new spirit of cooperation between them and Dalhousie University. And it is true, I believe, that a foot-bridge or two have been thrown across the chasm which yawned so long between the teachers in school, and the teachers in college. It is only because we had our finger on the pulse

of the schools that we have been able to make over the general course in Arts and Science, and that we have been able to add four-year Honour Courses. Lest I be misunderstood, I wish to make it clear that the Arts and Science Faculty have done this, not at the instigation of any one outside, but on their own initiative, and steadily feeling their way forward. They have been most anxious not to go too fast, but to keep step with the schools. I was not aware, until a few weeks ago, how carefully we were being watched by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Then, Dr. Learned, who has written so much and so well about education in the Maritime Provinces, asked me such questions and made such comments that I saw he must be thoroughly familiar with what we were doing. A few days ago, writing about another matter, Dr. Learned added this comment, apropos of our

courses: "I am greatly impressed with the progress you are making in Dalhousie, and with the manner in which you are going about it".

Before I stop I wish to lay emphasis on one thing. Nothing is possible in a school or college unless the students make it possible. Of the two sides of education, learning and teaching, the learning is far the more important. I have always been impressed by the human material in Dalhousie. But this year I have been more than ever struck by the quality of our students, from the first year onward. As for this graduating class, it contains students who would do credit to any University in the world.

May 14, 1934.