

If Dalhousie's Medical and Dental Schools are Typical Here are the

# Problems of Professional Training

Someone (identity unknown) is once known to have said "Money is the Root of All Evil" but two of Dalhousie University's better-known deans, D. J. MacLean, Dentistry, and C. B. Stewart, Medicine, have been quick to deny any personal knowledge of the source of this statement. In fact, as far as these two professional men are concerned, the "almighty buck" is very much in current demand to solve many of their present "lesser evils".

"What is your greatest single problem?", I asked the two gentlemen and both replied, with little hesitation, "money".

Cornering Dean MacLean in his new Dental building was a different job but a pleasant treat. The \$1,000,000 building is a dentist's delight and will enable Dalhousie's Dental School to turn out eventually double its number of qualified graduates. While the building looks elaborate, it has in fact been constructed along as economical lines as possible with joint laboratories and offices plus a need for students to double on the available dental chairs—33 chairs for 66 students.

"After a long, hard, uphill journey" said Dr. MacLean, "the Dental School has finally worked away from an annual deficit. This is due to the fact that all the Atlantic Provinces are beginning to carry their full financial responsibilities for the operation of this school that provides a service to all eastern Canada.

"Staff-finding is a big headache right now, which could be greatly eased with sufficient money to get the men we want with the particular qualifications we need. Unfortunately, the demand for trained faculty personnel is heavy right across the board and such men will become increasingly more difficult to obtain with the opening of a new dental school in Manitoba, a possible new school in British Columbia, and doubling of the Toronto University institutions".

Queried as to the quantity and quality of dental applicants these days Dr. MacLean pointed out that it would be easier for students to enter the dental school now, but priority is still to be granted students in the Atlantic region. Well over fifty per cent of the applicants have undergraduates degrees and the final pass record is more than satisfactory.

The pre-dental courses, now consisting of two years of undergraduate studies, appear to have no likelihood of being extended a year and here Dean MacLean emphasized his preference to see one year added to the actual dental course rather than increase prerequisite requirements.

"Second to none, better than some", was the way Dr. Maclean compared his faculty, which he termed adequate for first-rate teaching and a match with the rest of the nation. He also commended the library facilities, particularly the volume situation, but pointed out that any future expansion would require more library space.

As an accredited Dental School (both by the United States and Canadian authorities, respectively) Dalhousie dental graduates had no difficulty getting jobs with the dentist shortage still very evident. During the year, Canada added only 11 new

dentists per million population compared with 19 in the United States. To meet even the minimum recommended requirements it would appear that Canada must almost double its output of graduate dentists and even with this output, the smaller rural areas will continue to be neglected.

Although the young Dalhousie dental graduate can practice as soon as his Dalhousie exams are passed, he is still faced with the problem of finding some \$7,000 required as a minimum to open his office. And yet no one is prevented from opening up because of a lack of finances, even though the student, during his studying days, is called on to lay out anywhere from \$1,500 - 2,000 per college year.

"The high cost of student expenses" added Dean MacLean, "is our next major problem and the need for student loan funds, scholarships, and bursaries, is becoming even more acute in view of our planned expansion".

Along with the subsidies provided some Newfoundland students if they contract to attach themselves for several years, following graduation, to the Provincial Department of Health, other students are only able to undertake their dental studies through various military schemes and summer employment.

The prestige of any faculty is usually felt to be comparable to the amount of research and post graduate work being carried on. The Dalhousie Dental School is gradually getting its feet solidly planted in this respect. At present, dental research in anatomy (the developing embryo) and pharmacology (drug testing), is being carried on during the summer months with considerably more research work contemplated. Before too long Dean MacLean and his staff, to be increased substantially during the next 16 months, will be even more deeply engrossed in post graduate work, and in this field the general practitioner throughout the Atlantic region will be the main benefactor as a prospective series of short courses planned during the initial stage of the program becomes a reality.

The future for Dean MacLean, his staff and the 50 hard-working dental students housed in a splendid new dental school looks very rosy indeed.

Not quite so rosy is the situation facing Dean Stewart's Medical faculty with its expected deficit this year of \$36,000, or an average loss of approximately \$150 per student. "And", pointed out Dean Stewart, "our financial resources have been almost depleted during the past three years. Our present problem is how to cover the deficit!"

Dean MacLean is looking optimistically for financial assurance in the direction of the four Atlantic premiers who are now considering a system of a stable fund-distribution program based on a proposed grant of \$500 per student for those residing in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and a Nova Scotia grant of \$1,100 for each student whose residence is in this province. At present, grants are received from all the Atlantic governments contributed jointly to the Medical and Dental faculties and then re-distribut-

ed. Prior to 1938 Nova Scotia financed the operations of the Medical School completely on its own.

"Our main obstacle, like that of Dentistry, lies in the field of teachers and research workers. We don't know where we're going to get the money to pay the salaries required to obtain staff, when we consider the training they require and the competition from other Canadian and American universities. We have made a good deal of progress but our staff vacancies are still holding us back. We can be thankful for the good will and loyalty of the present staff which is allowing Dalhousie to maintain its standards—now rated as very good by the Liaison Survey Committee on Medical Education.

During the next year to 18 months a total of seven additional full-time professors will be required in the major courses in order to cope with the increasing joint med-dent studies that will be getting underway.

Contrary to the situation in Dentistry, Canada is turning out more Medical graduates (7-1 per year) than the United States (16-1). "Even at this rate", Dean Stewart emphasized, "we are going to need at least 65 Med graduates a year instead of the current 50 to cover the needs of our four Atlantic Provinces".

At present, there are some 50 Med students at Dalhousie from outside the Atlantic region—a temporary situation which arose several years ago due to a stiffening of Medical School entrance requirements. This is now down to five outside students per year making a total of about 25 "outsiders" but priority is still given to applicants in the Atlantic district followed by those applying from the West Indies—this is in keeping with a policy over the years to help areas much in need of medical personnel.

Dean Stewart had a pat on the back for the quality of grads being turned out today. "From 50 to 54 students graduate each year out of 58 and this makes a better percentage today than 20 years ago", he noted.

With the trend toward federal and provincial medical schemes becoming a reality, the head of Dalhousie's Medical School felt certain that the Doctors' income would not be hampered by any socialized health scheme. "The need today is as great as ever and our graduates go to work as soon as they complete their internship period unless they plan to undertake practice in another province, in which case they may run into a brief snag pending delay of about one month for Dominion exams results".

Although the cost of opening up an office for a general practitioner may run in the \$3,000 area compared with the dentists' \$7,000 opening costs, the latter is blessed with two years less academic study compared with the minimum eight years required to turn out a general practitioner.

Unlike their brethren, the Dentists, who are housed in more than adequate facilities, the Meds find themselves seriously in need of research quarters, additional Pathological facilities (which is their biggest current bottleneck) and may also require an addition to the Medical Science Building in the not too distant future.



by

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Dean Stewart was enthusiastic about research programs and post graduate work. Here, he pointed out, Dalhousie need take a back seat to no other university and noted that post graduate work for the general practitioner is being carried out in one of the most progressive and largest schemes in Canada. He further noted that good research programs were also underway but hampered by a definite need of research staffers. For this problem he had no immediate solution.

Going to Medical School is an expensive undertaking with tuition fees for Atlantic region students amounting to \$2,500 alone over the five years spent in Medical school. This compares with \$2,600 at McGill and \$2,000 at the University of Toronto, but each of the latter operate on a four-year system. Students who hail from beyond the regional frontiers are forced to dig into their coffers for an additional \$200 a year in order to find themselves placed on the Medical roster.

"Fortunately, no students have been required to withdraw because of finances", the Dean pointed out, "and we now have a \$10,000 Pfizer Drug Loan Fund and another existing loan fund of \$6,000. Students who are not able to get good-paying jobs, and this often happens, may borrow up to \$600 during their Medical studies.

"We are very much in need of increased scholarships and bursaries but the prospects aren't too bright".

From whichever direction the problems seem to stem, whether in the field of Medicine or Dentistry, the ever-needed "greenback" seemed to hold the eventual solution. With the funds available from the university plus proportionate and permanent grants from all Atlantic Provinces' treasuries, "a lot of manna from some heavenly source", and a little bit of luck, Dalhousie University's Medical and Dental Schools seemed assured of maintaining and retaining their enviable position amongst the leaders of the professional schools in Canada.