

President Murray Ross:**THIS YEAR AT YORK**

by Ross Howard

Dr. Murray G. Ross is president of York University, one of Canada's fastest growing, most modern universities. Recently I spent part of an afternoon talking with the president about the problems and progress of York. Dr. Ross offered to review the year so far, and comment on many of the major developments since September.

In Dr. Ross's opinion, York University has done well this year in almost every field and he, as president, is proud of the progress made. The foremost criteria in determining the success of a university are that of the quality of the academic staff, and the quality of the graduates. These criteria, according to the president, have been met. The teaching body is of very high calibre in general, as evidenced by their excellent qualifications, and the considerable amount of published material produced by professors from this university. Secondly, York graduates are carrying on their studies at many of the best post-graduate levels in North America and abroad, and carrying with them visible proof of the success of York as a successful university. Dr. Ross emphasized that present students seldom realize the true quality of their school, particularly a new one such as York, which is only in the process of building while they are junior students. A fuller realization often shows up later, when the original graduating classes have achieved success in careers beyond the university level, and the praise and expanding recognition of the university has spread. Future students will be more influenced and have a greater understanding of the success of their school, even as they enter a university education.

College Key to Decentralization

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pleted, providing an additional 500 beds on York Campus. In connection with Founders Residence, which is not yet filled to capacity, there appear to be enough rooms to fill most residence requests next year. A graduate students residence is now planned for completion in 1969, and McLaughlin College Residence is scheduled for the same year so that student accommodation after 1969 will likely be fully solved. In addition a public-private housing development planned with York in mind is to be developed west of the campus, near Jane and Finch. (See Excalibur, p. 1, Feb. 3) Atkinson College has already announced plans for an Atkinson Student Co-op to be included in this project.

Student Aid

Student financial aid, as outlined by Dr. Ross, is almost entirely a provincial government matter, and the individual universities can do very little to provide bursaries and loans. The Ontario University Affairs department has total and final control of financial aid, and all Ontario students are dealt with by this department. The government apparently feels that its system provides adequate aid to students, and no changes appear imminent. However, the York Board of Governors has created 10 entrance scholarships of \$1500.00 each, and another 300 scholarships of \$150.00, which will be available to future freshmen, to ensure meritorious students receive an education.

Drugs on Campus

The problem of drugs and their possession on campus, a recent issue, may be less serious than believed, in the opinion of the President. Dr. Ross thinks that more than likely, just a small group of experimenting students, with an exaggeration of their ac-

'completely buried in rules and manner of procedure', and finally had dissolved, when they met an internal stalemate on procedural matters. The President said he invited the committee to reconvene, and to arrive at a decision on four specific problems, including drugs on campus, and student housing; without making any general rules about future procedure, and the publicity of meetings. As Dr. Ross explained, the problem of drugs was necessarily held 'in camera' because certain students were discussing personal involvement in the matter, but this did not imply that all the meetings were to be similarly closed, as interpreted by some parties. Indeed, the following meeting, to discuss student housing, was held open to any student or faculty member. Dr. Ross emphasized that he wanted A.C.S.A. to get into operation and gain experience in dealing with university problems, before it made any general policies about its procedure.

Student Identity

Dr. Ross feels that York students have generally met their responsibilities well, with the exception of two areas. In the first case, the common rooms are still in a very messy state most of the time, and no one has really settled the problem of keeping them clean. Secondly, and of a more serious nature, is the problem of commuting students failing to 'identify' and become involved with their colleges. Dr. Ross cited the unsuccessful York Campus attempt at a winter carnival as an example of insufficient organization, and lack of participation by Founders and Vanier College students. He added that Glendon College acquired a sophisticated, successful air about student organization because Glendon is older, and has recognized, capable students who can organize such events. Glendon students can identify with their college because they have these responsible leaders who they know can work for them. Glendon has had more time for good leaders to emerge. Founders College, in the words of Dr. Ross, 'is faced with the big problem of becoming more than just a grade 14.' Many students who are to be the real leaders of student life have yet to come forward, and aid the process of 'association', at York Campus.

A Strong SRC

President Ross came out in favour of a strong Student Representative Council (S.R.C.) as beneficial for York in solving the problem of student government. He believes that a good S.R.C. system, such as the present one, would do much to support the colleges in their affairs. Furthermore, at present there is at least one standing committee on the Administration which wants a S.R.C. type government to offer a member as a representative of the whole student body, to sit on this committee.

New Building

York is adding new buildings and equipment largely as scheduled and the building plans are progressing on time, in most cases. Dr. Ross indicated that McLaughlin College is one year late, to be completed in 1969 instead of '68, but the new Science building, and the Humanities building, to be the largest on campus, are under construction as planned. He also admitted that Vanier Residence is nearing completion one year later than called for, but this situation arose



Murray G. Ross and Friend

from a decision to finish the Women's Residences at Glendon College instead of proceeding with Vanier. The finances available from the government were limited to permitting only one residence to be completed during that year, and unfortunately Vanier should have been completed first, but it was decided to finish the building plans at Glendon. There are now no major building plans left to be met in the near future at Glendon.

University Financing

Although 'no university ever really has "enough" money,' York seems to be adequately financed so far. The Board of Governors has done well in raising money, and the government has been generous in its grants to the university, up to this date. A new government plan is underway where every university in Ontario will receive an equal specified amount per individual student attending that university. A freshman is worth so much, towards the grant, a fourth year student is worth more, and post-graduates are worth yet a larger amount. Thus each school receives a grant related in size to the number of students at each level. Dr. Ross would like to see York have an increased general operating grant, to provide a little more free money to meet 'unspecified expenses'. At present Dr. Ross feels York suffers in operating grants, but he hopes that the new government grant system, private donations to the university will augment the grant, and create an increased operating resource.

To the President of York University, the completion of Glendon College, and its successful nature so far, has been one of his largest personal satisfactions of this year. Glendon, he thinks, has developed well in its role as a liberal arts college. He added that he is pleased by the progress of Atkinson College for night students.

Disappointment

However, this year has not been without some disappointments. He feels there has been a serious lack of effort and pressure on the government's part to create a Medical School at York. More medical schools are definitely needed, and York, as one of Canada's major large universities, will have to be the site of one such school.

The President also expressed disappointment in the lack of athletics and winning teams at York this year, and hopes the situation will improve in the future. Also, York has not yet opened a planned School of Fine Arts, featuring painting, dramatics, sculpturing, and television and film work. A completely equipped television studio will be on York Campus, and the Strong House art work is successfully under way, but no official approval of an F.A. Faculty has been given by the provincial government as yet.



Murray G. Ross Addresses Convocation

enation between the students and the administration, largely by virtue of the decentralized system of authority. Students, he says, are closely connected to their respective colleges, instead of to a huge, total administrative body. Thus favourable relations can be maintained at the college level, and no student should feel he is administered, along with every other student, by a distant, relatively unknown department. Dr. Ross feels that the unique emphasis on the individual colleges at York is the key to decentralization.

Residence

Residence space will not likely be a problem for York students in the future, says Dr. Ross. By September of 1967, Winters and Vanier Residences will be com-

pleted, providing an additional 500 beds on York Campus. In connection with Founders Residence, which is not yet filled to capacity, there appear to be enough rooms to fill most residence requests next year. A graduate students residence is now planned for completion in 1969, and McLaughlin College Residence is scheduled for the same year so that student accommodation after 1969 will likely be fully solved. In addition a public-private housing development planned with York in mind is to be developed west of the campus, near Jane and Finch. (See Excalibur, p. 1, Feb. 3) Atkinson College has already announced plans for an Atkinson Student Co-op to be included in this project.

Dr. Ross's answer to the question of closed meetings of the A.C.S.A. (Advisory Committee on Student Affairs) was somewhat surprising, in the light of recent debates and discussion concerning his appointment of this committee. The President said he 'personally doesn't care which way they hold their meeting'; it is up to the committee to decide. He explained that he originally proposed A.C.S.A. to deal with certain problems concerning the university as a whole, but the committee had become