

Tributes to Dr. A. E. Kerr

by
The Gazette

by
D. McInnes, QC

Rumours of Dr. Kerr's intended resignation have been circulating around the University for some time so the announcement last week did not come as a complete surprise. Nevertheless it is always something of a shock when an event of this importance finally takes place.

During the years Dr. Kerr has been president of Dalhousie the student body has increased from approximately 1,100 to more than 2,500, the annual expenditure of the University has risen from \$437,000, including scholarships, in 1945-46 to nearly \$4,500,000 this year, the endowment fund has increased threefold, research grants have jumped from almost nothing to more than \$600,000 per year, the value of buildings has increased fivefold and additional construction is likely to begin soon.

It is an academic question as to whether or not these changes would have taken place under any president. However, the influence Dr. Kerr has exerted over the University and its progress must be felt and appreciated by all Dalhousians.

A controversial figure, Dr. Kerr has always taken a stand for what he believed to be right and has not attempted to avoid unfavourable comment over his decisions. Some of his decisions have perhaps been wrong, but no one is perfect — as he himself would be the first to admit — and the good he has done for the University far outweighs the effects of any errors in judgement he might have made.

The time and effort required to preside over the administration of a university during

a period of expansion is considerable and Dr. Kerr has given unstintingly of himself in the service of this University. His actions have been governed by what he has considered to be best for Dalhousie and one has only to glance around the campus to appreciate this.

Money for a private (as opposed to a provincial) University like Dalhousie is hard to come by at the best of times. The Atlantic provinces are not exactly the most affluent in Canada, yet Dr. Kerr has been able to raise considerable support and funds from the provincial governments in this area. The Law, Medical and Dental Schools have become well known and widely respected. When the new Medical building is built the facilities of that faculty will be excellent. One has only to see the number of students from outside the Maritimes and even from outside Canada who apply for admission to the above graduate schools to realize their worth.

Dr. Kerr has also been pressing the federal government for some time to get more money for Dalhousie. He has sacrificed his health to raise this university to a position of prominence in Canada and he has succeeded. He leaves the university with a bright future ahead of it. The fund raising campaign should make possible far greater expansion in the next 10 years or so to meet the ever increasing demands on the university. We thank him for all he has done in the past and hope he will leave with many happy memories of his experiences here. His appointment as president emeritus is a fitting honour for a job well done.

Dr. Alexander Enoch Kerr is the sixth president of Dalhousie. His term of office of some seventeen years has been for the University the period of its greatest advance. The student body has increased from a comparatively small number to about 2500 students. A University does not win distinction in the minds of scholars and the public by numbers alone. It is known more for its character. The President of a University has more influence than any other person in developing and maintaining such character. Under Dr. Kerr's influence those unique qualities which have been inherent in Dalhousie since its beginning have been maintained and enhanced. The announcement by Dr. Kerr of his retirement as President has given occasion to many warm tributes to this man of distinction. The impact of his personality will long be felt in Dalhousie and his term of office will be regarded as formative years. Particularly, there has been the strengthening of the older disciplines for which Dalhousie has long been highly regarded; but as well there have been founded the Schools of Oceanography and Graduate Studies. These will be jewels in our crown which will brightly shine and add lustre to the fame of the college.

Dr. Kerr is possessed of sterling qualities of mind and learning and he enjoys the gift of oratory in full measure. His ability to draw upon reminiscences and anecdotes and his power to marshal the facts has given recognition to his qualities as a great speaker. Many who have suffered from adversity or trouble have had the benefit of his soothing understanding. It is fortunate that as President Emeritus that his influence on Dalhousie will continue. The Board of Governors have recognized his fine qualities in this appointment. It is believed that the faculty and the student body share the knowledge that Dalhousie has for long period of time enjoyed the direction and administration of a scholar and leader.

Fortunate too, has been the University and its constituency in the charm and hospitality displayed and given by Mrs. Kerr. Those students who have enjoyed meeting her throughout the years, and indeed they are unnumbered, will long remember the gracious way in which they were received by her and made one of her friends.

by
Al Robertson

The Faculty, Administration, and Students of Dalhousie University will lose at the end of the current year a man who has devoted seventeen of the most productive years of his life to a university that has expanded during this time from a small college to the seat of education in eastern Canada.

Since 1945, the year of President Kerr's inauguration, Dalhousie University has added many new buildings, and has undergone an enormous increase in student enrollment, new faculties, and prestige, due to the high standard maintained in our post graduate and professional schools.

When Dr. Kerr spoke to the student body in 1945, he stressed three main things.

Studies. "If you are industrious, the first reward of your faithfulness will be success in the fulfillment of the university's demands."

Extra-curricular activities. "Every student ought to take part in the activities of university life."

Attention to religion. "Hold on to your religious faith. I have great sympathy with young people who wrestle to know the truth and I admire them for their refusal to 'make their judgments blind'."

Throughout his stay at Dalhousie, Dr. Kerr has continued to emphasize these same three things with success, and upon adhering to this advice, any graduate leaving us has left as a well rounded man.

It has been said that Dr. Kerr is the only university president in Canada who has managed the finances of his university without incurring a deficit. This shows that his talents lie not only in the academic field, and points out his administrative capabilities.

Dr. Kerr has seen many students come and go, among them his own children, and he has shown his interest in student's and student affairs through his co-operation with the various Students' Councils with which he has come in contact.

The closing words of his first speech to the student body were . . . "And the door of the President's office will always be open to you."

On behalf of the students of Dalhousie University, I would like to extend our sincere thanks for what you have done for our university, and my personal thanks for your interest and co-operation



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