

# The Opening Of York Campus

NOTES FOR HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S REMARKS ON OPENING THE NEW CAMPUS OF YORK UNIVERSITY,

TORONTO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1965.

The opening of a new campus for York University is much more than just another milestone in the history of academic progress in Canada. It represents, I believe, both the implementation and the vindication of a new concept in the enrichment of the Canadian intellect. Perhaps more than at any time in its history, the world faces what has been aptly described as the shaking of our intellectual and spiritual foundations. Old patterns of thought have passed away and inevitably their passing has tended to weaken our grasp on the basic values which continue to govern human behaviour. To meet this new and dangerous challenge, equally new and daring innovations must be made. The new concepts of education reflected in York University have proven their value and have shown that even in an age of science, the humanities may still prevail. I congratulated the University on its accomplishment and I share with it pride in this new campus and in the expectations which are held for its future.

The tutorial system is of course, nothing new and has always been a hallmark of the British concept of a university. I think it is now exaggeration to say that York University, in introducing it, places itself in the vanguard among North American institutions. I know just how valuable the tutorial system is; in fact, I have a confession to make: I have grave doubts that I ever learnt very much of anything in the anonymity of the average classroom, but before you conclude that I know nothing, let me hasten to point out that anything I learned was acquired by personal contact with my professors. Certainly the higher the proportion of a subject taught by the tutorial method, the more interested I became in it. If ever the universities of this country begin to believe that education can be achieved by automation, it will mark the decline in the scholastic reputation Canada has.

In a measure, the founding of York University represents a realization of the dangers of academic elephantiasis in a large city. As a community grows, there are great pressures placed upon its universities to expand proportionately, but the larger a university becomes, the graver the danger that elephantiasis will set in. This disease is often characterized by a numbness in the affected regions of the body. The outer extremities of the university become so swollen that any intellectual circulation tends to be choked off at its source. The limbs of the university are no longer known to its heart and spirit, and students become no more than mere statistics. One solution to this problem is, of course, to found a new and separate university. For its own academic independence, indeed very often for its own survival as an individual personality, the new university should sever completely all umbilical vestiges from its late predecessor. Only then will it be free to pursue such pioneering innovations a York University has done with an unfettered hand.

It may interest you to hear a little story of what elephantiasis can lead to.

Not too long ago, in one of our large universities, the students of the Faculty of Law became convinced that the personal relationships between professor and student, which are the essence of spiritual development, were being replaced by anonymity. To prove their point, they enrolled a fictitious character in the Faculty of Law. Charity still existed at that University for when the students told the Bursar that their creation, being poor and a foreign student, was unable to obtain the Canadian currency to pay his fees, the Bursar generously agreed that the student, whose existence he never doubted, could carry on with his studies on credit.

I was told by one of the conspirators that they found a way to complete a paper for him at the examinations. A year passed, and it became only too painfully evident that the nonentity was not only on the way to obtaining a Bachelor of Laws degree, but he might do so with distinction.

Their point having been proven, the character's sponsors decided to test the gullibility of their fellow students and they ran their fictitious creation as a candidate for President of the Students' Council. By virtue of a massive publicity campaign, the nonentity was almost elected but by then the cat could no longer be held in the bag and word leaked out that a personage considered one of the most promising on campus was, in fact, a figment of his creators' imagination.

It is only with a close personal relationship between the student and his counsellors that a feeling of participation in the university community can be brought to an eager young man, and indeed, participation in the greater of all seekers of scholastic truth. I believe it has been York's experience that the resultant sense of belonging and self-confidence frees new students more quickly from the psychological difficulties of a new environment and permits the development of that self-assurance and maturity necessary to allow him to meet and understand students of different backgrounds, which is one of the most stimulating and rewarding aspects of a university education and one which develops interest tolerance and understanding.

The re-humanization of education evinced in York University deserves the intellectual support of all Canadians, just as the physical requirements of our academic institutions require our material support. If we in Canada are to achieve cultural and intellectual maturity as a Nation, we must match liberality in our attitudes of mind with liberality in our material concern.

The challenge before us is impressive. It remains for us all to seek every way possible to achieve the fulfillment of the destiny intended for our Country. It is with a sense both of pride and of keen anticipation that I declare the new campus of York University officially open.

## hear ye! hear ye!

--malak, ottawa



Halifax, during the war of 1812. Two British ships are in port and the Harbour is bustling with activity. The Town crier rings his bell and announces the arrival of field gun crews from the two ships, and that an obstacle race is to take place, with prizes awarded to winning teams by a City Official. The photo shows an Officer of the Royal Navy, a City Official and the Town Crier. (Centennial Commission Photo).

### A STATEMENT BY MURRAY G. ROSS PRESIDENT, YORK UNIVERSITY

York University was formally opened by the Hon. Leslie Frost on September 12, 1960. We have thus only a few weeks ago passed our seventh-birthday and just now are beginning our eighth year.

There was but a small group of us at the ceremony five years ago--counting guests, students and staff, perhaps 150 in all. On that occasion we spoke bravely about York, we planted the first white rose of York, we extolled York's new motto Tentanda Via, "the way must be tried", (which, incidentally stands in opposition to the traditional academic dictum that "nothing new must be tried for the first time"), and we predicted a great role for York in the future. There were I suppose the speeches one expects to give or to hear at the launching of any new enterprise--as if to suggest that this project might possibly merit that which all were required to say about it.

Yet, I very much doubt if anyone in that distinguished group meeting on September 12, 1960, would have dared to predict or to hope that five years later York would have a distinctive evening college--the Joseph E. Atkinson College--a magnificent residential college on the Glendon Campus, and the beginning, in embryo form it is true, of this great multi-faculty university on the York Campus; and while we faced the future with courage I doubt also if any of those present 7 years ago expected that we would to-day be serving 3,000 degree students, and a considerable number of non-degree students as well.

It is not often that a man has the opportunity to associate himself with an enterprise as important as a university which begins, grows, and flourishes in his lifetime. Those associated with York have had this privilege. None require, I am certain, any word of appreciation from me; their satisfaction comes--from the results they see around them. All of us associated with York would agree with the words of John Mansfield:

"There are few earthly things more splendid than a University--wherever a University stands, it stands and shines; wherever it exists, the free minds of men, urged on by full and fair enquiry, may still bring wisdom into human affairs... To be a member of one of these great societies must ever be a glad distinction."

York was, of course, the first of what is called "the instant universities" in Canada. These are the universities that, like instant puddings, take shape immediately. Unlike puddings, however, which come in ready-mix packages, the university must find its own ingredients for the mix: faculty, students, books, staff, property, buildings, and so on. Unlike puddings, one cannot be certain that the ingredients will mix--and one must expect a few failures--and perhaps a few explosions! The detonations emanating from York from time to time, have indicated that we have not always been successful in our mixing, but these explosions have, perhaps, cleared the air and taught us, and other "instant universities", that certain types of mixes are not possible or that some ingredients require time to set before they take shape.

A university is not an end in itself; it is a means of addressing humanity. What is important is whether York stands in the community as an intellectual and cultural force, whether there is here a devotion to intellectual pursuits, whether here there is dedication to full and fair inquiry, whether faculty and students--alike are seized by the necessity to find that wisdom from the past and the present that will assure the continued advancement of mankind.

I am confident that York has made a significant beginning. We have a fine faculty, gathered from all parts of the world; we have able students; we have ideas, goals, and purposes that we all share; and I am hopeful that the seeds of a great university are not only planted, but are receiving that nourishment that will assure York a prominent place in the academic world.