

DALHOUSIE TO-DAY

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THE editor of the DALHOUSIE REVIEW asks me for a statement about Dalhousie's present position, and the outlook for the future. Readers of the REVIEW will have read with great interest and profit Professor D. C. Harvey's articles in the last four numbers, on the history of Dalhousie up to 1887. There were good reasons for bringing that survey to a conclusion at that period. Professor Harvey has shown vividly that in its early periods Dalhousie had to struggle for existence, and indeed that at certain periods the very idea she represented seemed to have faded out. 1887 was not the date at which it was settled that her work would continue, and continue as a great instrument of higher education in Eastern Canada. That indeed was settled with the revival of 1863; for in 1863 there was an unusual stirring in the conscience of the community about the necessity for excellence in college education, which led to the suppressing of minor colleges and the cooperative support of a college worthy of the name. Nor was the effort blind. G. M. Grant and others, with a clear recollection, as McCulloch had had before them, of the Scottish universities, showed a profound insight into the needs of the situation; they went far afield to choose the new professors, and so certain and happy was their choice, and so vital and quickening was the teaching of the men chosen, that the Dalhousie tradition of sound scholarship and high standards was forever firmly established.

But this tradition had to disseminate itself not only among a handful of men and a small group of students: it had to win support; it had to strike root in the minds of the community. It had still to grow and fortify itself, and be contrasted with other efforts. The realms of science and scholarship too were being rapidly widened, and *pari passu*, the idea of a university had to widen. Particularly was this true in Canada where the word university, and indeed the word college, had been consistently used by the mass of people to mean an institution that would educate ministers of the church, first of all, teachers of secondary schools, and perhaps a few others, and an institution that would do even this in a perfunctory way. In 1868 the Medical Faculty, affiliated with Dalhousie College, had its inception. In 1879 George Munro, a native of Nova Scotia,

who had lived in the United States, and witnessed the growth of American institutions, came to Dalhousie's rescue with gifts of money unexampled at that time. Once again great professors in the Arts Faculty were appointed; men who, as their subsequent careers showed, would have been accounted great in any company. Furthermore, Munro showed that great professors must be given the best students who could be found anywhere in the community; for ten years he gave generous scholarships and bursaries on the basis of intellectual merit only, and thereby wove another strand into the Dalhousie tradition. Never has Dalhousie been tempted to use scholarships as mere bribes to swell attendance. In 1883, the Law Faculty had its birth. But it was not until 1887, after all this solid work and great growth in the Arts College, and after the addition of these two professional faculties, which were to become so famous, that Dalhousie moved from its original quarters to occupy premises which, as the then President said, would be adequate to all the needs and uses of a university so far as men at that time could see. It was in 1887 that the Earl of Dalhousie's plan for a college "in which the youth of this and other British Provinces may be educated in the various branches of literature, science, and the useful arts," seemed to have found fruition.

To be sure, there was no check in the development of Dalhousie University immediately after 1887. It began to outgrow its premises as fast as possible. In a year or two, the professors began to find themselves crowded; in a year or two, many of them began to see the need for new developments in many respects besides buildings. But it is not my task to continue Professor Harvey's story, and deal with the period subsequent to 1887. It is our present situation, and our future, immediate and more distant, with which I have been asked to deal.

Many will expect, when they read the word statement, a *financial* statement. Certainly some account of our finances cannot be omitted. I have often been asked how Dalhousie weathered the "great depression" with so little evidence of distress signals. Many Canadian universities were obliged to raise fees in all faculties and to cut salaries in all faculties. Some raised fees by 20% and some cut salaries by nearly 25%; some, indeed, did both of these things. We did not cut salaries at all, feeling that our salaries were already too low, though they are very considerably higher than those of any other university

in Eastern Canada. We have raised fees by 25% in the Law Faculty; by about 10% in Medicine and in Dentistry; added a small library fee for all students, and increased laboratory fees in Arts and Science. In every case, whether in maintaining a figure, or in increasing it, we were actuated not by whim, nor by a phrase such as "the necessities of the case", but by a strict mathematical consideration. Now, how have we been able to win through so well? In the first place, the endowments of Dalhousie had been very carefully and cannily invested. Our drop in income was not nearly so severe as that experienced by other institutions of which I have knowledge. (True, we suffered a drop in fees through diminished attendance, but that we faced; and so far from lowering standards by admitting undesirable and incompetent students, we adhered more strictly than we had for some time been doing to the last letter of the law on entrance requirements.) Again, we were ruthless in all *possible* economies, and, though we had never indulged in "frills or fads", we were able to save considerably. But, not least, we have received a considerable amount of new money—in the last seven years, in one way and another, over \$800,000. The great part of this was "ear-marked" for special purposes, and so could not be used to relieve finances in general. With it all, we have not been able to decrease our indebtedness; indeed we had one very sharp increase in it through building the new gymnasium, 1931-32, at a cost of \$153,000. It is still open to a benefactor to have that splendid building called perpetually after him by giving us that amount. It is a fire-proof and almost indestructible building.

We do not wish to speak with complacency about our financial position, or the financial measures we have taken. We consider that fees in all faculties have reached their maximum, even though we are well aware that our fees in Arts are \$40.00 lower than those of one Maritime university, and \$50.00 lower than those of another Maritime university. Why are we so confident about such matters? Well, one must see things in relation. Relatively to Ontario, our people in the eastern provinces are poor. In justice, therefore, and indeed as a matter of business, the fees of the Maritime universities should be lower than those of the provincial university in Ontario. As a matter of fact, the Dalhousie fees are a little higher. The Dalhousie fees, indeed, are about \$100.00 higher than those in the University of Edinburgh, on which Dalhousie was modelled. But, of course, no Canadian university has yet accumulated the en-

dowments of Edinburgh. Realising these things, and feeling that our fees, though so much lower than those of other Maritime universities, are still too high, we have left no stone unturned to build up scholarship endowments, and we have added about fifty new scholarships in the last seven years. Again, though our salaries are high relatively to those in Eastern Canada, they are not high in the Canadian scale. And all Canadian universities have been suffering in the past from the "pull" of the high salaries offered in the United States. In the large teaching staff we maintain, there are inevitable changes every year. It is not an easy matter to fill vacancies, even though we take the most diligent pains to fill them well, and though we have been helped in the last few years by certain endowments for this purpose. A main factor in our ability to maintain a teaching staff in Arts and Science unexampled in the history of these provinces was the affiliation of King's College and Dalhousie University in 1923. The two staffs are pooled, as libraries are pooled, with most beneficent results.

Libraries are another matter of the utmost consequence, which cannot be discussed apart from financial resources. The last few years have seen a remarkable growth in the Dalhousie libraries. Not only has the main library roughly doubled its effective contents: it has been completely catalogued, and made more available in every way. Statistics for the earlier period are not available, but it is a matter of common remark that the library is used five times as much as formerly. A modern fire-proof library building is in process of construction to accommodate the books and periodicals of the Medical and Dental Faculties. We are still gravely concerned over the fact that our large Law Library is not similarly housed.

There is an increasingly general recognition of the service which Dalhousie University renders to the people of Eastern Canada and Newfoundland through her three great professional schools. These have always stood in the highest rank as teaching schools. But they have always been the expensive part of the university to maintain, and, as the world of thought never stands still, and new methods of science come into use, the expense grows greater almost yearly. Recently, for example, the Medical Faculty had to undertake an annual addition to its budget of over \$12,000. As books and scientific periodicals have accumulated in Medicine and Dentistry, a new fire-proof library has had to be found for them. Not many years ago the Law Faculty felt that the time had come for four full-time

teachers, in addition to part-time teachers, for the completion of its programme. This was undertaken, though for a time it meant annual deficits running up towards \$10,000. As the world moves on, and science and knowledge grow, a university must also take steps forward, though the path ahead has no financial light shed upon it. It requires statesmanship to know how far or how fast one can move. Canadians have been noted for their progressiveness in applying science and knowledge to practical and political affairs. Is it to be supposed that they will fail to realise the importance of applying science to questions of health, especially health as a social question? In these matters the lead must be taken by the scientists and scholars themselves: they must then enlist the aid of a corporate body such as a university, that can weigh the matter in hand objectively; the university must then, at whatever pains to itself, interpret these needs to the community. Dalhousie University has long played this rôle. She was the first university in Canada to establish a Law School, instead of leaving that important science to a closed guild. But Dalhousie University has failed, up to date, to interpret the importance of these learned professions to the public in such a way as to win public support for them, and induce the community of Eastern Canada and Newfoundland, which she especially serves, and which is served in this manner by no other university, to share the university's staggering burden. The great accumulation of deficits, and consequently the great debt which Dalhousie at present carries, is almost wholly attributable to the deficits in the professional schools, and more particularly the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry. Public assistance to Dalhousie on these accounts is long overdue.

I have dealt thus fully with finance and with Dalhousie's chief financial problem—the professional schools—because, particularly during the past year, when I visited so many groups of Dalhousie graduates in Canada and the United States, I have been pointedly asked by what miracle has Dalhousie been able to keep its flag flying in days like these. I have been asked, further, how we have been able to offer salaries to induce such excellent professors to join our staff. My annual Reports on the university, collectively, yield an answer of a sort; but I have thought it advisable to assemble relevant matters together here.

Let us turn now to the Arts and Science Faculty, which my predecessors always insisted was the core and chief part of the university. I agree cordially with that opinion, but I think that all friends of Dalhousie who hold that opinion should con-

sider what it entails. I have been driven to the belief, during the last twenty years, that in many places the development of Arts Faculties has been haphazard; that, in many places, the chief causes to maintain and fight for have gone by default; and that the detrimental influences of many features in our whole social development on the Arts Faculty, and what it stands for, have not been combatted, nor even understood. We cling to many phrases still: we call the Arts Faculty the citadel of a liberal education; we say that the Arts Faculty teaches people to think, teaches people the art of life; helps us to treasure the wisdom of the past, to exercise the minds of youth on first rate things, and so on, and so on. Meantime, what has happened to the Arts Faculty in Canada and North America? To say nothing of the more vehement assaults on current practice in higher education by the Flexners and the Hutchins's, are we not given to think when the indefatigable Dr. W. S. Learned, after elaborate examination of scores of colleges over a ten-year period, gravely asks whether there is anything educative in what they do? For the most part, a subject is reduced to a text-book process, upon which is based an *ad hoc* examination. Twenty such processes, perhaps almost wholly unrelated to one another, constitute an Arts course, and an Arts degree. Furthermore, the group of students tackling any one of these processes almost inevitably, according to the system evolved, includes first, second, third and fourth year students—so little is it hoped that, after three years of a college course, a student will be any better intellectually than a freshman!

Now, I may be over sanguine in my belief that most Canadians who have to do with education are willing to admit, at least among themselves, that this system, or so-called system, has utterly failed. Certainly, Dalhousie teachers were loud and unanimous in saying that the system had failed in Dalhousie; and, seven years ago, they set out to overhaul it completely. But I wish I could be sanguine enough to believe that many in our midst realised how this sort of folly on the part of the colleges had crucified our schools. The mischief of it is that other colleges still continue with it; and our high schools will have to suffer for many a long day yet. If it is possible for prospective high school teachers to add up twenty "credits" in unrelated *ologies* and elementary courses in this, that, or the other thing, then it will be found that almost none of them have taken a sufficiently intensive course in mathematics, ancient languages, modern languages, physical sciences, biological sciences, to teach any

one of these subjects in a high school. That is precisely what has happened. Consequently high school courses have almost everywhere been watered down almost to nothing. I know of dozens of cases where a high school pupil, having sensible parents or advisers, has asked to be taught Greek and Latin, or German and French, or botany, or has sought encouragement to go on in mathematics, and found that none of his teachers could help him. In whole provinces, to-day, it can be stated that hardly any teachers, or not more than one or two teachers, in high schools, themselves know Greek literature, or the upper mysteries of mathematics. It is sometimes said that the excuse for this is that we live in an age of science; that we live in an age when modern languages are important for Canadians. Both statements are very true, but where are the high school teachers of German and French, or of science, to be found? The excuse is dishonest. For two decades at least, Canadian colleges have been denouncing the schools, or denouncing our materialistic society for having neglected the schools: the whole blame for the present state of our secondary schools should be placed on the colleges themselves. Indeed so remiss and neglectful and careless have the colleges been, so deeply have they failed to remember that one of their chief purposes is to train up a continuous supply of competent specialised high school teachers that, as often as not, the shrewdest comment on our schools is coming from business and professional men, and not from college authorities.

Canadian business men, who conduct trade with Switzerland, ask why so few in the ranks of college graduates can understand a letter in French or German. In some legal circles, queries are made about college men who cannot read a Latin phrase, or understand an English legal phrase that turns closely on a Latin word; the medical profession are asking why Greek has been altogether overlooked in the preliminary training of medical students. Engineering firms find it difficult to add young men to their staffs with a knowledge of mathematics adequate to bridge-building. Libraries find it almost impossible to find assistants who can catalogue books in foreign languages. In other words, even in relation to our material development, our school and college education has been allowed to break down. As for training thinkers—real thinkers—in the realm of philosophy, or economics, or politics, it is recognised, at least by many, that a scaffolding has been attempted without either bases or struts. Philosophy, economics, politics, history, democracy:

these and hundreds of other key words are Greek. We use them glibly without an attempt to understand the limitations and qualifications with which the Greeks used them. And, following habits as loose and lazy as this, we prate of preserving the heritage of the past, and say, hopefully or hypocritically, that we are training leaders. Instead of dealing with subjects, instead of cultivating subjects deeply, and instead of pursuing together those subjects which cannot be understood apart—for example, mathematics, physics and astronomy; geology, chemistry and botany; French, German and Italian literatures along with European History; Latin, jurisprudence and politics; Greek, Latin and modern literature—instead of these things, most colleges and schools substitute a text-book for the subject; treat only its elements, and leave all subjects unrelated. *Leicht gewonnen leicht zerronnen*. Almost anyone can be put through such a process: almost no one profits by it. The result is a capacious ignorance of science, and the basis of science; no love of literature; no enthusiasm for things of the mind.

What is the application of all this to the present condition of Dalhousie? Dalhousie University, in the Arts Faculty, has never been guilty of so wide an aberration from the first principles of education, commonsense, and human experience as the one here described. Dalhousie, for example, never threw over the requirement of "either Greek or Latin" in matriculation, and has always insisted on at least two years of Latin in its Arts course. It always insisted on a group of required subjects as a basis for any sort of Arts course. For science students, it always insisted on two language classes in course, and allowed Greek and Latin as these classes. (In view of the condition of the schools, Greek, in practice, was never taken for the science course, and Latin has been taken less and less.) Both in Arts and in Science, Dalhousie always made provision for students who could do more than the minimum, and encouraged students to do more than the minimum, both in subjects and in intensity of cultivation. But, in the last seven years, the Dalhousie Faculty has gone much further. It has strengthened the teaching staff in languages, both ancient and modern, and has done everything in its power to promote the teaching of languages in the high schools. It has insisted on the importance of mathematics, not only for the sake of mathematical discipline, but as fundamental to many of the sciences, and to other studies. For all students, it has insisted more strictly than ever on the pursuit of fundamental studies first, and the pursuit of later

studies in cohering groups. Six years ago, it utterly abolished the possibility of classes made up of students in all the various years. By offering large scholarships, and by doing steady missionary work in the community at large, it began some time ago to build up Advanced Courses in classics, in mathematics, in modern languages and history: a large part of the purpose of these courses being to train outstanding high school teachers. It already had Advanced Courses of this kind in the physical and biological sciences, but these courses had had little or no effect in the high schools, where science and scientific equipment are so little regarded. Needless to say, all these reforms, and others of a like kind, have resulted in a heightening of standards, and that in turn has resulted, not only in a certain culling-out of inferior material, but in an immense quickening of the intellectual life of our students. One hears no longer of students leaving first-year mathematics to be dealt with as a necessary evil in the fourth year, and then casting about for "four other soft subjects" to make up the requisite five "credits". It is the students, themselves, who have pressed for the Library being open longer hours on seven days of the week; it is the students, themselves, who have more and more justified expenditures on departmental libraries, on good, solid periodicals for their reading rooms, and on all that is best in contemporary literature for the Book Club. Scientific, literary, and political clubs among the students have developed apace. The number of supplementary examinations has been hugely cut. Every day the place grows more like a college and less like a high school.

Most of the real life and activity of a university goes on without striking public attention. This is in the nature of things, and is as it should be. Nor should the direct actions which a university takes to promote the welfare of a community be made obtrusive, or used for self-glorification or self-advertisement. But perhaps it is in order to speak briefly of our Institute of Public Affairs, which has attracted wide attention, and which has begun to do useful work for certain groups of students and for those who are interested in and have to do with governments—municipal, provincial and federal. It was established in 1936 with the aid of the Rockefeller Foundation. It involved no ambition to build up a separate grandiose department: rather it was a pooling of resources of certain teachers in the Arts and Science Faculty and certain teachers in the Medical and Law Faculties.

A university is tempted perhaps more frequently than other institutions to intervene in public causes and "good works" of various kinds, and in doing so to forget its own chief purpose. It must continually remind itself what its chief purpose is, and strive not to be led astray. On the other hand, there is a besetting danger that the university may wrap itself in abstract contemplation and remove itself from humanity altogether. In the history of universities, that has more than once happened. Particularly does this happen when those in the university specialise too narrowly, and make abstractions too thin to be worthy of serious study. Just as geology and botany must do fieldwork, must use the world round them for laboratories, so the social studies—history, politics, economics, law, public health and preventive medicine—must, for their own sakes, use the surrounding human life as their workshop; and they must do it with a certain comprehensiveness. It is well known that a certain proportion of the graduates of universities are going to find their way into the public service as health officers, municipal legal advisers, journalists, or civil servants. Surely, if students show a bent in these directions, it is possible for professors who have to do with the subjects named above to map out the field for these students, not in any *ad hoc* and careerist manner, but in a more philosophic way. Surely a student who had made a comprehensive survey of the matter would see the difficulties and complexities of a political action, and would learn, both historically and by comparison of contemporary methods in other countries, how society has successfully modified itself, outgrown lifeless traditions, and embarked on new ventures in the common interest. Surely, too, those who are engaged in public life, whether as politicians, civil servants, school commissioners, journalists, could refresh themselves if, while carrying on their various tasks, they paused to ascertain what an objective study of the social welter reveals. The life of this continent for some time past has indeed been a welter, and now strong currents of discontent, of fanatical theory, are observable. Education has always proceeded, must proceed, by retaining first principles, but also by adapting itself to the conditions of life. Education, indeed, is life, and life is education, if the words are used in their deep sense. But, as life has never fallen into the same mould for any two peoples and any two generations of man, the study of humanity is an endlessly changing process.

There are other ways in which we might develop, not only in the educating of our own students, but in direct service to the

community, if we had the indispensable funds. In some cases the amount needed is small, in other cases a considerable expenditure would be involved. To take but one example of the latter: a university inevitably finds itself possessed in the course of generations of collections, scientific or artistic, which can best be made use of when they are on display in a museum. But the university should not keep these collections to itself; and it happens that neither Halifax City nor the Province of Nova Scotia is provided with any real museum, though the Province has a considerable collection of historical and scientific material piled pell-mell in the Nova Scotia Technical College. In these cramped quarters, the collection can hardly grow, because it can hardly be seen and few people are interested in it. Dalhousie University has also some valuable collections, which are stored away in inaccessible places. Besides, gifts of artistic objects and objects of scientific and historical interest are not being offered to the university because we have no place to preserve or exhibit them. A good precedent for the proper line of procedure was established some years ago in connection with Nova Scotian public records. Dalhousie University gave the ground, and a Dalhousie Governor gave a building in which the archives of Nova Scotia might be safely preserved and also catalogued and exhibited to the public. Certain other expenditures were shared. Why should not a similar procedure be followed in the building and maintenance of a Provincial Museum? The building is needed for present purposes, both by the university and by the Province, and the very existence of such a building would ensure the addition of many valuable collections.

In the near future, we hope our buildings and premises will be thronged with visiting graduates. Many of them will see astounding changes, astounding growth of a physical kind. For many, the entire group of buildings on the Studley campus will be a novelty. And yet some, and certainly those who are engaged in educational work, will realise when they see these buildings, and remember the numbers who use them, that in many respects we are cramped and overcrowded. It will be seen at a glance that the Administrative Offices, housed in the main library building, are an obstacle to the work of the Library. It will be seen at a glance that the biological sciences need new and larger quarters, and that these quarters should be found on the Studley campus. Geology usually works downwards; but, in Dalhousie, one must climb to a high attic to study it, and that attic is not very satisfactory. And so

one might go on about teaching quarters. But, for many years, the friends of Dalhousie have agreed that, if and when we get on to a building programme, the first need to be taken care of is dormitories, common rooms and a dining hall for male students. We are, of course, by no means the only university in Canada without this provision, but it is a sad need nevertheless; and the need has been brought home to us the more since King's College brought its splendid example of residential life into our midst. Such needs as these are visible to the eye. We feel confident that they will be taken care of in time, and we hope without undue postponement. There are other needs which can best be appreciated by imaginative study of the foregoing paragraphs. To maintain our proud place among Canadian universities, we must make every endeavour to overtake the neglect of the needs of the Arts and Science Faculty, which has been forced upon us by the seemingly imperative needs of the professional schools. We urgently need a much larger endowment for this very important faculty: not so much to do new things as to do well the things to which we have set our hand.

In making the claims we make, and in setting forth our plans, we have no desire to be censorious of others. Yet it is not the mark of educated men and women to proclaim, now or at any time, that this is the best of all possible worlds. We know, of course, that the general state of education in Canada is attributable to no set of people, nor to the waywardness of any one generation. Yet it will hardly do merely to go on saying that this state of affairs is due to our rapid material development, and let it go at that. A circumstance affecting us in Eastern Canada is very peculiar to these provinces: for a population of one million people we have twelve independent universities. That is a fundamentally impossible situation. I alluded above to the relatively great wealth of Ontario. But our three provinces are trying to maintain eight times as many universities, on the basis of population, as does Ontario! This does not indicate an addiction to education on our part; nor should such an attempt be called heroic. We should rather, in the beginning, put ourselves in the place of the splendid youth of Eastern Canada, and ask what is the best way to secure for all of them the best schooling which they need, and, for the elect of them, how they can secure university education worthy of the name. Some years ago, in Greece, it sometimes happened that a larger number joined an archaeological expedition than was specified in the notice sent in advance to the keeper of an alleged inn. In

these cases, the latter would shrug his shoulders and say: "Well, I can add some water to the soup!"

Many times human affairs have prospered because wise men have forecast the future, and seeing that certain things, whether gains or losses, were inevitable at a future date, they as it were have based themselves on that date and worked backwards to speed the process. Our development in Dalhousie will be possible and indeed a joyous certainty if we consider the future, and, at the same time, remember the things that are eternally important.