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ADVANCE

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5 P.M.

THE UNIVERSITY TODAY

Address by

Oliver C. Carmichael, President

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Commencement - University of Michigan

Ann Arbor

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Commencement is a time when old grads return to renew ties with Alma Mater and a new generation of alumni is born. The minds of both old and new graduates are occupied with thoughts of the university and what it has meant to them. Parents of the graduates and their friends gathered here today are reflecting on the significance of this University in the life of the state and of the nation. On such an occasion therefore it is appropriate to consider the role of the university in modern society.

Universities are the most stable and permanent of human institutions. Through all the vicissitudes of history they abide, imbibing constantly from the fountain of youth as each new class enters. Oxford, the oldest of Anglo-Saxon institutions, has weathered the storms and stresses of more than eight hundred years without faltering in its service to each new generation. Harvard is now well into its fourth century, while four other American institutions have already celebrated their bi-centennials: William and Mary, Washington and Lee, Princeton and Yale.

This University is older than the state whose name it bears and has an enviable record of adaptation to the needs of youth throughout its long history. It must be a source of great gratification to the friends of the University of Michigan, its Regents and faculty and its new president to review that record. Since the inauguration of Henry Philip Tappan as president in 1852 down to the present it has been a leader, in many ways a pace-setter among state universities. Under the new administration I have no doubt that it will continue that tradition and render an ever expanding service to the youth of this and other lands. It is inspiring to contemplate its possibilities of usefulness to adults as well as to youth and its contribution through that to the stability and progress of society.

The meaning of the modern university cannot be fully understood, however, without some reference to its background and present trends.

Though institutions of higher learning have centuries of history behind them, universities in the modern sense are a late development. The founding of Johns Hopkins in 1876 really marks the beginning of the university as we know it today. Before that research as a function of higher education was not recognized in the budget. While a few institutions had departments of graduate instruction, no graduate schools had been organized. Science laboratories were scarcely twenty-five years old and they were used for teaching purposes primarily. Some professional schools had been affiliated loosely with universities for decades, but none were organic parts of their structure as they are today.

To realize how great the change in function of higher education has been and thus to set the university development in proper perspective, it is only necessary to note the growth of enrollments. In 1850 all the colleges in the land had less than 12,000 students, by 1900 238,000 and by 1950 2,430,000. During that century the country's population increased six-fold, but the college population two hundred-fold. To state it another way, whereas today approximately 20% of the 18 to 21 age group attends college, one hundred years ago only one-half of one percent had that privilege. Obviously undergraduate education had to expand before universities in the modern sense could develop. In 1950 the colleges and universities of the land granted 420,000 bachelors', 50,000 masters' and 5,000 Ph.D. degrees. Most of the medical, law, engineering, nursing and other professional degrees were likewise awarded by universities.

It is clear from these facts that all the professions, both old and new, call upon the universities to provide training for their practitioners. This means that the quality of instruction, the tone of campus life and the spirit of the university affect profoundly the competence, the professional ethics and outlook, and the general effectiveness of leaders in all walks of life. This was not true a century or even a half-century ago when the beginning and end of higher education was largely the college with its limited curriculum. At best it provided pre-professional training for all the learned professions except teaching, leaving the graduate to get professional training in proprietary schools which in most cases had no connection with colleges or universities.

The emphasis upon science, the scientific method, and research which characterized the modern university from the beginning has had a profound effect upon all who entered graduate and professional schools. Insofar as the spirit of inquiry has caught on, each individual on leaving the university becomes a center of initiative

seeking to extend the boundaries of knowledge and to find new and better ways of doing the job at hand. This accelerates change and in the main promotes progress in all the professions. Perhaps it is this fact which accounts for the great advances made by the professions in the past fifty years, medicine being the most notable example.

When the university accepted as a corporate responsibility the task of pushing back the frontiers of the known, it proclaimed its pioneering role in American society. It was modern research more than any other factor that brought the scholar down from his ivory tower into the market place. It gave him status in the world of men and by the same token raised the university to a position of prestige and power never before accorded it. In devising the laboratory method of solving problems the university blazed a trail to be followed later by business and industry. This new function of the university which established it as a highly important agency in solving problems and in thus performing the work of the world effected a great change in the public's conception of it. The campus today is no longer thought of as merely a seat of learning, a reservoir of knowledge and a training ground for leaders. It is now a beehive of activity concerned with the investigation of every conceivable problem which affects the life and fortune of the man in the street. The successes achieved by the scientists in their attack upon practical problems has inspired new confidence in and respect for research and has thereby attracted more students and greater support for higher education in general, and the graduate and research program in particular, than was dreamed of even a short while ago.

Business, industry, and government for some decades have called upon the universities for help in the solution of specific problems. It is only within the past ten years that industry has given support for research on basic and long range problems. The Nutrition Foundation, established in late 1941, was the first example of

such an effort. Since that time pharmaceutical houses and insurance companies have followed suit by setting up foundations on the same basis and with similar purposes. Each provides for a scientific director assisted by an advisory committee composed of specialists in the field. Applications from universities are invited and grants are made from funds contributed by member companies for fundamental research. The government has recognized the principle. At least in recent recommendations of the Research and Development Board a sum was earmarked for basic research in the defense budget submitted to Congress.

In line with this new demand on universities, the public is looking more and more to higher education for the solution of social, economic and political problems at local, state and national levels. Not only does the community expect the college or university professor to assist through research in finding the solution to its manifold problems, but also to give instruction to both youth and adults on subjects of interest and concern to the community, the state and the nation. The expansion of extra-mural courses provided by universities has been a marked characteristic of the past few decades.

An example of the response of higher education to the needs of society is provided in the development of area study programs in some fifteen universities since 1945. The government's experience in trying to find men equipped for service in various parts of the world during the war highlighted the lack of facilities for training men who were needed in the foreign service. This was still further emphasized by the widespread activities abroad which the government has had to undertake since the war. Moreover, the new role which the United States has been called on to play in the United Nations and other international organizations indicated a continuing need for men acquainted with other governments and peoples with whom we must deal.

With these facts in mind, early in 1946 a number of institutions began to consider the ways in which they could contribute to the solution of this fundamentally important problem. A survey of the facilities for area studies already existing were made by Professor Hall^{*} of this university and another was conducted by Professor Grayson Kirk of Columbia University to determine the state of provision for instruction in international relations. These studies were followed by active efforts on the part of foundations and other agencies to encourage and strengthen the most promising operations in this field. The result is that today programs in varying stages of development cover most of the important areas of the world: -- the Marshall Plan countries of Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, the Near East, Southeast Asia, India, South America, Japan and China. This University's program on Japan is one of the most highly developed and effective of the lot. Its field study station in Japan, a most important part of the plan, is not duplicated by any other institution. Numerous colleges and universities have courses on International Relations though none are really adequately supported and efforts are now under way to provide more adequate teaching materials for these courses.

All these efforts to strengthen international studies mark a new era in American higher education, but much more remains to be done. At the same time they serve as the best illustration of the new spirit of the universities' determination to help meet society's needs, whatever they may be.

The response of the public is a growing support of their efforts through tax funds, voluntary donations, foundations and bequests. The latest development is the plan of certain industries to make grants to colleges and universities for general purposes. The indications are that this source of income may be extremely important in the future. But support from such sources can be expected only so long as institutions hold the confidence of their benefactors.

* Robert B. Hall, professor of geography and director of the Center for Japanese Studies.

A new phase of faculty activity which appears to have great potentialities is group research. It was the organized efforts of a very large number of scientists and technologists that made possible atomic fission, the miracle of modern science and the most spectacular achievement of this scientific age. The same investigators working in isolation could never have achieved the result. This principle has been employed in other areas, particularly in medicine and public health with great profit to the health, wealth and welfare of the people.

Only a beginning has been made in the humanistic social studies. A few small research teams have been organized; others will doubtless follow. It appears that great advances in this relatively new form of activity will occur in the next half-century if we are wise enough to understand its importance and to provide the necessary support. Group research programs already in operation, widespread interest in advancing the science of human relations and the realistic attack on basic problems made by social scientists in several quarters, particularly since World War II, encourage the belief that a new era of progress in this area is just ahead.

The emphasis upon research in every field - the natural sciences, technology, the social sciences and the humanities - will be far greater in the next few decades than heretofore unless a general war should intervene. This will mean still greater power and influence for the universities and still more strategic opportunities for serving society. Research is after all the covered wagon of the Twentieth Century and the universities have been the pioneers. Rich rewards await their further efforts on an ever widening frontier, the conquest of which will be limited only by human intelligence, energy and effort.

PRESIDENT RUTHVEN, MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 1950,
AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: Thank you very much for welcoming me
here this afternoon to this your great family gathering. One of
the things that I like as an official guest in your country, as
I have been over the last two years, is that wherever I go as a
stranger you always put one word in front of it and say, "welcome
stranger." I appreciate it and I thank you very much.

When I was asking myself what I could say to the graduating
class this afternoon about the world we are living in; about its
tensions and its strains, its doubts and its difficulties, its un-
certainties, I found myself thinking of a conversation that I had
with my father just over two years ago before I came out here as
Ambassador. He was talking to me one evening and he said, "Do
you realize that at the age that you are going out to the United
States as Ambassador, 43 years, do you realize that I had lived
through 43 years of my life by 1914? Have you ever thought of the
contrast between my 43 years and yours? You have seen two world
wars and a great depression between 1905 and 1948. In my 43 years
I saw nothing like that. I believed that I was a citizen of a
country and belonged to a world in which peace, prosperity, and
progress were the order of every month of every year. Life seemed
like that and there was nothing in my first 43 years to disabuse
me of that confidence." Well, my father was contrasting the 19th
century with this 20th century of ours. It's true that the 19th
century for America and for Britain was a very great century.
When I think of your country in the 19th century, I think of the
conquest of a continent, the moving frontier, the wilderness