

TEXT OF SPEECH BY DR. ARTHUR T. PORTER, PRINCIPAL,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NAIROBI, AT A CONGREGATION FOR
THE AWARD OF CERTIFICATES AND CONFERMENT OF DEGREES
ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH OCTOBER, 1966.

Your Excellency Mr. Visitor Sir, Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies, Your Worship, Members of the House of Congregation,
Distinguished Guests:

In the name of the Council and members of University College,
Nairobi, University of East Africa, I welcome you all to this Congregation
for the award of certificates and the conferment of degrees by our Visitor,
His Excellency the President.

Perhaps the single important fact about the College since
we last met here in a House of Congregation is that it has grown faster
than we had ever anticipated. Student numbers have grown from an
estimated nine hundred and fifteen for the current session to an actual
one thousand one hundred and ninety one. Staff have also increased though,
quite rightly, not in equal proportions; but here the significant fact is
the increased number of East Africans, both on the teaching and research
staff as well as in the administration. In the last academic year we had
thirty three East Africans in the faculty. Today the number is forty two.

Three of our six faculty Deans are now East Africans, all of whom we are justly proud.

New departments and courses, essential for Kenya's development which were established last year, are already making their contribution. We were gratified to see the section in the Government's Development Plan on the role the College is expected to play in the planning activities of the Government, and the particular reference to our Institute for Development Studies and our projected Housing Research Unit. Last year we also established a Department of Education to aid in meeting Kenya's requirements in the field of graduate teacher education. It enrolled students for the postgraduate certificate in Education course, and this year we have been able, in addition to the postgraduate course, to offer Education as a subject in the undergraduate programme. This Department, conscious of its responsibilities and the tasks ahead, has already initiated discussions with Kenyatta College and the Kenya Science Teachers College, two other institutions responsible for advanced teacher training in the country.

We have attempted to rationalise our work in adult education by combining our Extra-Mural Department and the College of Social Studies at Kikuyu into an Institute of Adult Studies under one Director. It is hoped to embark next year on correspondence tuition and courses to further

meet the needs of post-school leavers for educational improvement. Plans are also well advanced for the establishment here at Nairobi of the second Medical School within the University, which will help Kenya and East Africa meet its health and medical requirements.

Last year we expressed the hope and the commitment that University College, Nairobi, will become in every sense an institution of higher learning in East Africa responsive to the needs of the territories it serves. The research projects and publications of our various departments reflect this basic commitment. Prof. Morgan's and Dr. Shaffer's recent book Population of Kenya and other publications of the Geography Department, the current research on East Coast Fever in our Faculty of Veterinary Science, the numerous projects in our Engineering Faculty and our other departments, all testify to our consuming desire to be an institution of relevance as well as of excellence.

Only last month we sponsored a Conference at Kericho on the related and topical problems of education, employment and rural development in Kenya. The report of this conference has now been forwarded to the Government, and we hope some consultative machinery will be established to look into the proposals raised in the report. This conference and its follow-up will, we feel sure, make a contribution to the better understanding and perhaps even the solution, of some of the serious social and economic

problems confronting our new nation. Indeed, we look forward to the part that this College will and can play in the whole process of rural transformation.

All these have been possible through generous financial and other assistance we have received from Governments, in particular the Kenya Government, and from donor agencies and the foundations. We take this opportunity to express to all our profound gratitude.

As an exercise in self-examination and to assist us in utilising our present physical facilities to maximum advantage, a space utilisation survey of the College was carried out in April. The report concluded that, on the basis of experience with educational institutions in the United States, utilisation of space for academic purposes at Nairobi was slightly above average.

Our utilisation of our residential accommodation has been, on any comparison, more than average. We have had to double up our students in rooms originally intended for single occupancy. As members of the House will recall, some students found this sacrifice a little difficult to accept and, for a few days towards the end of the first term last session, there were temporary interruptions of the work of College. But confidence was soon regained, for we know that Kenya and all East Africa have a rendezvous with destiny, and our young

men and women are as determined as ever to play their part in making this College and this country great.

I believe this incontestable fact, that we are trying to utilise to the fullest the resources at our disposal, was a factor in the decision of the Kenya Government and the United States to make available necessary funds, with the Kenya Government providing the guarantee and paying half the local costs of the United States loan, to increase the facilities in our Faculty of Engineering and to provide three additional Halls of Residence. Indeed, so conscious is our Government of our needs, that we are at present in consultation with them which we hope will result in a further Hall of Residence. With all these developments in the pipelines I, for my part, am beginning to feel less apprehensive as the tomatoes ripen!!

The University of East Africa, and our College in particular, have come a long way since the inauguration of the University here in Kenya in 1963. Indeed, so successful has been this venture at co-operative planning, that it has been decided to continue the partnership for a second triennium. As we enter this second triennium, our attention must be given to the present features of our higher education and their ramification for society. The first of these is the vast increase from year to year of the number of young people who expect a College education. There is, at the same time, a radical increase in knowledge itself - an increase of both

fact and concept, which shows itself in our expanding and increasingly complex curriculum, and which is equally evident in the strain it puts on everything from our library resources to qualified faculty to the basic issue of our intellectual community itself.

We are, I believe, playing our role as a College in teaching, in research and in service to our society. We are not yet at the point where we have lost control of the purpose and meaning of our institution or of what our responsibilities should be. But the good is not enough; the best is yet to be. We still have time to develop some coherent view of what higher education should do for Kenya and how it can best accomplish its ends. Within a few years the pressures upon calm insight will be nearly intolerable; the demand for student places, for additional faculty, for new buildings will leave us no time to look beyond our immediate obligations. I hope it is not too strong to say that, unless we define our purposes with complete clarity now, we shall find ourselves in 1970, at the end of the second triennium, dangerously confused.

This definition and clarity of purpose can only come from the two sides - the professional and the national - co-operating; and having reached understanding on the true purpose of the university, both sides should strive to realise their objectives. In this common task, two sets of problems above all others must be faced. First, there are

the problems of recognition - the identification of major ways in which higher education should meet the responsibilities of the country.

Second, there are the problems of support - where and how help needs to be provided if our chief educational purposes are to be met. Too often in the past those with the clearest ideas of educational needs had little access to the funds for bringing a wise policy to life, and those with the financial control had too little directly to do with the identifying and support of higher educational goals and purposes.

Education, in our view, is more than a means to some other end. It is, in any developing country, our first line of defence. It cannot therefore be left merely to chance. If universities and colleges are the keepers of value as well as the keepers of knowledge, we must make sure that our provision of adequate financial support is also a provision of adequate moral support.

If the College is to play its full role, there must therefore be national direction and national support. We are confident that we are on the eve of achieving these, for during my two years here as Principal I have seen developing, increasing co-operation and understanding between the College and the Government in the pursuit of our common objectives, which co-operation augurs well for the present and the future.

Your Excellency, Mr. Visitor Sir, we present to you today our

students who have completed their courses with us and whom the University and ourselves wish to honour. Of the 135 graduates who will be admitted to their degrees today, 60 are from Kenya, 34 from Uganda, 27 from Tanzania, 11 from Mauritius, 1 from Malawi and 2 from Ghana. We are confident that they will not fail us, that they will not fail you, that they will not fail Africa.

We are also more than grateful to you, Mr. Visitor Sir, that amidst an extremely busy programme yesterday and more so tomorrow, you are able to come here and confer our degrees this afternoon. We are sure this is because of your own interest in education and youth and your convictions about their importance for Kenya. We are also most grateful that Mama Ngina has been able to grace our ceremony with her distinguished presence.

Tomorrow, being Kenyatta Day, as we have done in the last two years, beer and soft drinks will be distributed at lunch to students, on the sole condition that a toast is drunk to the health and prosperity of our President and Visitor. Unfortunately, the finances of the College do not allow us to make similar issues to senior members, though we are confident they too will be toasting the Father of the country. Today and always we recall our President's immortal words during those crucial days. "It is not mercy that we want but justice." His emphasis today is still on justice, on freedom, on equality, and this your message Mr. Visitor Sir, is the message that we pass on to our students as we

call on them to work for the brighter tomorrow.

I want also to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to all who have worked here with us in the College throughout the past year, the senior members, the junior members, stewards, servants, messengers and all others. But above all I must pay a warm tribute to members of our College Council and in particular our Chairman for their wise counsel and guidance throughout the year.

In welcoming you all, I wish also to welcome in particular our new Minister of Education and to wish him every success.

The opening sentence of Rasdall's monumental history of Universities in the middle ages recalls the pride of a medieval author in the three great institutions of his age: sacerdotium, imperium et studium, the Church, the State and the School. But what is more significant in this quotation than the naming of these three institutions is the implication that they are linked together as a trinity of powers expressing a trinity of virtues, the spiritual, the temporal and the rational, faith, justice and wisdom. "The University" continued Rasdall, "was the child of the Church and its father was the State".

In this distinguished gathering today, we are reminded of this trinity, and are grateful.

Your Excellency Mr. Visitor Sir, Distinguished Guests, on behalf of the College and the University, I again welcome you all most warmly and thank you most sincerely for the honour you have done us by accepting our invitation to join us in this House of Congregation.

Your Excellency Mr. Visitor Sir, and members of the House, before calling on the Deans, I wish hereby solemnly to testify that the candidates to their respective Degrees and Diplomas, have all completely fulfilled their exercise and are worthy to be presented.