

TEXT OF SPEECH BY DR. ARTHUR T. PORTER, PRINCIPAL,  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NAIROBI, AT A CONGREGATION FOR  
THE CONFERMENT OF AN HONORARY DEGREE UPON ROBERT  
KWEKU ATTA GARDINER AND THE CONFERMENT OF OTHER  
DEGREES AND AWARDS OF CERTIFICATES BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE VISITOR, MZEE JOMO KENYATTA ON THURSDAY, 26TH  
SEPTEMBER, 1968

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Your Excellency, Mr. Visitor Sir, Your Excellency, Mr. Vice-  
President, Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Your Worship,  
Distinguished Guests:

We are met today for a purpose that is significant  
all over the world. We are met here to honour and to acknowledge  
those of our number who have completed their apprenticeship with  
us and on whom today, if it is your Excellency's pleasure, the  
seal of the University will be put.

But, before presenting them, Your Excellency, Mr.  
Visitor, Sir, I would like to join our distinguished Chairman  
of Council in expressing our profound pleasure that year after  
year, despite all the pressures on your time, you are able to  
join us in these our annual rites. We are deeply grateful for  
this evidence of your abiding interest and concern.

We are delighted that so many of you, our guests have  
responded to our invitation and are able to be with us this  
afternoon as we honour our new graduates, including our distinguished  
extraordinary graduate, Dr. Robert Gardiner.

In the year that has passed we at University College,  
Nairobi can with confidence and in all humility, say that we have  
made definite and striking progress towards our declared objective  
of becoming an institution with ever deeper and stronger links  
with the life and future of this nation and that we are ready and  
able to respond to its needs and aspiration.

The number of undergraduates has increased from 578 in 1964 to 1894 in the current year. The number of Kenyans in the academic and senior administrative staff have shown equally significant increase. From 19 in 1964 the number has increased to 90. In addition there were 5 non-Kenyan East African members of staff in 1964 and there are 14 in the present year. Today the total East Africans in the staff are 107 out of a total of 272.

The College, as we know, started twelve years ago as a middle level technical institute. We have since then moved a long way towards becoming a full-fledged university. We started with a technological base. We have developed the liberal arts. Last year we continued the process of improving our offerings in the social sciences and expanding and establishing those professional faculties which we know must be given priority for the all-round development of Kenya and East Africa. In the Social Sciences, we have now added a Department of Sociology to complement the older Department of Economics and the Departments of Education and Government which were inaugurated in 1965. In the area of professional faculties, we have established the Faculty of Medicine and, as authorised by you, Mr. Visitor, Sir, we have now appointed a Planning Committee for a Faculty of Agriculture to be launched within this triennium, a development which the University has accepted.

One of the disabilities a university in a developing country suffers is what might be called an "image hangover". This is the stereotype, sometimes even made by those who ought to know better, that we are an ivory tower indifferent to the problems of the society. It is unfortunate - indeed intolerable - that this pejorative stereotype continues to be held by some in complete contradiction of the facts. For the facts are that it has been our declared objective, repeatedly reaffirmed and resolutely pursued, to make this College an institution responsive, in every sense of the word, to the needs of Kenya and East Africa. One of

our tasks, therefore, for which we request the support of all here present, is to dispel this "image hangover" and create another image that is in accord with the reality.

I wish, Your Excellency, Mr. Visitor, Sir, to select only three examples of how in the past year we have been pursuing and moving towards our goal of positive responsiveness. The three areas to which I refer are our involvement and participation in Kenya's programme of rural transformation; secondly, our intention to offer courses not only for the education of undergraduates but also for the professional training of graduates holding or destined to assume important responsibilities in various spheres of national development; and, thirdly, the new courses we are inaugurating in our Institute of Adult Studies and designed to serve potential students drawn from the large community of citizens outside our walls.

In September 1966 we sponsored, with the support of the Kenya Government, an international conference at Kericho which discussed the inter-related problems of education, employment and rural development. Last year the proceedings of this Conference were published and they have been given and continue to be given wide distribution.

However, the Kericho meeting was not just another academic conference whose only legacy is a published volume of proceedings, important though this admittedly is. It was a Conference which was intended to produce, and which in fact has launched, a programme of research and action aimed at positive solutions to those crucial problems in nation-building.

During the past several months, members of staff of the Social Science Division of our Institute for Development Studies in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Planning & Development, have been actively involved in carrying out a

/systematic survey

systematic survey of small-scale farming areas throughout Kenya. On the basis of these studies, the Government expects to select a few pilot areas to launch intensive rural development action programmes, in which, as in the preliminary studies, we as a College expect to play our part.

Also, as an expression of our continuing commitment to serve the nation, we intend to develop as rapidly as possible an institutional capability to provide advanced postgraduate training to Kenyans already involved in, or preparing themselves for, professional careers in Government Ministries as well as the private sector. Evidence of our dedication to this goal are our current plans to inaugurate next academic year a new postgraduate Bachelor of Philosophy programme in Economics. The objective of this programme will be to provide advanced courses in economic planning and development, with particular emphasis upon the East African environment. This is only one example of our strong commitment to the goal of developing as rapidly as possible, Kenya's self-sufficiency in professional training and skills.

We do not, however, view the nation-building process as being confined narrowly to the material spheres of economic and social development, important though they obviously are. Just as we are concerned with developing and liberating the creativity of the whole man, so are we concerned with the development and progress of the whole nation. And central to our concept of a nation is that there must be a sense of cultural identity among its peoples. Cultural identity derives not only from an awareness of an existing and future national selfhood, but also a deep and abiding awareness of Kenya's national past. The research programme of the Cultural Division of our Institute for Development Studies, under the direction of Professor Ogot, is currently sponsoring several research projects specifically aimed at deepening our knowledge about Kenya's past. The discovery by members of the Cultural Division's staff of an important archaeological find in the Ngong Hills a few

weeks ago - a find which helps to illuminate the history of this area some 500 years back - is a recent example of our quest to rediscover Kenya's national history.

The establishment of a Correspondence Course Unit in our Institute of Adult Studies is our third example. During the past year, in its pilot project, this Unit has developed a series of radio/correspondence course in English, Kiswahili, History, Geography and the "new" Mathematics to prepare P.3 teachers for the Kenya Junior Secondary Examinations, leading to the P.2 teaching grade. Currently 700 of these P.3 teachers have enrolled. Next year, courses in Biology and Physical Science will be added, and an enrolment of more than 2,000 is expected. Plans are also being made to broaden the Unit's work, so that the resources of the University can be brought to adults whose interests and educational needs lie outside the areas circumscribed by conventional academic forms and requirements.

Throughout the past year, effort has also been made to accelerate the process of Africanisation of the staff. We have prepared a master staff development plan to guide us in our pursuit of the most rational, systematic and rapid recruitment possible of professionally qualified citizens. In collaboration with our sister colleges in the University, we have sought, and obtained, funds from a group of external donors so as to ensure that there will be no constraint to the immediate appointment to staff of any qualified citizen.

In all faculties, research projects of direct relevance to the development of the nation are being vigorously pursued. The housing research programme, the entomological programme, the research in East Coast Fever, are but a few examples of work now in progress.

All this would not have been possible but for the support we have received from several quarters. First and foremost we wish to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to the Kenya Government and in particular the Ministry of Education for their increasing and continued support. I also wish to express my warmest thanks to all my

colleagues in the College - academic and administrative, citizens and expatriates - who have contributed to the development. Without their support and co-operation we would not have been able to report these achievements, nor would we have the confidence we have in our future progress. Behind all this has been the governing Council, advising and guiding us as we charted our way. We recall on this occasion the unstinted service our Council Members render the College and in particular our Chairman to whom I owe so much personally, for the success and progress of our institution. I wish also to express our gratitude to our Vice-Chancellor for the direction and leadership he has given, and continues to give.

In the last year we have had very favourable responses to our appeal for finance for our building programme. The Carnegie Corporation has donated \$150,000 (£54,000) towards the cost of the construction of our Education building complex, which will be built on the side of this court opposite the Cultural Centre. The Kenya Government has also agreed to use £200,000 of its British loan towards this building. We have also received a promise of £100,000 from the Government of Denmark for a Faculty of Architecture Building and another £85,000 for a building to house our Correspondence Course Unit. In addition, the same Government of Denmark is meeting the costs of our long-term physical planning now under way. Other buildings in progress, or for which funds are assured, include a new Men's Hall of Residence, extensions to the Women's Hall, pre-clinical Medical Buildings; all these from funds provided by the Kenya Government; a Central Catering complex from funds provided by the British Government loan and from Kenya; a swimming pool of international Olympic size from funds donated by His Highness the Aga Khan; extensions to our physical plant in our Veterinary Faculty from funds provided by the Government of Norway, and an Animal Teaching Hospital from funds provided by the Federal Republic of Germany. Other projects under

negotiation include a Physics Building, an Agricultural Faculty Building and additional halls of residence.

We continue to receive support in terms of personnel and equipment and other forms of technical assistance from our many friends overseas. Last year we inaugurated the Gandhi Memorial Lectures Series with funds supplied by the Gandhi Memorial Society, whereby distinguished international scholars are invited annually to deliver lectures at the College. To all we express our profound appreciation.

Today, Your Excellency Mr. Visitor, Sir, we present to you 295 of our students for their graduation. We have exhorted them to consider their degrees and certificates merely as a token - valuable but temporary - until they can base their reputation upon personal accomplishment in service to their country.

We ceased work this afternoon to pay them this tribute. But the tasks that lie ahead admit no long interlude. With this glance of satisfaction and gratitude for the accomplishments of the past, we resolve to move steadily ahead to set about the immense unfinished business to which Your Excellency and the Nation continue to call us all.

Your Excellency, Mr. Visitor, Sir, the Deans will now bring forward to you in this House of Congregation the candidates to be admitted this day, if it is the will of the House, to their respective Degrees and Diplomas. I testify that they have all completed their exercises and are fit and worthy to be presented.

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