

# Dacca University Convocation

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The Vice-Chancellor's Speech,

His Excellency

The Chancellor's Speech

and

The Hon'ble

Sir K. Nazimuddin's Speech

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August 16th, 1934



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Speech by Mr. A. F. Rahman, Vice-Chancellor of the  
Dacca University, at the Annual Convocation held on  
Thursday, the 16th August 1934, at 10-30 a.m.

YOUR EXCELLENCY AND CHANCELLOR,

It is my proud privilege to welcome Your Excellency as Chancellor to preside over the Annual Convocation of the University and to offer our respectful congratulations on your assumption of the exalted office of the Governor of Bengal and for the high distinction that has recently been conferred on you. Equipped as Your Excellency is with an intimate knowledge of Eastern Bengal and gifted with imagination and sympathy, we have no doubt that during your period of office the problems of this University will continue to receive favourable consideration. We hope that during your brief stay, it will be possible for us to show Your Excellency something of the nature of the work that is being carried on in this University.

I would like to take this opportunity of expressing the University's profound thankfulness at the providential escape of His Excellency Sir John Anderson from the cowardly attempt that was made on his life at Lebong in May last. The very wide and emphatic condemnation of the outrage is an indication that public opinion realise the gravity of the situation and is a tribute of loyalty to His Excellency and the respectful esteem in which he is held in this Province.

On behalf of the University I also welcome the guests present here to-day. We are grateful to them for this interest in the affairs of the University.

It is customary on an occasion like this to mention some of the more important changes in the University staff, and the most important is the retirement of Mr. Langley from the Vice-Chancellorship of the University. Mr. Langley has been connected with the University since its establishment, and as Professor of Philosophy, Provost of Dacca Hall and

for eight years as Vice-Chancellor, he served the University with ability, distinction and a singleness of purpose. His insight, his grasp of the many intricate details of University administration, his steady adherence to the ideals on which this University has been founded have been invaluable assets during difficult years and the University to-day records its high appreciation of the very valuable services that he has rendered. In his well-earned rest we wish him every happiness and convey this assurance that we feel, a great work has been nobly done.

The other important changes are the retirement of Professor N. N. Ghosh, Dean of the Faculty of Law, and the appointment of Dr. Kedareswar Banerjee as a Reader in Physics to succeed Dr. Krishnan who has left this University to take up his work as Mohendralal Research Professor at Calcutta ; and also the appointment of Dr. Mahmud Husain as a Reader in History to succeed Mr. Sarkar who accepted an appointment in the Presidency College, Calcutta. Professor Ghosh served the University for eight years with ability and devotion and in many ways has contributed to the intellectual and social life of the University. The thanks of the University are due to him for loyal and efficient service.

I should like to mention that Dr. Krishnan has expressed a desire to found three prizes, each of the value of Rs. 50 to be awarded annually to the research students who produce the best original work in the Departments of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry respectively. The prizes are to be named after the late Mr. Ramanujam, Sir C. V. Raman and Sir P. C. Roy, and he has made a donation of Rs. 150 to enable the University to award the prizes in the present session. He has further expressed that in the event of his not returning to the service of the University, the University's contribution to his Provident Fund, approximately about Rs. 3,000, should be invested and the prizes awarded from the interest thereon.

I should like further to mention that Begam Shamsennesa Khanum Saheba, wife of Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmad, the Registrar, has given Rs. 500 for the award of two stipends to be called Roshanakhtar stipends to students of the Muslim Hall.

The thanks of the University are due to Dr. Krishnan and to Begam Shamsennesa Khanum Saheba for their generous gifts.

The academic and other activities of the University followed a normal course during the past session. The total number of students in the University at the end of March 1934 was 961; it is a little less than the highest number of previous years; but the total number of Honours students has been higher than that of any previous session and the number of Post-graduate and advanced students has been well maintained. This session the number of students in all the Faculties at the end of July 1934 is 842. There is a slight decline, but it only reflects the severe economic depression prevailing in the Province.

The University has maintained its high academic standard. Members of the staff have brought distinction. The University of London has awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to Mr. W. H. A. Shadani, Lecturer in Persian, and Mr. Sudhindra Nath Bhattacharyya, Lecturer in History, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Calcutta. This University has conferred Doctorate Degrees on two candidates on presentation of theses, and the Academic Council has, on the reports of Examiners, recommended the conferment of Doctor's degrees on two other candidates as soon as they publish their theses. The percentage of success of the students has been well maintained; the academic societies have shown commendable activity by frequent meetings and discussion of papers and the Halls under able and sympathetic guidance continued to make progress in the development of the corporate life of the students. The work of the University was carried on undisturbed by any political movement.

I would like to mention here two developments because of their significance in regard to the future policy of this University. The designation of Dr. Asutosh Sen has been changed from a "Research Fellow in Agriculture" to "Agricultural Research Chemist" and he has been given an appointment up to the age of retirement. The Executive Council in sanctioning the change felt that apart from the assistance which is being given by special grants from the Imperial Council for Agricultural Research, valuable investigations into agricultural problems could be made by the staff appointed from University resources. The University recognises that in order to be a public asset it must contribute to the well-being of the Province and at Dacca there are opportunities and facilities for placing skilled knowledge at the service of agriculture. We hope that the grants from the Imperial Council will be continued; already proposals have been submitted; and we also hope that in view of the importance to this Province of scientific investigations into agricultural problems we shall receive sympathetic consideration from Government of our proposals towards the establishment of a Faculty of Agriculture. In this connection I desire to mention that valuable investigations are being carried on in the Chemical Laboratory into problems such as analysis of lateritic soils; fixation of nitrogen in paddy soils and kindred subjects and the University has submitted to Government a carefully prepared scheme for a Department of Soil Sciences, at a reasonable capital grant and a modest recurring amount. We trust it will be possible for Government to accede to our request and help in the expansion of the University in a direction where it could render effective service.

The second development is the continuance of the present arrangements for the residence of women students for a further period of two years. In this there is no immediate change, but if the present arrangements are to continue an attempt must be made to provide more accommodation; the number of women students has increased from 23 in 1922-23

to 37 at the end of July 1934, and apart from a larger building, adequate and more satisfactory arrangements must be made for the guidance and supervision of these students and the University is convinced that this guidance and supervision can only be given satisfactorily by a woman who herself possesses the training and experience necessary to be a member of the University teaching staff. It has therefore been decided that whenever a suitable opportunity occurs, an attempt should be made to obtain the services of suitable women teachers. To this aspect of the question, in present conditions, a University cannot be indifferent and it would be failing in its duty if it did not indicate the trend of its thought.

The financial difficulties of the University are considerable, and though temporarily they have been overcome by drastic economy in expenditure and the voluntary sacrifice of a portion of their salaries by University employees, it must be confessed that the University do not foresee any reasonable possibility of expansion in the near future unless the Government of the Province comes to its rescue. There is no immediate prospect of any considerable increase in our income; nor is there any indication in the present condition of the Province that private bounty will help us in the realisation of our schemes. But it is equally true that an infant institution like this must be permitted to expand to maintain its strength and vitality. Unless therefore the University is to be seriously crippled, it would be necessary to restore to their former level certain grants, such as those of the Library and the Laboratories, and also restore the reductions in salaries. The University has worked out various schemes with great care and attention, others are in hand; and it is recognised that a modern University in order to win public esteem and confidence must stand in the forefront of movements that aim at the elevation of Society. A Department of Botany and Bacteriology co-operating with the well-equipped Department of Agriculture at Dacca, providing scientific and practical training and investigating

into agricultural problems is a legitimate need of this Province; the harnessing of the trained knowledge of the Department of Economics to the problems for the economic uplift of the rural population, the correct presentation of Bengal's History and a sympathetic appreciation of the contribution of the two great communities to her culture and history with a view to soften the bitterness that unfortunately exists, all these are spheres in which this University—situated in the heart of East Bengal—can play an important role; but the fruition of these schemes mean money. We recognise the financial difficulties of the Province but the University trusts that whenever funds are available Government will redeem its promise that legitimate schemes for expansion will receive their sympathetic consideration.

Students of this University, to those who have received Degrees and Prizes to-day I offer sincere congratulations on behalf of the University. Behind these distinctions there are qualities—the capacity for industry, fixity of purpose and the will to achieve, and admiration is due to those who have shown these qualities. I share with you your joy in being able to maintain the academic reputation of the University and pray that this promise of the future may be amply fulfilled. Many of you probably would be leaving this University soon for the battles of life and I hope the training that you have received here has equipped you with sufficient courage and equanimity to face every situation. We are passing through a period of transition; the impact of new ideas has produced a conflict of ideals; our standards are in the melting pot; instead of depending on love as a solvent of our troubles, we seem to be drifting towards hate. On you therefore, the real architects of a country, devolve the the responsibility of correcting standards, of insisting that there is no difference between private and public conduct, that in the familiar intimacy of our homes and surroundings, we must detest and shun what we publicly condemn. These may sound like platitudes, but apply them in your day to day life and life would be richer, happier, nobler.

A University has a spiritual life and I hope that it has touched your inner nature, that it will succeed in sustaining your affectionate loyalty and that its intellectual flame will kindle your emotions. Perhaps you have noticed that the present system of education is largely out of touch with the lives, needs and thoughts of the people; that there is a gulf between the intelligensia and the masses. You have to bridge that gulf. All your education would be purposeless if you do not carry back with you to your homes the atmosphere of your University—the spirit of comradeship rather than communal isolation, clean living, clean thinking and the steady adherence to the ideals of social service. On no account must you build your life on a foundation of despair. I can foresee in the coming years the evolution of a society more homogenous, reinforced by many new elements; sectional claims yielding to the larger interest of the people as a whole, everyday life quickened and enriched by new interests and occupations. From you therefore will be required a higher form of common social life, and you must bend your young energies to evolve a new conception of the duties which demand public spirit and personal sacrifice. The ideals of a University is in your keeping—the expansion of these ideals ought to be your mission. This University has furnished recruits to every branch of public activity, we watch their careers with pride; its products have won a place in the republic of intellect but there is ample room for more; for leaders to direct the thought and action of this country, for men who are resourceful, purposeful and full of that quality which is called character. I wish you every success in your new duties and responsibilities and may Providence guide you.



***His Excellency Sir John Woodhead's  
Address at the Dacca University Convo-  
cation on 16th August 1934.***

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

This is the first time I have had the privilege of meeting you as the Chancellor of your University and I am grateful for the warmth of the welcome you have given me. As you are aware, I spent the earlier years—to be precise twelve years—of my service in Eastern Bengal and I think I may truly say that largely due to my association with the people of Eastern Bengal I share with them a feeling of pride in this University of theirs, a University the foundations of which were laid during the lifetime of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. It has been therefore a great pleasure to me to be able to revisit Dacca and its University during the short time I act as Governor. I can assure you that my interest in this University needs no artificial stimulus and I am particularly glad that I shall have this opportunity of acquainting myself on the spot with the nature of the work the University is carrying on and of making myself still more conversant with your anxieties and difficulties and your plans for development in the future. I am, of course, not entirely ignorant of your problems, but on this occasion I shall have the advantage—an advantage which I am sure you will readily appreciate—of seeing them from a somewhat different angle,—as Chancellor and not as Finance Member.

You have referred to the dastardly attempt on the life of Sir John Anderson in Darjeeling in May last and have taken the opportunity to give expression to the University's thankfulness at his providential—almost miraculous—escape. I am glad your University associates itself with the universal condemnation of that outrage and I fully agree with your observation that the wide and emphatic condemnation which it has evoked is a great tribute to the esteem in which Sir John Anderson is held in this Province and a sure indication that public opinion realises the gravity of the terrorist menace.

As you have welcomed me, Sir, so do I welcome you to your new position as Vice-Chancellor. You are no stranger to Dacca or its University, which you served in former years as Reader and Provost. You are no stranger to the public life of Bengal, for in its Legislative Council your statesmanlike speeches have won the admiration of all. And you are no stranger to the educational problems of India, for you served with distinction on the Commission which set out to reform the University of the Punjab and produced a report which should be for years a landmark in educational theory. I feel sure, Sir, that the University of Dacca will prosper in your hands.

I am glad you have referred, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, in such appreciative terms to the work of Mr. Langley. It is not always that the philosopher is at the same time the man of affairs, but Mr. Langley's wisdom and practical good sense carried the University through eight difficult years. I feel sure that I am echoing the wish of all of you

when I say that I hope that in his retirement he will know that he has worked with success and that others know it, too. The University has suffered too by the retirement of Professor Ghose, the Dean of the Faculty of Law and I desire to associate myself very warmly with the Vice-Chancellor's expression of thanks to him for the valuable contribution he has made to the intellectual and social life of the University. We have also to regret the departure of Dr. Krishnan, a physicist of note, and Mr. Sarkar, a Reader in History, the former to take up work as the Mahendralal Research Professor at Calcutta and the latter as a member of the staff of the Presidency College. In these cases our regret at losing their services is in some measure mollified by the knowledge that they have left to take up duties in sister institutions and that Dacca's loss is Calcutta's gain.

You have also, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, referred to the benefactions of Dr. Krishnan and Begum Shamsennesa Khanum Saheba ; and I desire to join with you in thanking them for their generosity. I wish that there were more such gifts. The University's resources are not large and its prosperity is, to too great an extent, dependent upon the number of its students. As was observed by your Chancellor, Sir John Anderson, two years ago, such gifts are in the highest line both of Indian and University tradition and though at any time welcome, they are especially beneficial at a time like the present. I fully recognise, however, that the present time is not entirely opportune for an appeal for private benefactions, but I trust I shall not be unduly optimistic, if I express the hope, that when we have

climbed, as climb we must, out of the trough of the present trade depression, the people of Eastern Bengal will by generous gifts place their young University in the possession of endowments such as have enriched the older foundations.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, you have in your interesting address reviewed the University's work and progress during the year that has just closed. I am glad to hear of the successes of members of your staff and of your students in academic matters, and that the work of the University has been carried on undisturbed by any political movement. As regards numbers, we have unfortunately not yet reached the turn of the tide—lack of money has closed the doors of the University to many—but in this connection I welcome the encouraging advance made by women students. The raising of the level of female education is a matter of interest to the whole province. There is plenty of work to be done in India for which women of education and culture are peculiarly well fitted and in Bengal, Medicine and Education, to name only two professions, will be able to absorb for many years yet the women graduates of our Universities.

The University has always been keenly alive to the importance in this province of agricultural research and I know you look forward to the day when you will have established a large Faculty of Agriculture. I am entirely in accord with the great importance you attach to the need for scientific investigation into agricultural problems in this province, and in words which have been used on more than one previous occasion I know

of no direction in which the University could better extend its activities when money is available. But as regards the provision of funds from provincial revenues the position is practically the same as it was a year ago. It is true that the financial position of the province has been strengthened by the receipt of a share of the proceeds of the export duty on jute, but unless the other chief heads of revenue show a great improvement—and the present price of jute offers little hope of such a happy result—the province will not possess a surplus and Government will not be in a position to consider new schemes involving expenditure. But, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, if I have understood your address correctly, I gather that you recognize fully the financial difficulties of the province and that at this stage the point which you wish to make is that when a surplus has been secured, the University's scheme for expansion should not fail to receive the sympathetic consideration of Government. I have no difficulty in making that promise but I particularly desire to avoid any misunderstanding and I must explain that when a surplus is available Government will have to consider and weigh the claims of the various departments to a share in that surplus. It is a sad necessity that gives money matters such a prominent place in the addresses at the annual Convocation, but you may rest assured that, as the Chancellor said last year, Government recognize fully their obligations towards the University and that your Chancellor will always endeavour to ensure that any legitimate claim that you may put forward at any time is not subordinated to

others, unless the latter are really entitled to priority. But, Sir, I am glad to see that in spite of financial difficulties you have been able to make a permanent appointment of a Research Chemist in Agriculture and I trust that with the aid of the special grants received from the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research he will be able to continue the valuable work already begun. Further, I understand that you have submitted to Government a small scheme for a Department of Soil Sciences and that scheme is now under examination by Government in the Department of Education.

Before concluding, Mr Vice-Chancellor, I should like with your permission, to address a few words of encouragement and advice to the students present here to-day.

#### STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY,

The University to which you belong is a residential one, providing unequalled opportunities for close and continual contact between members of different communities—in the class rooms and in the various academic societies to which you belong—no less than in the playing fields. Your connection with the University must already have brought home to you the importance of a spirit of comradeship and mutual toleration, and it is my earnest hope that when you leave the University you will pursue this ideal and do all in your power to bring about that unity of thought and purpose based on mutual respect and understanding which India so greatly needs. Here in Dacca, you have unrivalled opportunities of appreciating and

learning to respect each other's point of view, and if you use those opportunities, as I hope you will, the spirit of understanding that you will acquire cannot but be of the greatest service to the province. In the near future opportunities of national and social service are likely to be larger than those that were available to your predecessors, and your country will look to its Universities to supply recruits in every sphere of its activities. I trust that you will worthily maintain the standards set by your predecessors, and I look to you to preserve and even enhance the high reputation which your University has already earned.

Under present conditions many of you will be troubled by the difficulty of obtaining employment and I beg of you not to be disheartened by temporary checks and disappointments, and above all not to allow your sense of disappointment to upset your sense of proportion and make you a prey to those false doctrines which have already done such harm to this province. In the qualities which you have acquired at this University—qualities of perseverance, toleration and self-control—lies your strength. Have courage and faith in the future, bear in mind the traditions and high ideals of your University and realise your responsibilities, and I am confident that success will be yours.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I feel it would be wrong of me to stand any longer between you and the Convocation Address. To you the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin needs no introduction; he is in every way a Dacca man. I have now great pleasure in asking Sir Nazimuddin, my esteemed colleague and friend, to address the Convocation.



*Address by the Hon'ble Sir K. Nazim-uddin, K.C.I.E., at the Annual Convocation held on Thursday, the 16th August 1934, at 10-30 a.m.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC COUNCILS OF THE UNIVERSITY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—

In asking me to address this convocation, the authorities of the University of Dacca have done me an honour for which I thank them most sincerely. I had great hesitation in accepting the kind invitation of the University because I felt that having recently relinquished the portfolio of education, I should not speak about educational problems which are still receiving the most anxious consideration of Government, and engaging the attention of public men and educational authorities in the province. But I accepted the invitation, eventually, because I decided to place before you the layman's ideas about the more general aspects and larger issues of education which are beyond the purview of Government but are in the control of universities themselves. There was another consideration which made me accept, gratefully, the invitation of the University. I have taken the keenest interest in growth and development of this University about which my uncle, the late Nawab Khwaja Sir Salimullah of blessed memory dreamed and worked. I was associated closely with the University from its inception as a Member of its Court and the Executive Council; and as Minister for Education I was brought in intimate touch with its problems and difficulties. I have many valued friends in the University. This invitation strengthens all old associations, and I value it, not so much as a mark of esteem to a public servant but as a welcome back to an old friend, colleague and fellow-citizen.

I am very happy to find Mr. A. F. Rahman back in Dacca, and I congratulate the University on its good luck in having

him as its Vice-Chancellor. He is an old and tried friend of the University and I am confident that he will not only uphold but raise the traditions of his high office. I wish him and you all success.

The increasing unemployment and the consequent growing discontent among our graduates has focussed the attention of all men upon universities and the education imparted by them. Many among us blame them for making education very cheap and, thereby, flooding the market with graduates who are unable to find work. It is pointed out that university life in England is very much of a luxury, limited to the few to whom chance has given wealth or outstanding ability; for the many, school and life are the only teachers. But the position is quite different in India. Ours is a poor country and the number of students who can pay, adequately, for university education is very small. On the other hand, the need for widespread education is greater in India than it is in England, for we are suffering from many evils which the spread of education, alone, can check and remedy. Our salvation lies in carrying the torch of learning to every nook and corner of our country in order to dispel the gloom and darkness of ignorance and superstition, jealousy and hatred. But the education imparted to our young men and women must be of the right type. "The chief mistake of modern philanthropy" said Ruskin in 1869, "is giving cheap imperfect education". This may sound cynical at first hearing, but mark the word "imperfect". We are proud of the numbers who flock to our universities. Are we satisfied that their education there is good? It is in our universities to-day that our rulers of to-morrow are being taught. Are we sure that they are getting from their universities all that they should? I am afraid that these questions cannot be answered wholly in the affirmative. Our university education is unsatisfactory and insufficient because a university diploma is regarded as a passport to service; we look upon universities as agencies for finding employment for our

young men. This unfortunate fact has not only narrowed the scope of university education and lowered the standards of examinations, but it has brought disappointment to a large number of young men and ruined their lives.

The complaint is heard in all quarters that our graduates do not know how to read for themselves ; that they are mere degree-hunters whose minds are set solely upon their syllabuses of studies outside which their text-books minds find it difficult to understand anything or grasp any facts. This indictment is too general as it does not take account of our brilliant students. But the utility and soundness of any system of education is to be judged, not by brilliant exceptions, but by the average product of the system. It is, therefore, true to say that our average graduates are not educated in the true and wide sense of the term. They do not develop their power of thinking, but remain in constant awe and dread of the printed page ; they have not the courage to examine facts and opinions, independently and to explore new regions of thought, without being led by so-called critics and experts. They do not, in most cases, read books but only the opinion and criticism of others about them. And they do not assimilate what they read. They always quote critics and authorities, but seldom rely upon their own, independent, judgment which remains dormant and undeveloped. This leads to unintelligent cram. This serious state of affairs needs the attention of all educationists whose duty it is to find some way to stop this tragic waste of the time and energies of our young men.

It is now imperative that we should consider the position carefully and understand the real object and purpose of university education.

A university occupies, it seems to me, a peculiar place in the social economy. The function of the university is (as the motto of Dacca University tells us) to explore and disseminate truth. As the explorer of truth, it has something eternal about it, for truth is eternal something that sets it

apart from the change and flux of our transient and temporal affairs. But as the disseminator of knowledge, a university has to adopt itself to its environments and the needs of the times. A university life is not given to us to amass facts—encyclopædias can do that; the collection of specific information about scientific and literary subject is futile unless these facts are correlated to life. True university education develops the physical, mental, moral and spiritual faculties latent in young men and women, and fosters the cardinal virtues of sincerity, inner poise and harmony so as to make each individual, and Milton tells us “a poem” by making his heart the abode of peace, harmony and the spirit of service. Education frees man from the shackles of bigotry and narrow-mindedness. Education, in the brilliant phrase of one of the greatest educationists of modern times, Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, “manumits and edifies”.

It is hardly necessary for me to emphasize the fact that passing a university examination marks, not the end, but the beginning of education. The stock of facts acquired by graduates in the university will not carry them far. The university degree only implies that the mind of its holder has been through proper discipline and has become sufficiently developed and elastic to grapple all situations, expected or unexpected, to master all facts and to work efficiently in all circumstances. A man who has learned to think clearly and to reason cogently, to sift and weigh what is put before him, to co-relate his little bits of knowledge with one another and with life as a whole—such a man, alone, can be called an educated man, such a man is on the way to being a philosopher and a happy man. This is the true ideal of education; it should shine as a beacon and guide all students in their passage through universities.

There is another aspect of university education which needs to be considered, carefully. The modern theory of education lays great emphasis upon specialisation in all departments of studies in universities. The highly complex

methods of research in arts and science demand great specialisation and concentration from university students who aspire to make noteworthy contribution to the advancement of knowledge in their particular subjects. The spirit of research must be inculcated and fostered in our university students in order to encourage them to explore new fields of knowledge and add to our stock of facts. The organisation and development of research is one of the paramount functions of every university and should be kept constantly in view, if the university is to justify its existence. But there is one danger which we must guard against. Specialisation and research can be undertaken only by those who have acquired a broad, liberal education and who have a fairly general acquaintance, with the whole field of knowledge relating to their subjects of study. Unless this is done, specialisation will come to mean knowledge more and more about less and less, and research work of this kind will tantamount to erecting altars to ignorance. Boards of selections for Provincial and Imperial Services complain that the general knowledge of most of our graduates is astonishingly poor. Even graduates with first class degrees know very little outside their narrow curricula of studies. They are utterly lost and bewildered as soon as they step outside their circumscribed and narrow domain. This is lamentable, indeed. Men with such narrow education and scanty ideas cannot make good citizens. We in Bengal are on the threshold of great political changes ; the administration of the country will be placed in our hands. The students of to-day will be the administrators and legislators of tomorrow. It behoves us to see that our young men are educated along right lines, so that they may be fit, mentally and morally, to assume command and to take the conduct of public affairs in their hands, in the near future. The eyes of the whole world will be upon us ; we must give a good account of ourselves and prove to all that we can manage our own affairs, smoothly and efficiently. This can be possible only if our young men are trained along right lines and

their minds are imbued with the spirit of service. For, an ignorant democracy must fail. We expect the universities to produce men who will possess not only high academic qualifications but also resourcefulness, tact, spirit of service and above all, strong character.

There is one aspect of university life to which enough attention is not being given in our universities, I mean athletic and sports. The value of athletics cannot be over-emphasized. Athletics not only keep the body fit but through the training of the body, develop character. A man who plays the game on the playground will also play the game in every sphere of human activity. To call a man "a thorough sportsman" is to give him the highest praise. Young men in our universities must take athletics and games more seriously, if they aspire to become valuable citizens after leaving universities. The physical development of a student must accompany his mental development otherwise his education will be lop-sided, unbalanced and incomplete.

I have refrained from discussing specific problems of education either of the province or of this University. But there is one topic to which I must make passing reference.

One of the outstanding features of this University since its inception has been the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and the time had perhaps come to review the progress it has made and the reactions it has so far had on the Muslim community in Bengal for which it specially caters. I am glad to find that the progress has been satisfactory so far, but it is my opinion that the problem of its future being closely linked up with the system of Islamic Intermediate Colleges, High Madrassas and Junior Madrassas spread over the whole province, the maintenance of the administrative and academic efficiency of those institutions is an imperative necessity if the scheme as a whole is to succeed in bringing about that cultural renaissance in the life of the community which appearing periodically through the centuries, has not

only reshaped the outlook of Muslims at critical junctures in their history but has also exerted a beneficent influence upon others as well.

Keeping this high ideal as one of the motive forces behind the inauguration of this system of Islamic education it has often pained me to notice that the same spirit of competition and local rivalries which have brought into existence high schools in close proximity to one another with deleterious effect, have also been responsible for unnecessarily multiplying the number of madrassas in some of the rural areas of the province. The result is that in the case of many of those privately managed institutions which I might mention as the nurseries of Muslims' education the staff is anything but adequate both from the point of view of quality and quantity and trained teachers are seldom employed. The ideal I have just mentioned is perhaps forgotten and the institutions are run from the point of view of limited local interests. In consequence they produce year after year young scholars who specially when they go up to the corresponding higher stages of the general branches of education find competition too hard for them because their grounding has been weaker.

I am fully aware of exceptions to this rule and I think only last year the product of an Islamic Intermediate College who subsequently changed over to general education distinguished himself in the English Department of this University. Nevertheless the majority of such students can scarcely do justice to themselves when faced with competition with others with better grounding both in the subsequent stages of collegiate or university education as well as in the various examinations held for recruitment to different Government services. This is a serious handicap and is bound to affect as in my opinion it is already affecting—the future of the community as such. I would venture to suggest that it is within the power of the Education Department and the University to improve this state of things by mutual co-operation.

Students of the University of Dacca who have received degrees to-day, I congratulate you, warmly and sincerely, on your success and I wish you very bright and useful careers. I hope and pray that you may become useful and distinguished citizens and devoted public servants. I do not wish to add anything to the valuable advice which you have received to-day from His Excellency the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor. Remember that a graduate always carries his degree with him not in the shape of a parchment diploma but in his manner, actions and in his scrupulously honest and straightforward dealing with men. You must carry the cultural and spiritual atmosphere of your Alma Mater wherever you go. However uncongenial and uncultured your surroundings may be, you must influence them and change them in accordance with your own outlook. You must always remember your Alma Mater with respect and gratitude. Her good name and fame are in your hands. Do not besmirch her fair face by any action unworthy of her and unworthy of her true sons. Make her proud of you and of your services to your country and fellow-men.

The welfare of your University is an object very near to my heart. I have spoken to-day not with the authority of an educational expert or with the weight of a member of the Government but as friend to friend, as one who watches your progress with the utmost sympathy and solicitude.







