

Ernest Martin Hopkins  
on His Dartmouth  
Presidential Years



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*Some informal reminiscences*  
*Tape-recorded and edited*  
*by Edward Connery Lathem*

HANOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE · DARTMOUTH COLLEGE



THE EXTRACTS THAT FOLLOW have been drawn from reminiscences by President-Emeritus Hopkins that were tape-recorded in the period 1958–1964, during informal, intermittently scheduled sessions with the editor of the present compilation. They are now published by permission of Mr. Hopkins' daughter, Ann (Mrs. John F. Spahr), to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.

A little volume entitled '*Hoppy*' on *His Early Dartmouth Years*, containing recollections drawn from the same series of tapes, but concentrating upon the interval prior to Ernest Martin Hopkins' assumption of the Dartmouth presidency, was issued by the College in 1966.

Readers are also referred to Charles E. Widmayer's *Hopkins of Dartmouth*, published in 1977 by the College through the University Press of New England.





**I**MMEDIATELY following his graduation from Dartmouth, in 1901, Ernest Martin Hopkins joined the staff of the College, serving successively Presidents Tucker and Nichols. In 1910, however, he left Hanover to enter upon a business career, as a pioneer in the specialty of personnel administration. Although during the intervening years he maintained close and active ties to his alma mater, it was from his standpoint totally unexpected when, in 1916, he was called to Dartmouth's presidency—a businessman chosen for that post, after nearly a century and a half of its having been filled by academicians or divines. His selection caused widespread skepticism, disapproval, and even outright hostility, both on campus and off—reactions that Mr. Hopkins sympathetically understood, and which he accepted without

making, either then or later, any pretense to being other than what in fact he was.—

“I never considered myself as an ‘educator.’ I was frequently flattered when people referred to me as an educator. But I never thought of myself as that. I always thought of myself as an administrator in an educational institution. And I think that’s what I was.

“I learned a little about colleges and what they were supposed to do and what they were about. But I had none of the insignia for the job.”

During the short interval between his election by the Board of Trustees, in June of 1916, and his actually assuming office, on August first, Mr. Hopkins made frequent trips to Hanover. (“I was up here weekends pretty constantly.”), in order to consult with

*outgoing-President Ernest Fox Nichols, whom he had come to know well during part of the period (1898–1903) when the latter was a Professor of Physics at Dartmouth and, subsequently, while working under him in the first year (1909–10) of Nichols' own presidency of the College.—*

“Doctor Nichols never liked being President. I mean, that was a case where, as a matter of fact, I always thought he was done a good deal of wrong on that thing, because it took him out of the scientific field and he never caught up with it afterwards. And, meanwhile, he never did adapt himself to the presidency.

8 “I don’t think more than a month after he took office, he told me one night, when I was up to the house, he says, ‘You know, this thing is all wrong.’ He says,

“From the time I can first remember, if I had a problem,” he says, “I took it into the laboratory and stayed with it, whether it took five minutes or five years.’ He says, ‘I leave a problem down at the office and come home and think it over, and by the time I get back next morning,’ he says, ‘there are a dozen more.’ He says, ‘I just can’t work that way; it bothers me to have them there.’[. . .]

“But personally and socially he was delightful. He hadn’t the faintest glimmerings of ‘administrative’ procedures. I don’t think he even knew what the word meant. And I don’t think he wanted to.[. . .]

“I was very fond of him, and (which I think he resented) I felt sorry for him. I felt then, and I feel now, that it would have taken very little change in his tech-

nique, to have made good as a president. But he didn't want to make a change. [...]

"As I say, I don't think he wanted anybody's pity, but I always think of him, very compassionately, as a man that, quite outside of any responsibility of his own, was thrown into an impossible situation, as far as he was concerned."

*In the midst of the various questionings and protests, from faculty and other sources, occasioned by the Trustees' choice of him to head the College, President-elect Hopkins attended Dartmouth's 1916 Commencement exercises.—*

"Actually, I was in sort of an anomalous position at that Commencement in 1916. I'd been elected, and yet I wasn't anything. And I've always felt very grateful to the Dartmouth alumni for the cour-

tesy with which they treated me at that period, because they didn't have to do anything."

*His formal induction as President was held in Hanover on October sixth, barely a fortnight after the opening of the College for its 1916-17 academic year.—*

"I remember the ceremony itself very definitely.[. . .] I think the general attitude of the attendants that day was one of extreme agnosticism. They'd come from all over the country, and they'd heard something in regard to the faculty attitude here, and they looked over my record and they didn't see much to redeem me in that. But my impressions of the proceedings were that they warmed up, definitely, during the day."

*He recalled with special delight one par-*

*ticular salutation, from among several that were directed at him during the course of the inaugural program—remarks made on behalf of certain of the academic delegates who were present, and made with caustic reference to someone who was not, as it happened, in attendance on that occasion: Columbia University's incumbent president, Nicholas Murray Butler.—*

“I never shall forget Richmond's speech. Richmond was president of Union College. I never knew whether he intended to do this or whether it was a slip or what, but he was addressing me on the general thesis of not taking myself too seriously, and so forth—and very amusingly.

“He said he was with his old Princeton roommate, several days before on the Co-

lumbia campus, and that they were walking across the campus and the flag was at half-mast. He said to his friend, who was on the Columbia faculty, he says, ‘Who's dead?’ And he said, ‘Nobody's dead that I know of.’ He says, ‘The flag's at half-mast there.’ And he said his friend looked over his shoulder and he says, ‘Oh, that only indicates that Butler's on the campus.’

“Well, he had one or two other cracks of the same sort in there—which didn't appear in the published proceedings.”

*But Dartmouth's new President regarded as “the greatest single service” done him at his inauguration a blunder committed by His Excellency, the Governor of New Hampshire—something that in large measure served to dissipate “the stiff-necked attitude” that had at the outset enshrouded the day.—*

“Governor Rolland Spaulding [. . .] came to me somewhat before the proceedings, and he says, ‘I’ve been asked to give a “felicitation.”’ He says, ‘What the hell’s a felicitation?’

“Well, I mean, I was on terms with him of intimacy; I could say anything I wanted to. And I says, ‘Well, you don’t need to know.’ I says, ‘Harlan Pearson is your secretary, and he’s a Dartmouth man. He’ll write it for you. All you have to do is read.’ He says, ‘That’s a good idea.’

“But he showed up here this morning—Governor Spaulding had been to Washington—and he found in his mail here this felicitation, which he hadn’t read. And so, as I say, with a somewhat stiff-necked audience, and so forth, and agnosticism rife, he rises (as one of the initial inci-

dents of the occasion) and draws out this ghost-written manuscript, spread it out and says, ‘Today Dartmouth comes to another millstone. . . .’”

*And the victim of this totally unconscious milestone-millstone gubernatorial slip added, with regard to recounting the gaffe nearly a half-century later:—*

“I felt a little ungracious telling that story, because as a matter of fact Rolland Spaulding was an awfully good friend of mine, and within two or three months afterwards he gave me the money for the swimming pool. But that was actually what happened.

“He had a big, booming voice—which made it a little funnier. He didn’t know! He asked me afterwards what the laugh was about. He didn’t realize at all.”

*The overall installation, with its seemingly endless series of engagements and obligations, was decidedly an ordeal.—*

“It really was a terrible day. The whole succeeding month was.[. . .] I got an apprenticeship in public speaking during the next month that I never want to go through again.[. . .]

“The remembrance of that thing was one thing that made me feel that nobody else ought ever be put through it. And I really think that we established what ought to be the universal pattern in President Dickey’s inauguration: they just had the faculty, and it was quiet and intimate and got rid of all this.

“But there had been a pattern established, which I guess probably was desirable to follow. I don’t know.”

*The launching of the Hopkins presidency was, in general, far from an easy task. (“I thought for a while there wasn’t anything but problems!”) And among the difficulties were ones associated with the College’s central administrative corps.—*

“There was an organization problem which was pretty acute. The Trustees, very early in the game, discovered that Doctor Nichols not only hadn’t had any experience in business, but that he didn’t want any. (He just hated the business side of the thing.) And they asked me back, at that time, to become business manager of the College, and I wasn’t interested. And, then, they elected Homer Eaton Keyes, who was Professor of Art.

“I never knew just how they figured that out! But they made him business

manager. And with Doctor Nichols' entire acquiescence, if not enthusiasm, they gave him very large authorities. It was practically coincident with the President's authorities. And they were given without any question. Well, I didn't know how to operate that way."

*Thus, from the very beginning, and increasingly, conflict was pronounced and awkward, the Business Director intent on operating, now, with the same independence of the President that he had exercised during the Nichols years.—*

"I tried to explain it, but it wasn't easy to explain to him that we weren't going to continue to. And it finally came down to the question of whether there were to be two Presidents or one, and he resigned and left.

"But that was the major organization problem of my early years here—particularly difficult because he'd been a friend of mine. As an undergraduate he'd preceded me as editor of *The Dartmouth*, and we'd roomed together [after graduation] for two years at the Howe Library.

"It isn't pleasant to have to settle those things with your intimate acquaintances and friends."

*Also, there was initially considerable awkwardness, or worse, regarding the President's relationships with the Dean, Craven Laycock.—*

"[. . .]Craven had of course felt quite definitely, himself, that he would like the presidency. He had been groomed for it. He was very unhappy at the fact that he was passed over on it."

*Laycock's disappointment ("He was awfully sensitive in regard to the outcome of the thing.") was manifested partly by his refusal to speak to the man who had been selected instead of him, and by an attempt to conduct his dealings with the President "wholly through memoranda." This was a situation the latter found intolerable; and one stormy night, when he knew other family members were not to be at home, E.M.H. set out for the Laycock house, determined to have a confrontation with the Dean of the College.—*

"So, I went up. (And he told me afterwards, one time, that he came nearer dying from shock that night than he ever did before: when he opened the door and saw me.) I explained to him why I had come. And I said, 'I think the time has come for us to have an understanding, because

when everything is done and said, I was elected President—whether wisely or not—and I'm not going to try to operate with a Dean that won't operate with me.'

"And it was an entirely pleasant party. I discovered that he had wanted to find some way that he felt he could, with dignity, end the feud. And everything went on nicely from then."

*One of the especially valued personal benefits for Mr. Hopkins, which attached to his return to Hanover in 1916, was the opportunity thus provided him for what proved to be a further decade of regular contact with the then-retired and invalided ninth President of the College, the man he had served so contentedly in the years 1901–09 and whom he so greatly revered, William Jewett Tucker.—*



“I think that Doctor Tucker would have had a much happier ending to his life today than he had at that day, because I don’t think the doctors today would have put him to bed and kept him there for ten years.

“It was too bad, because he was so interested in things and outside, and hungry for information. But Mrs. Tucker, who was the soul of devotion, took very literally the injunction of Doctor Shattuck that no one should see him more than twenty minutes. And Doctor Tucker would telephone for me to come over, and Mrs. Tucker would meet me at the door and warn me that it must be confined to twenty minutes.

“Well, to me a very interesting aside from that: Mrs. Tucker, who was a good

deal of a musician, played on Thursday afternoons in a four-handed group that got together for that purpose. And almost invariably on Thursday, Doctor Tucker would telephone for me and say that Mrs. Tucker was going to be out and that he had told the maid that he wouldn’t have anything for her to do, and wouldn’t I come up and we could have a good gossip?

“That went on week after week, and I always felt half-guilty in it, because I knew how much Mrs. Tucker would feel she was being double-crossed, if she knew about it. But, by the same token, some of those afternoons are very happy remembrances as far as I’m concerned.

And, as I said to you the other day, I think, in general, he was very well satisfied with the way the College was going.

And, insofar as I knew, he never was deeply dissatisfied with anything, excepting my decision to quit compulsory chapel.

“He felt that was a great mistake; and, on the basis we’d always been, he didn’t hesitate to tell me so—although he didn’t try in any way to alter my decision on it. But he thought that I would live to recognize that I had been in error on it—which will have to be pretty soon, if it proves true! [. . .]

“I saw a great deal of him. I made it a practice, as a matter of fact, to go in once or twice a week, whether or not I received any invitation, and just volunteer information. He seemed to be very grateful for that, and I was very happy to do it. Of course we were very fortunate in the juxtaposition when the new President’s

House was built, because it was right around the corner from him, and we could do it very easily.”

*By the time Mr. Hopkins came to the presidency of Dartmouth, the First World War had been under way in Europe for over two years, and active military involvement by the United States was little more than eight months away. (In looking back over his period in office, which spanned nearly three decades, he was prompted to comment, with mock wistfulness: “I always thought that I would like to have been president of a college during peace years, because we had two wars and a depression, you see—which was enough for the time involved.”) And in 1916 the atmosphere on campus was decidedly tense in nature.—*

“The war was coming on, and we had

all sorts of problems with the government. Men were being recalled. (The National Guard was being recruited at the time. So, men were being pulled out of the College to go into the National Guards in their respective states.) And other men, of course, were uneasy and were going into the services.

“We tried to block that by instituting a pretty poor military course here. But it was the best we could do at the time. We got Captain Keene, who had been wounded in the war, a Canadian officer, and he came down and took charge of the military training. And that prevailed until, eventually, the government set up its own organization, called ‘S.A.T.C.’ ”

*By and large, the Student Army Training Corps was, in his estimation, “a perfectly*

*futile thing; but it was presumed to be of some importance.” One element of its significance to Dartmouth, during those highly disrupted times, was the provision of governmental financing, this along with other contributions toward achieving some general stability for the College’s operations. Then, in the midst of the wartime interval, the President of the College was himself summoned to Washington.—*

“Well, this is the sequence of events, and it is a very odd one, too. General Sharpe was Quartermaster General, and probably the poorest Quartermaster General the Army ever had. The troops weren’t getting anything that they needed, and there didn’t seem to be any prospect that they would.

“I can’t be historically very accurate

on this, but General Goethals had finished up on the Panama Canal, and I think he had become president of the New York Ship Building Company. (Anyway, he had become president of one of the ship-building companies.) And Mr. Baker [Secretary of War Newton D. Baker] and Mr. Wilson [President Woodrow Wilson] [. . .] decided that General Goethals was the one man who could straighten the thing out. And they sent (I don't think they saw him personally) and asked him to come back into the service, as Quartermaster General. And he declined, on the basis that he didn't like either of them! [. . .]

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"As it was quoted to me (of course, I only know this by quotation), the response to him was that they didn't care

what he did as far as they were [concerned], if he'd take the job. I'm wholly hazy—I'm trying to get it, and I can't get it—as to how it was decided that I could be a liaison in the thing. But somebody, somewhere, decided that I could. And I went down and operated between the Secretary of War and General Goethals."

*Mr. Hopkins regarded George Washington Goethals highly ("He became one of the best friends I've ever had.") and as someone "perfectly charming," except during the course of occasional rages—rages that were, however, largely "artificial" and to be considered, apparently, as "just a part of being a general."*—

"But he was a big, handsome man. And of course the Panama Canal was a tre-

mendous accomplishment. He'd pushed it through in less time than it was supposed to take; and he was perfectly conscious of the fact that he'd done something, and he'd expected people to recognize it—but, from my point of view, not disagreeably at all.

“As a matter of fact, I had a desk in his office. I didn't use it all the time. Actually, I did more running around than office work, as far as that was concerned, because he was trying to straighten out the Quartermaster General's office.

“They had warehouses in New York and Washington and Charleston, South Carolina, and so forth. And there were a lot of things he wanted. Well, in some cases he wanted men sized up. He was having to move awfully fast, and he

couldn't give too much consideration to the thing. He apparently had some confidence in me, and he'd send me around to see the men and give as good an appraisal as I could in regard to them.[. . .]

“He gave me very wide authority, as far as that went, in the industrial-relations field. He just told Gompers [Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor] and all the rest of the labor leaders to deal with me. And he would back me. I mean, I don't remember of his ever reversing me in anything. Certainly, there were some times when the issues were fairly important.

“From my point of view, he was a wonderful man to work for.”

*Thus, his wartime stint in Washington got under way.—*

“But out of the thing, I eventually became assistant to Mr. Baker.[. . .]

“Stanley King, later president of Amherst, had been at the time in Russia as vice president of McElwain Shoe Company, selling shoes to the Russians; and they brought him back because of his knowledge of Russia. And we paired up together on the thing.[. . .]

“Stanley King had been advising Mr. Baker in regard to a lot of the trade questions involved, and so forth, and Mr. Baker took me on as a sort of a personnel man. And we stayed with him during the rest of the war, and I valued that experience very greatly at the time, and I do since.”

*To which he added the encomium:—*

“Baker was, along with Doctor Tucker

and Theodore Vail and one or two others, a big man in my life.”

*His assignment as assistant to the Secretary of War involved duties that were not, as Mr. Hopkins recalled them, “too closely prescribed, because Mr. Baker was utilizing me as a handy man around the house, for whatever might come up.” And it was during this same period that he developed a friendship with Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who occupied an office adjacent to his own, in the building that then served as headquarters for both the War and Navy Departments, as well as for the U. S. Department of State.—*

“There was the Secretary of the Navy; then, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, which was F.D.R.; then, my office; and, then, Mr. Baker’s office; and, then, Stan-

ley King's office. So, the group of us became pretty intimate for the time there. [. . .] Mr. Baker and Stanley King and I preserved our friendship throughout the lives of the other two. All three of us got off the Roosevelt bandwagon at one stage or another; so, that thing sort of lapsed."

*E.M.H. regarded Franklin Roosevelt as an immensely attractive person ("He had one of the most remarkable personalities of anybody that I ever knew. I mean, he was perfectly charming."), and their friendship was a close one for well over two decades following World War I. Indeed, upon his election in 1932 as President of the United States, Roosevelt made overtures to bring Mr. Hopkins into his Administration. ("Franklin D. asked me into the Cabinet and gave me my choice of Secretary of War or Secre-*

*tary of the Interior, and I didn't take it. I told him that I was here [at Dartmouth] for life and didn't intend to do anything else.") But ultimately the two men "pulled apart."—*

"I understood perfectly what happened in the transformation of Roosevelt from the playboy (which he was) to the political light that he became. But I never did understand what happened that he broke with pretty nearly every one of his old-time friends. I mean, the people that were around him in the Administration were wholly a new gang—and not only a new gang, but a crowd that had nothing whatever to do with the old crowd."

*A complete Roosevelt-Hopkins estrangement came about, finally, as the result of Mr. Hopkins' decision to oppose the former's bid,*

*in 1940, for an unprecedented third Presidential term—opposition given expression nationally in an article that E.M.H. wrote for The Atlantic Monthly.—*

“He told Mrs. Roosevelt, and she told me, that he felt that I’d knifed him below the belt, on that thing, and he didn’t want to have anything more to do with me.”

*It was a circumstance Mr. Hopkins regretted deeply, yet it was one that had to be borne. (“He wouldn’t accept any partial loyalty—one hundred percent!”) But what of his overall assessment of his former friend?—*

“I think, myself, that—and this may be a very partisan statement—but I think, myself, that history is going to ascribe an importance to the Roosevelt Administration or to Roosevelt’s part in the Ad-

ministration that I don’t think is justified. That’s a personal opinion. But I don’t personally think that Roosevelt was a great man. That’s what I’m trying to say. And I think history is going to record him as such.[. . .]

“I think that things happened during his Administration, and I think perhaps his sense of publicity and his golden voice and the rest of it had something to do with it. But I think that things were going to happen, anyway, and I don’t think they all were due to him.

“Well, I suppose my own beginning of doubt in regard to him, and unwillingness to accord what friends think ‘due credit’ to him, began with my certain knowledge that he was appropriating Mr. Hoover’s ideas [President Herbert Hoo-



ver] and claiming them as his own—and meanwhile abusing Mr. Hoover. His treatment of Hoover was simply abominable, in the time between the election and the inauguration. And it was unfair. At least, I think it was.”

*In the autumn of 1918, with the war nearing its end, E.M.H. concluded his period of Washington service as a “dollar-a-year man” and returned to Dartmouth.—*

“And I honestly don’t think that the College suffered any—I know, in some respects, the College gained—from having me down there. And I don’t think that it suffered much, because so much of it was under the control of the Army, anyway. I mean, the matter of educational policies—all that type of thing was out.

“And I came back here. I tried to aver-

age back here every two weeks. It sometimes didn’t work. But usually I could get back. And I’d spend all day Sunday, with two or three stenographers, catching up on correspondence and things.

“It wasn’t an easy life, but it was a very rewarding one.”

*Another of his comments on the time in question was a facetious quip to the effect that “one way or another, it may be an evidence that a college doesn’t need a president, I don’t know!” However that might be, in taking up again a full-time concentration on College affairs, President Hopkins promptly turned his attention to a variety of matters, including such undertakings as curricular revision. But what, really, did he regard as the single greatest task that he had to address during this particular period?—*

“I think, on reflection, that my answer to you would be, as to what was the most difficult thing: organizing the alumni. I think that was it, because it was a pretty sketchy organization. [ . . . ] I spent the hardest work for the first three or four years on getting alumni organization perfected.”

*Expanding upon this, he declared:—*

“I was impressed, from the time that I went into the office in 1901, continuingly, even up to the present day, that a college can be just about as strong as its alumni body, and that everything you did to strengthen the alumni body would strengthen the college. And I still believe that.”

*A basic necessity was reforming the attitude of Dartmouth's Board of Trustees it-*

*self, with respect to the importance to the College of its alumni.—*

“In the old days, the Board didn't pay much of attention to that. The Board I inherited had got a pretty good idea in regard to it. But gradually men [ . . . ] came onto the Board, and then we were all set. I don't think there's a man on the Board at the present time but what considers the alumni relationships as one of the prime responsibilities.”

*Inevitably, one facet of his working to strengthen alumni relations involved the President's having to speak to Dartmouth gatherings throughout the country, and that did not come easy to Mr. Hopkins.—*

“It was a tremendous chore for me. And if anyone was to ask me what was the greatest single difficulty I had in the

presidency, it was that: the necessity of constantly talking.”

*And what did he treat of in his talks to alumni?—*

“Well, I always had to stick pretty closely to subjects on which I had deep convictions or complete knowledge, because when I got off into an area where I was at all uncertain, why, I was not a good speaker. I really couldn’t be.”

*His fulfillment of his speaking engagements did not typically entail the use of a prepared text, but reliance, instead, on headings that were written out as guidelines for what he intended to say. ( He once explained to a fellow college president: “I work with a few beads. I try to figure out what will be the desirable thing for this particular situation, and put down three or four or five beads*

*and work from those.”) Of this approach, however, he readily conceded that it did, in its performance, impose upon him a substantial strain.—*

“Very great, because you had to work pretty hard on your feet. I’m not at all sure that if I was starting life over again that I’d follow that. I mean, I don’t know what I’d do, of course. But it was the only way, at the time, that I thought I could speak. And it had this advantage: that every alumni association is different from every other one, and you could come nearer getting onto common ground with them, speaking without any prearranged speech, than you could have with something formulated.[. . .]

“Well, it wasn’t a ‘horror,’ because I always had a great joy in meeting the

alumni. I mean, the thing just fascinated me—the difference between groups.[. . .]

“I enjoyed meeting the groups. I didn’t enjoy getting up before breakfast and leaving for the next town!”

*One feature of speaking at alumni gatherings stood out, especially, in his memory: “being welcomed anew in every place—and the hour and a half of standing around and being greeted was the tough thing.” On the other hand, he felt that this preliminary contact and, also, the post-meeting socializing were decidedly important. (“That informal work, I think, was fully as effective as the formal work.”) But what of the talks themselves?—*

“Of course, you understand, not all these speeches were ten-strikes. I mean, I got tired. Some of them were just duds.

And I knew at the time they were, and know now they were. But, after all, the principal thing, in a lot of them, was to be there in person and have somebody see you. And it didn’t make so much difference what you said.”

*Speaking engagements, before alumni and other audiences, seemed to him to be a near-constant, as well as unending, part of his presidential role.—*

“I just don’t understand how I kept talking as much as I apparently did. If anybody wants to argue it was too much, why, I shouldn’t [be troubled] about it at all! But, I’ll say this in defense of it: I think, at that particular time, the representation of the College was useful.”

*With regard to meetings of alumni, there was a particular change in program plan-*

*ning to which, finally, he decided to address himself with determination.—*

“One thing that I tried awfully hard on was to reduce the number of speakers at the alumni meetings. They used to get five or six speakers. The President would almost invariably come last, and I’d get on somewhere about midnight.

“It was, it seemed to me at first, a highly ungracious act, to tell a local committee what they should do. But I lost all of my humility, eventually. I said if I was going to come, I wanted to have enough time to speak.

“We got the thing down so it became pretty nearly conventional for three speakers, and it worked out much better.’

*Following Mr. Hopkins’ return from Washington, and with the re-emergence of*

*peacetime conditions on campus, the President directed special attention to the College’s financial situation.—*

“I felt, in those days, that the most indispensable thing for us was money. I mean, we were just short on ready cash, and faculty salaries needed to be increased, new buildings needed to be built.

“A college actually goes in cycles, and in some ways it was much like the present day. The cycle had gone around in Doctor Tucker’s building construction. Financial policies had come to their logical end. And somebody needed to pick up and go on, and I wanted money.”

*A reform that Mr. Hopkins pressed for within the Board of Trustees was a shift in investment policy, so that the College’s portfolio might include common stocks, for the*

sake of a greater income yield. ("There was the definite conviction, which I guess there was in all the colleges, and traditional from their foundation, that there was no safe investment excepting bonds. And all the endowment that we had, which wasn't much—I think it was four million—was in bonds.") But he found his fellow Trustees to be "very obdurate" regarding any such change; and repeatedly, to shut off further consideration of the issue, they would invoke the name of Dartmouth's principal benefactor, financier Edward Tuck (Class of 1862), then living in retirement in France. ("The minute I suggested common stocks, why, the Board was gun shy on it and didn't want, even, to discuss it. And when I crowded on it, why, they always would bring up to me the statement, 'What would Mr. Tuck

think?' ") It was a question Mr. Hopkins ultimately came to feel required definite resolution. ("Finally, it seemed to me one way to answer that would be to go over and ask him. That was the impelling motive of the thing. So, I went over.") The trip to France, made in 1922, was also prompted by a general desire on the President's part to establish a direct relationship with a man who had already done so much for Dartmouth.—

"It was a very interesting experience, because Mr. Tuck had an entirely different conception of a college president than I proved to be. And I didn't know anything about what to expect with him. We sat around and feinted and bluffed for a couple of days, then discovered that there was some common ground, and a very wonderful friendship began there."

*And as to addressing his main objective in making this initial visit to Mr. Tuck?—*

“After we had got onto a basis of mutual understanding—gone to the Folies Bergere and one or two other places together—why, one night I told him (just as I have told it here), I says: ‘I want more money, and the Trustees are very hesitant to invest in stocks. They ask me, every time, what you would think. So, I thought I would come over and ask.’

“He broke into his infectious smile, and he says, ‘Will you give them a message direct from me, in my own words?’ And I says yes, I would. He says, ‘I never owned a goddamned bond in my life, and I never expect to.’

“So, we began to buy stocks. (I noticed the other day that we’ve got over

sixty percent, now, of our endowment in common stocks.)”

*Clearly, not all of the time the two men spent with one another during the course of that Paris visit in 1922 was, indeed, devoted to discussions bearing upon financial and educational considerations associated with Dartmouth College.—*

“He said hesitantly one time, he says, ‘Do you want to go in to the Folies Bergere?’ And I said yes, I did. And he says, ‘Well, I’ve got tickets for tonight; and,’ he says, ‘I’ve got a box, so that we can screen you off, because there might be some Dartmouth men there.’

“‘Well,’ I says, ‘I don’t care whether there are Dartmouth men there or not.’ And he says, ‘You don’t?’ I says, ‘No, I don’t.’ ‘Well, then,’ he says, ‘I’d rather

sit down in the orchestra, because I can hear better.' And I says, 'Well, that's all right with me.'

"Well, the first thing that happened: When we went in, we started up the aisle, and there were three or four Dartmouth men up in the gallery and they gave a Wah-Hoo-Wah!

"And, then, they had a stunt in the thing[. . .]; these girls swung out over the audience, laterally, and they were just high enough so that they could kick prominent people with their toes, as they went over. And this girl came over Mr. Tuck, and she says: 'Well, where have you been, Eddie? I haven't seen you for a long while.' Which fussed Mr. Tuck very much indeed, and he explained—and I think probably correctly—afterwards, that they spot-

ted prominent people in the audience, beforehand, and did this. But he went to great lengths to explain that he'd never seen her before! [. . .]

"So it ended up, at any rate (rather to my delight), in his being embarrassed, instead of my being."

*Out of this 1922 Hopkins-Tuck visit there developed ties that were thereafter to be maintained by the two men through regular correspondence and occasional return visits by Mr. Hopkins. ("I saw him every three or four years.") Entailed was a personal friendship that provided an especially warm context for Mr. Tuck's several acts of generosity to Dartmouth during the period that followed—benefactions that included his provision of a new President's House.—*

"He said he wanted a house, and a good



house—as good a house as there was in any college in the country—built for the President. Those were the circumstances under which the house was built.

“And, as always in that sort of thing, he was sensitive to the nuances of the thing. He told me, he says, ‘I don’t give a damn what you want.’ He says, ‘I just want to know what Mrs. Hopkins wants.’ And they had quite a lot of correspondence about the thing.”

*Initial contact between President Hopkins and Edward Tuck occurred just as the former rounded out his fifth year in office—a time span that E.M.H. focussed upon with reminiscent reflection:—*

“Doctor Tucker used to say, and I think I would agree with that, that nobody’s qualified for full usefulness as a

college president in less than half a decade. I think it takes a long time to know the ramifications and all the rest. There’s a great advantage, I think, in a long term.”

*Among the changes instituted early in the Hopkins administration was the adoption, in 1921, of the so-called “Selective Process” of admissions, which had as an objective the ensuring of a greater diversity of character, as well as a wider distribution of geographical source, for the student body.—*

“What was behind that was the conviction on my own part, which I hold even more strongly today, that an undergraduate gets a considerable part of his education from association with his fellows, and that the more broadly representative your undergraduate group, why, the better your educational process.

“Well, we weren’t at that time able to get much of anybody west of the Mississippi River, because of the requirements. . . . They just couldn’t satisfy our requirements. (Very peculiar things happened. Oregon, for instance, in order definitely to preclude men coming East to college, voted to substitute the history of Oregon for Classical history!)

“I made up my mind that the only thing was to meet them on their own ground, on that thing, whether you liked it or not. And it was from that sort of reasoning that the Selective Process evolved.”

32 *Implementation of this new approach, supplanting the practice of primary reliance on entrance examinations, resulted from the President’s taking the proposal directly to*

*the College’s Board of Trustees, without its prior consideration by the faculty.—*

“I knew perfectly well that that would never pass the faculty at the time. . . . In a protest meeting, which the faculty called in regard to that, the heads of departments asked me to meet with them. And, then, they laid it on the table. They says, ‘We think this is our business.’ And I said no; I said, as a matter of fact, in my estimation, they determined when they came to Dartmouth whether or not they were going to select the men themselves or whether they were going to take what Dartmouth officially felt to be the desirable group and educate them.

“Actually, the thing was pretty hot for a while, on the thing. But the essence of it is, I took it directly to the Trustees,

rather than to the faculty[. . .]. And I stated to the Trustees that I felt perfectly confident that we could widen our distribution very rapidly and nationalize the institution with this, and that we couldn't do it under what was then the prevailing examination system."

*Mr. Hopkins recalled, regarding his Selective Process scheme ("It was my idea, but I had lots of help in working it out, of course."), that there existed for several years, both locally and within the educational community in general, great hostility centering upon its adoption ("They ran it to a fare-you-well in the papers.")—until, finally, others began to embrace the plan themselves. ("Yale later claimed to have originated it! You'd see all sorts of publicity about this novel idea they'd got, and so forth.")—*

"I think it was universally condemned, at the time, through the Ivy League. And Mr. Eliot [then president emeritus of Harvard], for instance, with whom in his later years I became very friendly, never gave up on that. He still saw red every time that was mentioned[. . .]. But that, more or less, was the attitude of the presidents of the Ivy League all through."

*Similarly, in the matter of the College's granting honorary degrees, Mr. Hopkins took a personal lead in instituting modifications.—*

"As a matter of fact, originally it was a question of the President and two or three Trustees sitting down and making up a slate, and more or less formally it would go through. And I didn't like that very much, and eventually we got it fixed

so that there's a joint committee—I think I'm right that it's existent today—a joint committee of the Trustees and the faculty. And they just go at it formally and seriously—and the folder's as big as an unabridged dictionary. I mean, everybody has a favorite pastor who wants a D.D. given to him!"

*Besides setting up a special committee on honorary degrees, Mr. Hopkins altered a long-standing practice with respect to the actual bestowal of the awards.—*

"When I came up here—and I had acquired some convictions about it beforehand, when I was Secretary of the College—we had given a lot of degrees *in absentia*. We'd vote the degree and, then, the man would say he couldn't come, and we'd give the degree. And I didn't like

that very much. I thought that for the dignity of the College, if for no other reason, we ought to do it some different way.

"We adopted the principle—and I think it's a Trustee action, but I wouldn't be sure—that we would give no degree except if the man was present to receive it. Under those circumstances most of them will come!"

*He took particular pride in the calibre of the individuals to whom Dartmouth honorary degrees were awarded during his administration. ("The old crack about Eliot saying that Harvard was increasing its endowment 'by degrees' has more or less truth to it, in that a lot of colleges give degrees for that." But he added: "I don't think we ever gave a degree for the purpose of getting a*

gift. I'm very sure that's so.") And he liked to remember circumstances associated with the 1923 doctorate tendered statesman-jurist Charles Evans Hughes, then serving as U. S. Secretary of State.—

“I was told, definitely, that there was no use to offer Mr. Hughes a degree, that he had turned down all sorts of offers. But, anyway, we went ahead and proffered the degree to him—and almost immediately received his acceptance.

“The next winter, I was sitting beside him at a dinner in Washington; and I told him, and said I'd always been curious to know why he came. He said he did what he had done in some other cases. He said that when he got the proffer of the degree, he went up to the University Club and got some of the catalogues down,

to see who had been receiving degrees here, and decided he'd like to be in their company. I thought it was very nice. (I utilized it a lot, in the years subsequently, when the general attitude would be to give a degree that seemed to me thoroughly no good.)

“I think our degree lists have been really quite distinctive.”

*And Mr. Hopkins developed the concept of preparing extended citations for the awarding of Dartmouth's honorary degrees, rather than using merely terse characterizations of the recipients.—*

“It seemed to me if a man made the effort to come up and get a degree, you at least ought to tell why you gave it to him. And I began the kind of citations that I used throughout. And some of the

colleges which hadn't used them began to take up that form.

"I felt then, and I think now, that if you're going to honor a man, you ought at least to honor him—and not just hand him a sheepskin and say 'get out.'

"Actually, while it took a good deal of effort to write the citations, I always felt it was a very rewarding thing."

*He was also responsible for the College's adoption of the policy of awarding to faculty members who were not Dartmouth alumni an honorary Master's degree, upon their election to the rank of full professor.—*

"I think I instituted it—whether during my term as Secretary or President, I'm not sure—but, anyway, I know it was my idea. The thought behind it was definitely just an added accent on the Dartmouth

connection: make them Dartmouth men.

"Of course, there are a lot of incidental details in regard to that, which sound picayunish. There was at that time a preference on football seats, for instance, and on publications—lots of little things. If a man was listed as an alumnus of the College, he got them, and if he wasn't, he didn't.

"But, fundamentally, my own thinking in regard to it was that it was well to have them associated just as close as they could be with the College."

*Mr. Hopkins regarded the "whole matter of college organization" as "a very interesting subject," and the broad question of the appropriate sphere and extent of faculty authority, with respect to governance, was one that frequently engaged his attention.—*

“I think it’s the function of the trustees to say what *kind* of a college it’s going to be.[. . .] And I’m firmly convinced, myself, that that thesis is right. There are a lot that will differ with me. But it’s the kind of problem that has never been settled in this country.

“The regents of a state institution are in an entirely different position than the trustees of a privately endowed college. And, on the other hand, among privately endowed colleges you get a tremendous variation, between boards of trustees which honestly think that it’s a part of their responsibility to dictate the educational policy of the college, and other boards like Dartmouth, Amherst, Williams, any of the Ivy League colleges—in no one of them would a board of trustees

think it was up to them, at all, to define the educational policy, excepting to say that it be within the certain framework that would contribute to the kind of a college that they thought it was to be.”

*With respect to the appointment of new faculty, from the outset be followed a policy of centralized personal concern. Although acknowledging that “theoretically” it might seem reasonable and appropriate for members of a teaching staff to possess in fact the sometimes-asserted authority to choose their own associates, he was sure that, in terms of practicality, such was undesirable.—*

“Because, I tell you, I’m just as certain as can be that if you did that you’d grade down.[. . .]

“I followed, definitely, the policy of asking the department if they had recom-

mendations to make, and then I pursued, as far as I could, my own investigations to find where the best men were. Made mistakes, but. . . .”

*Further to the nature of his approach, he declared:—*

“It’s partly relying on the judgment of others; it’s partly hunch—with a lot of good luck!

“I think two of the best men that came in during my term in office, I brought in over the objection of the departments concerned.[. . .]

“I’m surer of that than almost anything: that a good college is going to have a faculty of varied types, because the recipients of the educational process are varied—and the thing they’ll be responsive to[. . .].”

*With the passage of time, however, he did conclude that it was desirable to establish the post of Dean of the Faculty, a step formally taken in 1933.—*

“The thinking in that was—my thinking, at least, in it was—that the Dean of the Faculty should keep constantly in touch with the market (as you say commercially) and know where the people were, and also keep in touch with the resident faculty, to the extent of knowing what was the basis of discontent as it showed up here or there (many times justified and sometimes not justified at all).[. . .]

“I felt very definitely that I was being pushed away, by extraneous circumstances, from the intimate knowledge that I had originally had, and I wanted a lot more information than I had.”



*Illustrative of certain facets of his work as the College's chief executive (wherein, he emphasized, "you play with a lot of ideas and give up some, reluctantly postpone others, and try to carry through others"), he spoke of a number of his objectives in the past that had necessarily been abandoned, including one involving the celebrated architect Ralph Adams Cram.—*

"I think probably I became too enthusiastic about one idea that I held quite strongly for a while and tried to get some money to support.

"I knew Ralph Adams Cram pretty well. He was up here lecturing, and I said to him one afternoon (we were talking about his work, and so forth), I said I thought the West Point chapel was the most beautiful single building on the

continent. And I do, I think it's perfectly beautiful.

"And he says, 'Well,' he says, 'I want to talk with you sometime about that.' He says, 'I'd like to do something similar here. But,' he says, 'I can give you something even more distinctive if you'll give me the top of Observatory Hill.'

"Well,— we went out and went up there and looked it over. And it's perfectly true that that site would be even superior to the one he has at West Point. And we went as far as his drawing rough—just rough, impressionistic—plans of it and what it would look like, and so forth.

"I spent a deal of time, for over a year, trying to get the money for that. As I look at it now, I don't think it would probably have been good. I mean, I don't

think there's the use for it. The Princeton chapel is made very useful to them by the Westminster Choir. But, there again, the Princeton undergraduates don't have any particular appreciation of it. They call it 'God's Garage' and other titles of the sort.

"And we would have had an analagous discussion about that if it had been done, because of course Ralph Adams Cram was fully a disciple of the Gothic. It would have been a Gothic building, and I presume there would have been great objection—although up there it wouldn't have done much harm, that I can see.

"But as things are today, there'd be no practical use for a thing of that sort. I think the ideal thing, as far as a chapel goes, is what they've got at Chicago[. . .]. It will seat about a hundred and fifty,

and it's very largely used. I mean, you go in and you see people meditating, people praying, and so forth. I think *that*, with our modern times, is much more desirable, probably, than a Gothic edifice."

*This reference to the unsuccessful effort on his part to secure funding ("I got nowhere at all on it.") for the construction of a chapel to crown Observatory Hill, caused him to reflect, overmodestly, on his abilities within the realm of "raising funds," generally.—*

"I can't really use the term 'raising funds,' because I didn't do much raising of funds."

*On the other hand, he acknowledged that he had, over the years, deliberately put himself in the paths of potential donors, with whom he planted very definite ideas of support and sponsorship. Moreover, he chuckled*

*in confessing that, of course, he had never rejected proffered gifts to the College. ("I didn't repudiate anybody!") And in this respect he liked to recall an anecdote bearing upon his long-time friendship with John D. Rockefeller Jr. ("Yes, I was very fond of the Rockefellers—all the Rockefellers, as a matter of fact—on no basis at all of self-interest. But they were particularly nice people to know.")—a friendship that had grown out of contact between Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Rockefeller during summers spent on Mount Dessert Island in Maine, where both the Hopkinses and the Rockefellers had vacation homes.—*

"Mr. Rockefeller asked Mrs. Hopkins one year, he said, 'I would like to ask you a question.' He says, 'I probably know your husband better than any other col-

lege president, and,' he says, 'he has never asked me for anything.' And he says, 'He's probably the only New England college president that hasn't.' [ . . . ]

"He asked Mrs. Hopkins, 'Just why is that, do you think?' And she says, 'Well, Mr. Rockefeller, my husband thinks that it's an honor to be a [ . . . benefactor ] of Dartmouth, and he doesn't ask people for money.'

"Mrs. Rockefeller told me that, afterwards. She said it made a great impression on him. But I never did ask him for anything. He volunteered everything."

*One example of entirely self-generated generosity toward Dartmouth on the part of John D. Rockefeller Jr. occurred while the two men were jointly serving on the General Education Board.—*

“I was chairman of the Education Board at the time, and I wanted this money very much for the Honors Course. I knew the rules of the General Education Board: that they were only giving money when it would be matched. I said to the board, I says: ‘I want this money very much, and I don’t know where I’m going to get it. But I’m not passing up any opportunity, and so in spite of the fact that it’s contrary to the general policies of the board, I want to submit it for consideration.’ Then, I stated what I wanted, and so forth; and, then, I retired from the meeting.

“I came in after luncheon to the meeting, and Ray Fosdick [lawyer-administrator Raymond B. Fosdick] made the statement to me, very graciously. He said that there wasn’t anybody on the board but

would like to give it, but that it was contrary to everything they were doing and, obviously, they couldn’t do it, and so forth. But in order to show their willingness to help where they could, they would leave the offer open, to match gifts.

“I had argued that I was crowding the alumni fund just as far as I could and I couldn’t take on two programs at once. They, then, said that they would like to leave the offer open: that they would give seven hundred and fifty thousand if I could fund the other seven hundred and fifty thousand.

“Mr. Rockefeller was sitting in just about the same relationship to me that you are, there, and he says [in a whisper], ‘Take it, take it.’

“I thanked them and said that I was

very much obliged and that I'd do what I could, but that I didn't know what I could do. After the thing was over, Mr. Rockefeller came to me, and he says, 'At such time as you want the million and a half,' he says, 'I will give the other seven hundred and fifty thousand.'

"So, a month from then I told the General Education Board I'd got the promise of the other seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars!"

*With further regard to donations, Mr. Hopkins also touched upon the irony that benefactions to Dartmouth were sometimes made or, alternatively, not made, due to the very same causes or reasons.—*

"We had, in one year, these two things happen: We had a bequest of a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars to the

College cancelled because we had a winning football team. The man said that we were 'immersing' ourselves—I think that was the term—in high-pressure athletics, and he gave the money to Mount Holyoke College. And the same year we received a hundred and fifty thousand dollars because we did have a winning football team. Nearly enough equivalent so it makes a good story!"

*The decade of the 1920s was one of immense developmental achievement for Dartmouth, including the construction of a score of new buildings on campus. Among these structures was the Fisher Ames Baker Memorial Library, the provision of which, together with the nearly concurrent realization of a bequest from Edwin Webster Sanborn (Class of 1878) that served, primarily, to*

*endow the purchase of books and other library materials, represented an accomplishment especially satisfying to Mr. Hopkins. During the '20s, however, there was one feature of collegiate life that increasingly troubled Dartmouth's President: the effect of Prohibition—and specifically that which derived from bootlegging and other illegal activity, from the sale of adulterated liquor, and from a fostering of social irresponsibility. His misgivings and distress over this issue became, indeed, so great that he ultimately concluded that "somebody in academic position ought to say what it was doing to the colleges and college men, the Prohibition amendment." He gave the matter careful consideration before taking any action.—*

"I never did anything that I contemplated longer and more seriously than

that. But I just made up my mind that it was doing so much harm that we'd got to get somebody besides the saloon keepers to say they didn't think it was good."

*Accordingly, he prepared a long statement, of both criticism and opposition, which was released to the press in late December 1930.—*

"When this thing broke—it was a good deal of a surprise to me, as a matter of fact, the impact of the thing—they came up and took movie shorts, and they made recordings for the radios all over the country, and one thing and another. And, then, the mail began to come in by the basketful."

*One result deriving from the issuance of his anti-Prohibition statement and from the widespread publicity it received was a tele-*

gram sent to him by President Herbert Hoover, with whom Mr. Hopkins had long been on friendly terms, inviting E.M.H. to the White House. ("I didn't link the two together at all until I got down to Washington. . .]. But of course when the President says come, you come.") It proved not to be a happy occasion.—

"Hoover was outraged at my statement and asked me down to the White House. And before I got through the door, he began to say that I had disappointed all of his assumptions in regard to me. And he wouldn't let up on it.

"I got there late in the afternoon, and there were some people in to dinner—Meyer and his wife (Meyer became editor of *The Washington Post* and proprietor) and Charlie Hughes (the son of the

Chief Justice) and various others. And of course during the dinner the talk was general, but as quick as they left in the evening, he says, 'Come up to my office.' He says, 'I want to continue this.'

"Well, of course you're a little handicapped talking with the President of the United States—because, after all, he *is* President, and so forth—and I tried to be respectful about it. But I got very much irritated, as a matter of fact.

"By and by he says, 'My informants have given me irrefutable evidence that eighty-five percent of the American people want Prohibition.' So I says, 'The only thing I can say, Mr. Hoover, is that you're very badly advised.' And that irritated him of course.

"Well,' he says, 'leaving that subject

for a moment,' he says, 'think of the position it puts you in with your Trustees, how embarrassing it must be to them.' 'Well,' I says, '*that* is between them and me.' I says, 'I don't see that that's anything for you to worry about.'

"As a matter of fact, he became so irritated about the thing that he, for, oh, half of a decade after that, was very, very cool whenever he met me. It's all right now. I mean, we're back on the old basis."

*In terms of local Prohibition-era circumstances, Mr. Hopkins reminisced further:—*

"We had two boys, one died here and one at home as a result of bad liquor that they got in White River Junction. And they had a lot of boys in the hospital, from time to time, on it. And, then, the Maroney murder [Henry E. Maroney, Class

of 1920] was directly connected with the thing. Conditions were terrible—at all the colleges; Dartmouth wasn't the only one."

*And he went on to tell of a bootlegger named Pilver, located across the river in Norwich, Vermont ("Joe Pilver at that time was running a so-called 'nightclub,' but it was nothing but a bootlegging joint, really, there."), and about a confidential exchange they had had with one another.—*

"One day Joe Pilver came over to the office, and he came in and he says, 'I want to see you.' He said, 'The federal officers are after me, and,' he says, 'I simply want you to tell me.' He says, 'If you're going to support them and try to run me out, why,' he says, 'I'll quit right off.' He says, 'I know when I'm licked.'



“Well, it had been, up to that time, true (and remained true, as a matter of fact, afterwards) that Joe Pilver wouldn’t sell bad liquor. He was selling nothing but good. And I says, ‘Joe, if you just accept this as confidential between yourself and me: Just so long as you keep away from the bad liquor and sell nothing but good liquor, the College will never join in on any prosecution of you.’

“I says: ‘That’s not condoning you or anything of the sort. But, on the other hand, I recognize the fact that—according to your own idea, at least—that you’re playing this game straight. And I think it’s for the advantage of Dartmouth College that there be somewhere where they can get good liquor if they’re going to get anything.’ [ . . . ]

“That was the kind of choice you had to make in those days. And I’d make it again, I’m inclined to say.”

*An educational innovation brought into being in 1929–30 by E.M.H. was the Senior Fellowship program, based “in its elementary form” on a concept that emerged from discussions engaged in over a span of several years (“Yes, I would say at least half a decade.”) between President Hopkins and Beardsley Ruml (Dartmouth 1915), who was at that period director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and who also served (1946–1960) as a Trustee of the College. (“We talked a good deal about some plan by which you would give a lot more freedom of action to the undergraduate—at least the promising ones.”)—*

“And I said to Beardsley Ruml one

day, I says: 'As a matter of fact, I can pick out ten or fifteen men in the class that have so much better education at the end of their junior year than the average of the class will have at the end of the senior, it's just nonsense to tell them what to do their senior year.' [. . .]

"The idea I had in it was that you should, at the end of the junior year, say to whatever group you wanted to (and originally I suggested twelve) that they were entirely free to use the next year any way they wanted to—go abroad or get tight, anything; it was up to them. If they wanted to utilize the College resources or the College name, why, good. But they'd satisfied the College requirements, and a year from then they'd receive their degree.

"And I was very eager to keep it on that basis and have it work out. But the faculty has the insatiable desire always, of course, to get their hands on that sort of thing. And every year the demand came up that we make a project of it. I said projects were all right—and, I thought, in some cases exceedingly good—but I didn't want any project on that."

*In this respect, he regarded the Senior Fellowships, as reintroduced following their suspension during World War II, to be "one plan that, from my point of view, has gone awry"—this because of the imposition then, through faculty insistence, of "projects," which he had so resolutely resisted throughout the years when he himself was guiding the program's development—guidance that had included his personal participation in*

*the selection of those who were appointed as Fellows.—*

“I did a good deal of the picking, yes—more of it than the faculty thought was good for the College!”

*To which quip he added, in a more serious vein:—*

“I’m not as anti-faculty as I sound sometimes. But they’re a professionalized group, and I think sometimes that they don’t see things as largely as they might.”

*And had E.M.H. indeed said, as he was often quoted as having declared of those selected for Senior Fellowships, that if a qualified student would get most from his senior year by going up on Balch Hill and lying on his back to look at the clouds, then, that was what he ought to be allowed to do?—*

“Yeah, I said that. And I still believe

it. But I don’t think that very many other people do. Apparently not.”

*Necessarily, Mr. Hopkins’ entire presidential career entailed near-constant contact with the press. He never developed, however, either an easy relationship to or a cordial regard for journalists.—*

“No, that’s one place where my tolerance was very small. I always resented the photographers and the press, because they were after ‘a story.’ They weren’t interested in what I was interested in, at all.”

*And one ever-present danger was that of being, often troublesomely, misquoted.—*

“Well, I got a bad one the first year I went out, as a matter of fact.

“There was the assumption, because I had come in from the field of business,

that I would be in favor of making Dartmouth a vocational-education institution. I went to Chicago, and the *Examiner*—this was a woman, too. . . . She came around, and she kept pressing me on, ‘Well, aren’t you in favor of vocational education?’ And somewhere along the line I said, yes, I was in favor of vocational education, but not for Dartmouth.

“But the *Examiner* came out the next day, greatly to my consternation, with big headlines: ‘Dartmouth President for Vocational Education.’ Fortunately, it didn’t do very much harm. But at the time it seemed to me very tragic.”

*Further to the overall subject of press considerations, he commented:—*

“I was conscious, oftentimes, of the fact that either I didn’t adequately ex-

press my point of view or that, in emphasizing some minor factor, it was entirely screwballed in porportion. But I don’t know that I could do any better if I was to start today. Because you’re approached the moment you step down from a train or a plane or anything else. And, ‘What is your attitude toward this or attitude toward that?’ And before you get done, you have either overexpressed or underexpressed how you feel in regard to it.

“But I think that is probably a weakness that attaches to public men, in general. On the other hand, you can’t keep your mouth entirely shut and refuse to say anything, because, then, whatever cause you’re representing is hurt.”

*It seemed to him that especially in the*

*Western section of the United States he had encountered problems of press misquotation, and often with regard to such matters as the perennially asked for "comparison between Dartmouth and the state institution."*—

"I had a particularly bad experience on that down at the University of Kansas [ . . . ]. And I tried there to lean over backwards in recognizing the merits of the state institution, and so forth. The paper came out the next day with 'Dartmouth President Recognizes Superiority of State Institutions.' "

*But his problems with the press were by no means restricted to incidents that occasionally arose outside of Hanover, New Hampshire ("I had quite a lot of trouble with The Dartmouth along the way, sometimes out of casual statements, sometimes out of serious*

*ones.")—in which connection he was amused by recalling something that derived from a whimsical comment he had once made while chatting informally with a group of students at the President's House.—*

"There was a crowd of boys up one night, and they got to asking me why I did various things. And I always went to the office out the Tuck Drive door. (It's peculiar the things they pick up and are interested in.) But one of the boys says, 'We are interested, Mr. Hopkins, do you ever use the front door?' And I tried to think, and I said, 'Not very much.'

*This in turn prompted the query, "Why is that?" To which, indicating that the Webster Avenue entrance of the President's House was where the undergraduate newspaper regularly was delivered, he responded,*

regarding his Tuck Drive departure pattern:—

“I guess it’s activated by my desire not to have to step over *The Dartmouth* in the morning.”

*Reaction from the student newspaper’s staff, when they learned of this barb that had been voiced by the President, was both immediate and intense.—*

“Within twenty-four hours *The Dartmouth* editors were up to see what I meant by that!”

*He spoke, too, of the academic administrator’s dilemma with respect to encouraging the undergraduates’ engagement in journalism—allowing freedom of expression, while concurrently hoping to foster attendant responsibility. And, in this connection, he alluded to an occasion when he had in fact*

*acted to suppress an editorial intended for publication in the student press—an incident associated with a 1925 visit made to Dartmouth by Calvin Coolidge, then the Vice President of the United States.—*

“It’s the only time I ever stepped into *The Dartmouth*’s territory. Coolidge came up here, and he made a terrible speech. Goodness, even I would have been willing to write an editorial against it! Nevertheless, he had been here as the guest of the College, and so forth.

“One of *The Dartmouth* boys came up, with this editorial which they were going to run the next day, and it just tore Coolidge apart. It was pretty bad. I immediately went down to *The Dartmouth* office, and I says, ‘I never have interfered with anything you’ve done before, and I don’t

intend to again, but,' I says, 'that editorial isn't going to be published.' And I says: 'He was the guest of the College. He came at a good deal of inconvenience to himself. And I have no hesitancy in a legitimate criticism, but this is just abuse and it can't be published.'

"They took exception to it, argued very strenuously for freedom of the press, and so forth. But, anyway, it wasn't published."

*Undoubtedly the grimmest occurrence of Mr. Hopkins' long presidency was when nine members of Theta Chi died of asphyxiation, at the fraternity house, during late February of 1934.—*

"The boy who ordinarily tended the furnace went off on a skiing stunt, and his roommate says, 'I'll take care of this while you're gone.'" And the boy didn't

make any inquires as to whether his roommate had ever seen a furnace or not, and I guess he hadn't. And it was a cold night. The roommate went downstairs and just simply piled the firebox full of coal, and closed all the dampers."

*E. M. H. vividly recalled the circumstances surrounding his receiving, at the President's House, notification of what had happened on that occasion.—*

"We were having a President's reception. [ . . . ] I can remember with great distinctness in regard to that, because in the middle of it John Boardman appeared in the door and motioned like this to me.

"They had just discovered, in the middle of Sunday afternoon, that there had been a tragedy. The janitor had come in the morning and looked into one of the

rooms and thought the men were asleep, and had gone home to luncheon and come back and nothing had happened—and eventually discovered that they were all dead. He, quite properly, got hold of the doctors, and John Boardman had been one of the doctors who went over there.

“And I went over and did what I could. And the coroner was very insistent that I should identify each man, which I couldn’t do in all cases, but I could in more than half of them.[. . .]

“There wasn’t anything, in any case, that would indicate that there was any tragedy. The men were perfectly peaceful-appearing. One thing that sticks in my memory was, there was a collie dog, and apparently the dog had sensed that something was wrong. He was sitting beside

the bed, with one paw across his master’s chest—and had died in that position.

“Well, anyway, I knew that publicity was coming soon on the thing, and we mobilized the whole administration force to be available. And, then, it came with a bang.

“Walter Winchell, on his broadcast that night—the very last thing in his broadcast—said, ‘Flash: [. . . Nine] students asphyxiated at Dartmouth in a fraternity house.’ Well, I knew the minute I heard that what was going to happen. And I got hold of the telephone company, and I told them I wanted the availability of all lines that they had. And the administrative corps just slept on separate telephones that night, answering.

“We got I don’t know how many hun-



dreds of calls, but they continued all night —[parents] concerned about their own sons. I told Walter Winchell later—and he became very irritated; really infuriated—but I told him I thought it was a very heartless thing to do.[. . .]

“Our original intention, if it hadn’t been for this Winchell thing, was to announce it in the morning papers. We spent quite a long time drawing up that statement and, then, telegraphed it to the Associated Press and to the various papers. And then, of course, the Winchell broadcast threw that all out.

“But I found on several instances, during the years, that the desirable thing was to get any publicity that there was out, officially and fully.”

*Mr. Hopkins himself took on the task of*

*breaking the news to the families of the men who had died.—*

“Well, I was impressed, in that whole thing, with the fact that fundamentally the human race is pretty kindly. There wasn’t a single parent that placed any blame on the College at all, in regard to the thing. I thought it was remarkable that they were as understanding as that.”

*Among the students killed was the son of a man whom Mr. Hopkins had known from back in the days when they worked together, years earlier, in Boston. (“He had sent the boy to Dartmouth because I was there.”) And a younger brother from the same family had in due course proceeded to Hanover as an undergraduate, too.—*

“The brother went off on this trip, this ski trip. And one of the very tragic mo-

ments for me was after I'd been over and seen what happened, and so forth, and had come home.

"They surrounded the house and wouldn't admit anybody there, and the boy came back and tried to go in. They told him he couldn't go in; and he came right over (the reception was still in operation), and he came up and asked me if his brother was among those that was found dead there. I had to tell him yes, right there. Everybody's heart was wrung with the thing.

"And then, on top of that, Bob Michelet, who was our best athlete, and one of the most popular men in College and a high-ranked man scholastically, got up from what apparently was a bad cold, and insisted on being up, to represent the stu-

dent body at the memorial service—went back into the hospital with pneumonia and died. So, it was tragedy continued."

*An opportunity embraced with special enthusiasm by President Hopkins during the early 1930s was that of having the Mexican artist José Clemente Orozco execute his mural sequence "The Epic of American Civilization" at Dartmouth.—*

"He'd come first as a visiting artist. [Professor of Art] Artemus Packard got him up here to illustrate work in soft plaster, on which I was told, and I guess it's true, that he was the leading exponent—recreating a lost art, and so forth."

*Orozco's initial visit was a great success.—*

"The undergraduate body became tremendously impressed with him while he was working. They'd gather in bigger

numbers than could be accommodated. And, then, Orozco himself proposed the murals—which is an interesting story in connection with it.

“He came around to the house one night. He had a portfolio with him, and he says, ‘I’ve got here the plan for some murals, that I’ve been carrying around for some years, looking for the proper wall space.’ And he says, ‘You’ve got it, and,’ he says, ‘I’ve come to ask if I can make some arrangement with the College to put the murals here.’ ”

*The place on campus that the artist had focussed upon was the vast wall area of Baker Library’s Reserve Corridor, and it soon proved that his proceeding with the project, as proposed, was strongly favored by all concerned: the Department of Art and the Col-*

*lege Librarian, as well as the President. Happily, financial considerations turned out to present no obstacle (“I was immediately intrigued with the idea, but I began to think in terms of what I knew people were getting for painting murals.”), because Señor Orozco generously indicated a willingness to undertake the work on the basis of simply having a teaching-faculty appointment during the time the fresco was in progress, 1932–1934.—*

“Well, I had never felt that it was cricket to tell the arrangements, because Orozco and Rivera [fellow Mexican artist Diego Rivera] just hated each other. And Orozco looked on Rivera as an exploiter, and he didn’t give Rivera any credit for convictions. (I don’t know whether Rivera had any or not, but Orozco didn’t think so!) And with the rivalry and com-

petition there was between them, I didn't feel at liberty to tell the facts, which were that we got what I think would have cost in the neighborhood of a hundred thousand dollars, probably, in a New York bank, for twenty thousand—which was the total cost of Orozco's being here."

*It was, accordingly, ironic that one of the reactions against the commissioning of the Orozco murals centered upon their supposed costliness to the College.—*

"The Daughters of the American Revolution in Colorado, for instance, sent a protest, signed by I don't know how many women (pages and pages and pages of it), for paying 'these immense sums' to a Mexican painter, when American painters were looking for work."

*Clearly, the murals, as they emerged, were*

*by their content and character going to lead to expressions of objection and to controversy. And in this regard the President was given by the artist a totally unexpected chance to veto, if he so wished, one of the intended panels.—*

"I was very much amused. He'd come up periodically and talk over his plans with me, and so forth. And when he got to that panel on the sterility of education, he came up and he says, 'Look,' he says, 'I've been treated too well here to do this.' And he says, 'I want to talk it over with you.'

"I says, 'Nothing doing.' I says, 'You've taken everybody else in the world over the hurdles, and we aren't going to ask any immunity at all on the thing.' And he was very greatly relieved,

as it proved. But he had been perfectly willing to give it up. I mean, he thought it was the gracious thing to do.”

*From the outset vigorous opposition to the murals was voiced, and as Orozco’s work on them progressed toward completion, protests continued to be lodged. The murals were attacked on both artistic and political grounds, as well as for what some critics regarded as their inappropriateness (“an exotic form of art that they didn’t think had any place here”—a startlingly modern presentation, by a foreign muralist, within a majestic neo-Georgian building, located on the campus of a colonial New England college). Indeed, so great and strident was the assault, that the beleaguered President, with the passage of a little time, decided he would attempt to provide an antidote to at least certain of*

*the discontent among the College’s alumni. Toward that end, in 1936 Walter Beach Humphrey (Dartmouth 1914) was commissioned to paint a series of very representational murals to adorn the Hovey Grill of Thayer Hall, murals illustrating the lyrics of Richard Hovey’s song about the institution’s founder, Eleazar Wheelock. (“I thought if they were so outraged at these [Orozco’s murals], we’d give them something that they’d understand.”) Unhappily, the strategy did not succeed.—*

“They were done for that. They didn’t work that way, though. . . .] And I facetiously said, sometimes, that I’d lost half the alumni on the Orozco murals and the other half on the Humphrey ones!”

*The 1930s brought on, of course, not only the era of the Great Depression, but also the*

*interval leading to the Second World War; and the immediate pre-war years proved to be particularly trying ones for Mr. Hopkins.—*

“That was about the only period during my administration that I became discouraged. I really got awfully discouraged about the undergraduates at that period.”

*From an early point he was persuaded that the menace of Adolph Hitler, and of totalitarianism generally, must be faced squarely and that the United States needed to become active in opposition to it. Nonetheless, the predominant sentiment on the Dartmouth campus, as at colleges and universities all across the land, was one of pacifism or, at best, of isolationism. As an example of the hostile climate within which his own views existed at that time, E.M.H. could painfully remember his attempt to chal-*

*lenge, while speaking during the Commencement season of 1940, what he regarded as the irresponsibility and the wrong-headedness then prevailing.—*

“I gave the baccalaureate, and I used as a text, from Ezekiel, ‘Son of man, stand upon thy feet’—and took the general tack that the college generation was lying down and that that wasn’t good for anybody. But I could actually *feel* the antagonism in the audience, through the whole thing.[. . .]

“There were about three years there when I was definitely at odds with almost everybody around me.”

*Finally, by mid-1941, campus opinion and the countrywide attitude toward the European war had begun to change. Meanwhile, however, Mr. Hopkins had, for his*

*part, variously committed himself to active support of the nation's preparedness measures, including his having taken on duties in Washington with the federal Office of Production Management. Also, as overt military participation by the United States became a certainty, he busied himself with efforts to secure from the government a commitment to establish an armed-services training program at the College. He especially wanted to have a Naval unit on campus, and his negotiations toward achieving such involved James V. Forrestal, who had briefly been an undergraduate in Hanover, as a member of the Dartmouth Class of 1915, and for whom Mr. Hopkins had the highest of regard ("There was one of the greatest men we've had in public life, in my estimation."), and Secretary of the Navy Frank*

*Knox, long-time publisher of New Hampshire's largest daily newspaper, the Manchester Union.—*

"I went down to see Jim Forrestal on the thing. 'Well,' he says, 'have you talked with the Secretary?' (Jim Forrestal was then Assistant Secretary.) And I said no. 'Well,' he said, 'let's go in and see him.' (I'd known Frank Knox pretty intimately and, as a matter of fact, hadn't gone to him originally because I did know him so well; I thought it would be better to come through Jim.) But, anyway, we went in.

"Frank Knox says, 'Well, this is in your field, Jim.' He says, 'What do you say?' Jim Forrestal says, 'Well, I would say to tell Hop that he's sure of something, if he'll wait. But,' he says, 'on the other hand, I don't want him to say any-

thing to anybody about it, because we don't want to be in a position of being investigated for Commies before we make the award.' ”

*Based on this assurance, Mr. Hopkins began biding his time, waiting for Navy Department action, yet under the necessity of keeping everyone else in ignorance of the Navy's intentions. (“There was a period there when I think the Trustees had every reason to feel pretty concerned about whether we were doing anything or not, to take up the slack.”) Obviously, having a federally funded program would be crucial to the College's wartime financial stability, as the enrollment of civilian students dropped away. Finally, the award came through for the creation at Dartmouth of a so-called “V-12 Unit,” which became indeed the largest one*

*in the entire country. It had, however, hardly been instituted before serious trouble arose locally over the actions, attitude, and manner of the officer assigned to command the new Naval unit in Hanover.—*

“He just took over and began to issue orders, and paid no attention whatever to the College. And I said to him one night, I says, ‘Look here,’ I says, ‘you’re running this place as though we were conquered territory.’ And he says, ‘Why not?’ [. . .]

“But the thing was awfully tight here. I mean, just as near mutiny as you could have. The boys weren’t taking to it at all.”

*It was a completely untenable situation, and President Hopkins' protestations to the Navy Department swiftly brought about the commandant's removal; thereafter things*



*proceeded smoothly and effectively. During this period, besides concerning himself with the administration of the College, E.M.H. was involved with various activity in the national interest. Then, as World War II finally neared its conclusion, he turned special concentration upon efforts to help ensure the peace that would follow. And, in addition, he also began to make preparations for his retirement from the Dartmouth presidency.—*

“As a matter of fact, it came about primarily because I suddenly came to the realization that the world was changing faster than I could keep up with it. And I didn’t have the energy or the vitality that I’d had in earlier years. And I was partly crippled, because I had developed an acute case of angina. [I was told there was no way] angina could be cured, but that it

could be arrested. But that that would be dependent entirely upon my stopping any active responsibility for anything.

“That seemed to focus up with the feeling I’d had previously, that the time had come for a younger man to take over, anyway. So, on the basis of that, I asked Doctor White [cardiologist Paul Dudley White of Boston] if he would give me a letter that I might read to the Trustees that would make some sense to them. And he gave me such a letter and I read it. And this was somewhere nearly a year and a half before the eventual election of a successor.

“But that’s the whole story in regard to the thing. And it’s primarily not my health, but the fact that I just didn’t feel competent to take the College over into

a new era, which I knew was coming. [. . .] I thought I foresaw (and events have made me feel sure I did) that in education, as in everything else, why, you'd have to make a complete readjustment—in regard to theory and practice both.

“That was primarily it. But, on the other hand, I don't know whether the angina situation would have been conclusive with me or not. The trouble with that was that the thing that seemed to trigger the attacks was speaking—which pretty nearly put me out of commission for continuing in the presidency, because I don't think a man can continue in the presidency without talking.

“I could talk for two or three minutes. And, then, the so-called 'chest pains' would begin. And they'd become so acute

that I just would be incoherent, that was all.[. . .]

“Time, as a matter of fact, has proved that Doctor White was eminently right on that, because while now any extraordinary effort of any sort—hurrying or lifting or anything else—will bring on [pains], if I lead a fairly quiet existence, why, I have no trouble at all from the heart, any longer.”

*The decision on Mr. Hopkins' part to leave the presidency lead necessarily, in turn, to other considerations for the College.—*

“Immediately, when I submitted my decision and this letter from Doctor White to the Trustees, they asked me for my suggestion as to what next. And I said if my wishes were to be considered, I would like to ask that each one of them

hold the matter in complete confidence. And I don't think a secret was ever better kept than that, for that was over a year.

"And then they asked, quite reasonably, if I had suggestions in mind [regarding a successor]. And I've forgotten the exact number, but I should say five or six I did have in mind; and I submitted them to the Board, expressing a wish that they would look them up and form their own opinions in regard to them.

"And it's an extraordinary thing, I think that there was never any leak, so far as I know, in that. They met these different men and had dinners with them, and they talked over the problems of the College with them and told them definitely that they were under consideration, and so forth.

"It was on the basis of a very careful survey of the whole situation by the Board of Trustees that the eventual decision was reached. This was done by the Board as a whole; no, not a special committee. When they finally got done, I asked them what their decision was; and their decision was definite in regard to the thing, and I was wholly in accord with it. And, so, the election was made.

"My attitude in that whole thing had come about partly through my own experience. I felt then, and I feel now, that this announcing, two or three years before, to the public that you're going to retire, just opens the door to the formation of cliques. And I wanted to avoid that if possible."

*The news of Ernest Martin Hopkins' intended retirement and of the election of John*

*Sloan Dickey (Class of 1929) as Dartmouth's twelfth President came as a complete surprise when made known, concurrently, by the Board of Trustees in late August 1945.—*

“And of course there were some of the faculty that took deep offense to that. I remember, immediately after the election of John Dickey, [Professor of Latin] Stuart Messer came in, and he says, ‘This thing seems to have gone perfectly smoothly. But,’ he says, ‘I want you to understand that every member of the faculty recognizes it as a slap in the face.’

“I asked him for elucidation, of course, in regard to that point. He went on, and I think he went farther than he honestly believed, but he laid down the proposition that the election of a president was primarily the faculty's function, and that I

had entirely ignored them in that—which was perfectly true, I had. But I still think that's the way to do it.”

*He was, indeed, unequivocal in his conviction that choosing the President of the College was solely a Trustee responsibility.—*

“That's right; that's it exactly. And I'm certain that John Dickey came in without the antagonisms and skepticism and doubt that would have existed if the thing had been discussed among the alumni for a year[ . . .].

*Although the presidential transition was swift, and despite the fact that he continued to reside in Hanover, Mr. Hopkins as President Emeritus kept, from the outset, strictly away from any active relationship to College affairs.—*

“I deliberately forced myself into the

attitude, into the understanding, that the College was in other hands and that I had divorced myself from it. It's a fact, it's a difficult thing to do. Periodically, I'd have to say to myself 'this is none of your business, keep out,' and so forth.

"It wasn't exactly an agreement, but I established the understanding between John Dickey and myself, even before he took office, that I wasn't to have any hand in things and I didn't want to be consulted. And John has respected it very completely. He has never asked for any advice in regard to anything and has gone his own way, which I think is the way it should be.

"He drops in periodically, once or twice a week. I don't go over there much, because I don't want to appear to be butting in, and they have a lot of social life, of

course, with one thing and another. But it isn't from any lack of friendship for him or confidence in him.

"Incidentally, I think he is doing a great job. He supplied just the thing that I was beginning to lack, and that was energy and vitality and so forth. And of course he has an inherent respect for scholarship, that I wouldn't say I lacked, but that I didn't, sometimes, pay attention to.

"If I were to make any criticism—which I'm not inclined to do—it would be that, on the picking of the faculty, I don't think that a Ph.D. is a final criterion in regard to teaching. He and I will never see alike on that, and fortunately we don't discuss it. So!"

*Actually, there was, in fact, one instance*

*of counsel imparted by E.M.H. to his successor, something that reached back in its frame of reference to a troublesome matter of the mid-1930s. It was proffered during a brief visit the incoming President made, in August of 1945, to the Hopkins' summer home in Maine.—*

“This was shortly after he was elected. He came down here. We talked in generalities about the College. But I very definitely kept away from specific issues, and he didn't ask for any advice in regard to those.

“He tells the story (I think very likely you've heard him tell it), he says that the last moment, before he left, I said I had one piece of advice to give to him, and that was to keep away from *murals!*”

*He laughed over recalling this. But it*

*was really, he averred, his sole bestowal upon the President-elect of any guidance.—*

“That's absolutely true. I didn't know it was going to bulk as large in his mind as it did[. . .]. But I felt then, and I feel now, that a predecessor can do a good deal of harm in telling his successor what to do. And I very carefully refrained from it. It makes a very good story, anyway!”

*As he looked back on the years 1916 through 1945, he made several observations on the nature of the presidential assignment within a college or university, including the following generalization:—*

“I discovered, as I went along in the presidency, that you were far better off if you assumed, always, that there was going to be trouble.”

*In rather the same vein, he proceeded:—*

“Do you know my daughter, Ann? Well, she’s quite a gal, in my opinion. But she gets perfectly furious when the alumni get around and talk of ‘the peaceful days of good old Hoppy.’ She says that she can’t remember ever having known *any* day that was peaceful!”

*And, further, be observed:—*

“I think a college president’s job is entirely different from what the average person visualizes it. Well, I always thought Meiklejohn [President Alexander Meiklejohn of Amherst College] put it pretty well. Meiklejohn said that it was like conducting an orchestra. He said you didn’t necessarily have to be a violin player or a clarinet player, but you had to be able to make the clarinet player and the violin player play the same tune.

“It’s a very difficult thing (it isn’t any different in colleges from what it is in other things—it’s more accentuated, but the same problems are in any organization): the jealousy of the top men. Some men accept it and recognize its validity and work to become top men themselves, and others get resentful about it and never do.

“But the biggest problem, in my estimation, in faculty relationships for a college president is to distinguish between the men who constantly grow and those who begin to coast. And that’s true in every faculty, and it’s apparently inherent in the human nature. You pick two men, with actually the same training, products of the same environment and, for all that you can see, with the equal promise, and

one man will go on and become invaluable, and the other becomes just a load you have to carry.

“That’s the exception I take to the American University Professors Association, and so forth. Actually, they aren’t any different from any labor union. They want to protect the incompetent, fundamentally. Of course, they won’t acknowledge that!”

*He focussed, too, on the restriction from any close personal contact with colleagues that typically attends one’s wearing of presidential mantle. (“Your top administrator can’t have any intimacies.”) And he reminisced, in this regard, about certain considerations that had arisen in 1916, when the Dartmouth Trustees’ overtures were made to him about taking on the presidency.—*

“Thinking back on it, that was Mrs. Hopkins’ objection to coming up here, in the beginning, when we were talking about the thing. She was, naturally and by all of her instincts, a very gay sort of person, played cards and danced and one thing and another. She says, ‘You know, if we go to Hanover, why, that’s out for both of us.’

“Well, I made light of it at the time, although I knew at the time that there was a good deal of validity to it. But I became convinced, very early, that she was entirely right on it. And we did, we cut out that whole area—partly to avoid the influence on ourselves of the intimacies and, more particularly, to avoid the mistaken judgments that would be bred by it.



“But I don’t think it’s any different in an educational institution than anywhere else. That’s one of the penalties of getting up in the thing. [ . . . ] Of course, all ordinary contacts, and so forth, went along as usual. But you can’t afford to get into the position of owing any obligations to anybody—or having it seem so, which is more important than the fact. That’s the only thing.

“I think John Dickey has suffered some under that. He said to me, two or three times, that he didn’t think people realized how lonely a life it was. I know what he means.”

*Then, to this he added:—*

“Actually, I think a college president’s job is harder on the wife than it is on the president.”

*And how had he and Mrs. Hopkins shared the burdens of office during his Dartmouth presidential years?—*

“Well, Mrs. Hopkins and I always went on the general principle that we’d each go our own way, professionally. Her profession was a college president’s wife, but it had nothing to do with the running of the institution. And I, on the other hand, never knew any of the social problems that were troubling her; she never told me. And because I had a happy experience that way, it seems to me the better way.”

*In treating of the restrictions or constraints that inevitably circumscribe a president’s freedom of action, E.M.H. cited an example from the past and, then, observed regarding it:—*

“Little things like that cropped up, every here and there. And I think that’s what I probably mean by talking about the loneliness of the presidency. You have a thing like that, where for every personal reason you’d like to say yes; and, yet, you’ve got to say no. And it hurts, sometimes.

“And that’s the kind of thing nobody can help you on. I mean, you just find yourself cornered, and you’ve got to say yes or no.”

*Often Ernest Martin Hopkins proceeded administratively on the basis of what he himself jokingly characterized as “free and easy actions,” in contrast to the practice of his mentor, President Tucker, who in similar situations typically sought to have definite and unanimous approval from his Board of*

*Trustees. Mr. Hopkins found it hard to speculate on just how (“... because, actually, I never ran up against any Trustee opposition”) he might, during his own presidency, have reacted to Board disapprobation.—*

“I don’t think that I would have given up what seemed to me a desirable policy for the College, if I could have got a majority vote. In other words, I valued and appreciated the fact that the Trustees always gave me the backing they did. But I don’t think I would have felt as insistent as Doctor Tucker did that you had to have a unanimous vote.

“Never, anywhere else, have I seen a situation where you could expect a unanimous vote. And, certainly, in the business positions I’ve been in you very seldom get a unanimous vote.”

*Touching, next, upon differences in attitude, as between himself and the man who succeeded him as President, he continued:—*

“And I recognize, constantly, in talking with John Dickey that his legal training sets him entirely apart from me on the methodology (if that’s a good word) for handling situations. He apparently was a good deal puzzled—and I don’t know but troubled—to find out where the authority came for kicking the fraternities out of freshman year. And he spoke with me one time about it, and said that there wasn’t anything in the Trustees or faculty records he could find.

“I laughed, and I said, ‘No.’ I says, ‘What actually happened, John, was this.’ I says, ‘I got so sick of seeing the best men in the freshman class flunked out

because all of their time was taken up in fraternity “chinning,” that I went home from an administration meeting where we’d separated four or five of the best men in the class, simply because their scholastic records were awful; telephoned down to *The Dartmouth* to put in a notice that hereafter there’d be no pledging until sophomore year.’

“Well, I don’t know that he was shocked, but at any rate he was much surprised at the thing. And he says, ‘Wasn’t there great objection to it?’ And I says, ‘Not that I remember.’ I said: ‘I don’t remember very clearly on these things; but, at any rate, nobody raised any serious question. And, as I recall it, I don’t think I ever took it either to the Trustees or the faculty.’

“I only cite that as a very minor instance. But I think that all of John’s training and all of his thinking would preclude *his* operating that way. He’d want somebody to authorize it.

“And I didn’t always get by without criticism, either, because I not infrequently got violently criticized for things where I didn’t take due precautions to get the backing that I should have. But I never had any criticism, that I know of, from the Trustees. Two or three times, at least, where I took action, they found that there was some discord on the thing and they came forward themselves with the suggestion that they validate it by voting the thing—which helped a good deal, of course.”

*What of E.M.H.’s judgment about col-*

*lege students of the era since his own retirement from the world of education?—*

“In spite of the ‘Beat Generation’ argument and everything else, I think the college constituency is far better today than it was twenty years ago[. . .]. I think that there’s more potentiality in the college generation of the present day than there was ten years ago, twenty years ago. In other words, I’m an optimist to that extent. I think the race improves, gradually.”

*And associated with this was a fascination, on his part, with a particular facet of the development of individuals.—*

“The thing that interests me more and more is, really, *when* a man approaches maturity, because some men seem to do it in college, some men seem to do it soon after, and then you see the man who doesn’t

begin to blossom until he's forty or forty-five years old—and there are some of those.”

“Then, there are the men who, for one reason or another, take what seems to be the wrong road.[. . .] And then there are the men that you're perfectly certain have got all sorts of potential, but somehow the door never opens for them—and you run up against a good many of those during a lifetime.”

*An important tenet of his educational philosophy was that there must exist both openness and breadth in intellectual inquiry—that, moreover, one must try to be especially sure that students are exposed to “the unconventional side.”—*

“I think the basis of one of my strong convictions in regard to college adminis-

tration came to me not from any academic life at all, but from my experience with the Western Electric Company where, when [in 1910] I went out there, I found that somewhere between thirty and forty thousand—nearer forty thousand, I think—employees, going out at night, were met at every entrance by soap-box orators: pretty specious, and pretty fallacious in many cases.

And yet, this training group that I was in charge of, who were all college graduates, were very much impressed by these people. And on inquiry from them I found that the experience I'd had at Dartmouth wasn't at all the experience that most of them had had: of hearing anything of more than one side. They were vulnerable as they could be; that is, these boys in the

training course were vulnerable to these soap-box orations, because nobody had ever presented that point of view, at all, to them—and there was just enough truth in it, so they became intrigued.

“And as I watched that—and I watched it a good deal, because I would circulate around the different exit gates at night and listen to the things—and I, not knowing that I was ever going to be in college work myself, nevertheless became impressed with the fact that I was going to tell my experience to people up here sometime. And the experience had a great deal to do with efforts I made—which were sometimes not very effective, but nevertheless the effort was made—to keep a balance on speakers and departments and all the rest of it.

“And I also became convinced of what I think would be, by some, thought to be heresy: that if you couldn’t have but one side presented in the College, you would do far more for the boy in giving him the unconventional side—which he wouldn’t get at home or in his home community. So, of the two, I would definitely lean toward the heresy side, rather than orthodoxy.

“I’m rather glad to get that in, because I think sometime the question may be raised again, as was raised frequently during my administration, as to why we had some of the people up here that we did have.”

*He spoke, also, of considerations of relating to one’s associates within a college.—*

“Well, I think if you’re going to com-

mand the loyalty of your subordinates, they need to be completely in your confidence. That would be my first specification in regard to that. And, then, there's the question of selection, too. They need to be selected with some care.

"I don't know that I've got very much to say beyond that—excepting that, even so, somebody's got to be head of the organization. But I don't think being head of the organization needs to be so secretive that you don't have some group who knows what you're trying to do and why you're trying to do it, and so forth.

"Actually, I always felt, of my own administration, that I wanted it an oligarchy, rather than a sub-setted thing; and I tried, as well as I could, to make it that.[. . .]

"I found that if you stuck to the definition that you wanted dedication to the College, why, you're pretty safe—whether on the faculty or in the administration."

*Looking back over nearly seventy years of varied association with Dartmouth—successively as undergraduate, staff member, active alumnus, President for nearly three decades, and finally as President Emeritus for almost a score of years more—Ernest Martin Hopkins could declare:—*

"I don't know that I would have asked any better life than I had. It's kind of wonderful to be working in a cause where you've got so many collaborators."

*And he went on to speak appreciatively of the devotion of his fellow workers, in their service to Dartmouth College—those of the faculty and of the administrative corps, as*

*well as others, like the Trustees (about which body he interjected, "I had the best Board of Trustees that any college president ever had, in my estimation.")—*

*"The pay check's pretty incidental—and of course an awful lot of people put in a lot of work without any pay checks."*

*Part of the reason for the existence of such selflessness and institutional dedication be summed up in simple, direct terms:—*

"I think people like to be associated with a going enterprise. I think there's a good deal more joy in the work if you feel that it's a going enterprise.

And I think that's where Dartmouth has been, perhaps, fortunate. Because with the foundations that Doctor Tucker laid, and everybody trying to build on them, why, it is—and it will continue to be—a growing concern."



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