THIS, TOO, IS A UNIVERSITY . . .

Rice Gains Stature As Eisenhower Addresses Convocation On Campus

By GRIFFIN SMITH

Beginning with the welcoming crowd of 2500 at International Airport, continuing through the 300,000 admirers lining Main Street, and climaxing with the 8000 students, faculty, and alumni seated at a special University Convocation in Autry Court, Monday, October 24, was truly “Eisenhower Day” in Houston and at Rice.

THE “RICE FAMILY” audience, jammed tightly into the field house, heard the president emphasize “long-term goals,” national solvency, and maintenance of a balanced system of local-federal authority, during his 30-minute address. Loudspeakers carried his message to people gathered outside, while television cameras beamed it to homes all over southeast Texas.

“It is customary on occasions such as this,” Mr. Eisenhower began, “for Age to speak to Youth, to hold up before the young, lessons from the past, to offer counsel for the future . . . to bequeath to its successor a formula for a much better world . . . We have learned the futility of this, but we continue to attempt it.”

CONCERNING ECONOMIC issues, the president compared personal financial problems to those of the government. “No one seriously argues that the average person can spend what he has not earned,” he said, observing that many people fail to recognize this situation when applied to the federal level. He further predicted that an unstable dollar would cause loss of confidence in the United States, resulting in

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I DO BELIEVE deeply," he said, "that every problem should be solved as close to home as it is possible to do so... The South has long been a staunch defender of the rights of the sovereign states to its great and everlasting credit."

A torrent of applause and cheering met the president when he declared, "I counsel you to continue to guard jealously the rights reserved to your state under our Constitution—to keep your local affairs out of the hands of a meddlesome, bumbling bureaucracy thousands of miles away!"

(THIS STATEMENT, controversial in its own right, was made more so with the realization that its speaker was himself in charge of the "humbling bureaucracy." The question immediately arises, of course: Why—if this is really the way Mr. Eisenhower feels about the bureaucracy—has his 7½-year administration taken little positive action to reduce its power, its meddling, or its humbling? The president left the door wide open for a repetition of the most common charge made against his administration; that his own influence over it is negligible.)

AN ANTICLIMATIC and somewhat extraneous acknowledgement of the United Nations followed. Met suddenly by stony silence (or occasional light applause from the faculty section) for his praise of the world organization, the president hurried hurried along to his conclusion: the prophecy that American youth would continue "to measure up to the world's finest." "I have faith," Mr. Eisenhower told the student body, "in America's young men and women, and in the future they will build."

THERE HAS BEEN consider- able sentiment to the effect that the address was not the promised "non-political, major policy speech." Unquestionably, those who hoped for a startling revelation of new foreign or domestic policy were sorely disappointed from the start. And the president did—by implication—strike back at some Democratic campaign charges. But in the unsolicited opinion of this writer, it was a sincere attempt at a non-political speech—he expressed, as he said, his "personal convictions." Insofar as a president of the United States can make the distinction, it was made. Candidate Kennedy's charges had been levelled against the operations of the federal government, and Mr. Eisenhower responded to them as head of the administration in power—not as a campaigner for Candidate Nixon.

THE MOST SOBERING and impressive feature of the entire program must have been the academic procession, led by President Eisenhower, with its dignified caps, gowns, and multicolored hoods, and the subsequent glittering display of great minds gathered on a 33 by 72 foot stage.

Rice's three deans, SA president Harry Lynch, Houston Mayor or Lewis Cutrer, Mrs. Oteta Culp Hobby, alumni president George Red, and George R. Brown, president of the Rice Board of Governors, were among those introduced before the speech.

THE PROGRAM, with its emphatic orientation toward the student and its readily apparent efforts at creating an aura of closeness between the president and the student body, indicated extensive planning by all concerned. Particularly, the guiding hand of Rice Provost Carey Crowe was evident.

All the little sights and sounds that "alter and illuminate" our impressions of any great event were not lacking here. The secret-service men, strategically placed inside the field house, alert, with what one onlooker termed "oscillating eyes"; the row of press correspondents in front of the platform, some reading intently their copies of the speech, some yawning, some just looking around; the president leaving, glancing up to the Hanszen College section wherever someone caught his eye and prompted a brief pause and a wide grin—each of these and countless others contributed to the creation of an overall picture unlike anything most of those present had ever seen before.

FROM THE VAST but nearly vacant field house five minutes before the doors opened, with chairs covering ever available inch of space and dominated by a jungle of TV scaffolding—from this to the vast and living field house 125 minutes later, when one man sat in his chair as 8000 others stood and cheered, the performance was unforgettable.

"This, too, is a University"; this was one of Rice's finest hours.