

## CHAPTER 7

### REMINISCENCES

#### I. INTRODUCTION

JAMES L. STERN\*

Let me introduce our guest, Clark Kerr. He has had a long and distinguished career in the industrial relations field as a teacher, arbitrator, and director of the University of California, Berkeley's Industrial Relations Institute. However, this has been overshadowed by his contributions in the field of higher education. In fact, the number of honorary awards and honorary degrees that he has received for his academic work is about the same as the minimum number of arbitration cases needed by a candidate for membership in our organization. Now before asking Clark to chat with us about what he has been doing for the past 55 years, I'll sum up his biographical data.

Clark was born in 1911 in Pennsylvania, where he was raised on a farm. He graduated from Swarthmore in 1932, received a master's degree from Stanford in 1934, and earned his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California in 1939. He married Catherine Spaulding in 1934. Kay and Clark have three children. He taught briefly at Stanford and for five years at the University of Washington, before joining the University of California, Berkeley faculty in 1945, where, as a Professor of Economics and Industrial Relations, he became a leading academic in the industrial relations field with many publications to his credit.

During World War II, Clark served on the California and Pacific Northwest Regional War Labor Boards. In addition, he was the

---

\*Member, National Academy of Arbitrators; Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

impartial chairman for Boeing and the Machinists Union. From 1945 to 1967 he held various positions in the University of California's structure: Director of the Institute of Industrial Relations from 1945 to 1952, Chancellor of UC Berkeley from 1952 to 1958, and President of the University of California from 1958 to 1967. From 1967 to 1973, he directed the famous Carnegie Commission on Higher Education Study, followed by the Carnegie Council Policy Studies on higher education from 1974 to 1979. He has been on the front cover of *Time*, *Business Week*, and other publications for his work in the field of higher education.

Despite his extensive involvement in academic administration and research about the development of higher education, he maintained a presence in the labor relations field, serving on various presidential committees in this field or on public review boards for the Auto Workers and Upholsters unions. He was impartial chairman of the Pacific Coast Waterfront Longshoremen and Waterfront Employers' Association. He was the permanent arbitrator for Armour Meat Packing and the meat packing unions. He served as the interest arbitrator for the Postal Workers in 1984.

## II. FIRESIDE CHAT

CLARK KERR\*\*

**James L. Stern:** Clark, why don't you tell us what led you to get active in the labor-management relations field.

**Clark Kerr:** Well, the answer to that is that nothing led me to it. I was kind of pushed into the field of industrial relations. It happened this way. I had been, as you mentioned, a student at Stanford University in labor economics. My great interest was in what was happening to the unemployed at that time. You may remember that by 1932, one-quarter of the American labor force was totally unemployed and another one-quarter was partially unemployed.

I was terribly interested in how these people were making out, particularly studying the self-help cooperatives of the unemployed. At Stanford, the economics faculty was the old, classical type, which thought there was nothing you can do to help unemployment

---

\*\*Honorary Life Member, National Academy of Arbitrators; Professor Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley.