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'Aura of Enthusiasm . . .

Kahn Pursues Varied Interests in Economics

By CAROLINE M. SIMON

Traveling to Kenyon College and the University of Washington to deliver lectures and then back to Washington, D.C. to testify before the Federal Power Commission is all in a week's work for Prof. Alfred E. Kahn, chairman of the Department of Economics.

A bespectacled man, constantly on the go, Kahn emits an aura of enthusiasm when he speaks of any of his varied interests.

An authority in the field of public regulation of private enterprise, Kahn maintains that "it is time we took care of our public needs as well as our private ones."

The nation has a "bias for private consumption," he said recently. "We may, however, be coming to the end of a long boom that has been going on since 1940, during which time recessions have been short-lived and growth rapid. There was a terrific push after World War II resulting later in excess capacity. This is all the more reason to satisfy our public wants now with this excess capacity."

The talk of the economy's growth during the presidential campaign, Kahn characterized as "very superficial, a numbers game." "There has however, been a progressive increase of unemployment of our resources," he said. Five to six percent of our work force has been idle, and persistent excess capacity has emerged in steel, oil and chemicals.

"There would not be reason for concern about our growth rate were there not still genuine economic needs to be satisfied," he added. "The quality of life in the United States still leaves much to be desired."

"Most of us who went into economics during the Depression did so because we thought the world was in a bad state. We had sort of idealistic reasons," Kahn explained.

Kahn received his B.A. and M.A.



PROF. ALFRED E. KAHN

President's Council of Economic Advisers.

His most recent contacts with the government have been as a special envoy to Israel last summer to help review the U.S. aid program there for the Department of Agriculture and as a witness before the FPC offering testimony on regulating the field price of natural gas.

Coming to the University in 1947, Kahn became Chairman of the Economics Department in 1958.

As one of the University's ever growing corps of bicycle riding professors, Kahn says of his life as a teacher, "Nobody in the world lives as well as I do."

The author of several books and articles on various phases of economics, Kahn says, "I do believe that it would be an unusual teach-

reads," Kahn said.

Defending both the student and teacher against the heavy University course load, Kahn believes that students will have a four-course program soon, "leaving more time for independent work."

As for teaching, Kahn maintains that the University's work load is among the highest of comparable institutions in the country. "While eight hours a week might not sound like much to a bricklayer, it means a lot of time in preparation and outside work for a professor," he said.

As chairman of one of the arts college's most popular departments, Kahn looks forward to a re-vamping in teaching of economics.

The department in the future will aim for three levels of courses with the primary courses being taught largely by professors in but

degrees from New York University and his Ph.D. from Yale University. During World War II he worked for the government in the Anti Trust Division of the Department of Justice, in the Department of Commerce and on the War Production Board.

Kahn has also worked for a private commission on Palestine surveys, the Brookings Institute and the Twentieth Century Fund

Between 1955 and 1957 Kahn was a senior staff member on the

er who did not also periodically put his mind to writing. Such writing imposes an invaluable discipline of creative thinking and organizing thoughts. You can get away with lots of talking to students but a good teacher must continuously be facing questions to which he alone must seek the answers."

On the other hand, forcing faculty members to "publish or perish" may result in a "situation where many people write too much and everyone writes and nobody

taught largely by professors in big lectures instead of entirely in the former smaller classes taught by instructors

The department will also add next year a special economics course for undergraduate engineers and other upperclassmen who have had calculus.

After spending the year 1954-55 as a Fulbright Research Fellow in Italy, Kahn is looking forward to his sabbatical in Ithaca next year as a time to "read, study and think."

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