

ENCAENIA SPEECH AT N. B. MUSEUM IN SAINT JOHN

I must first express my deep appreciation of the honour done me by the invitation to participate in this celebration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the University of New Brunswick. I have always had and still retain a degree of awe for a centre of learning. I remember contemplating the mysterious splendour of a university as I did that of a star "hung aloft the night"; it was a remote splendour, a sort of glory in isolation, which a profane presence might not touch. But I am glad to say that familiarity with such centres has not in me bred contempt. In them throughout the ages has the great universe of the mind been slowly constructed and expanded. Through them have most of the intellectual means of carrying out the endless quests of life been discovered; man's physical world has in fact been largely pre-fabricated in these intellectual workshops. We, on the other hand, are the workers in the field to whom those means are furnished for us. But President Trueman has given me some measure of reassurance and confidence in the graciousness of his invitation. My regret is that I cannot hope, in discharging this task, to acquit myself as your traditions of scholarship call for; I can only give you my own thoughts on what I shall speak, and thereafter throw myself on your mercy and generosity.

These past fifty years have been an extraordinary period in modern history, and to enable us to appreciate the transformed conditions in which we now live, it will, I think, be profitable to review briefly the significant events and developments which those years have witnessed in the life of this country as well as in the world at large. If, in 1900, we had been warned that by 1950 the world of Western Europe, the United States and ourselves would be locked in a struggle to maintain human liberty and democratic government, we should have looked upon that warning as the raving of a crank or a fanatic, and, as Caesar did the warning of the soothsayer, have passed it by. But that is precisely the issue joined between the East and the West today, and it behoves all of us to address ourselves somewhat to enquiries which may reveal the causes of that issue and the means by which it can be successfully engaged.

Just what generally was the social, economic and political outlook at the beginning of the century in this country? We were then, as we still are, a small population in relation to the immense area of the earth's surface which we administer. It was so scattered and so absorbed in home building and livelihood that it had little time for thinking of social questions beyond those of neighbourhood race and religion. We were concerned politically with consolidating the Confederation and creating a national consciousness. Our controversies were local and neither commercial nor intellectual interests extended in any considerable degree beyond the bounds of the Dominion. Immigration from Europe on a large scale had just commenced, and the western prairies were being opened to settlement. Vast railway expansion was creating two more transcontinental systems. Industrial activities were of minor importance, and the outlook towards labour may, perhaps be gauged by the fact that in many circles there was still a stubborn opposition to the principle of workmen's compensation.

The war of 1914 was the first violent impact upon that local absorption. It was an exposure to new and unsuspected manifestations of human nature which fell upon us like a violent assault. That, in

the existing civilization of what we thought to be peace, one group of men could set out to destroy other groups by the force of the most devastating engines of war ever known was a startling realization. The South African war had been on such a relatively small scale, and so remote, that our participation was more of the nature of an adventure than a grim encounter. But the World War sounded depths of the best in human beings of which either we had little suspicion or into which we abstained from enquiring. To some extent we had entered the front lines; with 60,000 Canadians dead on European soil and thousands of others brought home as human wrecks, the consciousness of social convulsion did to some extent at least become impressed on the minds of many.

The war was the occasion for assertions of national status. Our constitutional relations with Great Britain had long since recognized responsible government, and the occasional disagreement indicated a residue of colonial direction which was permitted to remain undetermined. Sir Robert Borden had successfully maintained his government's general control of the Canadian army and he likewise insisted that Canada in her own right should be a signatory to the treaty of peace. Not only did this take place, but we became a member of the League of Nations, which, whatever its weaknesses, failed not because of its faulty structure but because of its want of internal integrity. Even at that, as the pioneer organization, its accomplishment bears comparison with that so far of the United Nations.

Those relations were further clarified in 1926 by the declaration of equality of status between Great Britain and the Dominions. This was followed in 1931 by the Statute of Westminster, whose provisions in substance recognized the Dominions as independent members of a Commonwealth of nations having the common bond of a several allegiance to His Majesty. That formal relation would have had much less significance had it not been that it was the outward symbol of an underlying community of traditions, interests and attitudes, of the fact that Great Britain and the Dominions were built upon foundations of the same fundamental conceptions of society and of government.

In 1917 the revolution occurred whose reverberations are still thundering in the East. From the futile motions of Kerensky its direction passed under the control of Lenin and the Politburo. Since then we have watched its evolution through socialism and communism into the messianic imperialism of wind and power, at length apprehended by the western world.

We later beheld the march on Rome of the Fascist legions under Benito Mussolini, and we became acquainted with the bestial barbarities inflicted upon their opponents. We saw an old civilization in fluidity and disorder and its government, breaking with the past, attempting to impose upon it conceptions beyond its capacities or character to realize or maintain.

A similar process was at work in Germany. A social upheaval was underway to which the serious attention of the world was drawn in 1933 upon the formal accession of Hitler to the Chancellorship, and we know what followed during the next five years. We saw the deliberate plan to bring the government of the world under German hege-

mony. Every conceivable instrument of social influence was called into service; the lie itself became an instrument of national policy; and the calculated obliteration of millions of human beings, an incident to main objectives. Feeling, sympathy, pity and fear were erased from human sensibility.

Underlying these social manifestations was an equally revolutionary progress in science. The principle of relativity had been demonstrated by mathematics seemingly inherent in physical substance. In 1931 or thereabouts, Field Marshal Smuts, in an address to the Royal Society in London, spoke of the "social lag" as contrasted with the advance of science, and suggested a holiday in scientific research. Since then, in the field of nuclear physics, we have reached the point where, as recently declared by an atomic research scientist of Canada, by exploding what is known as a hydrogen bomb, we may, as a possibility, produce a chain reaction in the decomposition of matter that within the space of minutes may render this globe either the charred remains of a dead planet or a raging inferno of a satellite sun.

At the beginning of the century, too, we were introduced by Freud to the shadowy regions of the sub-conscious. Self-consciousness was set loose to become a powerful agent in social conduct. It has indirectly made us vividly aware of the use of economic, social and psychological power, the technique of its mass accumulation and its fantastic exercise; and although the will to action has enabled us to move mountains, it has also furnished us with correspondingly menacing instruments for destruction.

As we recall the events of the 1920's, we can trace more clearly the course of things ending in the disastrous depression of the 1930's. The introduction of Canadians to widespread unemployment and its public relief revealed economic aspects of the modern world and its organization of whose possibilities we were as a people quite unaware. We came to realize that we had become implicated in the relationships, particularly economic, of the world order. We saw, for example, the significance of the grain trade to the economic life of the country, and what the cessation of that trade meant to the inhabitants of the prairie provinces.

Throughout the second decade after the war, in Russia, revolution was consolidating; in France there was the confusion of Babel; in Germany and Italy expansionist plans were nearing execution; in Great Britain an evolutionary transformation was underway; in the United States the welfare measures of the New Deal were on the march. This furious ferment set the stage for the holocaust of 1939.

What are the legacies of that frenzy of war? We see a seething humanity, a humanity in revolt, over almost the entire globe. What are its basic manifestations? What do they portend? Do we see man, doomed by his nature, driving forward to his own annihilation? To a high degree, what we see is a conflagration of human resentment, resentment at social injustice, at exploitation, at insult to man's spirit and dignity; humanity is proclaiming as truth that it is one, made of the same stuff and from the same mould. In the light particularly of the political ideas and example of the West, what else could have been expected?

To what end have we been educating men and women? Certainly it has not been to subservience and the acknowledgment of different clay. It has in fact been directed largely towards fitting them, professedly on the basis of equality, to operate the machine; but we must ask the antecedent question, to what end is the machine?

The conflict between totalitarianism and democracy arises in part, it is said, by reason of the isolation of man from a necessary creative intimacy with work and from each other; that in industrial mass action they have become robots; that in the only world they know, they cannot feel themselves to be of it. As the standardized and stereotyped functions increase their grip, isolation becomes deeper and the decay of interest in work extends to other interests; the creative sources dry up; anxieties follow sterilities of mind, loss of confidence and resourcefulness; even the warmth and reassurance of family life, so far as they remain, have become impoverished.

What is offered the worker by the communist is a release from these burdens; release from his bewildered thoughts, his weariness, his thankless role, the tensions of responsibility and the struggle for things. He is invited into a burdenless communion of all who labour, a communion that promises a new purpose, the satisfactions of identity with a world that is theirs.

How are the fatal dangers of this latest spider and fly tragedy to be shown to democracy? How is it to be demonstrated that, in addition to the falsity of the utopian element, there are in this paradise inexorable feuehrers who intend to dictate and masses who must submit? If anything has been established in the past thirty years, it is in the old knowledge that such a concentration of absolute power means the steady corruption of the one group and the steadily deepening enslavement of the other. We ask how it is that free men as an act of liberation should surrender freedom for a mess of pottage, and we treat it as an amazing paradox; but is it as simple as that?

The picture is false again because the test of any way of life is its capacity to endure in relaxation. Under the impulse of religious fervour or other emotional exaltation, a capacity to dedicate or sacrifice may for a time find its full expression; but for the mass of life, exaltation wanes, and in the normal condition, to which, however it may change, we must ever return, life means to every individual inescapably, apart from the bond of labour, some measure of strife with himself and with environment, some degree of isolation.

While these unfoldings have been taking place, we have been proceeding largely unaware of the nature and the foundations of government. Certainly in this country we had generally assumed that democracy, as government by parliamentary representation, had become a permanent establishment; but the slightest appreciation of the convulsions throughout the world shows how mistaken that view is. We had assumed that government of the majority, with measured concessions to minorities, would meet all problems; that rights of property and of civil relations were natural rights which no law should abridge, that our legislative constitution in fact partook of the character of an order of nature itself. Through inertia, the influence of the education of the few, and the traditional deference to class eminence and distinction, that notion of stability became fundamental. But with the opening of Pandora's box of ideas, the liberation of mind and speech, the processes of education and the moving scene of the last forty

years, we see that government rests in the minds and actions of men and not in the structure of nature.

It seems to be a universal law that any idea or conception or course of conduct pursued logically beyond a certain limit will be found changed either in quality or in effects. For example, the rigidly logical development of the concept of private property in the setting of a legal order and an enlarging social community has been found to transform itself into that of an instrument of economic power of an entirely different nature and a scope that in certain circumstances threatens the very freedom from which it arose. Similarly, liberty pursued far enough degenerates into license. We see the same law at work in the fields of physics and chemistry; and it can be perceived in social process generally.

From the stark evidence of these years and of the laws which have been demonstrated, we must conclude, I think, that if we are to have freedom and stability of the social order, we must, as one condition, accept the principle of limitation and diffusion of power and interest, maintaining equilibrium by the rational processes of compromise and accommodation. In the totalitarian state, total power has become concentrated in an oligarchy; the salvation of democratic freedom depends upon the distribution of total power in a multiplicity of individual interests. The maintenance of equilibrium in that mass of conflicting forces is the function not only of government but of social control generally. There is nothing in government controversy that is not susceptible of rational analysis and adjustment; and it is by that process that the dominance of any power and the strangulation of others can be prevented. Civilized life becomes a state of things in balance. Accepting the premise that we are members of what may be called a granular society in which the individual constitutes the essential unit, we must at the same time realize that he as well as his life are what they are by the fact of their involvement in a social community; and that it is in the service of the multitude of interests of the community as well as those of the individual that the balance expends itself.

With such a fluid and seemingly unstable operation of general control, the foundations of such a community must obviously be built of common acceptance of permanent and fundamental nature, that is of those ideas and conceptions of the broadest scope upon which we can and must agree as basic and lasting assumptions; and social stability will be achieved in the degree that these common acceptances become strengthened and multiplied. With the alternative of chaos becoming increasingly apparent, in proviisonalism, even to the ideological fanatic, must lie the only hope of survival.

You will recall that Mr. Toynbee, in his world history, sees the evolution of human organization in terms not of nations or states but of civilizations. Western Europe and America today broadly constitute such a civilization. But that means that within that vast body of human beings there exist certain common characteristics; and in the perspective of a period considerably shorter than eternity, can it be doubted that in a slow process of change those underlying characteristics and uniformities will spread and deepen among men? And that even more so than they constitute the distinguishing marks of a civilization, do they constitute the security of order and solidarity in every community?

To the effectiveness of these basic assumptions, tolerance of upper differences is essential. Though tolerance does not logically require us to concede the possibility that any view we may confidently hold may be wrong, yet it is in fact greatly strengthened by that concession. With such a mild skepticism of our own infallibilities and with tolerance as the elastic bond of the community, we might begin to learn the nature of that broad liberty and peace of mind which the privileged among the Greeks once enjoyed.

I come to the role of Education. Let us make no mistake about it: there is going to be a wider sharing of things; but if we would avoid the barrenness which that alone will bring, there must be a fundamental change of emphasis on standards of value and objectives; we must begin at once to look to the untouched resources of minds and talents and faculties with their infinite opportunities of individual enrichment as the new El Dorado open to free exploitation by every one .

To maintain then, the government to which we have become habituated, we must engage ourselves in deeper understanding of the organized life of which we are a part. What we place first among the desirable objectives are the freedoms of the individual and their underlying foundations. But freedom is to be measured by the extent to which we accord it to those with whom we disagree, even violently disagree; and the conscious cultivation of tolerance which can absorb the shocks of opposed opinion, I put among the first ends of education in its social aspects.

Fundamental to that government is the rule of law for all. We must conceive the legal order, flexible and resilient however it may be, as standing in isolation, unaffected by any considerations except those which have been prescribed as universal in their application. It is said that the first sign of the break-up of the German state was the corrupt betrayal of the administration of law to the executive. A legal order stands as a bulwark against oppressive power; it is, in fact, the dictatorship of social reason. But it may be destroyed by the insidious process of piecemeal encroachment. The only guarantee of its integrity lies in its integrity as a whole; the technique employed by Hitler is too vivid in memory to permit of any misconception of what compromise would mean.

Basic to the maintenance of standards of living is a higher degree of economic literacy. We see both in England and the United States a deepening appreciation by Labour of the necessity for the understanding of those factors and operations which furnish the material life of the nation. It should be obvious that before goods can be distributed they must be produced; and the powerful unions now maintain economic departments as necessary to their functioning. By whatever means it may be done, greater understanding of these matters in all their bearings must be diffused throughout the body of citizens.

An appreciation also of the nature and effects as well as the dangers of the various modes of power and their exercise must likewise be diffused. The understanding of the effectiveness of concerted or monopolistic action or inaction must be accompanied by the realization of its complementary responsibility; no coercive power can be permitted to threaten the community as a whole.

With the multiplication of education agencies, there is the tendency, following the law of debasement, for standards to suffer. What we seek is the erection of a social order in which ideally every man become a centre of judgment, initiative and discipline. We are in the full flush of materialistic philosophy, not only in the Western world but in Russia and the entire East; but even if it were otherwise, to expect of men singly or in the mass even lip service to what we generally agree are the paramount values while they are in hunger or destitution, is, to say the least, futile; and today enlightened leadership accepts the necessity of a minimum standard as a condition of amenability to rational social appeal. With the engagement of the majority chiefly in attaining that minimum, the maintenance and spread of cultural values becomes all the more clearly the duty of educational leadership. Under the pressure of the example of the United States, in the development of its massive wealth and in its individual prizes, our course has been powerfully influenced in the same direction; and while we must not underestimate the role which the apparatus of life must play, we must protest against its attempt to usurp the ultimate ends of human effort.

The weaving of values into the texture of experience is a slow process, and when life at large is in the open, as it is today, example takes on a new importance. Disillusionment in what formerly held men, as it was said, to accept their lot, now derides teachings that contradict practice. Assuming the desirability of other than material ends and values, one condition of their general acceptance will be the example of leadership.

I suggest, then, as of first importance, also, the stimulation of the instinct of artistry of all classes in all fields of action. There is a void in life generally which through the exercise of imagination and intelligence must be filled. Apart altogether from the necessity of a sense of finish and satisfaction in our everyday work, and from the interest in the great literary heritage we possess, the increasing free time of men and women must be more profitably employed, and it is here that creative action will not only find its opportunity, but will meet the desideratum of modern civilization. In painting, in music, in the drama and the dance, we must arouse the latent powers of the individual to the artistic expression of the spirit, the thoughts, the feelings and actions of men; and in the limitless possibilities of craftsmanship, the sterilizing effect of mass and specialized occupation will find its antidote. These are not dreams of idealistic visions; they are ends within the reach of every person. The movements that are actually underway in this country hold the greatest promise of success, what is needed as a guarantee of success is the increased appreciation of their worth. The unremitting effort, the refashioning processes, the striving for economy, the demand for fineness; only when these characteristics of a despotic critical faculty have been made our own, will our achievements be worthy of our opportunities.

I have in mind chiefly the extended education of those who can draw on experience in forming their social ideas and conceiving the duties and privileges of citizenship. Education to them is the expansion and deepening of the understanding of experience, of awareness of the forces to which they are subject, and of the degree in which they can consciously affect them. This requirement of education brings home to the individual his personal responsibility. If he looks about, he will find himself enmeshed in an invisible network of relations with

his community, and he will see his course to lie in consciously developing those adaptabilities by which, through underlying stability, idiosyncracies shall be free. At the same time he will enrich not only himself but his community by his fidelity to standards of quality in his accomplishments.

There remains the task of wider social reconciliation. With the heterogeneous nature of modern society, with its many and diverse racial groups, with the demands and manifestations of individual and group freedoms, with the infinite degrees of intelligence and self-control, and in the differences of traditional disciplines, we must examine ourselves to see how far it is necessary to maintain the age-long strife engendered through different intellectual interpretations of the ultimate mysteries; whether we should not in good faith and reality accord others the right to the sanctity of their own contemplation of them. In our relations with our neighbours, let us learn also to practise those recognitions which seem to be so necessary to the vital needs of the personality. The alternative is plain; destructive powers and changes by convulsion no longer represent merely new methods of working out our destinies; we have brought ourselves to the point at which further resort to war or insurrection may mean total obliteration.

For meeting these demands, the universities must take the leading roles. Under imaginative leadership, by extending and expanding their traditional functions built up over the centuries, they will be able to stimulate an intellectual and cultural renaissance throughout this Dominion. In this Province we do not have the material wealth of perhaps most of the other provinces, but we can say with confidence that we possess all of those conditions and factors which are essential to success in such an enterprise. Canada is now, in every sense of the term, on her own resources; and no greater objective can lie before her people than the enhancement of her social intelligence and her artistic spirit. No university is better equipped to perform its share of such work than that under whose auspices I am speaking.

Canadians may take some satisfaction in their government. It is, I think, widely recognized that in the integrity, character and ability of her public servants, Canada meets high tests. That we have a responsible and wholesome citizenry was demonstrated during the war; the regulation of the economic life of this country, maintained for so many years, was by economists in several countries thought to be an impossible task; it was successful because of the responsible and articulate public spirit of Canadians. This is a moment for decision to make of this land one in which democratic government, rooted in freedom and responsibility, shall stand against all the storms and assaults that may beat upon it.

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