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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, delivered at the University of Maine, on June 20, 1954.

If in archaeological excavations going on in Egypt these days, with such exciting results for the extension of man's knowledge of his past, it were possible to find the records of the graduation ceremony of the class of '54 - that is 2954 B.C. - of the Egyptian University of Memphis, I am sure they would include, in hieroglyphics, a commencement address by Mr. Imhotep, LL.D., exhorting the young graduate to go out into the world with head high and heart steady, thanking the Sun God for the happy, carefree days he had been privileged to spend at dear old U. of M., where he had been trained so well to meet the challenge, now far greater than ever before, of the complex and difficult days ahead.

That sort of thing has been going on ever since. I have been subjected to it - and I have inflicted it on others.

Frankly, I can't think of anything new and stimulating, or worthwhile, to say about graduation and new graduates, an observation which, I have also discovered, is often the prelude to a long homily.

Such a commencement homily is usually full of good, if somewhat shop-worn advice, pointing out that the possession of your degree, which is supposed to label you as educated, imposes on you certain responsibilities and gives you certain advantages in facing the future.

You may well wonder about that future in which, according to some, our best chance of peace rests on the knowledge that each side can obliterate the other. At best this is a shaky and bleak basis for a decent existence; the peace that two scorpions in a bottle enjoy because each one knows that the other can sting it to death.

Of course, there never was a time in history when the future did not present its challenges; or when there were not men and women who were stimulated rather than daunted by them.