

We have failed to realize that our civilization is carried on from one generation to the next only by learning it and having a proper respect for a civilization that civilized men have achieved by struggle over the centuries. Civilization, therefore, is a very weak and fragile thing. In the course of the centuries, even in our own memory, this tiny light in an ocean of darkness has flickered and almost gone out. Instead of realizing that our way of life and civilization is a thin veneer which can be quickly lost, we tend to assume that it is our automatic heritage or that it is proportional to technological advance.

• (4:30 p.m.)

I think there is very little relationship between true cultural civilization on the one hand and technological advance on the other. We make the great error of assuming that this is automatically our heritage, but we should realize that it should be carefully nurtured and passed on from generation to generation. I believe that one of the greatest weaknesses of our present way of life and of our present civilization is that our economic situation is such that one pay cheque will not support the average household. Therefore, too many mothers have to provide a second pay cheque to allow the family to meet its economic needs, thereby depriving the children of a close-knit family relationship which I believe is essential to the passing on from one generation to the next of the values that we hold so dear.

In rural Canada and in the small communities it has been traditional for families to be closely knit. They have been the bulwark, in rural and small town areas, of traditional virtues to which a country must resort in times of stress. Yet in the last 25 years especially, the economic policies of one government after another have devastated the rural life of Canada so that much of rural Canada today consists of dead or dying communities, vacant houses, abandoned land and empty churches and schools.

This series of policies has been as effective in decimating the rural population as was the bubonic plague in the Dark Ages or the Communist programs in the Ukraine between the wars. One of the causes of this—I do not know why it arises, and I am sure it is not from malice on anyone's part—is that the bureaucratic planners in all governments seem to look upon rural people as, not people in the ordinary sense but merely automatons to produce cheap food. Their right to exist and to continue must be measured in cold, economic terms only. If they cannot produce wheat at so many cents a bushel, they have no right to exist, and so on.

I believe this is a very unfortunate state of affairs. I do not know for whom this cheap food should be produced, whether it is to satisfy the teeming millions in our metropolitan areas or whether it is an unconscious way of assuming that good life is not achievable in a rural setting. I think maybe that is it, and this is a great fallacy. With modern facilities I believe that any family can achieve a much higher standard of living, in the true sense of the word, on a given income in a rural setting or in a small town than it can in a large metropolitan area.

The Address—Mr. MacLean

At the same time we are letting our large cities grow, without plan or purpose, like a cancer until they strangle themselves in their own transportation systems, in pollution, crime and bad housing. They are staggering under a burden of taxation that they cannot support and which cannot even provide the essentials with which to carry on. Also, the uncontrolled and unplanned growth of our cities forces an ever-increasing percentage of their inhabitants to do without even the essentials of a reasonable life, such as a decent diet and a roof over their heads. These things they can afford.

Much of this growth is unplanned and it is probably stimulated, in most cases, by the activities of corporations. I do not want to be misunderstood. I believe that the most feasible way of carrying out the large-scale operations that are required in a modern society is through the corporations. However, having said that I must add that I do not believe that just because a corporation has no body to be whipped or no soul to be saved, it should not be required to be a good corporate citizen in the society in which it intends to live and should not take on the responsibility of paying the cost of the social disturbance that it creates by operating in one environment or another.

I think our large corporations should be required, under a rational taxation system, to assume at least some of the extra cost that society must bear because of pollution, because of congestion, because of the need for new schools and the infrastructure of roads that goes with the placing of an industrial operation in a given position. If even a token portion of these costs was imposed on corporations, they would make more sensible choices of the places in which they chose to operate. I think you would find that corporations would not locate additional enterprises in the large, overcrowded cities but, rather, would do so in the smaller towns from one end of this great nation to the other.

Only by dispersing the primary type of employment throughout the country together with the secondary service industries which create more and more jobs, only by creating this compounding effect, can regional economic disparity be eliminated. I believe this is where the central government could give leadership to the provinces in the planning of new cities, new towns and the rationalization of our industrial capacity as a nation.

I want to turn for a minute or two to another subject, that is, the type of leadership we have been receiving from this government for the last six or seven years. Perhaps this applies in some measure to all governments which I consider have shown hypocrisy and an erroneous judgment of values in dealing with the rest of the world and with ourselves. We are everlastingly rushing around to the far corners of the world with a "holier than thou" attitude, trying to make underdeveloped countries into our own image or telling other people what they should be doing. We subscribe to the principle of self-determination for peoples in Africa, countries like Rhodesia. But I have never heard the government say in a crystal-clear fashion that the right of self-determination by democratic means is a right which also pertains to all Canadians.