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In the centuries that have intervened since the days of the Ancients, there is only one thing more remarkable than the growth there has been in the knowledge we have of this world and of the affairs of the peoples which inhabit it, and that is the knowledge which has been acquired with respect to the universe, of which the world itself is the merest fragment of a part. The Greeks were learned in astronomy, but to them the world which they inhabited was not round as we know it to be to-day, but flat. The Pillars of Hercules, as they described them, stood at the confines of the world they knew. Even at the time of the birth of Christ, in what had become a civilization greater in matters of government than that of Greece, we read in the Scriptures that "there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." It was a world which in the light of our wider knowledge of to-day might find its corresponding area in the area of more than one of our own provinces. Since that time we have discovered that the world which we inhabit is not flat but round; that it turns on its axis once in every twenty-four hours, that in association with other planets it is part of a solar system, and that it moves round the sun once in the course of a year, thereby giving to us in turn the seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter.

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

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