

balanced and disinterested. There was a wide response to the inquiry because its subjects affect everybody; any account of our efforts is therefore not the report of an academic project but is, in the real sense of the phrase, a human interest story. Had you heard, as we did, from a group interested in painting, which held its exhibitions in the basement of the fire-hall (though they could not always count on this), or from amateur players who rehearsed in a garage, or from a choral society which practised in a small room in the Town Hall when it was not wanted for something else, you would have been struck as we were by the enthusiasm and the energy with which the arts are cherished, often under what would be discouraging conditions, throughout the country.

Now, what were we about, and what was the purpose of this inquiry? It seems to me that, underlying the Terms of Reference, were certain ideas, or notions, or assumptions and these I would like to discuss briefly with you.

We were of course instructed to examine and make recommendations upon certain institutions of the Federal Government, and upon other precise matters related to the national interest; and this we have done, as you may have noticed, in 146 recommendations of varying importance. But implied in the inquiry and giving coherence to what we have proposed (and indeed, justifying the creation of the Commission in the first place) there existed certain fundamental assumptions.

One assumption which no doubt led to the establishment of this inquiry, and which certainly was often impressed upon us throughout its course, was that a nation should be something more than an economic and political structure. Political and economic factors are naturally of obvious importance in any community. A man must be concerned with how his town is governed, or the balance of trade; but what really gives a people its character is what the citizen thinks about, and that in turn depends on what he reads, and what he sees and on the programmes he hears. It may be that we have been inclined to neglect the importance of these non-material things, and if this is in fact true, it should be a matter of national concern.

A second assumption is closely related to the first. In most countries, literature, music, the arts, are not only symptoms, but at the same time are effective causes of a strong sense of community which in times of peace or peril is a nation's greatest asset. In this country too the arts are now, but can be to a greater degree, one of the most effective unifying forces.

There is a third assumption: although it is said that we live in a "scientific age", civilizations in the western world are still measured by their writers, artists and philosophers. The mechanical achievements of Imperial Rome were impressive in their time; but Rome's influence upon later civilization has been through its writers and its law-givers whose work continued to be important long after the temples and aqueducts of the Imperial city had fallen into ruin. This third assumption then, consists in the notion that we should remember how easy it is to confuse the means of civilization with civilization itself. Is it fair to point out that in Canada we have most of the world's nickel and, as yet, no national library?