

I beg the Senate of the University to accept the assurance of my sincere appreciation of the honor that has been done me, and to believe that my appreciation is the greater because the distinction is conferred by a University founded and conducted by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate—which from small beginning has become, through their indefatigable devotion, a great centre of Catholic culture.

It has been my good fortune to be brought into close and extensive contact with the Oblate community in that sphere of their work which is the noblest men can engage in—the spreading of the Gospel, and the pioneering of civilization in the immense mission field of our great west. I have spent many days with them in the life of the wilds “where not a single drop of acrimony mingles in the disembosoming of feeling and the flow of soul.” I have seen their lives and their labors, and have been filled with admiration for their zeal and heroism. No men have told less of their work, but if the annals of their congregation are ever edited and published for general circulation, a work will appear which will rival in historic interest and heroic exploits the renowned “*Relations des Jesuites*.” They were not called upon in Canada, it is true, as were the Jesuits in their earlier American mission, to water with their blood the soil for the seed of the Gospel. But they sowed “in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,” the seed of the faith where now are cities and churches and schools in western Canada; and what the church is there today is almost exclusively the result of their labors. And they still press on. The emigrant to the Peace River country will find them there. The railway builders in Northern British Columbia will learn that Oblates were long in advance of them. Let settlement press towards the Hudson’s Bay, and the trails will be found blazed and the rivers and lakes marked by these intrepid missionaries. Let the seekers of minerals go to the further confines of the frozen north, and there he will find the chapels and rude mission houses built by these men who have braved the north wind in his home to break the bread of life for the aborigines.

My travels have run along trails and by waters that were traversed by Taché when he made his first trip as far north as Isle a la Crosse, and I have seen much of the shelterless prairie, the then unbroken wood land, the dreary muskegs and the dangerous waters over which, in summer’s intense heat and winter’s biting blizzards, he travelled, in perils and much tribulation, in laying