

this phrase has content for us. I know, also, that we are all conscious of the danger to our own political institutions when freedom is attacked in other parts of the world. In the complex series of events which twice in a generation has led us into war, we have been profoundly influenced in our decisions by the peril which threatened the democracies of western Europe. From our joint political inheritance, as well as from our common experience, we have come as a people to distrust and dislike governments which rule by force and which suppress free comment on their activities. We know that stability is lacking where consent is absent. We believe that the greatest safeguard against the aggressive policies of any government is the freely expressed judgment of its own people. This does not mean that we have ever sought to interfere in the affairs of others, or to meddle in situations which were obviously outside our interest or beyond our control. It does mean, however, that we have consistently sought and found our friends amongst those of like political traditions. It means equally that we have realized that a threat to the liberty of western Europe, where our political ideas were nurtured, was a threat to our own way of life. This realization has perhaps not been comprehended or expressed by every group and every individual in the country with as much clarity and coherence as, looking back on the events, we should like. I have no doubt, however, that for the young men of our Universities who fought in this war, it was a part of our national inheritance which they well understood.

c) The Rule of Law in National and International Affairs

In the third place respect for the rule of law has become an integral part of our external as of our domestic policy. The supremacy of law in our own political system is so familiar that we are in constant danger of taking it for granted. We know, however, that historically the development of this principle is a necessary antecedent to self-government. The first great victory on the road to freedom was the establishment in early modern times of the principle that both governments and peoples were subject to the impartial administration of the courts. Only then could the further step be taken by which the people gave their consent to the laws by which they were governed.

Within the past decade we have been reminded by the hideous example of the fascist states of the evil which befalls a nation when the government sets itself above the law. Beneath the spurious efficiency of such a state, we have perceived the helpless plight of individuals who have been deprived of the primary right of an impartial administration of the law.

We have seen also the chaos which is brought to world affairs when lawlessness is practised in the field of international relations. The development of an international code of law is still in its early stages. The past decade has done much to delay and distort this growth. I feel sure, however, that we in this country are agreed that the freedom of nations depends upon the rule of law amongst states. We have shown this concretely in our willingness to accept the decisions of international tribunals, courts of arbitration and other bodies of a judicial nature, in which we have participated. There can be no doubt that the Canadian people unanimously support this principle.