

Contending Forces which have survived through the Ages.

In this way, there come to be, down through the ages, two great contending forces, the one seeking change in the form of more in the way of equality between men and in the form of greater freedom from that obtaining in an existing condition or order, the other seeking to retain the power of government at the hands of a privileged few, and to conserve or to keep in existing form institutions as established, together with the rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

Let me say a word about these contending forces. First of all, may I say that, if we are to do justice to each of them, we must avoid, as we do in other things, judging them by their extremes. Liberal ideas or the Liberal attitude carried to an extreme, might lead to a degree of license which would be equivalent to anarchy in which event the condition would cease to be one of liberty or freedom altogether, for the simple reason that true freedom for the individual can only exist where the freedom of other individuals is also recognized. Similarly, Conservatism carried to an extreme would lead to the most ruthless kind of despotism, or to a stagnation which would only serve to destroy what it had originally meant to conserve. It is not by the extremes that we judge the merits of any movement or policy. It is by its natural tendency under normal conditions.

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

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