

praising those responsible for them.

In these very difficult times, however, such institutions as yours even at a time of celebration are forced to look forward rather than back. They are drawn rather to face the challenge of the future than to contemplate the achievements of the past.

Universities today are rightly claiming evercreasing support for their manifold activities. This support they ask and receive from their students, from their graduates, from private persons and from voluntary societies as well as from government. The support is welcome, and is often generous, but universities are now illustrating their own version of the Malthusian law: their activities are forever pressing, and pressing closely on their means of subsistence. They are, therefore, obliged to ask themselves regularly, and persistently; What claims come first? And if all seem pressing, How can we secure increased funds? And these two questions lead inevitably to the third and fundamental one, not always considered in its correct priority, What, in essence, is a university and what is its function in relation to civilized society?

In dealing with this question, I have no novel or startling statements to make. I am only carrying on the conversation which constantly engages all those Canadians who know and love our universities. It is, I think, these earnest conversations, whether public or private, about meaning and purpose which alone can maintain and direct our growth.

May I commence by stating this as a proposition: that the primary and essential function which the university has increasingly assumed is nothing less than the care and preservation of the entire inheritance of our civilization; that it is for the universities to maintain and to keep alive the memory and the evidence of our accumulated cultural achievements, in the arts and letters, in science, in philosophy and in religion; that it is for them to make this intangible heritage available to each generation; to cultivate it and to present it in such a fashion that it may be, so far as possible, comprehensible to all.

This responsibility imposes on the group of scholars young and old which constitutes the core of a university, many tasks which still go to make up one whole. They must acquire knowledge both ample and precise. No field is too broad for their investigation, no detail too minute for their attention. They will, inevitably, in the process of acquisition add to the sum of knowledge. For the scholar can only reach the bounds of knowledge by looking beyond them.

To the acquisition of knowledge must be added the task of arrangement. As new knowledge is added categories change, and old classifications become useless. The whole body of knowledge must constantly be re-thought and rearranged if the new facts are to be fully valued and the old understood. The university in the intellectual world is like careful librarian who knows that books not classified and arranged are worse than lost.