

*The Address—Mr. Dinsdale*

the prairies, the home of those wild and woolly westerners. There are not too many of them in the Liberal ranks at the moment. It is an unfortunate thing because it seems to suggest that political power in this country tends to concentrate in the more populous, more wealthy and more powerful provinces. I say that it will be a happy day when this consolidation does take place and when we have a two-party system that embraces a broad cross-section of national interest and not any particular sectional interest. After all, democracy is compromise. I look forward to that development even in the next four years in Canada.

Our general problem—that is, the general problem that I briefly referred to—has been aggravated by the general confusion of this twentieth century of ours which began on a wave of bright promise but which, as we stand here in mid-century, does not look too bright for the next fifty years. When the western world moved into the 1900's, into the twentieth century, everybody believed in inevitable progress towards perfection. We thought it was just a matter of time until we reached the golden age just around the corner. All sorts of ideas were abroad in the world. For example, Marxism, or scientific socialism as they sometimes called it, was making its impact in a practical way. Social Darwinism or, as it is sometimes called, social evolution was also becoming effective particularly among the universities, colleges and the intellectual leaders. It gave rise to a practical political movement known as Fabianism, which believed in the inevitability of gradualness. This is an old idea that every day in every way we are getting better and better. Those bright hopes have diminished and there is abroad in the world a wave of pessimism rather than a wave of optimism. I know that in my own short experience—if I may make a personal reference—I have come through three or four successive stages that are rather confusing, to say the least: First a war baby; then part of the flaming youth of the 1920's; then the forgotten generation of the depression; and finally the fighting generation of 1939 to 1949—and all that in the short space of two or three decades. These influences, which have affected all the young men and women who have been growing up in the modern world, have had their impact upon governments as well.

Because of the increasing confusion and uncertainty in the modern world people in the free world have tended to fall back more and more upon government controls, regulations, and coercion. I have often heard the late Dr. Innis, that outstanding economist

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from the University of Toronto, use the phrase that periods of disturbance economically always result in appeals to force and coercion. Certainly the political record since the twenties has demonstrated the truth of that statement. Growing out of this confusion there have been all sorts of new social movements, political movements and religious movements, each one in its own way promising to solve all the problems that are confronting us and bringing in the new Jerusalem by its own particular form of panacea. Political movements have tended towards materialistic emphasis because in the twentieth century the emphasis is on materialism, and political parties have usually oversimplified the problems by suggesting that some economic manipulation would usher in the golden age.

In some cases there has been a confusion of religion and politics in political groups. In fact, it is hard in some European countries where political movements have grown up to say whether they are religious movements or whether they are political movements. I think it is rather dangerous when politicians in a democracy take themselves too seriously and begin to think that they hold the solution for all the problems; that they are infallible and everybody else is all wrong. That is a heresy that is not in the best interests of the democratic form of government, because the democrat must always take into consideration the possibility that he may be wrong and by means of discussion, negotiation and so forth arrive at some common basis of action and understanding.

All this leads to the super-state. The resulting loss of faith in our other basic social institutions in a free society has resulted in an increasing dependence by the individual citizen upon a paternalistic and all-powerful government. This is the situation I feel that emerges out of our recent unfortunate election, and this is not just sour grapes. I do not just speak from a partisan viewpoint. I believe it is an unfortunate situation because as I interpreted the political pulse before the election there was a movement of protest afoot, and it could have come to fruition. I am sure the common sense of the people of this country would have ushered in a more balanced democratic state of affairs had they really been given a chance.

Some of the leaders of the Liberal party are aware of these developments and they are sensitive on the point; quite self-conscious about it. The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), for example, speaking on October 12 at the Montreal shoe and leather fair, had this to say:

It certainly will be the practice of any government with which I am associated that, except in