

An address by the Governor General, His Excellency the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, delivered at the Convocation of the University of Western Ontario, London, Ont., March 7, 1953.

Western University in its seventy-five years has not been without the tribulations promised to the saints. I need not dwell on your past history. It would not be fitting for me to reduce to a cold chronicle the story which is built into the very lives of so many members of the university present here today. I have, however, given myself the pleasure of looking into this story, and I have been deeply impressed at the combination of audacity and persistence on which you have flourished. The original demand for a university on the "Western fringes" - to quote a significant phrase - was typical at once of the saintly daring of the missionary who thinks nothing too good for his flock, and of the more worldly sentiments of those who refused to be absorbed by Toronto.

But if it was audacity that seized on a charter -- a charter which envisaged colleges in arts, science, medicine, law and engineering -- it was persistence which clung on during the difficult years when problems of religious affiliation, of absentee presidents, of hesitating students, and, of course, of fugitive finances harassed those who continued to believe in the predestination of Western University. The support which came from fees and private gifts was, indeed, persistent, but it was not lavish. Only fifty years ago you were still facing a deficit. It is true that the amount was less than \$1000 but this trifling sum was, understandably, disturbing to those who were operating on a budget of \$3,500.

Audacity and persistence have now been rewarded and Western University has won an honourable and I think a very happy place in the local community, in the province, and in the nation. You have a fruitful association with affiliated colleges; you receive necessary and, I do not doubt, welcome support from federal and provincial governments. I think, however, that I am right in saying that the association which marked the great change in your fortunes is the one which gives you your special character among Canadian universities today; your intimate and happy association with the City of London. London as a city is well-known for its keen enjoyment of the arts, and for the generous patronage which it extends to them. It may well be proud of its relations with this foundation.

I could say much in praise of this university. I could recount the names of your distinguished scientists and scholars; I could speak of the well-merited recognition that you have received throughout our country and abroad; I could praise the far-sighted generosity which has given you dignified and commodious buildings, and I could pay tribute to your own earnest efforts to offer to young men and women a generous and balanced programme of study and recreation. I shall not, however, enlarge on these matters. It is a great pleasure and privilege to observe these fine accomplishments and to join with you today in