

The achievements of your people in the realm of art alone from Harappa and Mohenjo Daro to the sumptuous beauty of Mogul architecture have assured India a permanent place among the great civilisations of the world. I have already seen a few examples of this art in your capital city and, I am glad to say, I will see more during my visit to other parts of your country.

In this University, where Hindus, Muslims and Christians and the members of other religions all study together, I am reminded of the long tradition of religious toleration in India. I am told that about fifteen hundred years ago India gave refuge to Jews who fled from Babylon, and that the ancient Christian church in South India also goes back to the first centuries of the Christian era. The ideals of religious freedom embodied in your constitution clearly show that you do not forget the lesson of your long history that only through the practice of mutual toleration can men of different faiths live happily together and each make their most fruitful contribution to the well-being of the nation.

This attitude of tolerance, or to put it more positively, the effort to co-operate actively with others different from ourselves, seems to have been recognized as of the greatest importance during all periods of Indian history. This is true not only of persons of different religions but also of persons who are of different races or who speak different languages or whose customs and traditions distinguish them from the majority of the population.

How else but through tolerance could unity be achieved in a country so vast, so complex and so diverse in its natural surroundings? For in spite of the differences and contrasts which are so marked in India, I know that there is something essentially and demonstrably Indian, a heritage that belongs to all of your people.

This situation reminds me of my own country. Canada is a very new land compared with yours, but like yours it is of great size and like yours it stretches to the sea in three of the four directions of the compass. Over the doors of our Houses of Parliament is written: "The wholesome sea is at her gates -- her gates both east and west." Although a large part of Canada is still uninhabited, our people, like yours, are spread over widely different geographical regions and live under many different conditions. We, too, have our mountains and our plains, our rivers and our forests, our countryside and our villages and towns. And, we, too have a climate which has been a challenge to human perseverance and ingenuity.

But there are similarities which are more deep-rooted. Like you, we have built our national unity on co-operation among people with various racial, linguistic and religious backgrounds. We Canadians may be of English, Irish, Scottish, French, German, Italian, Ukrainian or other European origin, or from India or Pakistan or China or Japan, but we are all, above all, Canadians. Each group makes its own characteristic contribution to the culture of the whole, and so we achieve something of that unity in diversity which is the essential ingredient of nationhood and out of which ultimately, I hope, world brotherhood can grow.