

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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THE UNIVERSITY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs,
the Honourable Paul Martin, to the National Conference of
Canadian Universities and Colleges, Ottawa, April 20, 1964.

It is both a pleasure and a privilege for me to have this opportunity of speaking to this Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges. "The University and International Affairs" is a subject with which many of you are closely concerned and one which has interested me intensely for a long time and I appreciate this opportunity of telling you of some of my own thoughts and hopes in this challenging field of endeavour.

There is a direct relationship between Canadian foreign policy and the work done at Canadian universities. Both in the formulation of Canadian policy and in the creation of public understanding and public support for Canadian foreign policy, it is absolutely essential that this relationship be vigorous and vibrant if Canada is to have a foreign policy which will allow us to have our maximum influence in today's changing world. Certainly, over the years there have been very close ties between the Department I am privileged to preside over and the universities. Some of our most distinguished Canadians, men like O.D. Skelton, R.A. MacKay, George Glazebrook, Norman Robertson, Marcel Cadieux and many others, have been and are equally at home in either milieu. I express the hope that this valuable interchange, which is part of the Canadian tradition, between the Department of External Affairs and the universities can grow and flourish even more in the days ahead.

The philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, once said: "A university should be, at one and the same time, local, national and world wide. It is of the essence of learning that it be world wide and effectiveness requires local and national adaptations. It is not easy to hold the balance. But unless this difficult balance be held with some genius, the university is to that extent defective."

The primary responsibility of the university community must always be to itself, to its own ancient and honoured traditions of freedom. By remaining true to its own heritage of scholarship and learning and the relentless pursuit of truth, the university will respond to the great new demands which confront our contemporary world.

Internal Pressures Never Greater

At this conference you have been studying a document which discusses the nature and extent of international studies in Canadian universities. You are meeting to study the implications of this report at a time when the internal pressures upon Canadian universities have never been greater. Too many students and too few professors, too many legitimate needs and too few dollars - this is the cruel dilemma facing Canadian universities today. And yet, in spite of this dilemma, I think we all recognize that the evolution of the international character of all our institutions today demands every determination and every sacrifice of which we are capable. Whatever may be the difficulties, the universities must be in the vanguard of mankind's march towards a true international order.

The university at its best throughout the centuries has always displayed an international character. Since ancient times, when Horace and the younger Cicero left Italy to take advanced studies in Athens and later when the scholars of the Near East journeyed to Alexandria, this trend has continued down through the centuries. Perhaps it reached its finest hour in the early Middle Ages, when Paris, Bologna and Oxford exhibited a cosmopolitan character, the very recollection of which still presents a sense of excitement and exhilaration.

In this century the movement of international students and the stimulus to internationalism which they represent has developed into one of the most positive and priceless aspects of the "jet age". I am glad to take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to a new organization which has recently been established in Canada, known as the Canadian Service of Overseas Students and Trainees. This organization, which has assumed responsibility for continuing and extending most of the national services for overseas students and trainees that have previously been provided by the National Committee for Friendly Relations with Overseas Students (FROS), World University Service of Canada (WUSC), and the joint FROS-WUSC Overseas Students Reception Service, is most welcome. It has a highly important and valuable role to play in providing friendship and guidance to international students, and the Government deeply appreciates this initiative and assures this organization of our fullest co-operation.

Today we often hear cliches about the challenges of the contemporary world. The ever-apparent crisis of the moment is always upon us. However, there is no doubt that today we are living in the most rapidly changing world in all history. The pace of change is breathtaking.

Crisis of Rapid Change

These are days in which the old terms of reference as we used to know them are no longer adequate, days in which new power centres are coming to life in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America and in other parts of the developing world, days in which the whole nature of the international structure is in the process of transformation, days in which some of the old traditions upon which most of our learning has been based may need to be re-examined.

It was Gibbon who once observed that: "There exists in human nature a strong propensity to depreciate the advantages and to magnify the evils of the present time." But I assure you that it is no obsession with the contemporary that suggests that our civilization has come to a crisis point of unprecedented gravity caused by a failure in communication and understanding between peoples of different races, backgrounds and continents. The rapidity of change in virtually all areas of human endeavour today has greatly increased our interdependence and made our task of living together in peace with our fellowmen on this small planet much more complex, much more hazardous and much more imperative than ever before.

The superlative need is for knowledge and for understanding. It is here that the university must accept its primary and fundamental responsibilities to provide more knowledge and more understanding, so as to better lay the foundation-stones for the new international situation in which we find ourselves.

I think it is probably true to say that, when the average graduate of a Canadian university thinks about international affairs, he does so essentially in terms of North America or the North Atlantic triangle, or perhaps Western Europe and the older Commonwealth. In these areas he has a certain background, a certain feeling for history, a certain depth in political theory and in general and basic information. But if he reads about Asia or Africa or South America or China, as so often he does today, he has little or no background. He has few terms of reference and few points of departure and he reads what is offered without perhaps enough critical facility or capacity for judgment.

I think it is here that one can see most clearly the relationship between the university and international affairs in Canada. The academic community performs the invaluable function of increasing the basic fund of knowledge in Canada about developments in international affairs and the problems and attitudes of foreign countries.

Need for More Foreign-Policy Research

We need much more research on foreign-policy problems in Canada. We need more information about foreign countries. This research, to be really meaningful, will in turn require a solid basis of scholarship. As events and developments in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and in China have to be more and more taken into account in the formulation of our foreign policy, the need for our universities to provide us with the knowledge and understanding of these areas becomes very urgent. Until there exist in our universities strong centres for studying these areas of the world from which good research can be done, a knowledgeable body of experts can be assembled, and undergraduate and graduate courses can be formulated, we shall not develop in Canada that informed and articulate public opinion which in our democracy must constitute the bed-rock upon which our policies are formulated. On this point let me quote to you from the report you are studying at this conference:

"The broad conclusion of this report is that the sound formation in these fields of study has yet to be realized in Canada. There is an urgent need, on the part of Canada as a whole, for development of these studies. This need must therefore be a concern of all Canadian

universities. Also, because it is a need of Canada as a whole, it must be a concern of the Federal Government; and, because Canada is governed by a federal system in which education comes under provincial jurisdiction, it must be a concern of provincial governments. The urgency of this matter calls for a new sense of commitment and for co-operation, collaboration and action by the universities, the Federal Government and the provincial governments."

We need to get on with this action, and I hope this conference will mark an important step in this determination.

Let me turn now to discuss with you a few of the many ways in which the Canadian universities and the Canadian Government are now participating in the great adventure of spreading knowledge round the globe.

For several years now, the University of British Columbia has been co-operating with the Universities of Malaya and Singapore to establish a Department of Business Administration. The University of British Columbia has sent out a number of professors each year and has brought graduate students back to Canada for training. Next year this Department will be able to function on its own. The External Aid Office has looked after much of the financing of this project.

A similar contract has been made between the Universities of Toronto and Mangalore in the field of graduate engineering. Another half dozen contracts are being arranged at present with other universities.

A similar example is Father Levesque's project in Ruanda in East Africa, where a French-speaking university is being established under his leadership. Canada has given eight professors to this university.

There are a number of other forms of university assistance. Canadian professors are at present serving abroad, in India, Basutoland, Ghana, Morocco, Kenya and Tanganyika and at the University of the West Indies.

Twenty-seven university teachers are abroad at present, and we have requests for another 40. I hope you in the universities will second these to us so that they may feel somewhat secure in their adventure -- because they will return to you more valuable than ever with the experience acquired.

I look forward to the day when every university in Canada is co-operating with at least one other in one of the developing countries to their mutual advantage. Perhaps the year 1965, which, as you know, has been designated by the United Nations as International Co-operation Year, may provide a special incentive for more individual initiatives between universities in this country and those abroad. It would certainly be a wonderful Canadian contribution to ICY and an inspiring example if we could take the lead in developing these kinds of contact next year.

Canadian Universities Service Overseas

I should like to take this opportunity to make an announcement regarding the Canadian Universities Service Overseas. This good organization which has done so much useful work the last few years in providing opportuni-

for young Canadian graduates to serve in the developing countries, has proven its mettle. Those individuals who were instrumental in the development of CUSO, the Canadian universities which have so strongly supported the organization and the Canadian University Foundation, which has played an important role in its administration, have every right to be proud. CUSO has done much and done it well.

I am very happy to announce this evening that the Government will provide transportation for this year's CUSO volunteers from Canada to their destination in the developing countries. By entering into this kind of constructive and practical partnership, the Government will be giving tangible recognition of the strong support we have for this voluntary organization. At the same time, we want to encourage and sustain the essentially voluntary nature of CUSO. It is from its voluntary and non-governmental character that CUSO gets its spirit and its impetus and we must do everything to make sure that this spirit and this impetus remain undiminished.

I believe that, in the relationship between the Government and the voluntary associations in Canada in the field of international aid, we have a unique and precious opportunity to create a new and vibrant concept in international development. I should like to see a close collaboration develop between all these associations and the Government, all playing their proper role.

In our time, international development is the task of every man. This is not something that government can do alone. Here is an opportunity for all sectors of the Canadian community to join in a great constructive international partnership. I assure you that the Government will play its full role.

Somewhere in his writings, Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: "It is the eye which makes the horizon". In free societies it is the university which must provide the beacon to light the way ahead. The problems we face in today's world are numerous and often depressing. Sometimes we seem to be making little progress. Yet we must not lower our eyes from the horizon. Simply because of the immensity of our challenges, we must pursue our ideals with a faith and a resolution which must stand undiminished before any threat. The great imperative of our time is the creation of a true international community and a more secure international order based on strong moral and intellectual foundations.

Like any community, this international community depends in the final analysis upon its citizens. Upon the universities, first and foremost, rests the responsibility for developing and nurturing these citizens of the world. This is a frightening and an awesome responsibility. It is also one of the greatest opportunities and richest privileges that the universities have ever encountered, for this is a goal which has been latent in the idea of the university for centuries. It is a goal which in our time has become an absolute necessity, a goal which demands and is worthy of our mightiest endeavours.