

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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No. 59/5 THE NEED FOR A DECLARATION OF FREEDOM'S CREED

Notes of a speech by Mr. John G. Diefenbaker, Prime Minister of Canada, to the Convocation of the University of Toronto, on January 12, 1959.

My deep appreciation of the honour you have bestowed on me is enhanced by the attributes of this university which have won world-wide renown, not only in the field of learning, but also among men of practical affairs. No Canadian can be made a member of the family of the University of Toronto without being aware that he has entered into the privileged society of one of the ranking universities of the world.

Of the pre-eminence of the achievements of the University of Toronto in many different faculties, there is general agreement. This university has won highest renown all over the world in the superlative degree to which the university has served, and serves, Canada in adapting the pursuit of learning to the material, as well as to the cultural, welfare of this nation in particular, and to the nations of the world in general.

This university has made its contribution to every facet of Canadian life. To public life it has given to this nation two Prime Ministers and many other leaders, national and provincial, and in the international field I have but to mention the present Secretary of State for External Affairs and his predecessor in office, the Leader of the Opposition.

This is an age of scientific advancement and physical exploration. The mind of man is moved as it has not been since the first Elizabethan age, in the spirit of adventure, and in the field of exploration, as for example, the climb of Mount Everest, and the explorations of Fuchs in the Antarctic; the Nautilus moving four hundred feet under polar ice for eighteen hundred miles, or the variety of satellites that have woven their longitudinal patterns around the globe these last sixteen months and now, more dramatically than ever before, the fingering of space by man, as the recent Russian rocket speeds its way around the orbit of the sun.

Scientific advances with their immensity and deadly power of destruction have brought fear into the hearts of men everywhere. Fear can be met, if we elevate the spiritual horizons of mankind which beckon to the adventurers of good will and vision. Freemen must be prepared in this period of the new Renaissance to sacrifice and to weigh the accepted views of the past, and if found wanting, to courageously provide new formulas to meet new conditions in the conflict of ideas and ideals. We live in a new age. There are many challenges for the adventurous in this age, which has been described by Dr. Smith, Professor of Medieval History at Cornell University, as "a period and process of transition, fusion, preparation and tentative endeavour".

In Asia and Africa a major conflict for the minds of men is taking place. In the Asian sub-continent 500 million people -- 30 times the population of Canada -- are crowded into territory less than one-half the extent of Canada's. One hundred millions live in Southeast Asia -- including Indonesia. China has 500 million people occupying a land approximately the size of Canada. In Africa, some 200 million people occupy territory the size of Canada, the United States and China combined.

In these and other countries a tremendous awakening of nationalistic pride, coupled with a desire to raise conditions and standards of living, is under way. The advances of the U.S.S.R. in scientific achievements, in nuclear power, in intercontinental missiles, in jet planes, in the exploration of outer space, have had a tremendous influence on mankind, not only throughout the world, but in particular in these areas where poverty is the daily portion.

What the Russians have done scientifically is in the air for all to see and, in the field of trade, is revealed by the communist trade offensive. In parading its achievements -- even though attained by tyranny and slavery -- the communists would have us believe that the free world is decadent and has lost its sense of adventure and achievement.

That wise world observer, Walter Lippmann, in a recent article, stated that there are some who feel that the West is losing, and the communists are winning, the contest for influence in the underdeveloped countries:

"....it is not enough to stand firm and persevere. It is necessary also to take hold and costly measures to turn the tide.....time is not on our side unless we make a prodigious effort in armaments, in the development of our own economy to support them, and in a demonstration

that there is a way other than the communist way, by which the underdeveloped nations can overcome their weakness and master their poverty".

"...the West is losing and the communists are winning the contest in the underdeveloped countries."

"The central reason is that the advanced and industrialized Western countries of North America and Western Europe and Australasia are growing richer while the underdeveloped countries, outside the communist orbit, remain in dire poverty and insofar as they are advancing, are moving very slowly."

"It is in this factual situation, it is in this soil, that communism is expanding. For the Soviet Union has succeeded in demonstrating that there is a way, though harsh and cruel, by which a country can be raised by the bootstraps."

What can Canada contribute to the solution of these problems which affect all mankind?

No nation with a like population has the same appointment with world responsibility as has Canada. She is respected because it is admitted that she has no ambitions to expand, and no aggressive purposes. Canada cannot escape a world outlook because of its geographical location between the U.S.S.R. and the United States. Canadians are a people of the world, for whether in trade (in which Canada is in fourth position) or in geographical position, Canada's future depends on the degree to which world understanding can be achieved.

Canada must be a world power in the things of the spirit as well as in her material potential resources. It was because of the importance and prestige of her world position that I recently took a world trip designed to learn something of Asia where, as in Africa, the major battles are being fought today for the souls and hearts of men. Canada has a message for mankind. Canadians have shown that peoples of different races can live together. We are respected because we have been generally free from discrimination. We have recognized the need of the international application of the Christian principles that nations, no less than individuals, must be their "brother's keepers". Canada has aroused no hatreds or suspicions in the hearts of men. Its contributions of aid and in international assistance plans for underdeveloped countries have no possible ulterior purposes or objectives.

The United States has assumed world-wide responsibilities, and it is part of the communist technique to endeavour to plant fears in the minds of Asian peoples that she is aggressive-minded and that her assistance plans are sinister plots. Canada

can best interpret the United States, in a way that no other nation can, to the nations of Asia and Africa and provide the answer to such propaganda.

Wendell Wilkie, that great American whose passion for freedom and human rights lifted him far above the politics of his day, once reminded his own people:

"We cannot keep freedom to ourselves. If we are to have freedom we must share freedom. Let us keep that aim shining before us like a light -- a light for the people of Europe, for the people of Asia, for the people of South America, and for the people of our own beloved land."

I believe that there is a ceaseless need that the nations of the free world explain what we stand for, in simple and understandable terms. The word "democracy" conveys little, for it has been borrowed and its meaning distorted by the communists. They misinterpret the purposes of Western democracy by seizing upon isolated events or untoward occurrences that take place anywhere in the free world. There is no way in which an interpretation of the meaning and purposes of Western democracy can be secured excepting by a study of the statements made in recent years by world leaders. The purposes of the democratic free world have been left to a considerable degree for definition to the whims of its enemies. We need understanding of the vital faith and philosophy that is ours. I am persuaded that there is a compelling need for the Western world to restate and define its purposes, its principles, its ideals, if they are to be understood in a world engaged in the war of ideas.

Material assistance to the peoples of underdeveloped areas is important. Canada's contribution has been a worthy one. Since the Second World War Canada has contributed no less than four and one-half billion dollars in financial assistance to other nations and few other countries have made proportionately larger contributions. Material aid has its place, and it has contributed much, but of itself, it is not sufficient.

In visiting Asian countries I sensed misunderstanding of the aid programmes, and among some people a frightening suspicion as to the motives actuating the humanitarian action of the contributing nations. The lesson seems clear that material aid alone will not convince the uncommitted nations of our sincerity, nor win their allegiance to freedom in the battle of ideologies. I am convinced that should the Western world prove its eventual superiority in the race of scientific advance, (important though victory undoubtedly is in this vital aspect of the world struggle) the spiritual things will constitute the decisive element.

How many of us who are its heirs can express the philosophy of freedom? We feel it, but that is not enough. We need to understand what we espouse. Criticizing communism is not enough. A knowledge of freedom's aims is necessary, so that uncommitted peoples can understand the worth and superiority of freedom when compared with communism. I can think of no better way to explain freedom than for the nations of the free world to meet together, exchange ideas, and reach a common basis for a Declaration of Freedom's Creed. Such a Declaration would give to the uncommitted world a solemn pledge of willingness to work with them for better economic conditions, in which human dignity, equality and tolerance will be recognized, and personal liberty -- freedom of thought, expression, association and religion -- pledged to those who will join in freedom and for freedom in the struggle for men's hearts and minds.

During the last war President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill "being met together", as they said, in that historic document called the Atlantic Charter, "deemed it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world". And they proceeded in eight resounding articles of the proclamation to tell the world what their countries, and those associated with them, were fighting for.

These two leaders declared that their nations sought no aggrandisement and no territorial changes not in accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples involved. They affirmed their belief in the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they wished to live. They declared that with due respect for existing obligations, they would further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access on equal terms to the trade and raw materials of the world. They expressed their belief in mutual co-operation among the nations to secure for all, improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security. They pledged themselves to support such post-war measures as would afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

The effect of the short, precise and readily understandable document was an inspiration to the legions which upheld freedom. It was a message which the people of many lands were waiting to hear. Within a few months it had been signed by 26 nations and became known as the United Nations Agreement.

It is just as important in time of peace as in times of war for freemen to speak to the rest of the world with a united and compelling voice. Has the time not come for the free nations of the world to again dedicate themselves by some similar declaration? It is my conviction that there is much to be gained from such action. Knowledge of the economic purposes and policies of the free world is necessary. This is lacking. There is a decided lack of literature available in Asia on the subject of democracy and its operation, while communist literature is generally widely circulated. A few of the types of communist literature are shown by these titles:

"How the Tillers Win Back the Soil";

"The Paper Tigers of the West";

"The Challenge of New China".

(by Mao Tse Tung).

It was my pleasure when visiting the University of Kuala Lumpur to deliver to the Faculty, as a gift from Canada, some 200 volumes dealing with economic, political and other phases of Canadian life in particular, and democratic concepts in general.

Finally, my observations lead me to believe that there is a need of a greater interchange of students between Canada and other Western countries and the uncommitted countries. In the Middle Ages, students travelled from university to university seeking knowledge and sitting at the feet of outstanding teachers, thus affording that "universitas" which must be of the essence of any true university. I am told that in this university there are students from over sixty countries devoted to the search of truth. At present there are 4,000 foreign students attending Canadian universities -- 5 per cent of the total student body.

There is a need of expansion in student exchanges so that each can share a portion of the heritage of the other. Canada already provides opportunities for foreign graduate students to do research work in chosen fields under the National Research Council, and in 1957, 192 such fellowships were held by fellows from different countries. Under arrangements agreed to at the Trade and Economic Conference in Montreal, scholarships are to be made available to students and teachers in 25 Commonwealth countries. As a result, in a few years there will be 1,000 students and teachers receiving scholarships and fellowships, and Canada has undertaken responsibility for one-quarter of the students and teachers participating therein. These scholarships will contribute a new spirit of wisdom, tolerance and understanding

to the participating nations. The U.S.S.R. is not unmindful of the benefits that flow from such a policy, and while I have no information of the number of Asian students, I am informed that some 2,000 students from Africa are now studying in Moscow, Budapest and Prague.

The West must get to know the East. I think that if finances would permit there is a need for the establishment in Canadian universities of Chairs for the study of Asian history and affairs, and of Commonwealth relationships, as the Commonwealth is by its very nature an object lesson to the world in tolerance as between race and creed. Incidentally, the only university in North America which provides a course on the Commonwealth is located in the Southern United States.

I said earlier that the struggle for the minds of men will depend on the example that each of the nations of the free world give in the laboratories of daily living. Canada needs men and women of dedication and ability to make her contribution to public life.

We live in an age that is dark and menacing which means that there are great challenges and grave problems. We live in a world in which men can reach for the moon and grasp it, which means that there are as great, if not greater and more challenging opportunities than ever before. We live in an age requiring service and sacrifice of men and women who, in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi.

"ever in his right hand carried gentle peace to silence envious tongues. His prayer each day was: 'Lead me from untruth to truth, lead me from darkness to light'."

John Morley put it this way:

"....not many have so many gifts of the spirit as to be free to choose by what pass they will climb the steep where fame's proud temple shines afar."

But every person having integrity, dedication and a tireless capacity for energy and service has the qualifications for public life.

By 1979 Canada will have a population, according to some prophetic economists, of at least thirty million. It is possible that we will be the only Western country whose population growth has not only kept pace but actually exceeded the world average. Canada's role will be much more than that of an interpreter and intermediary between the great powers. We will then no longer be a middle power, but one of the leading powers of the West. Canada must be prepared for her larger role in the international sphere.

I ask those of you in this audience in whose hearts, hands and minds will lie the responsibility and opportunity for the maintenance and development of that national spirit, to carry on your studies and your activities in the assured belief in the destiny of Canada. Canada's continually rising greatness is assured. To believe that is not wishful thinking or blind optimism. I hope that you will devote your trained minds to the acute and careful analysis of the problems of our times, for that is the best possible exercise to develop the necessary muscles of understanding which you will need when the time comes for you to take active participation in meeting the challenge of the problems of the future. That you will examine and criticize the solutions offered, I have no doubt. It is the prerogative -- indeed, the duty -- of youth to do so.

As William Cowper, the poet, put it:

"And differing judgments serve but to declare
The Truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where."

I ask you to think, and to think in a large way and with a long view, about the kind of Canada that you believe you and your generation are entitled to inherit. To assure the attainment of the Canada of your dreams will require that each and all will give of your time to public service.

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