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CANADA AND UNESCO

An address by Dr. N.A.M. MacKenzie, Chairman of the Canadian National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, to the tenth session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, on October 8, 1958.

I am happy to join with others in thanks and congratulations to France who is this year our host and in whose fair land the permanent headquarters of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is now established in new and interesting buildings. We all know that these buildings in this beautiful city have been made possible by the generous attitude and the practical help of the French Government and the French people. For this we are grateful, though not surprised, for France has traditionally been "a mother of the arts", and what she has done, and is now doing, for us is very much a part of that tradition. I, myself, remember 33 years ago when, as a young member of the staff of the International Labour Office in Geneva, I had occasion to attend what was our precursor, the Committee for Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations. Some of you will also remember that France provided, here in Paris, the physical headquarters of the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation.

This is the first time that I have had the pleasure and the honour of being present at a meeting of UNESCO, but I have been interested in its work ever since its inception. In fact, in September 1943, as a representative of the Government of Canada, I attended a conference near Washington, D.C. to discuss with the representatives of other countries possible programmes which were later to become the responsibilities of UNESCO, and I have followed the activities and developments of this body ever since. This because of my growing conviction, which has been strengthened by my experiences during the past two or three days, that human beings are, and fortunately will continue to be, very different from each other. The only methods that I know of getting them to work together for their general good and for the solution

of the many problems which confront them are coercion or through effective and voluntary co-operation. History has taught us that coercion can never suit the needs or be acceptable to human beings. The possibilities of persuasion and co-operation are now in the process of being tried out through the United Nations and its various Specialized Agencies like UNESCO. I know too well the difficulties that UNESCO has encountered since its inception and I know, too, the criticisms directed against it in many countries but, despite this, I also know that the most difficult and the most important areas of concern in this world today are not science or technology or economics, but rather the whole field of human relationships, the relationship of men and women as individuals, in groups, in classes and, particularly, as races and nations.

I have mentioned earlier the reality of the differences between us and among us and cited this Conference and the different approaches of its members to our problems as evidence of this. Furthermore, I am persuaded that unless we human beings can co-operate together intelligently and effectively and can devise ways and means of dealing with and overcoming the many and complex problems which beset us, and do all of this without resort to violence and destructive war, there is no hope anywhere for any of us now or in the future.

My main concern about UNESCO is that its areas of interest and of operation are so vast, the problems that it deals with so intangible and hard to come to grips with, and the evidences of its constructive results sometimes so difficult to determine and assess, that practical-minded men and governments will not provide it with the resources it must have, or have the patience to allow it to work out its proposals and its programmes to satisfactory conclusions.

It is in the light of this general introduction that I would now like to try to put UNESCO into a Canadian context.

In stating these views, I believe I am giving you the opinions of most of my thoughtful fellow citizens. It is true that only last year have we been able to establish our National Commission for UNESCO (of which I have the honour to be Chairman), but that was not due to any lack of goodwill toward UNESCO or any doubts about the importance and value of its work. Our difficulties, as so frequently happens, have been legal and constitutional for in our country much of the work which UNESCO does, and in particular its educational activities, are within the jurisdiction of our provinces. However, we seem at last to have been able to surmount these obstacles and we will, I hope, be able to take a larger and more effective share in UNESCO's work and programme. But if this is to happen, I feel it both essential and desirable that individual Canadians and non-governmental organizations and groups, in Canada, be involved and participate to a far greater extent than has been true in the past in the actual

work of UNESCO. It is not enough, in my opinion, to be a donor or beneficiary nation if that means merely the contribution or receipt of moneys by governments and the occasional provision or use of experts and information in areas where both are useful. In saying this, I am not suggesting that the limited funds available to UNESCO should not be used in the areas of greatest need, nor am I suggesting that we should have spent for the benefit of Canada the equivalent of the contributions we may make. I am urging, for Canada and for all other countries, that the programmes and projects approved by UNESCO should be designed to interest and use the human and material resources in our member countries. As an illustration, may I cite one of UNESCO's major projects, "The Mutual Appreciation of East-West Cultural Values". There is in Canada a good deal of interest in this, and a survey just completed by our own National Commission indicates that we do have resources, both human and material, in this field. My concern is that somehow or other UNESCO will be able to use these, and, in doing so, bring to the personal attention of many Canadians the fact of its existence and the reality and value of its work.

Then, too, in the exchange of persons programme, whether these be technical "experts", scholars, artists or members of trade unions, I hope that UNESCO will arrange a real exchange in the sense that individuals come in as well as go out from our respective countries.

I hope, too, that UNESCO and those responsible for the implementation of its programmes will do everything possible to meet the particular needs or conveniences of the individuals in question and of the institutions to which they are attached.

As far as the current programme of this UNESCO Conference is concerned, Canada is interested in two major matters of principle: the first the nature and effectiveness of the programme and the second the intelligent and efficient use of all the moneys contributed. Specifically, this means that we should proceed with the few major projects or proposals which seem particularly important and we should devote most of our attention and resources to these. In this matter of the programme and the budget too, I believe that it would be well to consolidate our position and to assure ourselves that what we have done and are doing are both worth doing and the most important that we can do. For the next few years at least, we should stabilize our budget at about its present level, subject always to changes in the value of money or to special circumstances which may arise. This, to give us time to appraise what we have done and are now doing with a view to the elimination of the unimportant or unessential items, and the more adequate support of the really worth while.

In saying this, I do not want to suggest that Canada is not interested in UNESCO or does not believe in the importance of its work, but every year our Government asks Parliament to appropriate money for the support of UNESCO, the Colombo Plan, the World Health Organization, the Special Fund and other international organizations and programmes. All of these have to be examined together, and the importance of the work done, considered and compared in competition with many other urgent claims upon our Treasury.

As you will have gathered, my own people were Scottish in origin and the Scots still have a good deal of influence in Canadian affairs and Canadian finances. One of the most notable characteristics of the Scots is their ambition to insure that every dollar spent is well spent and will achieve the absolute maximum in terms of constructive practical results. This attitude and characteristic does perhaps help to explain the position we have taken and continue to take in respect of the programme of UNESCO and its finances.

And now, Mr. President, in conclusion I would like again to express, on behalf of my country and all my colleagues here with me, our congratulations to you and our thanks and our appreciation to your country. I also include in these expressions of appreciation the Director-General and members of the Secretariat who have been performing a most difficult and important task in most difficult circumstances. To them, and in particular to the Director-General who is an old friend and an honorary graduate of my own university, I extend the good wishes of Canada and her people.

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