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After the Centenary, Whither Now?

THIS HAS BEEN Canada's Centenary Year, and a few reflections are in order before it is written into our history books.

The captains of industry, the kings and queens and presidents of nations, and all the other notable visitors, have departed after helping us to commemorate our nation's birthday. Now we must beware lest our Centenary should become an episode that has no sequel.

What has been learned from our own efforts, from our millions of visitors, and from the display of culture, industry, and way of living presented by our own country and by other countries?

We paid tribute to our founders and our pioneers, to their gallantry and their magnificent achievements. We displayed our scientific and technical triumphs, our regional production of forest, farm, fisheries, mine and industry, our manufactures, our trade and commerce. We showed our paintings, our sculpture, our architecture and our performing arts.

The confederation we celebrated was a great achievement, but now we are looking to the future. We have made some encouraging progress. It is only 475 years since Columbus set sail out of an ancient port 120 miles from Gibraltar toward the rim of the world and opened up America; it is only 433 years since Jacques Cartier cruised into the Gulf of St. Lawrence; it is only a hundred years since the colonies and provinces of Canada united to become a nation; but look at what has been accomplished.

This gigantic half continent has been explored, settled, and linked together with railways, highways, waterways and airways. Canada has become one of the greatest producing and exporting nations in the world, and is a good customer of other nations. At the turn of this century, affluence was confined to a minority, and a low level of living was shared by the majority: this is no longer so.

But the Centenary events have opened new doors. We have been shown how other countries do things, some of them better than we do. We have been given an incentive and are under compulsion to take new steps forward.

Another benefit — a great one — was that Centen-

nial Year not only gave Canada confidence in her ability to do big things when everyone lent a hand, but revealed that she is not so stodgy as general repute led us to think. There was a lot of sparkle in the show we put on.

We have ended our birthday celebrations more confirmed in our good opinion about Canada as a homeland, as a nation, and as a world figure, but what has happened in our country during 1967 has given us rather more intelligent reasons for this opinion. We have had a fresh and valuable look at ourselves alongside all the rest of the world.

No longer young

We have no reason now to keep harping on the string that Canada is a young country. Youth means the absence of history or background; youth is a catalogue of untapped resources; youth relies upon others for original thought in culture and science. In every area of life we have attained heights that would make any other country feel proud. Our constitution, which we celebrated in 1967, is far older than those of all but a few nations.

Is there anything that is an epitome of Canada's history and culture . . . something representing or standing for all that changes and all that remains the same . . . a living, robust idea?

We keep poking around for a supposed identity, groping for a role. We mourn our lack of the myths of nations whose heroes have been elevated in pantheons. Our own events have been modest. We have no Runnymede to inspire our people with thoughts of Magna Charta, or the brave ground of Bannockburn celebrated in poetry and song, or a Bastille where France tore down the walls of injustice. But through our founding fathers and all those who have come to us over the years we have a share in everything that is freedom-loving and democratic and best in all the past and in all countries, and we have achieved our own sort of distinction through our own efforts.

Perhaps we need something softer than an Act of Parliament, yet more animating than the compulsion

of necessity. As we think of Mother England or Mother France or whatever motherland our ancestors came from, can we think of Canada as our Father Figure to whom we can relate emotionally?

Canada is a rugged land, with few effeminate characters in the cast of those who developed it. Given it as a Father Figure we may work at the job of our further development with the spirit of men, realizing our true potentiality and having the sturdiness to be great.

This is the sort of forward looking into which the natural retrospection of Centennial Year led us. The world has a new pattern. The idealistic thoughts of a century ago have become the material realities we saw at the International Exhibition. Our ideals for the second century should be a challenge to us and to our children to bring them to fruition.

The *Manchester Guardian* said editorially about our Centenary that this hundredth birthday marks both an old and a young age: "Old, because Canada's traditions of domestic stability and international responsibility seem to stem from a solid past; young, because with a population of only 19 million in an area larger than India, Canada still promises more than she has fulfilled." To fulfil the promise of our youth demands manliness and vigour.

The great values

Among the great values of national life are freedom and democracy, and these require tolerance and compromise for their preservation.

Freedom includes the prerogative of changing and growing in accord with new social and individual ideas which are emerging. It includes the right of dissent to express itself, but it does not give unbounded liberty.

Democracy is a positive faith expressed in respect for the equality and rights of others, limited only by the bounds of justice for all. It is, in the words of the school textbook *Civics and Citizenship*, written by L. D. Baker and J. M. Brown: "An ethical faith expressed in the willingness and desire of human beings to work together in the pursuit of the common good."

With all the shortcomings that may be charged against it, Canadian democracy possesses the instruments by which it can make more complete the promise of equality and freedom it contains. So long as the conditions for opposition and innovation remain, every remediable social evil can be conquered by courage, organization, co-operation and hard work. What we must determine is that the people of Canada accept, and care deeply about, the principles upon which democratic government is based.

The democratic method is that of persuasion and education: the only other way is that of what Mao Tse-tung calls "commandism and coercion". Democracy means having the right to raise questions, voice opinions, and criticize defects, but once a decision has been reached it obligates its members to give full support in carrying out what has been decided upon.

All sorts of views

The golden rule of democracy is tolerance, through which we recognize and admit that there are all sorts of views about everything. Differences of opinion between people in such a society need not be the cause of strife: they only become so when they are combined with fanatical narrowness.

It helps in a touchy situation when people on both sides are big enough to acknowledge the good will of those on the opposite side. Every mature personality is unique, just as the experiences that have created it are unique, but everyone can find common interests instead of stressing separate prejudices.

The best thing to help troubled people is perspective. Being broadminded does not mean being so pliable, so flexible, so indecisive in all things that we have no personal standards. We know that neutrality is not always a virtue. Every person has the privilege and responsibility to think, to study, to reason, to listen, and to accept differences in opinion, and to decide for himself where he stands on all subjects affecting his life and actions.

There is one sort of intolerance that should be upheld by every Canadian. It does not discharge a person's duty to refrain from committing any of the hundreds of offences listed in the Criminal Code. The Old Testament prophets did not chastise their people only for such sins, but also for day-to-day lapses like tolerating poverty, bribery and corruption. For sins such as these the whole nation is held responsible.

Compromise is a quality that runs in harness with tolerance. There have to be agreements between what we should like emotionally and what is workable practically.

Theories and desires do not change phenomena. Electricity remains the same whether we consider it a fluid, a repulsion of molecules, or vibrations of the ether. As one writer put it: "If a man held the theory that electricity is a flock of invisible molecular goats he would still have to insulate the wire."

Methods and plans which cannot be accepted and used as they now are can frequently be adapted by adding a "twist" or taking a new slant. Many things we get peevish about are things that we could adjust to or correct if we looked at them intelligently and stirred ourselves to thoughtful action.

This means avoiding sharp angles. All beautiful forms in nature are composed of curves. A dialogue consists in setting forth facts and circling around them, reasoning things out so as to resolve contradictions.

A home for all

Many races have helped to shape the character of Canada so that this country is a home for all.

At a time when the authorities in France were calling Canada "a few acres of snow" and in the English Parliament the legislators were calling her "a mill-

stone round the neck of the motherland", stout French and British pioneers were laying the foundation of a great nation, to the building of which they invited many other peoples.

The human composition of Canada, added to the native Indians and Eskimos, is the British part, the French part, and the fourth part made up of all those others who have chosen Canada in which to build their homes and careers.

Some 27 per cent of our population is of neither French nor British origin. More than 180 foreign-language publications are produced regularly in 27 different languages. In 1966 the Citizens Civic Action Association was organized nationally by 33 of Canada's ethnic groups, made up of six million people who are not of French or British stock, seeking a Canadian Canada.

Canada helps immigrants to find their place in life without losing their individuality. They have come here for release from bad economic conditions, to preserve their spiritual freedom, to escape from pogroms, to breathe freely politically. All of them brought with them their cultural heritages.

It is to the advantage of everyone to see that all our people, from the most lowly worker to the most powerful executive, from the twelfth generation child born in Canada to the latest newcomer from another land, shall have an interest in seeing Canada endure.

At the same time, the factor which most clearly distinguishes Canada from other nations, and might give her the basis for a national identity, is her Anglo-French partnership. So long as a dialogue goes on among reasonable people there is hope that the extreme exponents of racial separation within this partnership may moderate their attitudes. To have a community or a nation in which to live happily, men must work together, having common principles and purposes.

This does not mean the death of individuality. England and Scotland have been united under one parliament for more than two and a half centuries, but Scotsmen still have a sense of communal identity. The National Congress has always maintained that the people of India, in spite of their religious, linguistic, and ethnic differences, are members of one nation; that differences among the various groups do not make the Indian society fragmented; on the contrary, they enrich the Indian culture shared by all.

Canada may solve its problems within the rules of the game. As was said of the United Nations Charter: "A charter or constitution which cannot be adapted to changing conditions is likely to be inadequate for survival." And the Queen, speaking in the Quebec Legislature in 1964, said: "To be happy, a people must live in a climate of confidence and affection. But a dynamic state should not fear to re-assess its political philosophy. That an agreement worked out a hundred years ago does not necessarily meet all the needs of the present should not be surprising."

National unity

We need to play our parts on the provincial stage and on the federal stage, and to play both parts with equal comeliness. Excellence and wisdom have no provincial or county boundaries.

This was well illustrated in the herculean task of organizing the International Exhibition. In January 1963 the formal Exhibition agreement was signed by representatives of the federal and provincial governments and the City of Montreal. Mayor Jean Drapeau, who presided at the ceremony, said in part: "It is the duty of every one of us to mark in every possible way the solid reality which is Canada, its real personality."

Canadians must not grow away from one another regionally in their day-to-day contacts any more than in their great events. We are closely bound by common interests and shared ideals.

Some provinces of Canada have economic difficulties, and other provinces should not be indifferent, because all provinces are involved in the economic health of all Canada. Forest fires in British Columbia, a drought on the prairies, a manufacturing slump in the central provinces, a slow down of industrial development on the Atlantic seaboard: all these have an impact on life everywhere in the country.

There are, despite over-all prosperity, still economic disparities between Canadians in various regions. The equalization formula has for many years made it possible for the poorer, or less developed, provinces to provide basic minimum services for their people. But if Canada is to be truly a nation, all of its component parts must seek a decent measure of prosperity for everyone. There can be no provincial right to default on a national duty.

Co-operation

Around the confederation table was assembled as brilliant a handful of practical men as any other 34 you could gather on the globe. They were strong in their belief that national responsibility could be effected only by national solidarity. They gave an example to a sceptical world of how two people of different origins and creeds could live together, not without friction, but without disruption and strife. They came together by compromise, rationality and hard effort. To paraphrase what Tacitus said about Rome in his *Histories*, their work "cannot be unraveled without destroying those who unravel it."

It is true that there were strong compulsions of self-defence and economics pressing Canada at that time. Confederation was founded on a successful attempt to avoid internal revolution or foreign conquest. It was a collective determination to live together in harmony. And last July 1st, a hundred years later, the Biblical lesson read by the Prime Minister at the ecumenical service on the lawn of Parliament Buildings contained this exhortation: "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

Confederation started with negotiated unity, and as we enter our second century we need to continue resolving differences through criticism and correction and compromise. This co-operative behaviour directed toward the solution of common problems is possible only to enlightened, reasoning, men and women.

We had a good illustration in 1967. The country came alive from coast to coast through the joint efforts of men and women of every ethnic origin. That they put into their celebration of Canada's birthday many and varied examples of the customs of their birthplaces is evidence that confederation achieved national political unity without imposing racial, cultural or linguistic uniformity.

A world view

The centennial celebrations held out hope to the world. Canada took on new stature. While asserting afresh our solidarity as an independent nation, we showed that we recognize the interdependence of nations on one another.

What are the bases of our claim to world attention? One reason may be that more than other countries we have experienced the successful development from a natural and political wilderness to a measure of economic stability and to unity in citizenship. We have survived invasion by the forces of "Manifest Destiny" four times; we have opened our doors to exiles from many countries; we have placed our land and our harvests at the disposal of hungry and penniless people.

We have, in many ways, an open society. By importing people from all the world we have added their virtues and talents and skills to those we already had.

We have not withdrawn from the great issues stirring the world, though our efforts have been steadily designed to stop the stirring or to keep it from spilling over. Our contribution to the maintenance of world peace has been distinguished, and a maintained peace is our surest defence against aggression.

Changing times require rethinking of old thoughts. An imaginative leadership in government at all levels is needed to cope with problems of our time. Lord Hailsham told a convocation of the Fund for the Republic that "there is no political theory at present canvassed which is not implicitly pre-Darwinian in character, and therefore in need of drastic revision."

Government must be dynamic, thorough and speedy. The way of working is this: locate a problem, validate it, awaken public concern about it, set up research, collect information, and get busy to solve the problem. An example of dilatoriness was given when someone praised an Egyptian king for keeping his army and himself in an admirable state of discipline and exercise. A critic remarked: "always preparing, and never performing."

There is little that is purely technical about government. Much is dependent upon basic human attitudes, much is governed by human dictates, much is guided

by human dignity. For these reasons political life demands high standards of conduct in its practitioners, carried out in the interests of the people and not of self-interest.

Canada's second century

It is un-Canadian to be satisfied with stagnation, or to be content to look at ourselves and think: "We are all right".

In the ruins of Pompeii may be seen a wall painting of a youth who did just that. Narcissus is pictured as a beautiful young man admiring his image reflected in a pool. He became enamoured of it, and his self-love led to his death.

All the fine words spoken by visiting dignitaries, all the splendid structures erected, all the birthday parades and shows and celebrations, should not lure us into narcissism. We should enter our second century as self-confident Canadians, not dazzled by our past, not dismayed by our present, and not afraid of our future.

The prospect before Canada is one to command enthusiasm. We can paraphrase a saying of the Athenians: "We have extolled our ancestors, now let us behave as valiant men."

In our second century we might set ourselves to provide widened scope for the exercise of human potentialities and human excellences, and for recognition of them. We might improve ourselves as Canadian human beings, without ethnic hyphens.

We do not need to fix our eyes unblinkingly upon what is remotely ultimate, but we do need a sense of direction, to see clearly the trend of events so as to make the best of them. While we debate about ends, we need to put the means toward them into action.

The future is ours

We do not merely hope for a bright future in Canada, but we perceive that it is there for our making and taking.

It would be wrong not to lay the examples of the past before the future, and we have done that in 1967. We have looked at and lauded the people who had the initiative, tenacity, courage and good sense to deal with fortune and all its changes, and who had the gifts of compromise and tolerance in getting on with one another. It is the opportunity of second-century Canadians to bring it all to fruition. There is nothing in the massive structure of the oak tree that was not potentially in the acorn.

Though Canada is not such a place as is famed in song and story, she can be great in the hearts of those who live here.

Everyone cherishes a desire to belong to something big. This half continent that is Canada, with its political federation that retains cultural freedom, regional variety and individual opportunity, is surely big enough to challenge anyone's creative power.