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Assoc. American Colleges
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UNIVERSITIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK.

A few years ago, in the Canadian conference which corresponds to this meeting, a youngish professor was asked for his views. "What's the use?" he replied in a tired voice, "What's the use of trying to talk about education here? You are all ~~with~~ university presidents ~~of university drama~~. A man might just as well try to talk to God." I have often thought of that thrust since I became a university president. But here, yesterday and today, I have felt much comforted. The informality and humanity of these meetings suggest to me something far removed from the windy heights of Olympus.

It is not difficult to bring a message of greeting from Canadian Universities to any conference representing Universities in the United States. I have never met anyone in university circles in Canada who was not deeply sensible of the debt which we owe to your Universities on this side of the line. The hospitality of American Universities to Canadians, and especially to Canadian graduates bent on further study, is a matter of common remark. In other ways we have learned extraordinarily by your experiments in university education, which began to be made before our beginnings. The earliest of our Canadian colleges goes back no further than 1797; and four of our provincial universities, corresponding roughly to your state universities, are only twenty-eight years old. Canadian professoriates are about as cosmopolitan

as anything I know. Still a very large proportion, indeed, of our Canadian professors have had at least a part^{of} and many of them all their university training in your universities. In the Arts Faculty of Dalhousie University about half have been so trained. But, aside from all these things, we are acutely aware that the situation in which we find ourselves is more like your situation than any other in the world. And there is a distinct feeling of community^{of} purpose. Indeed it could not be otherwise.

I do not imagine for a moment that you feel this community as fully as we do. We are on so much smaller a scale. Where our university staffs are numbered in ^{half-}dozens, yours are numbered in hundreds. Your idea of a small college would apply to some of our larger universities; and your large universities, with the single exception of the University of Toronto, are quite out of scale with ours. I do not imagine, therefore, that you have much, or anything, to learn from us. But perhaps it may interest you to know, at least, what we think of the situation in which we find ourselves to-day. Some of us, indeed very many of us, find ourselves reviewing our whole conduct in the light of the international situation. We feel forced now, if we never were before, to take an international outlook.

The other evening I listened, over the air, to the Prime Minister of Great Britain talking to a large audience in the Guildhall, London. When he came to speak of international

affairs, of the European situation, of the American-British-Japanese naval conference, it was apparent that his audience (representative, I should think, of the political and commercial life of London) was most enthusiastic in a desire for world-peace, and world-settlement. Every hopeful passage in the speech, every determined word on the necessity for peace and order, was wildly applauded. I was one of many millions, all over the world, listening to this plea for peace, and to the applause with which it was greeted. We heard many allusions to the League of Nations, and the Covenant, hopeful allusions. As I listened, I was moved by the thought that this plea for peace was being heard by men and women all over the earth. At the same time I found myself asking: "How many understood this plea? How many on the Canadian prairies, for example, understand what they must do to secure peace, and to promote the work of the League of Nations?" True, a plea for peace finds an echo in the hearts of all but a few: so many are still suffering, directly or indirectly, from the last War. But then, the peoples did not will that war either. Their leaders seemed powerless to prevent it however, and their leaders in these later days seem powerless to prevent the world taking on a complexion not unlike the world's complexion from 1909 to 1914.

There is the question of questions. The world, with its heart in the right place, may still go to the devil. Civilization, without anyone willing it, may cease. It is good

that millions of men and women should hear a plea for peace and international understanding. The popular will is after all a powerful thing. But is the popular intelligence capable of understanding an argument about the means of preserving civilisation? Civilisation, we say, is the "control over environment". How far does the ordinary man see into a phrase like that? To say nothing of doing the thing described in the phrase? Let us illustrate. Any one who has travelled across the American-Canadian frontier, or who has done business across it, has seen the exchange between our two currencies swing violently up and down, with a variation as high as 25% in twelve months. No ordinary traveller, and no ordinary business man understands even why this should be so. He knows that it is, on the whole, very inconvenient to travellers, and he knows that it paralyses trade. But ask him how it is to be stopped, and he is helpless. Particularly is he baffled by the suddenness of it. He can understand speed in an aeroplane, he cannot understand speed in economic cause and effect.

Civilisation! We now have books on the "history of civilisation" which we put into the hands of young school children, books which tell the story of mankind, so they claim, over a period of 6,000 years. Now aside from children's ability to master such a stunning array of facts, how many of us, University professors, are capable of setting down in a book what the salient facts were over so long a period? The

specialists all warn us that these books are full of "howlers"; that the authors of them, obliged so frequently to take things at second hand, have here and there followed authorities long out of date, or perhaps just recently out of date, and the philosophers warn us in general:

Die Zeiten der Vergangenheit

Sind uns ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln.

If, then, it is so hard for the ordinary man to know much of the world in the past, how can he intelligently participate in the conduct of the world today, - which is larger for any given man than the world ever was previously; which is infinitely more complicated; and which moves so much faster than it ever did? Again, it was never easy to govern a nation, how will it be easy to govern all the nations?

Many of us believe that the League is our only hope. I firmly believe so. But I do not think it will accomplish much out of hand. It has been said by one who has had to do with the League of Nations since it came into being, that it came into being far too easily and suddenly for its own good, and that all its intellectual foundations have still to be laid. It is said too that it is the work of the Universities of the world to lay these intellectual foundations.

Let us for just a few moments examine the last proposition. On the face of it, it seems very obvious and easy. We remember at once that nearly all the subject matter with which universities have to deal is ~~intellectual~~. Homer, Bendetto

international

Croce, Archimedes, Einstein, these are not ~~historical~~ ^{national} figures, they are citizens of the world. May we assume then that students of this raceless and timeless material are automatically becoming citizens of the world? Hundreds of Universities in the Americas: are the Americas therefore international in outlook? Or would this be to promise ourselves results in too easy a way, as we perhaps do when we put the "history of mankind during 6,000 years" into the hands of every high school pupil? Shakespeare is a mind for all time and for all places. True. But does a schoolboy in Peru, reading him in a Spanish translation, really make very much out of Shakespeare? What then of a North American student who reads Plato in an English translation? There are dozens of American professors who are sure that no one can understand ~~French~~ ^{France} at the present time, Frenchman of the present time, who is not steeped in ~~Richelieu~~, Montaigne, Moliere, Voltaire, Pascal, le Rochefoucauld and all the other ~~writers~~ ^{makers} of modern France. But this requires a long period of study, best begun in childhood, and never safely deferred till college days.

Oh, but, you will say, not many can come to know the literatures of Europe and the history of its peoples, in this way. Not many, but some find it possible, and they are the few who can take a truly international outlook. You had here in Washington for some years, a good example in the late Jules Jusserand, the French ambassador. And was it not of another ambassador to Washington, Viscount Bryce, that

Rabelais

William James said: "All facts to him are free and equal". These were men steeped in all the Western literatures, ancient and modern, and at the same time highly trained in science and law. Such men as these; such men as Prof. Gildersleeve, carrying the Greek orators in his knapsack in the Civil War, and some professors in American ^{and Canadian} chairs today, these are capable of an international outlook. But (basing my remarks now on the state of affairs in Canadian Universities) I think we delude ourselves if we imagine that we are training many such men. It seems to me that just as we assume too much, and take too optimistic a view of the results of a school text-book, so we in the Universities are trusting too much to short cuts, ^{which lead nowhere.} Science, one would think, would give its votaries the broad, tolerant, humble view. At this point I pay tribute to American foundations and American universities which have so frequently, in the study of disease and in other ways, taken the whole world for their province, and which have welcomed ^{exiles} ~~wides~~ from more than one country in recent years. Yet too frequently (again I limit my observation for the moment to what I see in Canadian universities) we confine ourselves to special fields, to practical ends, to a parochial outlook. How many of our professors of mathematics or physics would venture an opinion as to why Archimedes stumbled when he was just on the brink of the work of Leibnitz or Newton; or why, Archimedes having failed, no one else took up the torch for 1800 years? How

many of our professors of science would ask why biology is the first science to fade when civilisation crumbles, and the last science to become respectable when civilisation is solidly established? Some would dismiss such things as impractical questions, mere metaphysical puzzles. I am not of course demanding that these particular questions be answered. I am using them merely as illustrations of things which commercialised and materialistic men would never dream of pondering, but which some professors would ponder day and night. Any one capable of weighing the first of these questions would be a profound scholar, unimpeded by nationalism; any one capable of weighing the second question would know that science, if it is to be truly served, demands a disciplined courage on the part of the individual inquirer, and a tolerance based on generations of freedom in the society where the inquirer works. At any rate it is the sort of mind which will pause over such questions that is capable of the international outlook.

Now, we in Canada - I am speaking for many besides myself - have become painfully aware that it is not upon this sort of mind, not upon this deep scholarship, not upon this highly trained intelligence that we have been concentrating our efforts. We have become painfully aware that if our universities are to produce thinkers and critics with the international outlook, the universities themselves must be greatly changed. For years we have known, in a general way, that the university, through trying to carry too many to the goal, has not come near the goal. But now, in the present

difficulties at home, and in the growing uncertainty the world over, it is forced upon our minds that we dare not delay in our efforts to produce scholars, thinkers, critics, versatile, adroit, far-seeing; and that in order to do so we must lighten the ship. Furthermore, we see, I think, more clearly than we ever did before, that the whole process must begin, not in the university, but low down in the school. For at least a generation we in Canada have been admitting that our schools are far behind those of Western Europe, in results obtained. Lack of money, if nothing else, now makes a reform of our schools imperative.

In conclusion, lest I be misunderstood, I do not wish it thought that we imagine we have found a simple formula to set everything right. Rather, part of the experience we have been going through is a realisation that, life and the world being so difficult, so fascinatingly difficult, education must be correspondingly difficult. On the other hand, we are not depressed. We have punctured our own vanity at many points, we have deflated our complacency, but we have a quiet and steady hope. For it is youth with which we have to deal, - a youth not less eager and splendid, we think, than the springtime of any generation in the past; a youth, moreover, that is bored to death with the so-called amusements which we older men, in our own weariness, have provided them; a youth whose best intelligences ask not to be insulted nor trifled with. If we take that request seriously we may have to get over conducting sanatoria for the intellectual lame ducks,

but we shall find our national and our international leaders.

And when I say "leaders" I am thinking not at all of university presidents or Prime Ministers, nor of any one else ^{in danger of being} ~~who is~~ swallowed up in the routine of keeping pace with public vagaries; I am thinking not at all of pundits with a ready answer to "questions of to-day". I am thinking rather of those whose chief eminence is that they are private, independent, unattached; fertile in questions rather than prolific in answers; obstinate and stubborn only in devotion to ideals, principles and scepticism; ready and yielding only to the promptings of imagination and to dreams of a sane world.