

Mr. Chairman,  
distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

At this moment when so many persons of Scots blood are gathered together to witness, and to participate in, this latest edition of the Highland Games held under the auspices of the Highland Society of Antigonish it is fitting that we should pause and ask: why are we here?

The immediate reason is that the Games are annual instruments for attaining the primary object of the Society which, as stated ninety years ago, is "to preserve the martial spirit, language, dress, music and antiquities of the Caledonians."

And so we shall expect to see and hear today evidence that the customs and traditions of Old Scotland in such matters as athletic sports, dress, music and dancing have been treasured and perpetuated in this new land down through the arches of the years.

This, in itself need not be a sign of present strength; for it might merely betoken a people living inertly in the memory of the past with but a nostalgic loyalty to an historic greatness long deceased.

No such sombre conclusions, <sup>however,</sup> can be drawn in this case; ~~however~~; for here is no mere loyalty to a dead past; but rather the upthrust of a pervading sentiment which ennobles and activates the present.

Here, indeed, is an external manifestation of a deep inner conviction that things which have helped to form the Scottish character in the long ago have much to contribute to the world of today.

Here we are met to show to ourselves, and to the modern world, that love of manly exercise, that love of beauty in music, in dress, and in the poetry of motion, so characteristic of the native Scot, is as living a thing today in us as it was in the hearts of our grandsires.

Like them each of us can exclaim:

"Land of my sires! What mortal hand

Can e'er untie the filial band

That knits me to thy rugged strand!"

Here, in this remote time and place, we are to see again:

"The spirit(perfervid) of the heroic Scot,

The ancient native prowess unforgot;

Valour undropped, and manhood undecayed."

Yes truly it is fitting and meritorious that we should preserve all these visible symbols of our loyalty to the race from which we have sprung; that we should demonstrate our pride in its achievements, and our sense of gratitude for the spiritual heritage bequeathed to all who have any tincture of Scots blood in their veins.

In this outwelling of pride and gratitude we must not forget to extend a friendly Hieland hand to those of other races who mingle with us today [in the sacred character of Guests.]

Perhaps you will permit me, as a MacDonald of Antigonish long associated with Education, to remind you of another attribute of the Scot. That is his innate and compelling love of learning; not merely a respect for the material advantages it produces, but a love of learning for its own sake. [This, also, is a quality transmitted to us in this Province, so well served by great educational institutions.]

It has been said with truth that "there is no finer culture than is produced by the influence of the Christian spirit upon the rugged excellences of the Scottish character." Accordingly for this reason, if for no other, it is appropriate that these Highland Games, dedicated to the preservation of those excellences, should have their setting in the seat of a great university

animated by that spirit, and owing its origin and success so largely to the Scottish love of learning.

For all of these reasons let us be proud that we are what we are, and glad that we are here today with one another, and with our welcome friends. Let us now enjoy, and benefit from, the exemplification of the spirit of Old Scotland afforded by the Highland Games of 1951, which I now declare officially open.