



Some Aspects of
THE BRITISH
EXPERIMENT
IN DEMOCRACY

SIR HECTOR HETHERINGTON

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IN DEMOCRACY**

*The Chancellor Dunning Trust Lectures, Queen's University,
Kingston, Ontario, 1962*

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FOREWORD

Within these covers is found the twelfth series of lectures given at Queen's University under the Trust established in the name of the late Honourable Charles A. Dunning, Chancellor of Queen's University from 1940 to 1958. The purpose of the Chancellor Dunning Trust, founded in 1948, is "to promote understanding and appreciation of the supreme importance of the dignity, freedom and responsibility of the individual person in human society." It is a condition of the Trust that the Trustees of the University shall every three years determine the means by which the purposes of the Trust shall be pursued. So far, the method selected has been an annual series of lectures given at the University during the academic session. Normally, three formal lectures, supplemented by a considerable number of informal talks and discussions with students and staff, make up the programme.

Early in 1962 Sir Hector Hetherington, recently retired as Vice-Chancellor of Glasgow University, gave this latest series of lectures, *Some Aspects of the British Experiment in Democracy*.

The subject has a special concern and fascination. For some time it has disturbed us all to realize that democracy, as a political and social system, is still indeed an experiment with something less than a sure guarantee of lasting success. We are the more concerned because so much of what we live for and live by seems to be implicated in its fortunes. The events of the last generation have proved to us, if proof were needed, that democracy is more than political mechanics;

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at bottom it is a social life and spirit which seeks this particular form of political expression. It is clearer than ever before that the congenial life and spirit need to be sustained by an education suited to it, both in reach and in content. In recent years we have been forced to see that democracy must show its relevance to "the tempestuous and untamed streaming of the world" if it is to hold men's allegiance.

The fortunes of democracy in Britain have a special fascination for us. In matters political, we are mostly her pupils. If a political and social system that calls for restraint and common sense, for practical rather than utopian vision, has a promising future, we believe that Britain can teach us much about the essential conditions. We watch the experiment in democracy there, alert for leads, lessons, and warnings.

So it was an informing thing for Sir Hector's audience in Kingston to listen to him on British politics, British education and on the British role in Africa. It is a pleasure now to let a wider audience hear him speak with balance, clarity and simplicity.

J. A. CORRY,
Principal.

*Queen's University at Kingston,
July 19, 1962*

PREFACE

Conformably with the intention of the Chancellor Dunning Trust, the three Lectures delivered in Queen's University, Kingston, in February, 1962, are here committed to print. I have somewhat expanded a few paragraphs in Lectures Two and Three and have restored to all the Lectures the passages omitted in order to bring the spoken version within the limits of the academic hour. Otherwise they are as given.

They are no more than is here stated—notes and observations on the contemporary British scene and action. In Lectures Two and Three, my obligations are more to conversations than to books, though I surely have borrowed more from my reading over the years than I can now identify. In Lecture Three, as will appear, I am much indebted to books, particularly to the many authoritative writings for which, either as author or as editor, Miss Margery Perham has been responsible, and to the papers and talks that have come my way in the course of my association with the Commonwealth University Grants Advisory Committee. It was the introductory chapter of the 1945 Report of the Elliot Commission on Higher Education in West Africa that first gave me an exciting sense of the magnitude and adventure of the impending political changes in Africa. For anyone interested in these matters it is still immensely worth reading.

To me, the visit to Queen's University was an experience altogether happy and refreshing, most of all in the abundant

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meetings and talk with members of its faculty and with groups of students of whom any university would be proud. I am very grateful to the Principal, to the Vice-Chancellor and to their colleagues who so arranged my programme as to fill every day with interest and pleasure.

HECTOR HETHERINGTON

Glasgow,
March 12, 1962

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ONE

THE POLITICAL ASPECT

I am honoured beyond my deserts by the invitation to give this series of lectures on the Chancellor Dunning Foundation. I never knew Dr. Dunning but I have heard something of what he was and did. That knowledge adds to my gratitude for this occasion. And for two further reasons I am happy to find myself again in Queen's. The first is the long linkage between Queen's and the Scottish universities, which we on our side greatly value and which I think has meant something to you. The Church of Scotland had some part in your foundation, and if you want a catalogue of good Scots names and good Scots faces, you need look no further than that "illustrious line of devoted men" presented to Dr. Corry for his encouragement when he succeeded to their office on October twentieth. From his colleagues in Scotland may I wish him well?

The second reason is the nature of the commission given to the Dunning Lecturer. He has to say something calculated "to promote the understanding and appreciation of the supreme importance of the dignity, freedom and responsibility of the individual person in human society." When Dr. Mackintosh's invitation reached me I had to remind him that though I have lived all my life in the company of scholars, it is nearly forty years since I exchanged the practice of scholarship for the humbler business of trying to help scholars to do their work. So I can offer no profound study of the issues involved in our

topic, only some notes and observations based on my experience of the changing scene in which my work has been conducted. I find myself in full agreement with the purpose of the Foundation. The thesis here proclaimed has to make its way against the current of events over large areas of the economic and political life of every country, including my own, and against the open derision of many powerful systems elsewhere. Nevertheless, I believe it to be fundamental to our western civilization, indeed to any high political morality. I would, if I could, add to its force. And if I may sum up in a few sentences the import of all that I have to say, it is this. I believe that the key to our thinking and to our action in this matter lies precisely in the order of the words that Chancellor Dunning has chosen—"the dignity, freedom and responsibility of the individual person." Every word counts. The dignity of the individual means, in the phrase of Kant, that he must be recognized as an end, never used as mere means. Always, of course, he is caught in a web of purposes wider than his own, to which in some measure he must be instrumental. But equally he is a *person* with rights of his own, in which he may claim to be sustained. The corollary is that he should have some share in the making of the purposes to which he is called to contribute, and that in a wide, though never unlimited, field of thought and action he should be *free* to make his own decisions and to abide by their consequences. And—here is the commanding element in the whole situation—the condition under which any social order, even the most liberal, can acknowledge and support this right is that at least on issues of wide importance a sufficient number of those who claim their rights should be ready to act consistently under a clear sense of their personal responsibility for a just decision.

You observe that I use the phrase "a liberal society":

a society, liberal of course not in any party political sense, but one whose institutions, procedures and government favour the recognition of the individual as the unit, the bearer of its life, so that its purposes are fulfilled in a rich diversity of individual achievement—what Gilbert Murray called *liberality*. Therefore, I want to consider the conditions that such a society will seek to establish as the necessary preconditions of its own effective existence. First I shall discuss government, secondly education, and finally both government and education in relation to the greatest of the current adventures of the Commonwealth—the bringing into being of self-governing states in Africa.

Let us be clear about this individual person of whom we speak. We are not to suppose, for it is certainly untrue, that sheer or simple individualism is a sufficient basis for a social philosophy or for social action, for the individual himself is a product of his society, never an independent, complete, self-subsistent fact. As Adam Smith puts it, “the individual disentangles himself from an organic unity of social feeling based on common circumstances and conditions of life and well-being.” Yet what is thus disentangled is not just an arithmetical unit, but a peculiar kind of unit; not a unit but a unity, a person aware of himself as a focus of his society, for himself unique, but always in relation to other persons like himself.

Moreover, that disentangling takes time, both in the scale of the individual life and in the evolution of society. Indeed it cannot go far in either context until a certain level of maturity has been attained, so that even today, in many still relatively simple societies, this concept of the individual is not strongly effective. What matters, what really exists, is the family or the racial group or the tribe. Maybe that was true not so long ago in my own country. If the more romantic accounts of the eighteenth century Scottish Highlands are any way near the mark, he would

be a very strong-minded Mackintosh, though they are a strong-minded lot, who at that time thought of himself as anything other than a liegeman bound body and soul to the Mackintosh himself—the chief of the clan.

The gradual emergence of this recognition of the individual is a fascinating chapter in the history of Western thinking. Many strands have gone into it, and the emphasis has varied from one era to another. As in all else, the Greeks had something to do with it, especially perhaps the tragic poets. But I think the main source is the moral theology of the Jewish people; you get it right at the Bible's beginning in that wonderful myth of the Creation and the making of man in the image of God, and indeed all through the Old Testament with its assertion of the need for personal righteousness: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" And the deepest root of all, I am sure, is Christian—in the teaching of the Founder, which to this note of personal responsibility adds a profound and moving sense of the equal estate of men of every condition—all alike sons of God, all alike estranged by sin, and all alike the objects of his compassion.

That note was never lost through the centuries of the early Christian era, and during the Reformation with its theological insistence on the direct relationship of the individual soul to God it seems to have entered decisively into the mind of Europe. What matters even more is that the relation of the self to God and to other selves is seen to be a moral relationship, curiously interpreted by Calvin, but clear enough in Luther, that the self is capable of purpose as well as subject to impulse, under judgment by God and by himself, thus responsible, and as responsible, free. That is, I think, the crucial step, this recognition of the self as a member of a moral order and as such the bearer of rights and obligations. Until this conception has

clearly emerged, not just here and there but as part of the substance of our general thinking, there is no foundation for a mature, for an adult society that rests upon a consensus of individual wills and manifests the quality of its life through the freely chosen achievements of individual citizens. In a word, there is no prospect for liberality. The basis of liberality is the recognition of personality, responsible and free.

With this in mind, we may turn to look at how this new principle of liberality has gradually come to manifest itself in the ordering of various aspects of our common life. Fundamentally, liberality renews the Christian assertion of the equal status of all human souls, of their claim to equal consideration and equal rights. But it encounters at once the stubborn fact of human inequality, whether in original circumstance that can be changed, or in native gifts of mind and body that cannot. By no possibility can unequals be dealt with in all respects as equals. For that reason, as with some other Christian principles, it can never be fully realized in our ordinary work-a-day world. That is one of the inescapable tensions between the moral and the material planes on which we live our lives. But it remains a goal, a guiding light, and over five hundred years it has become of greater effect in every civilized society.

Historically, I suppose, that claim has taken three main forms. It is a claim to equality of economic status—seldom, I think, for equality of economic reward which in anything but a closed society is almost meaningless, but for two more practicable things. One asserts that the first claim on the national income is for a basic level of well-being for everyone who according to his power and opportunity makes his contribution to that fund—the simple principle of bread for every worthy citizen before anybody gets cake. Clearly, in recent times, with all the apparatus of

the welfare state, that claim has made some headway in most societies, and has now come to be seen as one to be reckoned with in the relations between the wealthier and the poorer societies. The second is the claim that inequalities of economic reward should bear some relation to function. That of course leaves plenty of room for differences of interpretation, and in a free society it will always be difficult to apply. But in most communities something of the sort is happening, with wide consent and surely to the general good. Taxation, if nothing else, sees to it that there are few mere consumers, and that differences of reward are narrower than they were. The end is not yet. Most societies still show examples of conspicuous and wasteful private expenditure. But at least the distribution of resources is very different from that which prevailed when I was young—great wealth in a few hands, and a third of our working population at or below the poverty line.

The second related aspect is the impulse to equality in general social status and opportunity. It appears, for example, in the claim of associations of wage-earning workers to some share in making the strategic decisions of the industries in which they are engaged—a claim often admitted in principle but very hard to work out in practice. In a broader way it appears in the desire for a less stratified society, a society in which different groups talk easily with one another, where people participate in the same amusements and cultural interests, and where differences of speech, recently diagnosed on most competent authority as *U* and *non-U*, are less potent barriers to communication. Summarily, perhaps, this is a claim to equality of education, or at least of educational opportunity.

The third aspect, and I think the most important of all, is that of equality before the law. That also has two implications. On the one side it means that in his dealings with others the humblest citizen has the same rights, the

same protection, and is to be judged by the same procedures and criteria as the rich and powerful. On the other side it means that all citizens in good standing have an equal claim to participate in the government of their society, which on the scale of our present-day affairs requires that the political form of that society should be what we call a representative democracy. That is the normal, almost the inevitable political expression of the principle of liberality.

All these three aspects—the economic, social and political—are subject to this principle, and wherever it is acknowledged it has been of some effect in all three directions. Opinions may differ as to their relative importance and societies do differ in the measure of their achievement in each. Britain certainly has cared more about the liberality of its political organization than about anything else; and though, as we shall see, its comparative neglect of the economic and social aspects has brought some weakness in its structure and action, I do not think that this fundamental choice has been wrong. For politics is the conduct of the business of that distinctive and dominant institution, the state, which is concerned to define and to maintain the rights of all its constituent members and groups, and to resolve their conflicts. The state is by no means the supreme teacher of morality. Family, church, school, especially the family, are of greater import in that regard. But the democratic state does offer to every citizen a theatre for the exercise of his moral responsibility on the widest scale.

What then, let me ask, mainly about Britain, is happening nowadays to our democratic state? Is it gaining in strength and effectiveness or holding its own, or are there symptoms of weakness? There is, of course, no one standard constitutional pattern of the democratic state. There are many variants. But whatever the pattern one broad result is attained; the ordinary citizen has the opportunity if he

cares to use it to take a recognizable part in government. And in every mature democracy most citizens do in fact make some use of this right. In the form evolved in the Commonwealth the mechanism is that government, provincial or central, is in the hands of a body of ministers, who are responsible primarily to a popularly elected assembly—in our usage, the Commons House of Parliament. The Government holds power so long as it is supported by a majority of the Commons. But it is there faced by an Opposition formidable enough to have in it the makings of an alternative government. That is the essential thing, that the alternative is always there and that the Commons by one device or another can, if it wishes, compel a change either of government policy or of the government itself. And its authority so to do rests on the final requirement that it has to submit at intervals to the grand assize of election by constituencies of ordinary citizens.

This linear relation between Government, Parliament and citizen is to us a familiar and, it seems, a simple way to secure the necessary interplay of influence. The trouble is that it is not quite as simple as it looks, for it is a mechanism that serves at once the two very necessary but very different purposes of concentrating and of controlling power. And it does so by setting up strains between its different elements. I do not know whether this is good engineering, but in a political instrument it brings peculiar risks. Power, supreme power, is essential for the business of government, and every politician desires and ought to desire to be in power, in order to promote the policies in which he believes. The whole thing becomes degraded unless there are genuine differences at issue. But to most politicians, as to most men, power is attractive, is a temptation in itself. Hence the struggle for power sometimes is a contention not for causes but for office, to be won without much regard to the morality of the means employed. Policies are

offered and commended not in the long term interest of the community as a whole but because of their appeal to the immediate self-interest of some large section of the electorate. Power may corrupt its holders but the struggle for power may corrupt those who have it in their gift. We are all aware of that, and of the cynicism which it engenders.

Even apart from the general hazard this mechanism calls for delicate handling. Its internal strains are essential to its operation. Without real, sometimes fierce, opposition there can be no searching examination and debate. And yet the strain must not be too great—otherwise the mechanism will break. How then are we to secure a strain sufficient for its critical uses, which can still be contained within the limits of an ongoing system of government? Only, I think, if the parties know the tolerable limits of controversy, if you like, the rules of the exercise, and are ready to abide by them. That takes a good deal of experience, and even more importantly also presupposes a certain overriding unity of mind and purpose. For there are at least two rules, one obvious and the other less so. The first unquestionably is that the Government must govern. It must have the authority and the ability to use the power with which it is endowed. No state can long put up with the absence of an effective centre of decision. I doubt if the most ardent Marxist any longer believes in the messianic prophecy that the end of the revolutionary process is the withering away of the state and the replacement of government by agencies of voluntary co-operation. Not even Communism is a cure for sin. Hence, if any government or form of government is so hamstrung that it can maintain no consistent line of policy and no stable order in public affairs, then whatever moral benefits it offers its citizens will set it aside and revert to another that promises at least to preserve the state against disruption. History, even very recent history, is full of examples of individuals

or oligarchies who have come to power on the strength of the assurance that, as the phrase goes, they will "get things done."

Governments then must govern, and in a democracy they are entitled to insist on the full application of any policy for which they can command a parliamentary majority. But there is a second rule—that in all but the most exceptional situations they must not drive a responsible minority too hard or too far. They must, to begin with, give full information and opportunity in Parliament and in the country for serious debate. And above all they must be attentive to criticism, manifestly concerned to see that it has full consideration. It would be a very unwise government which on a sharply contested measure yielded nothing to the judgment of the opposition. For the minority is likely one day to be a majority. It can then, if it pleases, reverse the policy of its predecessor and so, possibly, begin a succession of alternating decisions that would be the negation of government. It is better, therefore, that a government should not abruptly disregard substantial criticism of its proposals, should indeed go as far to meet it as it consistently can, so that asperities may be softened and all parties may feel that they have made some contribution to the final result.

This is a delicate process, not very welcome to ardent opponents. No one can say in advance when some compromise would be right and when it would not. All one knows is that bitterness born of sheer frustration is bad, and that while statesmen may not be false to what they conceive to be right, they govern best when they rely not solely on their own partial wisdom, but when as trustees of the whole society they draw upon the good sense and the goodwill of the widest possible area of responsible opinion.

That is what I mean by saying that this apparently simple relationship between government, parliament and

people presupposes a society mature enough to have learned by experience the tacit understandings by which the relationship can be maintained, and united enough to set the preservation of democratic government so high in the order of its public purposes that the people will not readily allow it to be overthrown by the pursuit of any sectional policy. The only safeguard against the recurrent mistakes and malaise that beset the democratic process is a general and genuine conviction of what I believe to be true, that with all its defects and failures, nevertheless over a space of time and over the whole broad field of our common affairs, this form of government can and does yield a better result morally and materially than any alternative. When most citizens agree about that, and are seriously concerned to make it work, democracy is viable and will succeed.

I have been speaking of the central agency of government. But this line of participants is by no means the whole apparatus of democratic government. Other agencies also are involved, are indeed necessary for its proper working. Three at least are quite indispensable. The first is a system concerned with the administration of justice, of sovereign authority in its own sphere, wholly free from the control of government, of established competence and impartiality and, therefore, the guarantor of the equal rights of the individual citizen before the law. The second is a corps of professional administrators, the permanent Civil Service, of high intellectual and moral quality, accepting with complete loyalty and integrity its subordinate but exceedingly important role in government, and able both to provide ministers with the information and guidance on which their decisions can be taken, and to apply the resulting legislation to all the complexities of actual situations. Let me add that not least important in this context is the quality of the civilian police. A police state is far removed from a democracy, but a democracy

cannot do without competent, disciplined and honest police. The third is an extensive and reliable service of news, again wholly free from government control, whose business is to report accurately and objectively the acts and intentions of government and all that is relevant thereto, and to offer responsible comment and appraisal. Without these three substructures and without the complete independence of two, democratic government is hardly even conceivable. It cannot prosper unless these three essential services, again no doubt with frequent failure, sustain and are sustained by a sufficiently strong and pervasive sense of their responsible part in the democratic process.

I come then, finally and briefly, to try to answer my question: what, under present conditions and tendencies in our public affairs, is happening or is likely to happen to this apparatus, to Parliament itself, and to those other agencies that participate in its work? There are, I think, grounds for fearing that there may be some invasion or weakening of that attitude of responsibility which is a condition of our democratic health. Vigilance is much in place.

First, as to Parliament, consider especially the ordinary back-bench member whose office in the whole scheme is to be the first-line judge of the wisdom and practicability of the government's acts and policies. He is the man who can make or unmake governments, who therefore holds a key point in the democratic process. For him, one factor undoubtedly adverse and of ever more serious weight is the enormous increase in the volume of government and parliamentary business. Under modern conditions that increase is quite inevitable, partly by reason of the gravity of international affairs and partly because Parliament must be concerned with a multitude of complicated and controversial issues of economic policy and of the social services.

At this moment in London there are twenty-eight separate departments of government, all promoting legislation in Parliament, all raising difficult budgetary questions, all subject to interrogation on their doings and to a full-dress review at least once a year.

The consequences are clear. The sheer mass of paper and of information is far beyond the mastery of any member, however diligent. He may be able to form an instructed opinion of his own on a few points, but on most he must rely on the judgment of others. Then this torrential flood of parliamentary business has compelled timetable restrictions—a subject can be discussed for so long and no longer. When the party leaders have said their say, there is less room than there used to be for the private member and for the expression of the unorthodox view. Party discipline is tighter and members on both sides are firmly discouraged from taking, either in speech or in vote, any other than the party line. They may say what they want to say in the private meetings of the party, with some influence, but only rarely do they utter sharp dissent in Parliament. Undeniably, under those conditions Parliament itself loses something of its interest and authority.

The relation of the member to his work has changed in another way. Parliament is no longer a part-time occupation but a demanding full-time job, necessitating the payment of members—not very lavish, but quite often nowadays all the income that a member has. A man so situated, especially if he be of the government party, is apt to worry a good deal before disregarding the Whips and thereby risking the loss of his only job. I see no alternative to the payment of members. Certainly it is better than the alternative, still not unknown, of subsidies by private pressure groups. Nevertheless, it remains that this change involves a subtle diminution of the independence of some

members and an increase of the authority of the Government over its own potentially dissident supporters.

Thirdly, this increased range of the business, and therefore of the power of the central government, has been accompanied by a decline in the powers and interest of local government, through the county, town and district councils which, when I was young, were lively agencies of local democracy. A parliamentary election will draw a vote of eighty to ninety per cent of the electorate. A local authority election does well to draw a poll of half that number, and though the work of these authorities is still an immensely important part of the whole process of government they furnish less of a stimulus and less of an education in public business than was once the case.

In all these three ways it seems to me there is some dilution of the democratic process—not as yet in any way disastrously, but sharply enough to raise a question. Some improvement could be made by a reform of Parliamentary procedures which are unnecessarily time-consuming, and more by the devolution of Parliamentary business to subordinate regional authorities. Ideas to that end are often under discussion. But if you will look, for example, at the absurdly obsolete structure of many of our trade unions you will see that even our radicals are very slow to change anything in an established apparatus of government; and thus far nothing of moment has been achieved.

At the second level also questions arise about the condition of those three necessary substructures of government. As to one, the administration of justice, so far as I can see there is no need for concern. Like Parliament, the Courts of Justice are more heavily occupied, partly because they have to interpret and apply a greater volume of legislation, and partly for the less creditable reason that when money is abundant there is more crime and fraud. Many more High Court judges have had to be appointed, and the lower

courts strengthened. That has meant perhaps some temporary shortage of senior counsel who have their own important part to play. But there has been no impairment of the quality, standing and independent authority of the judges. And with the more ample provision of free or cheap legal aid to poor litigants and accused, the ends of justice are not indeed served perfectly, but probably better than ever before.

But for different reasons the situation is not so reassuring as regards the other two—the Civil Service and the Press. The Civil Service in Britain has long been a *corps d'élite*. Its quality depends on the quality of its annual recruitment, especially to its highest grade. Twenty years ago that grade was recruited exclusively by competitive examination. For its thirty or so annual vacancies the Service could rely on attracting applications from a hundred or more of the very best graduates of the British universities, so that its selected entrants were of quite outstanding ability and promise. The situation is far different today. There are many more places to fill and far fewer candidates of the old distinction. They are going to other and perhaps more attractive occupations. Alternative methods of recruitment have had to be devised, intellectual standards are somewhat lower, and even so the Service cannot be sure of getting the number of men and women it wants. Quite often in the last few years vacancies have been left unfilled. That will hurt the future; it hurts the present too. Senior civil servants are desperately overworked, and no man who is subject to the pressures under which they live can maintain the standard of accuracy and objectivity on which the proper working of our government depends.

Similarly, I think there are some grounds for disquiet about the future and the freedom of the Press. It is under no threat from government. But ownership and control are steadily passing into the hands of a very small number

of people—so far as Britain is concerned, mostly Canadians. The cost of producing a newspaper is now so high that even popular dailies with circulations of well over 1,000,000 find it hard to maintain an independent existence. More and more of them, therefore, are falling out of the race, either by simple disappearance or by being absorbed into a rival with a still larger circulation. Especially is that true of papers of the political left, which is a great misfortune. Ten years ago in London there were three such papers. Now there is only one and even that has passed, though with some limited assurances about its future, under the control of one of the three big financial groups. The number of important national daily newspapers that are not controlled by one or other of these groups can now be counted on the fingers of one hand. Only one of them has a large circulation. None of the others exceeds a quarter of a million, and that means some financial anxiety. More than that, these same financial groups now have in their hands many regional daily papers and have remade them in the image of one or other of the mass-circulation dailies, so that they no longer reflect, to the degree they once did, the regional character and point of view.

This is, to say the least, an unhealthy situation. It is not good for the service of news. Technically, most of the mass dailies are extremely efficient and readable papers. Their news-gathering is admirable; but, inevitably, presentation is selective. Their interest is in stories that will sell the paper rather than in the news which is seriously important. And perhaps the effect is even less good for editorial comment, which is apt to be forceful rather than weighty. I would not say that these newspapers do any great harm. They just have the defect of being overly concerned with sales rather than with service, and I doubt if anyone would say that the popular press provides much of an education in political or moral responsibility.

On the other hand—and this is something of a balancing factor—these papers seem to have surprisingly little effect on political events, or on the direction of popular political thinking, far less, certainly, than the handful of their “quality” contemporaries, or the small-circulation weekend reviews. I suspect that their owners have come to be aware of this for I think their standards, though nothing to boast about yet, are rising. Moreover, there is another compensatory factor. That is the very high standard of the British Broadcasting Corporation in its presentation of news and comment. From its foundation to the present the B.B.C. has been organized as a public service corporation, deriving its main revenue from licence fees. Its broadcasting, therefore, though it must have popular appeal and provide plenty of entertainment, can have regard for other ends than simple salesmanship. It had the luck to find in its first director-general a man who had a profound sense of the moral responsibility of this new instrument. It may not be in all respects quite what it was, but in news at least it has held its standards. Within the limits of the party-political impartiality to which it is bound, it has developed methods of free political discussion, and even controversy, and of instructed comment on foreign and domestic affairs. Beyond question, by its service of political information and understanding, as well as in other things, the B.B.C. has brought immense benefit to British democracy. For my own part—I am not talking about Canada where the conditions are different, but about Britain—I regard it as a most grievous mistake of the Government of 1954 that in the even more powerful medium of television it established as an alternative to the B.B.C. a commercial system, financed by advertising revenue and therefore heavily dependent on the mass popularity of its programmes. A former director-general once remarked that the one certain way for the B.B.C. to increase its audience

was to lower its standards. That is a measure of the risk run by the commercial companies and the B.B.C. in this competitive field. Nowhere, not even in the B.B.C., is television on the intellectual level of sound broadcasting. But as with the newspapers, so on the evidence thus far, it seems that some at least of the commercial companies begin to feel themselves under challenge from the standards of the B.B.C. It may be, therefore, that here too Gresham's Law that bad money drives out good is less strongly operative than we had feared. If so, there are grounds for hope.

I have drawn in terms of British experience this all too summary review of the instruments by which the adventure of democratic government is sustained. I hope it may be of some interest in itself. And I daresay that in ways not wholly dissimilar the same conditions and tendencies repeat themselves in every other democratic community, and that the same problems are there encountered. For all alike there is one clear inference. Every form of government has its own hazards. There is no reason to think that in a relatively mature society a liberal democracy is necessarily at greater risk than is any alternative form. But it is certainly not exempt from peril or failure, and the conditions of its maintenance are evident enough. It can be effective and viable only if all its agencies are sufficiently and continuously inspired and permeated by an informed concern for the issues of public policy. In the end that means that its citizens, or enough of them to exercise a decisive influence on the course of events, must be able to judge wisely the objectives of that policy and the means to be taken thereto. The ultimate safeguard is the moral and intellectual quality of the ordinary citizen, and to that end one of our most important public services is public education.

TWO

THE EDUCATIONAL ASPECT

The first lecture brought me to the conclusion that any society embarked upon the experiment of democracy must have a strong concern for the education of all its citizens, among them those who do most of the ordinary work of the world. I think it altogether right to apply to the service of education the desiderata named in the commission of the Dunning Lecturer—the dignity, freedom and responsibility of the individual person. Dignity means self-respect and the respect of others. Education must prepare a man to earn that title, which means at the least that he must do a recognizably useful job in life, by which he maintains himself and makes his contribution to the common stock. Freedom means not just that he should be free from oppression and want, but that he should have a margin of means, leisure, vigour of body and mind in which to enjoy his own interests, and that his interests should be such as to engage him worthily and bring him real content. Responsibility implies that he should be fit and willing to take his share in the ongoing business of his society, that he should feel he belongs to it, that he should understand something of its processes and judge and act seriously towards its policies and objectives. These are three characteristics—vocational, personal and social—of a good citizen. They are also constituents of a liberal education—an education in freedom. And a good educational system is one that places that experience within the reach

of all normal citizens in the measure of their capacity to use it.

Education, this three-in-one, is a complex process. It has to deal with a human nature variously endowed and often resistant to its discipline. It touches not only the intellect but the whole personality, body, mind and spirit—sensibilities and attitudes as much at issue as physical and mental skills. It must draw upon the insights of many sciences; its methods will change from time to time. There is perhaps only one assertion that holds everywhere and always—that at least up to the stage at which our young people move out into adult life, educational programmes, whatever their content, should be drawn with a single eye to their wholesome welfare; all else is subordinate to that. This is what education in a free society, in a democracy, must mean. I want to convey enough about British education to enable a judgment as to how far it meets these criteria. There have been serious defects, now in course of mending, but I think the failure has been of quantity and extent rather than of quality and aim.

I shall try to cover enough aspects, but very far from all there is to tell, and perhaps not quite justly proportioned. Being what and where I am, I shall speak more about the later stages of education, especially the universities. These are by no means more important than the earlier, but they are the area of our present problems and growth. Even as to them I can use little refinement. I shall have to speak mainly of England, which by reason of its size and wealth has set the general pace and pattern; but that country alone has a complex educational apparatus, the outcome of a variety of strains and influences, of which I shall distinguish only a few. And in Queen's University I have no need to stress the point that England is not the whole of Britain. Scotland and Northern Ireland on the one side, and Wales on the other, have their own educational ways,

indeed their own educational administrations, and there always has been some difference—at least of emphasis. Perhaps it would not be wholly misleading to say that over a long period England more than the others spent its effort mainly on the education of its élite, whether of birth or of talent. In that sense its outlook was aristocratic, while in the others the concern was wider, the way to education always a little more open, their outlook more democratic.

Though nowadays the difference cannot be so stated, the older attitude is still of some effect. If you look in Britain for the very highest points of intellectual attainment to which only the ablest can aspire, you will find more of them in England than in Scotland or Wales, at the summits of its system—in the sixth forms of the grammar schools and the so-called public schools, and in a few of the honours schools, not only at Oxford and Cambridge, but in some of the new universities as well. These are more selective, more specialized than the schools and universities of Scotland and Wales, which have never favoured so high a degree of selection or of early specialization. They have preferred a broader school and undergraduate curriculum and have brought a broader band of their youth within reach of higher education—a point of educational principle not unfamiliar in Queen's.

It is to be remembered also that every national scheme of education, like other elements of a social structure, is very much the outcome of an historical experience. In particular, it is always sharply affected by an experience of crisis. In Britain, for example, the Acts that created our modern system were passed in 1902, 1918 and 1944, each at the end of a war. Until perhaps 1914 or even later Britain, England especially, had been for nearly three hundred years a comparatively stable country, free from the violent changes that had occurred over most of Europe. So its educational history has been one of slow development;

there has been no great stimulus to change, and to this day, its apparatus has less of the logical consistency of the French system, or of the social urgency of that of Germany since the mid-nineteenth century, or of Russia since 1917. And for the same reason it differs from the systems more or less deliberately created by the new nations of North America that were able, as it were, to start from scratch as they faced the task of establishing their homeland over the length and breadth of a vast continent.

This long absence of external compulsion is surely part explanation of some elements of long enduring influence. Someone (I have not been able to find the reference) prescribed as a maxim of political action that if it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change. By that measure the English at least are good conservatives. So it has come about that since in an educational system not strongly established the strongest components from the sixteenth century onwards were the grammar schools and the universities, the prevailing emphasis in our scheme has been on those academic studies, especially the ancient classics and mathematics, which were thought best to secure—in the words of the bidding prayer—that “men should never be wanting to serve God in Church and state.” This emphasis brought strength—a respect for intellectual standards—but some weakness too, persisting. It has helped to perpetuate a separation between the schools of the public system and those that are privately provided, and it has imposed some difficulty in the design of the public system itself. At this moment in Britain great efforts are being made to create a system of secondary schools which in its organization takes account of the different aptitudes and interests of its pupils as these have been assessed in the course of their primary education. One of the obstacles that effort encounters is that many young people and more of their parents are reluctant to accept anything but a course of

study oriented primarily towards an almost purely intellectual attainment. The reason lies not in a doubt as to the educational merits of the new and broader courses, but in the higher prestige still attached to the older clerkly disciplines.

Most of all, perhaps, it explains why over the whole of Britain, until not quite a hundred years ago, the state as such had no significant hand in the provision and management of our system. As with many other countries, education began with the Church—part of its great civilizing mission in our northern lands. In the sixth century in Scotland and in England the missionaries of the Celtic and Roman Churches established houses of piety and learning. From these, schools were founded in many parishes, and much later, when the Church was strongly established, universities too—Oxford and Cambridge in England, St. Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen in Scotland. The Church, the values of the Church—piety before learning—dominated their programme. Even the differences between Scottish and English education really derive from the different effects of the Reformation on the Churches of these two countries. Both became Protestant. But England remained Episcopal; Scotland became Presbyterian and therefore more democratic. The difference reflected itself at once in their educational policies. That is why a long time ago education reached deeper down into the community in Scotland than it did in England.

But whatever the differences, in both countries the Churches retained control. They provided such schooling as was available to working folk and led the abler boys on to further study. For centuries they ruled directly, and later with the appearance of denominations within the Reformed Church, largely through denominational societies. Private and corporate charity gradually entered the field, usually to provide secondary education. Bit by bit a

patchwork of schools was built up—some good, some bad. Only with the nineteenth century when the needs of a new industrial society had become clamant was there any dawning of the idea that this sporadic effort would no longer do. In 1833 Parliament for the first time showed a concern for education by making small building grants to the church societies that provided and managed the schools. But not till 1870 did it accept a measure of direct state responsibility by setting up and aiding a system of local authorities charged with the care of elementary education, applying some compulsion to parents and pupils to secure attendance at school. Later, at the turn of the century, the local authorities were helped and encouraged to concern themselves with secondary and technical education as well. Progress in the first half of the century was rapid. But even so we had to wait until 1944, less than twenty years ago, for an Act that drew the lines of a fully comprehensive public educational service, available without cost to everyone who wished to use it. The elementary school as such was abolished. All young people were required to give full-time attendance at school up to age sixteen, so that the educational programme could be conceived as a single planned process, beginning with the primary school from five to eleven or twelve, with a transition to one of several four or five year secondary courses, according to the aptitudes or interests of the pupil. Thereafter, a continuation of school work was provided for as many pupils as could be induced to remain full-time till age eighteen, and for those who left at sixteen, compulsory part-time education up to eighteen. Statutory warrant now exists for this whole scheme and for a range of post-school services, vocational, recreational and cultural. As regards the declaration of public intention and policy, we may now be well content. It is no idle dream. Barring calamity, it will happen. But a great deal has still to be

done. Even yet obligatory attendance at school ends at fifteen, not sixteen; and although many more pupils remain voluntarily at school, the wastage is considerable. It is hard to measure it precisely but quite probably, according to a recent official report, those who leave at fifteen include some eight per cent of that tenth of our young people who are rated as of very high ability, and the loss to others of a year's maturing may well be even more important. As for post-sixteen experience, on the 1958 figures, more than half the boys in the seventeen to eighteen age group and three-quarters of the girls were getting no education at all; only quite small fractions of that age group, 7.8 per cent of the boys and 5.4 per cent of the girls, were in full-time education. You see the contrast with the North American Continent. The reason now is not want of intention. It is simply that we have made so late a start, have not hitherto really believed in the importance of educating beyond fourteen any but the fairly well-to-do whose parents kept them at school, and that group of talented youngsters who forced themselves on our notice. *They* have been well enough. But we have been too little concerned about our ordinary citizens. So we find ourselves short both of buildings and of teachers. We are working quite hard to make good—not without some rough political weather and some teasing problems of curricular relationships. It will come. The issues are gradually clearing. But not for a little while yet.

So much for the schools. As to post-school education, especially the universities, the story is not really very different. There also, until five years ago, the state left the initiative to other people and for most of the time was a rather grudging foster-parent. Nor until the mid-nineteenth century was the initiative of others very remarkable. In 1841, when Queen's was founded, there were eight universities in Britain—Oxford, Cambridge, the

four in Scotland and the new universities in London and Durham, then not twenty years old. But in 1851 the benefaction of John Owens to Manchester seemed to release a splendid upsurge of private and corporate interest in many larger and some smaller cities, which led to the formation of colleges, most of which developed rapidly to the rank of universities. By 1914 there were fifteen universities in Britain and four university colleges on the way to the full status that they have since attained. Every one of these was the outcome of local enterprise, though when they had made themselves going concerns the state did provide modest grants in aid. Until the end of the First World War, the state contribution to the expenses of every university was the least significant part of its budget. Oxford and Cambridge got nothing at all.

Not many universities, you may think, for a nation of over forty million people, especially as four of them were in Scotland. True enough, and except for Oxford and Cambridge they were all financially poor. But there were two compensations. First, they were all, every one of them, the real thing—truly of the university family. Some had been built around schools of medicine or applied science. But all of them had come to give a quite central place to the humanities and the pure sciences, and none but had men of very high distinction in its service. Secondly, they believed in themselves. When, with the financial strains at the end of the war, the time came when Government had to take a share in their support, it found itself dealing with mature institutions that had well-tested ideas of what they should do and were firmly attached to doing it in their own way. They were in fact too strong for any question to be raised about their right to independence.

Hence, when in 1919 government help was called for, an interesting procedure was adopted. The Government authorized the Chancellor of the Exchequer to appoint a

committee—the University Grants Committee—to study the needs of the universities and to advise on the amount and allocation of government aid. The outcome was a total grant of £1.4m. (\$7m. at the then rate of exchange), just enough to keep the universities solvent, though it left them to find for themselves the further £3m. required for their current expenses, and the whole of the capital needed for their development. But two material things had happened, almost by accident. First, the universities had been placed under the care of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and not under a state Ministry of Education. Second, the Chancellor chose as his grants advisory committee a group of eminent ex-academics—nobody else. That meant that the channel of communication between Government and universities was a body that understood the language and working of a university, a precedent that was to be of importance to the universities of Canada, Australia and New Zealand when some thirty years later they came to have financial dealings with their federal governments.

With little change, that situation endured until the end of the Second World War. Government aid had gradually increased, though it never amounted to more than about a third of the recurrent expenditure of any university, and provided almost none of their capital. But a second crisis arose in 1945. Once again inflation had destroyed financial stability, and it had become clear that if the higher manpower requirements of industry and the professions were to be met a large and speedy expansion of the number of graduates, especially in the applied sciences, would have to be achieved. Government therefore set out on a policy of increasing the flow of students to the university, first by a scheme of grants to veterans, which in stages has since been extended to all students. We are now in the remarkable position that subject to a very generous test of parental means, every British national who can get

himself admitted to a university is legally entitled to support from public funds sufficient to cover the whole cost of his university residence with something over for his vacations. Similarly, government aid to the universities was rapidly augmented, to a point at which it is now much the largest element in the university's budget—covering in most cases not one-third but three-quarters of the recurrent costs and more than half its capital expenditure. Moreover, very much at the instance of Government, all universities were urged, and most have agreed, to enlarge their accommodation and staffs, and seven new universities are being created. Maybe there will be more.

By these measures the whole scale of the university effort has been multiplied. Student numbers have doubled—from 50,000 to over 100,000—and it may well be that in the next twelve years they will double again. Not, of course, without difficulties; not, indeed, without some loss. Government has provided a great deal of money, but not nearly as much as was needed and by implication promised. Buildings, staffs, facilities of all kinds are still inadequate, and nobody who wants tranquillity will choose to preside over a British university at any time in the next twenty years. But at the end of the day a more powerful and a better furnished university system will have emerged, in which there will still, I trust, be room for a seemly and invigorating variety.

But there is something of a risk, pointing to the need for substantial private support, which will be hard to get in these days of punitive taxation. Inevitably, so great a change of scale and of finance has brought a change in the relations of Government and universities. Not in form, or in procedure, for neither Government nor its Grants Committee does more than indicate the direction of its policies. No university, not even those that have been brought into being by central rather than by local initiative,

and which must look to Government for an abnormally high fraction of their costs, is obliged to act or to refrain from acting otherwise than its own judgment approves. But the whole context of these decisions is altered. In framing its policy every university knows that the practicability of its programme depends upon the financial support of the U.G.C., and that in making its allocations that Committee must have close regard to its own and to government policy. The area of the university's independent choice is only marginal. Aside from private support, it is the U.G.C. that settles for each university the pace of its development and, if not quite so decisively, its direction as well. Moreover, when government expenditure on the universities is running at the rate of £70m. per annum—some forty times what it was even fifteen years ago—Treasury supervision is much tighter. Staff salaries, for example, are really fixed within very narrow limits by Treasury decisions. Parliamentary questions and debates are much more frequent and perhaps we must expect that quite soon a minister other than the Chancellor will be designated to keep an eye on university policies and progress, and to tell Parliament what he would like them to do and how far they are meeting his wishes.

I do not see how some such change can long be delayed. Nor do I feel any particular apprehension about it. There will even be some advantage to the universities themselves in being able to extract in Parliament an explanation, not now available, of official decisions that occasionally wreck a carefully considered plan. On the other hand there *are* dangers—the possibility of rather too much supervision and direction. There could come a point of invasion at which the universities would have to resist, for the autonomy of the universities is not an idea invented by them in their own behalf. It is a condition of their being able to do their work. Their staffs are, many of them, on the

frontier of advancing knowledge—at times, therefore, critical of received opinion, and at risk of difference with the powers that be. But there would be no progress if teachers and researchers were to be restrained in any field of knowledge from publishing the conclusions to which, by the best light they can command, they are led. Unless, therefore, except for breaches of the ordinary law of the land, the universities and nobody else are free to judge the issues that may here arise, their work will be inhibited. I suppose opinions differ as to the freedoms that the universities essentially require. For myself, though I may be unduly easy, there are only two. I think it vital that each university should be wholly responsible for its own appointments, that it should choose its faculty, should decide the conditions of their tenure and should, if need be, dismiss them. And similarly it must hold full responsibility for the organization of its courses and for the character and standard of the instruction given within its walls. Of course it has no right to be heedless of criticism. But it has the right and the duty of final decision. And if these two freedoms are secure—and so far as I see they are not now in peril—I do not think we need be over-anxious about the abridgement of our area of free choice in matters of less intimate concern.

Let me make one further point. You may think that compared with Canada, and still more with the United States, we are setting a rather low target for our larger university programme—200,000 students in any year after 1970 is about 1 in 260 of our total population. Ontario expects to have a higher fraction than that, perhaps already has. I would not deny that in that respect you are ahead of Britain, and you may justly be glad of it. But the difference is not as great as it appears. It is partly a matter of the organization of the educational system. Some activities that in North America belong to the

universities are with us assigned either to the schools or to institutions other than the universities. And simultaneously with the expansion of the British universities, the same process is underway in all other forms of post-school education. Technical colleges and colleges of higher technology—now very much the centre of government interest—colleges of Education, Art, Music, Commerce, Nursing, Household Economy and all the rest are similarly preparing for a larger inflow. Our universities have, as they ought to have, associations with nearly all these institutions. But in the main they are under different authorities and take their own independent course.

It would be quite pointless and on my part impertinent to consider whether your system or ours is the better. There is no *a priori* wisdom on such an issue. Experience is the only determinant. Either will serve if its intention be rightly conceived, and Canada seems to me to have understood these intentions very clearly. But perhaps it is worth while to say this. Aside from its research, and in my judgment prior even to that, the business of a university is not training but a different thing, education. Often enough the instruments of that education will be and should be the disciplines that serve as a basis for future professional practice. But they earn their place in the university because they are worthy educational disciplines, linked with and leading into the whole developing system of knowledge. The virtue of the university is that it is a *studium generale* where all such disciplines keep company, and where the Humanities—the study of man's achievement in all the arts and sciences, and in the making of his society—hold a central and not a peripheral place. That is the essential matter which seems to me vital to our university office and tradition.

There I must leave my account of our British public system of education—public not in the sense that it was

made by the state but that the state is deeply committed to that service and is responsible for its maintenance and supervision. But, as noted earlier, there is another system of schools, especially in England, standing outside the state system, the relatively small but powerful system of private schools. On that I must say a word, for though the point is more social than educational it bears on our interest in democracy. We call them, as you know, by a stroke of English humour, *public* schools, apparently because they are the only schools to which the public makes no contribution and to which most of the public has almost no chance of being admitted. Of course private schools exist in every country for much the same reasons as they do in England. But nowhere, I think, have they the same influential place as in England. Some are old and famous schools; most are of the nineteenth century, established for the education of their own sons by a prosperous upper-middle class that had no great interest in creating a national system.

In some ways these schools are like the ordinary primary and secondary schools, with much the same range of studies and catering for pupils of the same span of ability. Indeed the lines of demarcation are not entirely clear. Within the public system there are many fee-paying day-schools, state-aided but managed by their own boards of governors, which in their general ethos have a good deal of the quality of the private schools. But in two respects the private schools *are* different. They are residential—boarding schools. They are therefore more self-contained, less part of the life of the towns or townships in which they are set. And they are expensive to run. They get no state aid, and though in the older schools endowments make a contribution, by and large they must meet their costs from the fees charged to their pupils. The result, though it is

deplored by the leaders of the schools themselves, is that they are accessible only to the well-to-do.

In general they are good schools, many of them very good schools indeed. And for many of their pupils, though not for all, their claim is well founded that a residential school provides a more varied and intense educational experience than can be offered by the ordinary day school. They made men who in distant and often lonely places in the overseas Empire could carry great responsibility. That is their educational justification and the reason why they attract the devoted service of many who dislike their exclusiveness. Nowadays it is fair to say they are not so isolated from the main school system as they once were. They have welcomed inspection by the Ministry of Education, and have unquestionably met the test of efficiency. Happily also, exchanges of staff between the private and public systems are now fairly frequent so that each has had some gain from the experience and experiments of the other. The strongest critics of the private schools would not deny that they contribute something of real value to English education.

But, equally, their strongest champions would not deny that this division in our school system ministers to a division in the unity of English society and to the vice of snobbery. They are upper-class schools, available only to the comfortably off, the surviving strongholds of the aristocratic tradition in English education. And beyond doubt rather than any peculiar educational merit, this feature induces many parents to strain and even mortgage their resources to send their children. They covet for them the social hallmark of the public school. Not so long ago that was also true of Oxford and Cambridge. But with the new provision of maintenance grants these universities are rapidly getting rid of that embarrassment. They now can and do admit the applicants they think most worthy, without

regard to means. Instead of being socially divisive they have become, like other universities, something of a social cement. That solution is not open to the public schools except on a scale that makes no difference. They remain a constituent of social cleavage and their influence is deeply resented by a strong section of opinion, which sees in the schools a denial of the deep desire for equality of educational opportunity. When a Labour government comes to power there will be a movement for their compulsory absorption into the public system. It is fairly safe to say that such is not the answer and that it would not at once succeed. But it is no less certain that public opinion, which has been much concerned to mitigate the differences of esteem in which various elements of its own system are held, will not indefinitely tolerate so sharp a division between the public and the private systems, and will require some closer working relationship than any which thus far has been under contemplation.

That, I think, is as far as I can take my narrative of the expanding educational effort in Britain. Much that we have is good—the best of it very good—and everywhere a fortunate concern for standards. But we have been slow to realize how supremely important to the health of our society is the full contribution of the schools. The awakening has come more under the impulse of military and economic necessity than for any other reason. But I think we see it now as a measure of social justice, inherent in our political profession. On that basis, I believe it will endure. In the final judgment it is well to remember that as elsewhere in our free communities, our formally organized action is still something short of the whole. The record shows how greatly over all the modern period our education has depended on private initiative and benevolence, and that has not yet failed. With the building of the public system it has found new forms of expression at all stages of the

educational process—schools for very young children, some of them highly inventive and imaginative in their approach; in the post-school period a panoply of organizations comprises what we now call the service of youth, clubs, social and athletic, Brigades, Scouts, Guides, the Cadet contingents of the services, Sea Schools, Adventure Schools—any number of such bodies, now happily getting themselves into good and helpful relations with the schools. And beyond school age there is yet another reinforcement. More than fifty years ago the universities, led by Oxford and Cambridge, began to interest themselves in what came to be called extra-mural adult education—courses offered in places away from the university centres and open at trifling cost to any student who cared to attend them. No vocational interest was involved, no credit offered. You have the same in Canada, and some extension services beyond anything that Britain can show. But what is most significant in Britain is the response to this effort evoked among wage-earning workers. Trade unions, co-operative societies and the like in alliance with the universities have created a strong voluntary movement for the liberal education of their members—never numerically large but serious in intention and powerful enough to have produced, by no means for its own exclusive use, a quite extensive system of residential adult schools and colleges offering short or long courses of organized study. That is good democracy.

I would not have you think that all this has made a serious dent on the attendances at our football games or movie houses. I do not want it to, though I would be glad if it could help to kill the follies of the "pools." But it is a simple matter of history that this liberal education has had a perceptible effect on the quality of the political and social thinking of many men and women of all persuasions and has, in other ways also, enriched their lives. Enriched their

lives. That surely is the short way of saying what Chancellor Dunning sought to emphasize, and what we hope may now be achieved in the more abundant provision at last in sight—that all our young people, not just the able or the better off, but all of them may have an experience of discipline and creation long enough and well enough devised to give to each a chance to make something of his capacities, to realize something of his citizen responsibilities, and to enjoy his private pursuits and his family life in a civilized and satisfying way. To give him a chance—that is all we can do. Education offers no certainty of happiness or of wisdom or of virtue. But it betters the chance and lessens the risk that a man may fail because his life holds nothing but thin and trivial interests. To that objective I believe that Britain is now committed. In my lifetime I have seen a truly wonderful improvement in the material condition of our people. I have seen something of their reserves of those primary virtues of courage and neighbourliness, and enough of our schools to believe that, given the resources, here is an instrument that will help to bring the people to a better fulfilment—not in learning only but in discrimination, enjoyment, a sense of the wonder of the world and of its uncovenanted gift of beauty, and of what they owe to one another. Britain—a political democracy? Yes: very fairly experienced and secure. A social, an educated democracy? Not yet: But I think we are on the way.

THREE

THE COMMONWEALTH IN AFRICA

I had long doubts before venturing to propose the topic we are now to consider. I have never been in Africa; therefore, in one way this is a report at second hand. What I do know at first hand and what I shall mainly discuss is the development of the universities there. Like others of my cloth in Britain I have had some contact for many years now with higher education in the British Colonial territories, and since its appointment in 1946 I have been Chairman of the Commonwealth Universities Grants Advisory Committee, whose functions I shall describe later. Educational matters are not easily separable from broader political and social considerations, so that in the course of my work and of many conversations with British and African academics and administrators, I think I know fairly well how things are moving. In any event, nothing could be more germane to the intention of the Dunning Foundation than this adventure into freedom of the emergent states. Adventure it is, inevitable and right, but its prosperous course is by no means yet assured. And if it be true of Britain and of the older Commonwealth that the health of our societies calls for longer and better education, *a fortiori* that is true of Africa. That is why the educational need and opportunity are dominant, and why in this matter the new states and we, their well-wishers, are involved in a race against time.

We are all familiar with the course of recent events—so familiar that we hardly stop to think what an extraordinary story it is. Fifteen years ago, at the end of the war,

Britain and the British Parliament had final responsibility for the government of vast overseas lands, containing at some 600,000,000 a population as large as that of China. Of course so great an enterprise could not be run wholly from Britain. Nearly all those countries had not only British appointed administrative officers but agencies of government of their own, legislative and executive councils with varying degrees of local participation and influence—in some cases, as in India, a great deal of influence. But the final responsibility lay with their British governors and with Parliament and ministers in London. Today nearly the whole of that responsibility has gone. India, Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon, Malaya, Ghana, Nigeria, Somaliland, Tanganyika, Sierra Leone, are already independent states. In almost all the rest, in Africa and in the West Indies, British sovereignty will soon be a thing of the past. There will be left only the three High Commission territories in South Africa, Hong Kong, Malta, a few very small colonies in Africa, Asia and Central America, and some islands in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Of these, only the Protectorates and Hong Kong seem to be attached to their present status as British Colonies, pretty much on the ground celebrated in Belloc's jingle:

We do not want to let go Nurse
For fear of meeting something worse.

Never in history has there been so rapid a dissolution or surrender of a great Empire. It is not surprising that some in Britain and more elsewhere suppose that the British people have lost their nerve and their sense of an historic mission.

Perhaps it is so. Two wars are an exhausting experience. But it can be seen in another way, as in some sort a completion. Thus far all these states have chosen a form of

parliamentary government on the model with which Britain has made them familiar, and all except Burma have chosen to remain within the Commonwealth. How long they will stand by their choices no one can prophesy. In the circumstances of their new nationhood, democracy on our model is not an easy form of government. In the first lecture I discussed some of the conditions which it seems essentially to require, and it is hard to think that the new states can quickly meet them. Can they create, can they support this method of governing by a balance of opposing but mutually responsible parties, the strains so engendered being contained within the felt organic unity of the whole society? Can they establish, can they allow the necessary range of freedom to those substructures of government—the judiciary, the press, the universities—required for their effective operation?

It seems unlikely that they can, and more probable that in this process of adapting modern political structures to their familiar and traditional ways they will have for a time to work through a less dispersed and more authoritarian form of government. Experience so far points in that direction and it is no matter for surprise. Nor in the Commonwealth will they be easy partners, or inclined to regard that association as the most important of the linkages they will desire to form. All the African leaders have made it clear that to them the most important prospect is a close association of African states, ex-British, ex-French and all the rest, and if the price of that association be separation from the Commonwealth, they will cheerfully pay. There is no sign at all of any special tenderness towards Britain or the Commonwealth—rather the reverse. But they do not intend to break with what they have learned. They mean, if they can, to use it and to give it the imprint of their own character and policy. That surely affords to us of the older Commonwealth, especially of Britain, a chance to help

them on their way—an opportunity to which, in our own interests, we should not be slow to respond. For beyond doubt it would mean much to the prospects of Western liberality if the states of the Indian subcontinent, of tropical Africa and of the Caribbean were able, whatever their forms, to maintain themselves in spirit and outlook as democratic societies. In Africa certainly their deepest wish at present is to avoid entanglement in any extra-African conflict. Africa is what matters to them. But it is not the less important to us that in their internal order and practice they should feel themselves committed to a liberal attitude, and it would be worth our while to help them in that enterprise. But there is an even better ground. They have been our wards or pupils and to help them further is a duty laid on us by the facts of history. They are in no way disposed to be suppliants but they feel that they have some claim upon us. I am sure we have been right to admit that claim, and it is fundamental in this new relationship that what we do should be done for *their* welfare and not for any expected profit to ourselves.

There is no need for our present purpose to go over the story in detail. But we may note the three or four events that really forced the pace of this transformation. One certainly was the world-wide character of the war, and of the war-time and post-war propaganda. From our side there were appeals on behalf of free institutions, and from the other the unceasing denunciations of *colonialism*, partly from America and particularly from Russia as soon as the uneasy alliance had become a cold war. The twofold effect was to sharpen the desire of the colonial countries for freedom and to weaken the desire of Britain to resist. There were other events of like tendency—the speeding up of apartheid in South Africa, and the successful revolt in Indonesia, the one a warning, the other an example. Perhaps one of the two most powerful influences was the

emergence in Africa of a fairly numerous and growing group of young African professional men, lawyers, doctors and the like, including some very able political leaders, most of them educated in the West, familiar with Western ways of thought and standards of living, keenly aware of the far less favourable estate of their own peoples, some embittered by the racial discrimination they encountered abroad, and all convinced that nothing of this would be radically altered until their countries had freed themselves from dependence and were able in their own way and in their own right to develop their economies and institutions. It was they who created, inspired and led the popular drive to independence. The other major influence was India's achievement of independence in 1947. The long debate over that issue had been watched by the African intelligentsia with the deepest concern and its outcome set African nationalism aflame.

Inevitably, other colonies than the British have felt the impact of these influences. French, Belgian and even Portuguese territories have all moved towards emancipation—sometimes without violence, sometimes under conditions of savagery and strain. Thus far, though there are acute difficulties still to be overcome in East Africa and in the Central African Federation, the British operation has taken an easier course, mainly because the long involvement with India brought a large section of British opinion to the view that in Africa also the culmination of British rule should be early self-government. No one expected or desired that it would come quite so soon. Very much the contrary. Britain and even some Africans would have preferred a longer period of transition and preparation. But when the widespread and formidable African insistence was plainly manifest, not very many in Britain were willing to take any other course than to accept the change as speedily as possible. To say the truth there was no alternative, save that of maintaining British supremacy by force of arms,

and that was unthinkable. More than once before, although in far easier circumstances, Britain had had to make the same choice. If we had had no other teachers, Canadian memories like that of Lyon Mackenzie and his grandson would have helped to point the way.

But it was India that mattered most on both sides. In the long story of Britain overseas no chapter is of more absorbing interest or more revealing than that of its dealings with India. In its way it is a paradigm of all the rest. There was nothing angelic, nothing consistently high-minded about the British attitude. Like every other power that over the centuries has come by conquest to rule a subject nation, it has grievous stains on its record, stains of exploitation and arrogance that are not forgotten. The British entered India, as later they entered Africa, to increase the profits of their trade and to get bases for their sea power in the European wars, and they used them to those ends. But from the beginning that was never the whole story. Clive, the military founder of the Indian Empire, was censured by Parliament for his dealings with the Indian people. Warren Hastings, the first great civilian Governor-General, was impeached, though unjustly. All the way through, both for India and for Africa, there have been strong groups in and out of Parliament, largely inspired by Christian missionaries, who were vigilantly careful of the interests of the native peoples, insisting that sovereignty involved responsibility.

Even in the later nineteenth century, after Disraeli, when Britain had something of a fit of Imperialist fever, the voice of liberality was not silent. If you doubt it let me commend *India Called Them*, published in 1948 by Lord Beveridge, one of the principal architects of our welfare state. His father, Henry Beveridge, who was brought up in my own University of Glasgow, was one of the very earliest civil servants of the British Government in India. He and his

wife were indefatigable correspondents. Eighty years after their letters began their son made this selection. They are remarkable in many ways. But what is most remarkable is that almost from the first days of his service young Beveridge was clear that the British presence in India had one justification and should have one objective only—to bring itself to an end as speedily as possible by providing India with the agencies and experience to govern itself. That was not a popular view then or for many years thereafter and it took a long time to come to effect. Britain was slow to realize the unreality, the moral impossibility of a continuing dominion. But it was stirring, as I can well remember, even in my student days of more than fifty years ago. Not until the 1930's, after a succession of constitutional advances, did British opinion begin to move firmly, though never unanimously, towards the granting of independence. The Act granting Dominion status was delayed until 1947, but it is fair to say that it would have come some years sooner had not communal divisions in India defeated every effort to devise a constitution that would produce a balance of power between Hindu and Moslem, acceptable over the whole subcontinent. That proved to be impossible and independence brought with it, at a heavy cost in human life and suffering, the division of British India into India and Pakistan.

India fixed the African resolution and Africa has won its independence almost overnight. But if we are to understand the present problem we should note how different, and in many ways how much less favourable, are the conditions under which the new states in Africa are born. Even two hundred years ago India, though divided by differences of language, religion, caste and political authority, was the home of an ancient and remembered civilization. In the two hundred years of British rule it had been brought under a single central government, had been

equipped with passable roads and good railways, schools and colleges—too few and too crowded, but bringing the promise of a renewal of India's own culture and a mastery of modern science and technology. Indian scientists had begun to rank with the best. Prosperous industries had been established, many of them under Indian ownership and direction. Its trade connections were world-wide. As well, India had learned the procedures of parliamentary government and was furnished with an administrative service of the very highest quality in which Indians themselves had come to bear the largest part. If you walk through the corridors of the vast government departments in New Delhi you will see on the doors of the rooms of many of the highest officers a name followed by the initials I.C.S., signifying that the tenant was a member of the old Indian Civil Service. He carries its title still as a mark of distinction.

For all its desperate poverty, India in 1947 had the leadership, administrative skill and discipline to make itself a viable and, in time, powerful state; the issue has never been in doubt. Pakistan has a harder prospect. It lost too much of its trained ability. Africa perhaps is faced with even greater difficulty. Except for the coastal regions, Britain, or Europe in general, has been less constructively at work and for a much shorter period, so that the new states have had only a brief apprenticeship to the business of modern large-scale government. In none has the practice of local self-government gone as far as it had in India. Some of the larger states are aggregations rather than organic societies. They are countries of tropical forest, hard to penetrate even by the great rivers, so that until the age of air transport, communications were meagre. Their organization has been tribal and tribal loyalties are still strong, an obstacle to the acceptance of wider constitutions. The Congo is by no means the only area in mid-Africa where

these tribal animosities can create a tragically explosive situation.

Nor again has either economic or educational development gone very far, though there is indeed something on which to build. The natural resources of most of the territories, especially in West Africa and the Rhodesias, hold promise of substantial if sometimes precarious wealth, and in some accessible areas European technology has created large enterprises and modern cities. The British Government through its various colonial research organizations has done much to establish and to demonstrate methods of improving crops and herds, and of controlling disease. Missionaries have built schools and colleges, which are now supported by the local governments, and which are at least the beginnings of an educational system. But measured against the size and condition of the territories, the effort, well as it has been served by those who have laboured there, has been too small and too brief. Geography, poverty, ill-health, diversity of language, have all conspired to limit its effect. The realized assets are few. The needs are enormous. But all this being said, the demand for independence at any cost, at any risk, is universal and irresistible; by and large it has been achieved.

But independence has not been gained without difficulty. For although Africans were often united in wanting Britain to get out, they have proved to be less united in their ideas as to what should take her place. Each of the territories presents its own special features and problems, and in almost all of them differences of local interest and ambition have been hard to reconcile. For some fifteen years constitutional discussions have been going on between British ministers and officials and their opposite numbers in Africa. In West Africa the immediate problems seem to have been solved. Ghana, reviving its ancient imperial name, holds its diverse constituent elements within a unitary state.

Nigeria, after prolonged discussion, is established as a federation of its three regions, and the small state of Sierra Leone, with its markedly different coastal and inland populations, has accepted a two-stage procedure for reaching its final form of government. But difficult issues still remain in East and Central Africa. Tanganyika brought itself swiftly to a political unity. But in Uganda intertribal differences are still unresolved; the Bugandas, largest and most developed of the ethnic groups, are unwilling to place their destinies in the hands of the less mature majority, and seek to preserve the essentials of their own comparative independence. Kenya, as well as its intertribal and inter-party animosities, has considerable areas of European and Asian settlement, important to the economic future of the country and developed often at great cost by the settlers themselves. They are fearful, not without cause after the Mau Mau rebellion, of their future. The British Government, which encouraged the settlers, is bound to try to see that in all the new states the minorities are not left without some safeguard of their position in the new government. Federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland makes good economic sense, not least from the standpoint of the Nyassas; but they too, not without cause, are deeply suspicious of the political good faith of the Rhodesian Europeans. Of all these strains, some will not be completely overcome. The best that can be attained is a sufficient measure of mutual accommodation to give the new states a fair start and their leaders the chance to prove their quality. But the decision for independence is irrevocable. Political predominance has passed or will soon pass into the hands of the African majority, and though there is recent evidence of some division of opinion in the British Cabinet, the prospect is that even in these difficult east and central areas the final legislative acts will be completed in the course of 1962, so that over all but

the tiniest fraction of onetime British tropical Africa, independence of prevailingly African states will be accomplished.

That is a momentous new beginning. Just that and no more. The hardest part lies ahead. The new states have to establish themselves, to find a settled way of government, to fulfil at least in part the perhaps excessive expectations of advance engendered by these excitements. Some of their problems can be solved only by themselves; with others they will be in need of help. Long-term capital must be found either by grants or by loan to improve agriculture, industry and communications. They must have good short-term technical and administrative help in the management of their economies and services, and above all they must have help in establishing the educational facilities required in order to furnish from their own ranks the skilled artisans and professional workers. They have native ability in plenty, no question of that, and immense enthusiasm, but it must be given the chance to acquire the knowledge and techniques required for a modern society. Their governments are engaged in this massive effort in all three directions.

The British Government takes its share in all three, as do the governments of the other Commonwealth countries. Various international and American agencies are now furnishing long and short-term economic and technical support. The Russians also are bidding high in this field—the bids, perhaps, rather higher than their actual contributions. But until recently the third, the educational need, has been the concern mainly of the local and British Governments and of the British universities. It is now aided on a steadily increasing scale by the great foundations, American and British, and by the I.C.A. programme of the United States. American and Canadian universities are also substantially involved. All these participants are

welcome and necessary; and after some initial confusion and mistakes, co-operation is now well arranged. We shall have all that we can do to catch up with the urgency of the need.

In detail the story varies from place to place, but the broad outline is the same. Look, for example, at Nigeria, the largest of the territories. Its area is nearly that of British Columbia; its population is approaching 35,000,000, about twenty times as great. It is composed of three main regions—East, West and North, and two smaller ones, differing from one another in race, language, religion, and in the degree of their social and economic development. Each is an amalgam of similarly divided groups. It was not possible to establish a unitary government. Each region has its own government—the three joined in a Federation under a distinguished Prime Minister, but not wholly free from internal strains. Education is, in the main, a regional responsibility. Considerable progress has been made in recent years, especially in West and East and Lagos. But even primary schooling is inadequate and higher education, whether in secondary schools or technical institutes, is far below requirements both in quantity and quality. As to university education, until sixteen years ago there was none, although young Nigerians did go abroad, mainly to Britain, six hundred or so every year—about a third of them on government scholarships. Very good students many of them were, though sometimes not very easy to deal with.

Plainly, this is not enough for a vast country looking to independence. With clearer foresight the British Government might well have seen to it that more had been done, but to its credit it did act at a moment when there was no certainty that Britain would have much to say about the future of her dependencies. In 1941, when the military prospect was bleak, the agencies of the Colonial Office were well under way with discussions as to the means of general

educational development, with the result that in 1943 three strong interlocked committees of enquiry were appointed, one (Asquith) to study the whole matter of higher education in the Colonies, the others (Elliot and Irvine) to look particularly at the university problem in West Africa and in the West Indies. Three long constructive and mutually congruent reports were presented in 1945, from which derived the policy that has since been vigorously implemented.

All the commissions clearly felt bound to satisfy themselves on one fundamental issue—where should development begin, at the top or university level, or with institutions of lower rank? There were good reasons for beginning at the lower level, nearer the grass-roots, leaving the universities to the second stage. But quite unanimously and with the strong urging of local advice, the decision went the other way: “The lesson to be drawn from history is quite clear, even if at first sight paradoxical, that where education is backward, effort is most rewarding where it is directed to the higher levels.” (Asquith Commission). The university was to come first, even if that meant that both the British and the territorial governments had to devote to it a proportion of the total available resources considerably higher than could be clearly justified by the *immediate* result.

It was a bold decision and there are still some who question its wisdom. But I think the event has confirmed the grounds on which it was based. The commissions felt that although some temporary gaps and disproportions would arise, these should be accepted in order that the standard of the whole operation might be set at a high level, and that the stimulus of an active university might influence the subsequent development of the schools. They were prepared to take some early risks with quantity in order to be more sure of the quality of the end result.

Moreover, there was the quite unshakeable point of prestige. Local opinion, Nigerian, Ghanaian and West Indian alike, was quite clear that their coming nation states must have at once a university as the crown of their educational systems. To them the university was both the symbol and the instrument of their independence, and in that context they wanted the best—a university fit to take its place in the family of Commonwealth universities, accepted by them as of equal rank and standing.

The question was how, from slender beginnings, that result could be achieved. The conclusion was that it should be done by a partnership between the British and territorial governments on the one side and the British universities on the other. The governments were to provide the legal basis and finance, but were to invite the universities to help in academic planning, in procedures for staff appointments and in guaranteeing the standards of instruction and research. And this guidance had to be offered in a fashion that would prepare the new institutions to exercise full responsibility for their work at an early date, and would also encourage their governments to allow them that measure of autonomy, of freedom from external pressure, which is essential to their proper life and operation. That latter consideration was rightly held to be of great importance. In the second lecture I said a little on the meaning and rationale of university freedom. It is just that the university serves not only the needs of today but the needs of the future. It has, of course, a special loyalty and duty to its own community by which it is sustained, but not to that only. It has an obligation as well to the whole world-wide community of scholars and to truth itself. There is therefore always a possibility of conflict between the two obligations. Even mature governments have sometimes found it hard to accept that situation and to allow their universities to pursue and to proclaim

whatever, responsibly, they are led to hold. It could be harder still for a new government in the first flush of power to tolerate the free discussion and dissemination of ideas that might be unwelcome to it and out of line with its prevailing policies. Moreover, aware as they all are of urgent national needs and eager for signs of material progress, governments may well expect their universities, even at the cost of relaxing their standards, to concentrate on producing graduates with some serviceable skill, and to turn away from studies apparently of less immediate profit. In their circumstances that wish is natural enough and the universities ought not to be indifferent to it. But a sharp relaxation of standards, a complete concentration on the needs of the moment, would defeat the university intention. Recovery would be a long business. Somehow, a balance has to be held and both parties have to understand the issues and what the long-term interest of each requires.

The method has been this. In each of the territories, one institution of university rank was established, not to begin with a full university, but a college, with the structure and procedures of a British university—a mixed lay and academic governing body, a senate or faculty board, with its appropriate subdivisions, and a student council, each dealing with its own business. But for a few years the college would prepare its students not for its own degrees but for external degrees of the University of London. To that end London generously and willingly accepted a special relationship between itself and the colleges. It undertook to invite each college to prepare its own programmes of work and present them for scrutiny so that, for example, a college in Africa has the opportunity to teach not the material of a European university, but its own biology, geography, geology, languages, history and economic conditions. Similarly, the college teachers prepare and send to London their suggested question papers for degree

examinations, and when the examinations have been written they read the papers and send them with their proposed marks for review by London examiners, who at regular intervals visit the colleges for consultation on the results. Thus London, awarding a London degree, retains a final control over standards, but at every point the college teachers have a highly responsible share. That is the essence of the arrangement. The initiatives lie with the college. It may bring forward any course considered suitable to its needs. But the structure of the curriculum and its standards of attainment are comparable to those of any British university; the hope is that when the day of independence comes, that situation will endure.

There are two further elements. To help the colleges in more general academic affairs—on development policies, appointments, the planning of buildings and research programmes—a large council was appointed in London, one member being nominated by each of the British universities with a few others of special experience. Thereby it has been easy to draw into the consideration of these academic problems not only the wide knowledge of the council itself, but where necessary the expert help of particular British departments. That Inter-University Council is at the disposal of the colleges. They are in no way bound to use it, but on every important issue they do, so that by these consultations, and a fairly frequent exchange of visits, they are kept closely in touch with British practice, and are always free to vary or to adapt it in any way that seems good to them. The second, more executive, body is my own Grants Advisory Committee, a small Committee that advises the British Government on the use and allocation of the one and a half million pounds per annum set aside for this specific purpose from the British Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. It has been agreed that the recurrent expenses of the colleges are met from local

sources—fees, endowments, grants from the territorial governments and benefactors—while in most of the new colleges the British Government bears a large, usually the greater part of the capital cost of providing and equipping the buildings. Hence, in co-operation with the Inter-University Council, and with representatives of the colleges themselves, my Committee has had to examine their capital programmes and apply our not too abundant funds so as to secure in each a balanced and healthy development of the various elements of an incipient university, and to make sure that its projects can be economically and effectively maintained.

This tripartite system has worked remarkably well. Something like it was applied later to the building of technical colleges. In all the territories the colleges have housed themselves well; they are well-staffed, increasingly by their own nationals. All the colleges in West Africa and in the West Indies now have their own nationals as principals, and Nigeria about a third of its own faculty. Student populations, after a rather slow start, are pressing upon them, and every important branch of university study is represented. Already, for example, three extremely promising medical schools are being established in Africa, two with better and more modern hospitals than most in England, and another in the West Indies. They have succeeded, too, in building away from the university centres a quite effective service of extra-mural education, of special importance in helping older citizens to understand the nature of the problems facing their countries. Moreover, the process of expansion has begun. Ghana, its first university already independent, is preparing a second university, mainly of science and technology. Nigeria, having built its federal University College at Ibadan, is now setting up two regional universities, one by American support in the East and one in the West, with a third in

preparation in the North. East Africa is working towards a federal university, including the present University College in Makerere (Uganda), the Royal College, Nairobi, in Kenya, and a quite new college in Tanganyika under its Toronto principal. The College of the West Indies in Jamaica has spilled over into a new college in Trinidad, which no doubt will in time become a separate university. And so the process goes on. More than that, thus far the new colleges have been able to uphold three good principles. First, for both geographical and educational reasons, they are residential. Almost all the students live in halls built, owned and managed by the colleges, and most of the staff live in college houses on or near the campus. Second, they are open equally to men and women, and third, they are multi-racial. There are no racial quotas—Africans, Asians, Europeans are accepted as students and as staff, to share equally in all the facilities and activities of the colleges. Only in Southern Rhodesia, and there only as regards residence, has any brief difficulty arisen in the application of the inter-racial rule.

A good beginning. There is the promise of great and useful service, but much remains. The whole apparatus of the schools must be strengthened, which calls for more teachers' training colleges and more technical institutes. New demands must be met by the universities. For example, there is no veterinary school in the two thousand miles between East Africa and the Transvaal, in the midst of an enormous problem of animal health. Good staffs on the scale required will not be easily come by—will not be come by at all unless over the next fifteen to twenty years the new universities are willing, as now, to appoint teachers from overseas, who will be forthcoming only if the universities in other Commonwealth countries agree to recognize fully the service of young men who are willing to give a few years of their lives to Africa. Some lowering

of present standards of buildings and equipment is inevitable, with the mounting costs of more universities and more students, to say nothing of all else that has to be done in the way of education. That will not greatly matter if standards of staff and teaching can be reasonably held. But everything turns on the resolution with which the new governments support their universities and allow them that measure of responsibility which will attract and encourage staffs of the requisite calibre. In that connection there have been some, but not many, uncomfortable symptoms.

Greatest of all, however, is the task that lies before the universities in making themselves, both worthily and truly, African universities. They have been made in the English, now in the American, model. That is well enough. But they must not be English universities in Africa. They must find and make their own character and commission. Their medium of instruction is English, and that must continue for a long time. It is the only common language of the whole of ex-British Africa, as French is for the ex-French states. It does very well for science, medicine and most technologies, and for their application to African life. But it is not the first language, sometimes not even the second, of most of the students; there are genuine and difficult problems of understanding and communication. In any event, no alien language is the best instrument for the deeper study of the languages, history, sociology, folklore, ritual, music, dance, art and legends of the African peoples. Until these have been firmly brought within the intellectual inheritance of the colleges, their teaching will be insufficiently rooted in the national life and will not yield the needed fruit of a truly national literature and culture. The university must be universal and the English medium offers at least an easy entry into some of the great civilizations of the world. But it must not de-nationalize or de-racinate its students. Otherwise it will remain a thing

apart, no doubt making good practitioners—engineers, doctors, accountants, applied scientists of various kinds whom these countries most sorely need. But even these will not be of full effect until they have come to feel that African culture provides a large part of the substance of their intellectual lives, and not otherwise can the universities provide the statesmen, administrators, teachers, journalists, all those concerned with the shaping of public policy and the education of the public mind. Only through their work can the day-to-day opinion and sentiment of ordinary citizens find that measure of enrichment, which is the soil of all great national achievement, and that patient yet critical judgment of political ends and means, which is the prerequisite of a stable society.

It may be long before the African states achieve that meaningful if modest measure of widely dispersed political initiative and responsibility which characterizes the maturer Western democracies. Yet with them, as with us, their strength and hope lies in the degree to which they can overcome the differences they inherit, and engage the instructed loyalty of their citizens. They need that loyalty, and to that end they need above all the disciplines of education and experience. Only so can they have that reserve of civic virtue which can bring them through the mistakes, the misfortunes, the crises that are bound to come. Even in our older societies the reserve is sometimes perilously low. Inevitably it is still less secure in Africa. These countries have bred some remarkable men. There is no doubt that given education and time to learn how to use their powers, they can staff their services and build a civilization satisfying to themselves and worthy of the interest and emulation of others. Education and time—both of them hard to buy. They will cost money but that will not be enough. The new states will need sympathy, patience, understanding, and in the measure to which they

are disposed to use it, the right to draw upon what we have learned. I have seen enough of their academic leaders to feel strongly encouraged. But the gates of the future are wide open: the issue is by no means yet determined.

I read lately that your Governor-General in his New Year message to the Canadian people asked them to ponder, for a few minutes each day, the question "Who is my neighbour?". For all of us part of the answer lies in Africa. I am sure that to help these neighbours of ours grow to their own version of liberality and freedom is one of the greatest and most rewarding of our common tasks. *Sapientia et doctrina stabilitas.*