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## *Living by the Same Code*

CANADA IS 103 years older than when she drew her provinces together into one national family. She has learned many things of which she knew nothing then, and thinks differently on many points. But one purpose stands: to further the welfare of her people under a code of decency, freedom, equality and fraternity.

There were obvious reasons for the drawing together of Canadians in confederation: it made possible co-operation designed to protect them and to enable them to obtain the material things necessary to their survival. The undertaking appeared at first to be beyond their powers, but intelligence, patience, a firm resolution, and goodwill overcame the obstacles.

The most important question a nation can ask itself at any time is whether it has developed a permanent standard in keeping with its early purposes.

Our code suggests that we have a certain ideal for our society and for individuals. If we have not yet brought it to perfect realization, we have at least progressed some way toward confirming its virtues. These are: ethical standards, a humanistic spirit emphasizing the dignity of man, belief in testing ideas as the safest path to truth, the rule of law, and the democratic faith in liberty, equality and fraternity.

Canada is not a utopian society. The ideal states invented by philosophers and the utopias dreamed up by many writers remained unrealized because they failed to provide practical ways for making effective the good society they described.

The Canadian ideal is to build a democratic society in which men govern themselves and are free to progress as far as their ability and energy carry them.

### *Resources and diversity*

Canada has two vital assets: natural resources and the diversity of its people.

Sometimes when Canadians look at their vast country with its multitude of opportunities for development they feel like dwarfs playing on a stage designed for Titans. They have all that is needed to build a great nation: now they must decide upon a

plan, design the structure, and establish standards of quality.

This is not hindered, but helped, by the diversity of the Canadian people. Diversity makes the difference between men and robots. It is the essential nature of democracy to bring together men and women of various opinions and skills in a community of interest so that they can do great and new things.

Civilized people allow their neighbours to have opinions that differ from their own. They are free from the mental ailment whose symptom is holding a furious intolerance of other people's beliefs. They value rightly the benefits of variety, and thus avoid the opening of crevasses of misunderstanding between groups and individuals. If rifts do occur, they build bridges. When the Romans and the Sabines each wished to furnish the king a compromise was reached by which it was agreed that the king should be a Sabine but that the Romans should choose him.

Sharp lines are hard to draw in judging between two opinions. When two persons look at a rainbow one may see a series of distinct colours side by side, while the other sees a shading of one colour into another, with no boundaries to indicate precisely where one colour ends and another begins.

So in building a nation. Different people construe their welfare in different ways and there is no single recipe which all feel compelled to follow.

Professor Archie John Bahm of the University of New Mexico puts it in this homely way: Western culture is like a huge pot of stew. Into it have gone vegetables, meats, grains and oils of various kinds. It has been cooking for a long time. Some bones refuse to dissolve. Vinegar, pepper and salt, in various quantities, have been added from time to time. Every cook has tried a new recipe. Every revolt has provided a new kind of spice. If one ladles from only one part of the pot, he may come up with only carrots. But if he samples bits from various places, he can find enormously rich varieties of flavours. Nevertheless, it is, as a whole, rich, sustaining, and satisfying.

A nation survives according to the ability of its

members to contribute their qualities for common ends. They not only coexist — and if coexistence is becoming a world need, how much more necessary it is within a community or a nation — but they co-operate. They know, as Gitchie Manito told the tribes of men in Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha": "All your strength is in your union, All your danger is in discord."

### *Democratic freedom*

There is something valuable in being Canadian. This is an independent country, designing and shaping its own code and planning its own course. It is a country which believes in judging a person by what he displays of individual skill, responsibility and personal worth. These high purposes require mature, educated and freedom-loving people to maintain and develop them.

"Freedom" is a precious word, but it needs to be properly understood. It means a clear intellectual perception that reason alone, and not passion or self-interest, has the right to limit liberty and dictate actions.

Rollo May wrote in *Man's Search for Himself*: "Rebellion is often confused with freedom itself. It becomes a false port in the storm because it gives the rebel a delusive sense of being really independent." Those who tear down socially-approved institutions are not the intellectual pioneers they think themselves to be, but only rebellious boys who have forgotten to grow up. They look upon every wall as something to climb over. They reject the ancient and still valid doctrine that nations have boundary lines and farms have fences so that every person shall know where his individual freedom ends and the equal freedom of his neighbour begins. It is a wise saying that "good fences make good neighbours."

Within its boundary a nation has the responsibility to enforce rules of safety and communal behaviour. John Ruskin gives us a homespun parable to illustrate this. A mother sees one of her careless children fall into a ditch. She pulls him out, boxes his ears, and leads him a little way carefully by the hand. The child usually cries, and very often would clearly prefer to remain in the ditch. If he knew the language of politics so commonplace today he would express resentment at this interference with his individual liberty.

Grown-up people who do not feel free should define for themselves the ways in which they are restricted. What are they compelled to do that is not for their own good in conformity with the sense and will of the society to which they belong? What are they hindered from doing that is in keeping with what the combined wisdom of society considers to be good?

### *Shared ideals*

Democracy is founded upon the belief that every person has the right to enjoy, according to his aptitudes of character and mentality, the material and spiritual opportunities that nature, science and good government have placed at the disposition of mankind.

To provide this opportunity requires us to advance from the instinctive life of savagery to the rational state of civilization in which men learn the art of self-government and skill in working together.

The qualities which bind together citizens in a democratic state are shared ideals, hopes and aspirations: as Henry Clay writes in his exceedingly practical and down-to-earth textbook on economics: "Democracy is a spirit, not a piece of governmental or economic machinery."

Democracy does not exist and cannot develop among people who do not understand one another, who make no effort to understand one another, who do not care deeply about shared purposes and co-operative endeavour. The code by which democratic people live includes a large measure of altruism. Men have a strong natural tendency to seek what will satisfy their own immediate interest. The democratic code emphasizes our duty to others.

Lip service is ineffective. Democracy is a "do-it-yourself" project that must be worked at. If a citizen does not do it himself — read, study, participate, vote and act — someone else does it for him and he is no longer using his democratic freedom.

If a person feels that life is simple, totalitarianism is for him; if he is weary of thinking for himself, totalitarianism is for him. The democratic way of life is for the tough-minded. It does not relieve one from the effort of thought or from the obligation to face the facts of human relationships. It does accept the difficulties as a necessary part of its progress toward a higher level of human achievement.

Democracy does not guarantee equality of accomplishment for all citizens. The notion that those who are equal in one respect — under the law, for example — are equal in all other respects is not part of the democratic code. There are, obviously, innumerable inequalities of the most important type. People differ in capability, in diligence, in health, in intelligence, and in aspirations.

A man who became known as the "weeping philosopher" five centuries B.C. because of his unhappiness over the state of the world, said that the citizens of Ephesus ought to be hanged because of their doctrine "There shall be none first among us."

Canada's ideal is to provide a country which is independent, a state which is democratic, a society where the laws are just and restrictions at a minimum, and an economy in which individuals have the latitude to progress by merit toward security and comfort.

Successive Canadian governments have taken steps to free the individual from avoidable handicaps so that he can run the race on fair terms with others. They have not tried to produce a nation of well-tended sheep, but to release the powers of individuals and encourage individual initiative. In the words of the Grand Master of the knightly tournaments of old they seek to provide: "A fair field, and equal partition of sun and wind, and whatever else appertains to a fair combat."

## *Good government*

Good government arises out of what Louis XIV called the application of common sense to a sufficient number of facts. It is carried out by men and women who look upon political service as a matter of obligation and not as a matter of personal ambition and power, people selected as having qualities of leadership and responsibility.

Canada adopted the principle of majority rule. This is not a complete answer to the demand of people for democratic living, but majority rule which provides, as the Canadian system does, the minority with the possibility of becoming a majority through the education of citizens comes close to what is desired.

Ours is a society which requires that decisions shall be arrived at by a free choice after rational debate. It requires that every citizen co-operate wholeheartedly with those elected to direct the country's affairs, while at the same time scanning closely their exercise of the powers delegated to them. Opposition is taken as a matter of course, but it needs to be opposition that has a viable alternative to offer.

## *The individual*

We need not only to believe passionately in democracy but to practise it earnestly. Ours is a society in which the individual, through participation in government and education, can acquire an ever-increasing sense of being important as a citizen.

Graduates from school and university pass out of their institutions as a block — the class of '70 — but they enter society as individuals. Every one of them will contribute something of his own to the character of Canada. If they say "yes" to the many opportunities this country offers for their self-expansion they can enjoy all that can be desired in the way of broad personal development.

Living by the same code does not mean that people think alike, desire the same things, or live their lives in ruts. There are certain questions that every person must answer for himself, because democracy does not provide a universal guide book. Democracy believes in the significance of personal thought and effort, so that every man can be himself. He may like what he likes because he likes it, and not because some poll says that it is popular.

The contributions made by individuals need not be great and impressive in order to be worth while. There was a Greek actor in olden times who said that he liked to think, when he hung up his mask after a performance, that perhaps someone in the audience had gone home less ready to beat his children.

In addition to the belief in equality of opportunity and self-governance, there is a certain sentiment attaching to democracy, a feeling of brotherhood, of fraternity, of respect and protection. Man expresses his freedom by entering into association with other people to accomplish something they all desire.

Personal freedom and social responsibility go hand in hand.

People cannot live happily or fruitfully in isolation. This is why the Jewish language of prayer concentrates upon the plural, rather than the singular, the group rather than the individual. Indeed, the Rabbis of the Talmud ordained that on the Sabbath and festivals it was improper to offer petitions which centred on private wants or needs.

There is another reason for fellowship. When we look around us we see people who have become dried up and shrunken, by withdrawing within themselves. To participate in society is not to subtract from our individual happiness, but to add to it. We need the incentive and encouragement and approval given by other people.

The feeling of community is essential if we are to realize the fullness of human dignity and worth. It is ironical that community, formerly a natural state contributing to existence and to the wholeness of life, is now something that has to be planned for, and sometimes urged upon people. The purposeful re-planning of our cities to provide neighbourhoods that will encourage people to meet and work together is an example of what is found to be necessary. George Bernard Shaw said: "The worst sin toward our fellow creatures is not to hate them but to be indifferent to them."

## *The influence of change*

Beholden to the past for so much that is good in Canadian society, we must contribute something to Canada's future. We should not think that we must leave the dust of antique times unswept, but rather look at what has been bequeathed to us with the thought: "How can we adapt it and burnish it so as to use it in the modern world?"

There are things that can be improved, such as education, law enforcement, the relationship of capital and labour, the propagation of health. This can be done within the framework of democracy, which is the only system that provides deliberately the opportunity for correction and betterment within the bounds of reason and decency. The art of a free society is to maintain principles and revise customs so as to serve progressively enlightened reason.

This requires that we have some idea of where we are going, what we are going to do when we get there, and why we wish to go, instead of milling around aimlessly. We know the bewildered feeling expressed by Charles Lindbergh when he landed amid the welcoming crowd near Paris after his solo flight across the Atlantic: "Everyone had the best of intentions but no one seemed to know just what they were."

To plan constructively is not the easiest thing in the world. In discussing Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale" a critic remarked: "The theme is one of regeneration, and a play about destruction is much easier to write than a play about regeneration."

It is not practicable to predict the future. World events, national developments and local changes make forecasting untrustworthy, but we must prepare young people to meet the challenges of that unknown future. The way to start is by providing education in the democratic code lest our children grow up with an intimate knowledge of calculus and in ignorance of the great principles that should guide human beings. The future depends, as the welfare of humanity has always depended, upon wisdom, faith and virtue.

Modern Canada is the product of piecemeal and laborious building. It is not the mark of either wisdom or statesmanship to think that needed improvements can be made at once or with improvised plans, or with expediency as the guiding force. We need to avoid the mistakes which men have made in the past: failing to see alternatives, limiting alternatives to an oversimplified either-or, and neglecting to seize opportunities for betterment immediately they present themselves.

### *About keeping up*

Canada is committed to shaping a good society through intelligent and informed public opinion, and therefore to the making of realistic choices in the light of adequate information about needs and trends. The complications of the age should not push us into believing that life is becoming incomprehensible. They merely create the need for an extra effort to understand what is going on.

Knowledge of this sort is advanced by listening to criticism as well as by bending our shoulders in study. To have no acquaintance with contrary opinions is to remain partially blind.

We need to learn to disagree with other people's opinions after consideration without deriding them, and to accept the notion that sometimes our opinions may be wrong. This approach lessens the danger of misunderstanding and leads healthy and open minds to the solution of difficult problems in mutual respect and trust.

Effort must be added to understanding. In seeking to build a better Canada in its second century as a nation we should not expect that things will be easy. It is going to take well-directed work and courageous enterprise. We may with benefit read a signal made by Villeneuve, Admiral of France, when he was briefing his captains before the battle of Trafalgar: "Let there be no ignominious manoeuvring. Any captain who is not under fire is not at his post."

This leaves no room for waiting around to see what will happen next, forgetting that we could ourselves make happenings.

In planning and bringing about these happenings we need an instinct for propriety. Our society is built up of people from many races, of many faiths, with many differing customs. Under such conditions considerations of manner and courtesy are by no means

to be overlooked or treated as frivolous or unimportant. They are, in fact, an important element in enabling people to live together and to develop their lives in harmony with their shared ideals. The structure of good manners that is part of the Canadian way of life holds out promise of the development of a state of chivalry which will do credit to both our hearts and our intelligence.

### *Values and principles*

In the fundamental things most Canadians share the same values. They believe in a social order in which persons are more important than things, ideas more precious than gadgets, in which individuals are judged on the basis of personal worth, and in which people express themselves without oppression and under a rule of law.

The nation is the guardian of certain very positive values: culture, traditions, community awareness, historical continuity, and a code of behaviour.

Behind these values are principles. People have to care greatly about the principles that lie behind democratic government or their nation will end up by being pallid, disunited, decadent.

Our appraisal and application of whatever principles we adopt will develop into our philosophy, which is our quest for wisdom in thought and action coupled with a firm and dignified determination to do the best we can.

### *There is no blue-print*

The future of Canada is something for calm consideration by thoughtful persons, untrammelled by foregone conclusions, unpledged to shore up tottering dogmas, and anxious only to know what is for the true betterment of their country.

There is no blue-print to follow, but only guiding ideas. This country did not grow up by slavishly following a rule book, but by the process of sensible people trying to do the best they could under the conditions in which they lived, and experimenting with new ideas and making adaptations of old ones. But from the beginning they realized that true union is not people marching in lock-step. It is more like the harmonious performance by an orchestra, in which individuality in the instruments contributes to the melody of the music.

There is no system of government yet devised that will guarantee that perfection in the social order will be established.

The Canadian way of life provides a system for putting the intelligence and good will and effort of individual citizens to work on the solution of problems. Success depends on this: that the average citizen can be relied upon to measure up to his best knowledge; to do his duty, and to use good sense in doing it. Then, as they say along our ocean coasts, the rising tide will lift all the boats.