

The Address of

PROFESSOR T. H. B. SYMONS, M.A.

The President and Vice-Chancellor of Trent University

Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

on the occasion of the official opening of the University by

HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGES P. VANIER, D.S.O., M.C., C.D.,

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA

on Saturday, October the seventeenth

nineteen hundred and sixty-four

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Your Excellencies; My lords; Your Honours;  
Mr. Minister; Reverend Sirs; Distinguished  
guests; Members of the Board, of the staff  
and of the student body of Trent University;  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my privilege and pleasant duty to welcome  
you here today at the official opening of Trent University.  
I do so most warmly and I thank you for coming to join with  
us in celebrating this happy occasion.

We are, of course, particularly honoured and  
delighted that Their Excellencies, the Governor-General and  
Madame Vanier, have been able to grace this meeting with their  
presence, and that the Governor-General has consented to declare  
Trent University open.

It is surely a good omen for our national sense of  
values in Canada when the first citizen of our country is  
prepared to place first upon his heavy agenda participation  
in educational matters as he is doing here today, and will be  
doing again on Monday when he goes on to St. Catharines, there  
also to declare open a new university, our sister institution,  
Brock University, to whom we send warm greetings and good wishes  
today.

The presence of the Governor-General is a reminder, too, of the fact that, in founding a university here in Peterboro we are doing something which will be of interest and service to all Canada, and which is of national as well as of local significance.

Nous sommes fiers, (votre Excellence), que notre premier collège portera le nom de Champlain, ce qui témoigne, d'une part, que nous restons sensibles à l'histoire de notre pays et, d'autre part, qu'à l'université de Trent on tient beaucoup à forger des liens durables entre les deux races qui, ensemble, établirent les fondements du Canada.

It is also fitting and a happy thing that the Honourable Mr. Davis, the Minister of Education and of University Affairs of our Province, is able to be with us and to take part in this occasion. The charter which Trent University holds was conferred by an Act of the Legislature of Ontario which received Royal Assent on 6 March, 1963. Moreover, this University has benefited enormously - indeed, has been made possible - by the substantial, the understanding, and the enlightened support which has been given to it by the Province, acting upon the advice of the University Affairs Committee and under the leadership of the Minister.

Nevertheless, Trent University is in a special sense related to the community in which it is located - to Peterborough



to the Valley of the Trent, and to Eastern Ontario. No new university has received a greater measure of support from its home community - as well as from many friends across the land. And it was this support and the dedicated service given by men and women here in the Trent Valley - many of whom are present today - which made Trent University possible and brought it into being.

It also gave to the University much of the special character and outlook which already make it distinctive. Located in the historic Valley of the Trent, and in this old Ontario city of Peterborough with its long tradition of interest in the arts and letters, it is natural that this University should feel a particular interest in the study of the history and culture of its community and of its nation. It is very much the hope and wish of everyone associated with Trent University that it may become in the fullness of time a useful and significant centre for Canadian studies. By this is meant the study of our Canadian civilization - for such there surely is - in its totality: its history, literature, art and institutions, its people, and its sciences. In relation to this programme, Trent University is planning in the near future to give sponsorship and support to a new quarterly which will be <sup>known as the</sup> a Journal of Canadian Studies.

study and intensive planning extending over a number of years. In the age of instant coffee and even instant tea, we hold to the view that there is no such thing as instant university or, indeed, as instant education.

The founders of Trent were able and willing to look afresh at every facet of university life, to examine all possibilities, and to experiment and to pioneer whenever and however they saw fit. From this process of study and planning has emerged a university with a distinctive philosophy and a character of its own, which may guide it and perhaps inspire it through years to come.

The philosophy which inspires Trent is based upon the conviction that education is, inescapably, an individual experience - individual to each student, to each teacher, and to every scholar who may come to it. And this philosophy is reflected in the teaching methods of Trent University which seek to encourage each student to find a close and direct contact with his teachers through the tutorial and seminar method of instruction. The founders of Trent have kept in mind the dictum of Henry Adams that "A teacher is for eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops," and they have thought therefore to place the first emphasis upon creating a university in which the standards of teaching and scholarship are the prime concern.



This philosophy of our University is also reflected in the decision that Trent should be a collegiate university - that is, that it should be made up of a number of smaller sister colleges, which will be the fundamental units and the chief feature of Trent University. Every student and every faculty member will belong to one or another of these colleges. In this way, through the colleges, members of Trent University may be helped to preserve a sense of individual identity as the University grows larger, and to find richer personal associations and a greater measure of academic assistance than would otherwise be the case.

May I end upon a more personal note? I was deeply the honoured when ~~Trent~~ Founding Board invited me, in May of 1961, to undertake the Presidency of Trent University. I have appreciated greatly the unflinching support, and the confidence and co-operation which have been extended to me since that time by the Board, and, too, by this community - of which my wife and I are very happy to be new citizens, - by an interested and widely diverse public stretching across the land, by the government, by a dedicated and distinguished staff, and - most recently - by our students. It has made my task a most pleasant and rewarding one.

Looking back upon what has already been accomplished

at Trent, looking upon those who are its present Board and staff and student members, and looking upon this heartwarming gathering today, I am moved to hope - and to believe - that we are establishing here a great University, one of excellent standards and of fine character. May it give service to this community, to this Province, to Canada, and to many scholars from lands overseas through generations yet to come.