

## FULL AND EQUAL CITIZENSHIP — THEORY OR PRACTICE?

The following address was given by Hon. Robert S. Welch, QC, Provincial Secretary, Minister of Citizenship and Registrar-General for Ontario, to the 11th Conference of Federal-Provincial Survey officers in Toronto last Fall.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to be with you this evening and participate in this Eleventh Conference of Federal-Provincial Survey Officers. I understand that this is the first time you have met in Toronto, and I know that all of us in Ontario wish you a pleasant and meaningful stay here in our provincial capital.

I must admit that when Mr. Code first invited me last April to speak at this evening's function, I was particularly concerned that I could have little to say of specific interest to surveyors. I have had some exposure to questions of property rights and such in my legal career, but a detailed understanding of your work is obviously outside my own competence.

### Certain Similarities

Nevertheless, as I learned more and more about your profession, I realized that there were some very striking similarities between your work and that of my own Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship.

To begin with, it seems that you take a great interest in a theoretical approach to your work. Not satisfied with the old maxim that what was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us, you have spent much of your attention finding better and more efficient ways of co-ordinating surveying activities in Canada so that they will fit into some kind of single organized scheme.

For example, I understand that your Advisory Council on Cadastral Surveys has, for many years now, been considering the establishment of a co-ordinate system of cadastral surveying for all of Canada. And if I understand the implications of such a system correctly, it appears that it would be theoretically possible to put all maps based on such a system together and end up with a single map of our nation, uniform in scaling and coding.

But of course you are not satisfied with theoretical advances alone. You realize, as all of us do, that changes on paper can only have value when we actually apply these developments in the field. It is what we do with our increased knowledge that counts, even though an increase in understanding is an important first step to any goal.

### Cites Example

Once more I can use a very simple example from your own work, and this concerns your interest in a system of permanent monumentation. A co-ordinate system of surveying can be used only in concert with an efficient system of monumentation so that the changes we make on paper will result in corresponding changes in the field.

But a system of monumentation which shifts its position over time, or disappears altogether for one reason or another, is inefficient from any point of view. A ground survey with monumentation makes sense only if we can assume that it will still be there tomorrow for future reference as an aid both to ourselves and to others.

Well, in my own department we are also concerned with improving the ways in which we can approach our work in citizenship both from a theoretical and from a practical point of view. As some of you may already be aware, the Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship was created in Ontario by the passing of the Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship Act of January 1961.

And under this Act, one of the duties of the Minister is the responsibility of advancing and encouraging the concept and ideal of full and equal citizenship among all residents of Ontario.

### An Ongoing Process

Naturally, one of our first aims is to develop a way of looking at citizenship which makes sense for all people no matter where they came from originally or where they are living at the moment. This, if you like, is a theoretical concern, a concern for concepts and ideas.

And in this area we feel that we have made considerable progress. We have realized that citizenship can no longer be treated by people as merely a legal status, although citizenship does involve an important legal component. It is more than this, however. It is an ongoing process, something without any definite beginning or end, something which involves the identity of people rather than their status or position in structural terms.

To put it in its most concise form, we see citizenship as that ongoing process in which individuals in society are able to identify themselves with their own communities . . . local, provincial, national, and ultimately universal. We see citizenship in terms of the individual's recognition of where and how he fits into the world. And we see citizenship as a system of ongoing communication in which the individual is able to effectively interact with the world around him, with his environment in its broadest physical, social, and psychological terms.

But as in all things, theoretical progress is not enough. It is necessary to also translate this system of concepts and theories into the actual field, in this case into the real life situations of living in Ontario. And this, you can well imagine, is the most

difficult part of our task.

For unlike yourselves, my department works with people and not with physical structures. It is possible for you to physically define and physically measure the lakes and mountains and rivers which you survey and map, but how is it possible to physically measure the quality of life of individual people?

Certainly this cannot be done in terms of dollars and cents, although the economic standard of life in Ontario may be an important criterion in such an effort. It cannot be done in terms of years of education, number of children, or even number of friends, although once more these may play an important part in the quality of life experienced by an individual.

The problem is quite straightforward. When working with essentially inanimate structures as you do, it is possible to equalize things by means of comparable systems of measurement. Two surveys, for example, can be equated because of a common scaling system, even though the terrain surveyed in each map may be quite different.

### On Achieving Progress

But when working with human beings, it is impossible to talk about equalization. For unlike lakes and mountains, people can talk back. They can, and often do, tell us immediately that although we have treated them as equals on paper, and tried to equalize the **means** by which we describe and measure them, they are nevertheless not experiencing equal treatment in their everyday lives.

And yet by listening to what people have to say, progress **can** be achieved. It may appear to be a rather negative way of approaching progress, but it is nevertheless an important step to our final goal — full and equal citizenship.

Essentially it comes down to this. As a government, we can legislate in certain ways so that particular rights are guaranteed to all people. But the only action which we can take is to step in when these rights are being obviously tampered with. It is almost as though the law must be broken before we can take any direct action.

And the law, as you all realize, is concerned with actions. Our problem is this — what can we do about attitudes, about prejudices which may be extremely strong and deep-rooted, and yet which never come to the surface in terms of actions which can be legally acted upon?

### Some of the Difficulties

Again let me illustrate my point with an example from your own work. I was

pleased to notice the attention which the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names has devoted to avoiding the use of names which would appear discriminatory or derogatory from the point of view of race, colour or creed. But even your own Committee has come across the problem of what to do when a name which is obviously discriminatory has been in common and official usage for several generations. This is a difficult problem from any angle, but it underlines the sorts of difficulties which arise whenever we work in the area of changing human attitudes.

But let me dispel at this time any impression which I may have created that this is an impossible or unrealistic task. Although it seems unlikely that a goal like full and equal citizenship can ever be won overnight, I am nevertheless optimistic that it is within the grasp of human possibilities for one very simple reason — because we all have a vested interest in the achievement of such a goal.

All of us in society, including of course everyone in this room, wants to be assured that certain rights and privileges will be guaranteed. All of us have a vested interest in living in a world where each man can know that his children are safe, to live in dignity and respect. All of us want families cared for, and our liberties assured. All of us, in short, want to be **protected** as well as being the **protectors**.

### To See Ourselves

It is apparent, then, that there is a way of approaching this task which is neither theoretical nor negativistic, and this is simply going out and doing what is our responsibility as citizens to do in the first place. It is not enough in your own field that you lay down principles for other surveyors and mappers to follow — you must also follow them yourselves. And it is not enough that we encourage others to exercise their rights and meet their responsibilities as individual citizens — we must also learn to see **ourselves** as citizens, to find out how **we** fit into the structure of our own communities, and then to act in a manner consistent with our **own** values and goals.

And yet these goals can never be met if people opt out of their responsibilities. In making a map, you do not need the co-operation of the lake or mountain you are surveying. But when working with people, we must always have the active co-operation of all concerned.

It is obvious, for example, that we must guarantee all people who are legally qualified to vote that they will not be arbitrarily prevented from voting. But what happens when people who are guaranteed the vote **voluntarily** choose not to exercise this right, in effect voluntarily choose to opt out?

### Obvious Result

The result is obvious. Although we can

legislate in such a way that everyone has an equal right to participate in certain decision-making processes, only a portion of the population ends up to be actually involved in the decision-making itself. And quite frankly, this is a situation which is becoming more and more common in all aspects of our lives, and which stands in the way of full and equal citizenship for many people not only in Ontario, but also all across our nation.

You can see, then, the complexities of the problem facing all of us in the modern world. Technological progress can solve problems which can be technologically defined. But certain problems, problems like those involving citizenship — in fact, all truly **human** problems — cannot be technologically defined, and so will never be solved by technological progress alone.

Only when we learn to live in harmony and mutual respect, with a full understanding of our own rights and a total acceptance of our own responsibilities, will we be able to rest in the ongoing struggle for full and equal citizenship. For then we will have produced a society which has been the dream of man throughout the ages — a society in which all men can live with a sense of personal fulfillment, individual identity, and human dignity. Let us work together, then, to pull our share of the load, and by our own example and leadership make this dream a reality for all men the world over.