
CURRENT SCIENCE—50 YEARS AGO

The King's Silver Jubilee*

In the whole history of civilisation, there is no more psychologically puzzling phenomenon than the situation in the year of the Silver Jubilee. All the nations as if by common consent have drifted from the path of peace, sanity and wisdom, and under the malign influence of the Political and Economic "Legion", they are precipitating down the Gadarene slopes to submergence. The Great War was fought to save civilisation, liberty and democracy; these ideals are smoke-screened by political passions and economic restrictions; the bitter lessons of militarism have only led the nations to sow fresh Dragon teeth; the ideals of the church and the claims of common humanity have almost been forgotten in the transactions of international affairs. It is yet possible that the auspicious anniversary of the Silver Jubilee may be the occasion for the birth of a new and moving hope to cement international sympathy, confidence and friendship, without which the perplexing problems which now confront civilisation will finally overwhelm humanity, if they are not wisely handled to compass a higher unity and a broader synthesis. In the political and economic conflicts, we forget the essence of human nature, its scale of values, the meaning and purpose of social existence, its desires and aspirations.

The multiple contradictions of the present stage of civilisation must be due to the fact that while the progress of science has endowed man with almost fabulous powers for controlling his environment and refining his nature, it has in the sphere of thought apparently dissociated the human spirit from the world values in which inevitably it has its existence. Viewed from a superficial standpoint, science would appear to have come up against the meaning and purpose of human nature and this confusion has affected other fields of thought and activity so completely that further progress in the outer and inner life seems to be barred unless a bridge is thrown across the chasm which separates faith and action and ideals and practice. The increasing appreciation of the functions of science in civilisation may be hoped to remove such antinomies which generally arise from false emphasis on values and from treatment of incomplete or

inaccurate premises as if they are whole and final. A great psychological event which has its roots in the heart of the nation has often deflected the current of public affairs, and the Silver Jubilee, which has stirred the imagination of the whole Empire, may, if its spirit is understood, perhaps prove to be the turning point of the fortunes of the greatly distracted and perplexed world. In this noble task, the genius of the Commonwealth is behind the Sovereign.

His Majesty as the inheritor of the rich traditions of the Throne and of the achievements of the British race is a representative of the national history. He is the cornerstone of the Empire. The affection and esteem in which his subjects hold His Majesty and the singular popularity which he enjoys throughout the world by the sympathy and tenderness with which he approaches international problems are an invaluable asset for the Empire. The world can pay no nobler tribute to its greatest monarch on this auspicious occasion than re-explore the possibilities of achieving international peace, prosperity and contentment. All the nations of the world have, in a smaller or greater measure, contributed to disorganise the international economic structure and to arouse mutual suspicions, jealousies and passions; and in rehabilitating international life on the basis of goodwill, truthfulness, honesty and amity, the contribution must be made in a spirit of Christian humility. The different races have to make large sacrifices in the interests of humanity and live as a brotherhood of nations and not divided into warring camps.

It is in this spirit of broad kindness and sympathy that His Majesty's reply to the Dominions representatives is conceived and it is worth reproducing in full:

"There is a word which gladdens me, more especially when I hear it used by friends from the overseas, many of whom say, when they visit this country "they are coming home". It is in this spirit that the Queen and I meet you to day, you who represent the vast territories, the Dominions, the Colonies, the protectorates and my peoples in India and the dwellers in the countless Isles of the sea from the Pacific to the homewaters. We greet the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, now equal partners in the Empire, and thank them for the addresses from their Parliaments which they have handed to me. We welcome one and all to our home.

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“Eventful your visit cannot fail to be and I trust it will be happy also. When the time comes for you to return, I would ask you to take back, each to his own people, a message of affection to every member of this great family, of which I am so proud and thankful to be the head; and a message of deep gratitude for the loyal and kind words which you have spoken on their behalf. You all, who are here to-day and who hold responsible positions, will best know what an inspiration and encouragement your words are to me to continue the task which, 25 years ago, I set myself to do. Before I succeeded my father, the Queen and I had the privilege of studying firsthand the Dominions Overseas and India. We were fellow-travellers then, as now, comparing notes and sharing impressions. We treasure these memories and keep them alive. Moreover, what we forget, our four sons are now able to recall. Many years before our happy partnership began, I had, as Midshipman, sailed the seven seas and I realised early that the Empire has many climes but one spirit.

“I regard this as a unique gathering where we can tell one another our successes as also our failures and mistakes, but there can be no sharp criticism nor vain regrets, for we are, in sympathy, one with another, conscious that we have acted according to our lights

for the good name and ordered prosperity of the family. We are some time told that we are lacking logic, and that our political institutions are loose and undefined; but I look back on the trying and testing time through which we have passed and wonder whether a less flexible system would have withstood the strains to which we have been subjected. With common-sense and goodwill as our shield buckler, we have kept in spite of all difficulties our heritage—liberty alike for the individual and our many constituent races. The numberless and invisible ties, sentiment and tradition, which bind us together, are indeed delicate, but many strands make the cable strong to bind in times of adversity. It is my prayer, no less than my firm belief, that this bond of spirit may prove also the bond of a peace. Some of you are, with a few happy exceptions, about my own age and I pray for the continuance of God’s blessings on your labours. With His help, I will work on with you in the years that remain for that object which has ever been next to my heart—welfare of the mother country, the Dominions Overseas and India, their happiness and their good repute.”

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NEWS

PROTECTING THE NATION’S GROUNDWATER

... “If groundwater quality is to be better protected, laws and programs must be broadened to include sources of contamination, contaminants, and users of groundwater not now covered. Most programs now focus on contamination from ‘point’ sources, especially landfills and other activities associated with hazardous wastes (as defined by Federal law). Not generally covered are non-point sources (e.g., pesticide and fertilizer applications) and sources associated with non-hazardous wastes (e.g., residential disposal) and non-waste products (e.g., leaks and spills from storage tanks). Also, over 200 individual substances have been detected in groundwater, but mandatory Federal water quality standards have been established for only 18 of them. And existing programs are primarily concerned with protecting public drink-

ing water supplies; at least 11 million rural households—as much as 20% of the Nation’s population—rely on private drinking water wells. . . . At present, no Federal program earmarks funds for groundwater. As a result, all water quality programs are competing for State grants, some of which have recently been reduced or eliminated. And because groundwater protection activities are expensive, funds are needed by the States for both program development and implementation.”

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