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# ON LOOKING BACKWARD

*By*

FREDERICK MOORE CLEMENT

CONGREGATION SERIES No. 2

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Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture  
The University of British Columbia

*An address delivered at the Spring Congregation  
of the University of British Columbia,  
May 12, 1949,  
on the occasion of his retirement as  
Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture*

The University of British Columbia  
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1950

## CITATION

Mr. Chancellor, in presenting Frederick Moore Clement, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of British Columbia, I feel that we are in his person offering a just and due tribute to the vital role of agriculture in the economy of our province and our country at the same time that we honor one who has zealously promoted the welfare of the Faculty of Agriculture in the University of which he is one of the pioneers. His record of achievement in education and scholarship, in public service and administration, has indeed been beyond the ordinary in more than one province of the Dominion, and his influence has never been restricted to the professor's classroom or the administrator's office: there is no district in British Columbia which has not felt the benefit of his expert and affectionate interest. We believe that it is of importance that a University maintain close touch with the community it serves; there are many hundreds of our fellow-citizens who can bear witness to the energy, the intelligence, and the friendliness which he has displayed in carrying out this vital part of the University's work. His acknowledged and unusual gifts as a teacher, his patient and many-sided skill as an administrator, his understanding of the relationship between true learning and practical affairs are the outcome of his experience not only as Professor and Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics during the last ten years, but also as Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture in this University for the past thirty. Yet his arduous duties have not prevented him from undertaking, on many occasions, special duties of major importance to the University and to the province. To one who has successfully piled Pelion upon Ossa, and Ossa upon Olympus, we are happy to award the degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa.

# ON LOOKING BACKWARD

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, Honoured Guests, Members of the Graduating Classes of 1949, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Permit me first to express my thanks for the honor that has been conferred upon me today by making me an alumnus of this University. A large part of my life has been devoted to the building of this institution, and the many incidents of the years are indelibly stamped on my memory. It has been a pleasing and interesting task, and it is naturally with some regret that because of years I find it necessary to pass on the gavel of authority and responsibility. But I am not unhappy, because I have had the privilege of serving with men and under men who over the years have contributed much to the educational and intellectual life of this Province.

No words that I can use can express adequately my feelings on this occasion.

Permit me also to say a few words on behalf of the associates who are being honored with me today — **Dr. Gordon Taggart**, an old friend and classmate, and **Dr. Bill Brittain**, a fellow dean who in the same year graduated from another institution. Each is worthy in his own right. Each has made a contribution in his chosen field. They honor us with their presence here today. On their behalf, I express our deepest thanks and appreciation. Together, we all express our thanks for the honor that has been extended to Agriculture, a basic industry in Canada. I regret very much the absence of Dr. Mathews, who, because of illness, could not be with us today. We, as alumni, accept the rights and privileges conferred upon us; we also accept the responsibilities that go with the rights and privileges.

While the honor is being conferred upon me, I am not unmindful of the fact that I am only representative of a group of men who over the years have built the Faculty of Agriculture. Barss, King, Laird, Lloyd and Moe — these five have a collective service of a century and a half, less one year. These men and their colleagues — the middle age group — have served the Faculty in sickness and in health and have rendered the fullest cooperation to me and to each other. It is they who have given of their abilities and their energies in laying the foundations of the Faculty. I cannot overlook the warmth of the friendships that have grown with the years.

Nor can I overlook the incomparable group of energetic young men who have joined the Faculty recently. They, in the space of a few short years, will be the senior members just as now they are the driving force of the Faculty. Each, by temperament, personality, and training, is potentially not only Department Head, but also Dean, and even University President.



I am told that I symbolize the passing of an era, that I am among the last of the "originals" who assisted in laying the foundations and in raising the superstructure of this University. One third of a century has gone by since the late Dr. Frank Wesbrook came to see me in the City of Hamilton, Ontario, and suggested that I might consider the possibility of joining the staff of The University of British Columbia.

Many changes have taken place since then. In a sense, at that time we were still in the horse-and-buggy days, and I, among others, was wondering whether or not the day would come when there would be more automobiles than horses on the roads of the Province. You see, we had not yet thought in terms of highways as we know them today, and there were few aeroplanes, no radios and no atomic bombs. We had done little more than imagine things to come. The University of Saskatchewan was but nine years old, the University of Alberta was five years old, and the University of British Columbia was two years old. In a sense, we were just emerging from the forest and pioneering the second decade of the 20th Century in business, education, and other modern social and economic endeavors.

That was in 1916, and I find from a glance at the University Calendar that there were 37 members on the teaching staff — 26 of whom were of professorial status. Dr. Wesbrook, the first President, was then Professor of Bacteriology; Dr. Klinck, the second President, was Prof. of Agronomy; and Dr. MacKenzie, the third President, was on Active Service overseas. There were 151 women students and 228 men students registered for classes; there were hundreds more who had discontinued their studies and gone overseas. There were 318 students in the Faculty of Arts and Science, 61 students in Applied Science, and none at all in Agriculture. Other faculties had not yet been organized. But one other faculty is referred to in the 1916-17 and later Calendars. Among the Members of Senate was the unappointed Dean of the Faculty of Forestry.

Four years after the close of World War I, registration had reached 1194, and the numbers in relation to total accommodation brought even greater pressure to bear upon existing facilities than the great numbers in recent years have brought upon our present facilities. As you are aware, the University was at that time housed in buildings some of which are now used by the Vancouver General Hospital. But long before 1916, the year of my appointment, the University Commission had made its recommendations and it had been decided to establish the University at a suitable time on its present site at Point Grey. We moved in the summer of 1925.

It's interesting how sometimes big things come of simple incidents. During the early days, one of the common discussions was how and where to obtain additional land for the University at Point Grey. The first grant of 250 acres had already been made, but

this was not considered large enough to house all Faculties and provide land for the Faculty of Agriculture. In 1917, the late Premier Brewster wished to have Dr. Klinck, then Dean of Agriculture, accompany him on a trip to the Peace River country to look over certain lands. Dean Klinck, although interested in the Peace River, was much more interested in obtaining additional acres for the University at Point Grey. He advised the Premier that he would go to the Peace River and report on conditions there if the University authorities were first assured of additional land at Point Grey. On August 17, Dean Klinck received the following wire: "HAS BEEN ARRANGED FOR LEASE TO BE MADE UNIVERSITY OF LAND ASKED FOR STOP BE SURE TO TAKE PEACE RIVER TRIP." Dean Klinck took the trip, and here we are with an additional 298 acres! This incident also settled for the time being the question of the location of the Faculty of Agriculture. A strong body of opinion had maintained that the Faculty should be moved to the land at Colony Farm — which is now a part of Essondale.

The University as we know it today did not "just grow up." As is always the case with the building of great institutions, there were many conflicts of opinion that had to be reconciled, many ambitions that had to be sacrificed, many ideals that had to be realized. In looking over an important manuscript a few days ago, I noted some of the special headings that were prominent there dealing with the current situation in the early part of the century. They illustrate clearly the educational, political and economic struggles of the day. These are some of the headings: **Graduates Alarmed** (the first appeal to create the University would have made the University of British Columbia an off-shoot of McGill University!); **Protest by Alumni of Other Universities in Victoria; Protest by Vancouver Graduates; Resolutions Demanding a Provincial University and Condemning the McGill Appeal; The Vicious Provisions of Bill 23; Why the University Graduates' Association Was Kept in the Dark; A Conspiracy of Silence to Keep Victoria Quiet; Petition to the Government to Renew the Charter of the University of British Columbia and Endow it With a Grant of Land.**

These are only examples, but they do illustrate the differences in opinion and the problems that had to be dealt with in the early part of the century.

Great credit must be given to the Governments, Ministers of Education, Chancellors, members of the Boards of Governors, members of Senate, and to many other hundreds of men and women who have given fully of their lives to help build this university. Time cannot dim their magnificent contributions and all were willing to contribute more.

But I wish for a few minutes to dwell on the contributions of the three men who, in my opinion, have given most, because, thanks to the judgments of the Boards of Governors, the University has



been guided by Presidents, each by character and temperament suited to the particular time and place of his appointment. These are the men who thought the thoughts, dreamed the dreams and erected in their own minds the educational structure, academic and physical, of this University as we know it today — the Presidents from 1914 to the present time.

To the memory and the gifts of the first President, the late Dr. Westbrook, I bow in deep reverence and respect. To that great leader who dug the trenches and poured a portion of the foundation cement, we owe a great debt of gratitude. His many qualities of heart and mind — and these were many — are well remembered, but the one that is stamped most clearly on my memory is best illustrated by the question he usually asked about an important problem when a decision had to be made: "Is it **sound in principle**? Is your suggestion — (or your request for something) — **sound in principle**? Is it something fundamental to the founding of a great university?" If it **was** sound in principle, then it would have his support.

The second President, Dr. Klinck, now President Emeritus, was the right hand of the first President. Together they travelled this Province from one end to the other and gathered information at first hand. Or, had you been lucky, you might have caught them resting before the big fireplace in the home in old Shaughnessy where they talked and discussed. Together they planned an institution founded on scholarship in the sciences, in the humanities, and in the arts — an institution where students in Applied Science, Pure Science, Agriculture, Classics, Humanities, Art and Literature, Law Pharmacy and last, but not least, Medicine (because Dr. Westbrook was a medical man) — in fact, all branches of learning — might work in classes and laboratories side by side, closely associated in labour and refreshment, learning to know and understand one another.

This is one of the principles of education that has been so strongly emphasized in the building of this University. The applied sciences were to rest on the sciences and humanities. While now a fact, this principle was but a dream in this Province in 1914-19, and at no institution on this continent has this principle been carried forward and brought to nearer fulfilment than at the University of British Columbia. The founders are to be complimented on their foresight and skill.

And what of the second President? He, too, like the first President, had the many qualities of heart and mind so necessary to the character of all builders. Times and conditions had changed, and new approaches were inevitable. The question now was: "Is it **administratively possible** and **administratively sound**?" Or: "Is it possible, from our meagre resources, to give effect to this new idea (or to add a new department or faculty or even an additional mem-

ber of staff)?" . . . "The plan must be perfect; it must be accurate. Every line must be true, and every brick must fit precisely into its proper place." Such was the principle of the second administration; and out of the first two administrations, there grew up in this far Western province an institution **sound in principle and sound in organization and sound in administration.**

Now we are evolving in the third administration, with our present popular, dynamic, travelling President, Norman MacKenzie. The idea of a living university and a living education has been sold to the people of the Province. A vast expansion of buildings and equipment has taken place. Students have come forward until the present eight thousand is well below the postwar peak enrolment, and we have become the second English-speaking university in Canada in point of numbers and the first in popularity.

And so today, as we look back over the years, we have four years of the first administration (which was **sound in principle**), five years of the third administration (which we hope will continue for many years to popularize, to lead, to build, to add to the lustre of our University), and between them we have an administration of 26 years through prosperity and depression, during which the superstructure emerged, university buildings were constructed on this beautiful site, the standards of scholarship became established, and student graduates became leaders in every walk of life in British Columbia, in Canada, and beyond.

Truly have the three administrations supplemented and complemented each other and brought to near fulfilment the ideals, hopes and desires of the University men and women who half a century ago held firmly to the idea of a Provincial University.

I would say a word to my colleagues in all Faculties — for 33 years I have been a professor and head of a department, and I know you as a body of friends and as intellectuals highly trained, specialists each in his own department. We have known each other as colleagues working together, each in his own way, each doing his duty as he saw it and each contributing something to the life of the University. That is as it should be. But permit me to add that I know you, even as you know me, each head of a department a little sovereign in his own right, each in charge of a little kingdom, seeing, as we should, the problems of our own departments. We would not have ourselves otherwise. We would be weak indeed if we did not think our own department the most important in the University. But taken together, we make up the personnel of the University Staff. Some persons, maybe the Deans, maybe the President, must hold the Faculties and then the Departments in balance. Just as the Heads of Departments tend to take a departmental view, so do the Deans take a Faculty view, and so must the President take a University view. This simple statement is very important today. During recent years there has been some tendency



toward the breaking down of Faculty barriers, of departmental barriers, and, what is more important, the breaking down of individual prejudices. This is necessary in a modern university. The problems of teaching, the problems of research, the problems of balancing a budget are all interrelated. We are all servants of the people, and I commend to you the thought that important as your department or your faculty is, you are **primarily concerned** with a great university. The administration must of necessity at times ask you to take the university point of view and do a good deal of cheerful giving and taking. The years that lie immediately ahead will be difficult ones and well may you be asked to seek university solidarity by making some sacrifice of departmental sovereignty.

And now a word to the students: As young men and women you, or many of you, are seeking employment. Well may I ask what are your qualifications and what you have to offer. The two questions might be given a simple answer. Assuming that you have average or better ability and mental capacity, these are the essentials: (1) Strict honesty, high mental integrity, a mind whose reliability cannot be questioned; (2) The ability to speak and write correctly and well; (3) Technical knowledge. There are other qualifications, but these are of importance in the order named, and for the years to come, may I express the hope that students in the applied sciences, without making any great sacrifices in technical and scientific training, could well devote some additional time to the purely cultural subjects. And, by the same token, may I add that those who feel that they are the essence of pure culture might profit much and become more useful citizens if they would extend their knowledge to the scientific and the technical.

To all young men and women of this University permit me to say: **Guard well the right to student self-government.**

From the earliest days, student self-government has been a privilege and a responsibility. Under it, you have learned to govern yourselves, to conduct your own affairs, and to provide your own disciplines. **This is education in its widest and truest sense. Guard well the right to investigate, to study, to talk and to criticize.** This is necessary in every student body and in every university faculty. **Guard well the right to select from among yourselves those who are to make up your governing bodies. And guard even more rigidly the right to discharge your governing bodies. Guard well the individual rights and freedoms that have been won through many centuries of economic and political struggle.**

You, the students of today, are the men and women of tomorrow. Your studies are beginning. You have taken the first step during which you have learned to think and learned to plan. You are as well equipped intellectually as it is possible to equip you in four

or five years of study. You are now going out to fight your battles in a troubled world.

I have an especially warm fellow feeling, for I, like you, am at the end of the beginning; and like you, I am starting on a career in which there is a definite objective. Like you, I am aiming high and expect in a few years to reach that objective. Like you, I will make mistakes and, like you, I am going to gain from experience: like you, I expect to continue forward while others sleep, toiling upward in the night.

And so we go forth together, you and I, to seek our fortunes in an ever-changing world. The ways are devious and the paths are crowded, **but we are the leaders, and we dare not fail.**

And in conclusion: The idea of a university is world-wide. Throughout the ages, scholars have assembled, studied and sought the truth. For short periods in history the idea may have been overshadowed but the never-ending search for truth and knowledge has continued. The footprints of knowledge and truth from universities of which we are one can be traced to the four corners of the earth.

Among all civilized peoples and in all Christian lands, the place and existence of universities are recognized. The hurricanes of war may come, the bombs may fall, and for a time, many buildings and many people may be swept away. But over the years, unaffected by the tempests of war, the storms of political persecution, the denunciations of fanaticism, the ideals of truth and knowledge, which are the breath of life of our university, must stand erect in the clear sunshine of heaven.

Truth and knowledge must stand like some patriarch of the forest with its roots firmly in the soil. Blasts may come and lightning may strike and even for a time the light and radiance of truth and knowledge may be obscured; but the storms will pass and in the years to come the sunlight of honor and distinction will delight to linger among its branches.

"And if ever in the Providence of God, lashed by the political storms and shattered by the lightning it should fall, and the dark ages again return, may the ivy of affection still continue to grow around the shattered trunk until once more the search for truth and knowledge has taken root and grown and blossomed forth and restored to humanity the love of God that shall not be banished from the earth."

And to the many graduates of this university — and to the "Aggie" grads in particular, let me say: The shadows lengthen and the faltering pass on, leaving only fading footprints in the sands of time. Fresh ideas are already germinating in the new earth as my successor comes forward and moves onward and upward to new and better things in a great university.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

No. 1. AND WE ARE HERE — *Ira Dilworth*

No. 2. ON LOOKING BACKWARD  
— *F. M. Clement*