

where his next meal is coming from. But he may well be wondering where his next barrel of flour is coming from.

I have to insist upon relating any conclusion as to the sound and satisfactory character of our economy to the minimum that I am prepared to be satisfied with. I have made the point before that we are a western people, a North American people. We have but to look across the Gulf to the North American mainland to observe the standard of civilisation that such a people are entitled to enjoy in this day and generation. If there are any means that we can employ to come by such standard, then we have every right to use those means, provided they are not in conflict with Christian principles and the democratic tradition. For a little while I had almost become uncertain of that. So much emphasis had come to be put upon our duty not to sell that rather amorphous something called "our sacred heritage" for a mess of pottage, that I had almost come to think that a mess of pottage was something intrinsically evil. However, in the meantime I have had the opportunity of talking again with people to whom a mess of pottage has meant the difference almost between life and death at times — and I have consequently been confirmed in my belief that in its rightful place a mess of pottage is something of considerable moment.

In the most recent years we have come upon a new ability to supply ourselves with some of the public and social services of a western people. It is but little enough we have come by — and what we have come by we have come upon the hard way. We have been a long time in this island. Our history is as long as the history of any others who live in this hemisphere. We are as old in the New World as any men of our race. We have worked hard in this island — we and our fathers before us, and their fathers before them. The men who pushed around the capstans to stump the first fields, and their sons after them who laboured so mightily to make those fields produce the little that they have; the men who decade after decade have wrenched from the ice floes their wealth of seals and from the surrounding sea its wealth of fish; the men who have trapped and logged and mined and done all such others things as men have done in this island to make a living; they have all had to work for that living mightily indeed. From the wolf at the door they have

received no quarter. Sometimes even to stay alive has required effort monumental in its proportions.

In June past we came to the end of 450 years of history — for the most part years of grim endeavour to make both ends meet, years of just managing to keep body and soul together, years of doing without. And at the end of four and a half centuries we have not very much to show for all our years and all our efforts. Three or four cathedrals, a few hundred churches, a thousand or so schools, a narrow gauge railroad that swirls across the island in a reiteration of fantastic scrolls, a few ribbons of road ... and an airport at Gander and in the red. Once upon a time we even had a house of parliament and a museum. These latter years, it is true, many more of our people have come to know the benefits of what are called modern conveniences. But as far as a great many are concerned, the intimate institutions of their daily lives still are outdoor latrines, wood stoves, kerosene oil lamps, and carry in your drinking water from the well back of the house.

I have often wondered why it is that after four and a half centuries we have so little to show for all our efforts. It is true we live in a gaunt land that maybe has not had the capacity to produce a higher standard of living than we have known. But I have often wondered if that is not too simple an explanation. There is a saying that they built New England out of hard times and codfish. Well, we too have had the codfish. It will also be conceded that we have had the hard times. There is another saying about the fault being not in our stars but in ourselves. But there again the explanation is too simple. There have been things in our history that have been beyond ourselves to effect, that have contributed.

In any case, it would appear that we have lately come to enjoy a somewhat greater portion than has been our historic portion.... Some of us have come to be a bit better off than ever before. As a people, we have come to be able to supply ourselves with a few of the public amenities and social services of a North American civilisation. I am not prepared to accept as conclusive evidence of a condition of self-support less than reason to believe that we shall be able to maintain such personal and national standards for the normal times of the future. No person of fair mind will seek to deny that there is some hope that we