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ONTARIO COLLEGE OF ART

LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE OF THE  
NEW BUILDING, SEPTEMBER 21ST, 1920.

The ceremony of laying the corner stone of the Ontario College of Art took place at 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, September 21st, 1920.

MR. G.A. HOWELL, Vice Chairman of Council of the College, presided, and in opening the proceedings said:- Ladies and gentlemen, the occasion of laying the corner stone of this new College building is one that we have looked forward to for many months. It is a far cry from the time when we used to come before the City Council along with the public charities and beg for a small grant for this College. At that time we had not any idea that we should ever gather in these grounds and celebrate the laying of a corner stone of a new building. We had many vicissitudes, but there have been a number of public spirited citizens, artists and others, who have stood by the formation of this College until today we are here to lay the corner stone of this building, the funds for which have been provided by the Dominion and Provincial Governments. The Provincial Government has put us on a good financial footing otherwise by the grants they have given to us, and we now look forward to a splendid future for this Ontario College of Art. Those who have stood out among the pioneers, men who have done great service for this College, I desire to mention; and first is Mr. G.A. Reid, who has been on the staff of the College and the School ever since it was a School, and if it had not been for his optimism and his perseverance we would not be here today to lay this corner



stone. (Applause) The late Mr. R.Y. Ellis was also a very energetic friend of the school; and we can thank Mr. J.P. Murray to a great extent for our being in the present position. There are others whom Mr. Murray will mention later who are certainly deserving of all praise. In the Department the cooperation of Mr. Seath and Dr. Merchant has been of wonderful assistance. As to the site, the Art Council of the Gallery have been good enough to donate the site to the Ontario College of Art, and it is owing to that, and the grants we have from the Governments, that we are able to put up this building. One feature in connection with it is very interesting - that the gentleman I mentioned, Mr. Reid, who has stood so nobly by the school, is Architect for the new building, which certainly must be a great pleasure to him. (Applause)

I would now ask Mr. J.P. Murray, the Treasurer of the Council, to read a brief history of the College which will be deposited in the cylinder in the stone.

MR. J.P. MURRAY, was received with applause and said: Mr. Chairman, Reverend Archdeacon Codéy, Mr. Premier, our programme is a good long one, and I do not know that you would care to have an address from me, but there is one thing that I would like to point out in connection with my cooperation in the past years with the old Central Ontario School of Art which has developed into this College. Years ago, owing to the business with which I was associated, although I was not an artist, I found it was necessary that we should have some knowledge of art among our people, and I lent myself to the College. What I am going to say may appear egotistical. If you think so you are entitled to



that thought , but that is not the way I feel about it. Some of you may remember years ago when Dr. James L. Hughes was Inspector of the Schools, there was an attempt to have the children understand something of Art, and efforts were made in the various Schools to introduce meetings with parents, and a number of gentlemen and ladies were invited to those meetings where children gathered the parents and met in the schools, and talks would be given along those lines. At that time we commenced to improve the walls of our schools by having them colored and having certain ~~the~~ pictures put on them, with the idea of encouraging a knowledge of art. That gave me the idea that we ought to go further, and when, in this upstairs room in 1911, Mr. R.Y. Ellis resigned the Presidency of the Central Ontario College of Art I was a Vice-President, and they wanted to make me the President, and I refused to accept it because I was going over to Great Britain, and I was going to spend most of 1911 in Great Britain, and I told them the reason I would not accept the Presidency of the School was because when I came back I intended to establish a College of Art. I was challenged then ~~by~~ that I was going to commercialize Art. I visited the Old Country, and when I came back I proposed a constitution for the College of Art. I had the assistance of our friend Sir Edmund Walker, Mr. Reid, Dr. Seath, and quite a number of others, and I presented the proposition to Sir James Whitney, and he took it up; and when Dr. Pyne and Sir James consulted about it they told me to see the then Provincial Treasurer, Honourable Mr. Matheson, and I was told that we would have to have a deputation to show the



people of Ontario that a College of Art was desired; and I think one of the most influential committees or deputations on education waited on the Minister, and the result was the bringing in of the Bill that was accepted as a Government Bill, and the College of Art was established. From that time out, just as the Chairman has said, Mr. Reid has been in the front rank, fighting tooth and nail for it on every and all occasions, and doing a great work, and from these efforts have come what we are doing here today. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that you should ask me to read this sketch; everybody has a copy of it, and our programme is fairly long. If you insist upon my reading it I can do so, but I leave it to the meeting, and ask them if they want ~~to~~ take it as read. I move that it be taken as read. (This motion was carried amid applause)

THE CHAIRMAN: I have now much pleasure in calling on Sir Edmund Walker, President of the Art Gallery of Toronto.

SIR EDMUND WALKER: Archdeacon Cody, Premier, ladies and gentlemen, I have in my possession the Art Catalogue which contains the names of the painters and the lists of the pictures that were exhibited in Toronto in 1837, and in 1849, twelve or thirteen years afterwards; the two events being so extraordinary at the time that it was thought well in 1849 to reprint the catalogue of 1837. That was the beginning of any attempt to give an art Exhibition in Upper Canada. The pictures that were exhibited at that time were mostly those of students, although I do not know who the painters were, but all beginners in Art, all copies of paintings in England,



made by people who loved pictures but did not affect to be artists, and pictures of natural objects such as wild animals and Indians and flowers and things of that kind, and some topographical sketches by men like Bonnycastle, the President of the Society at that time, who came to this country as one of <sup>the</sup> English Engineers after the war of 1812. Now, that is a pathetic document of the beginning of Art in Ontario. I remember that I was myself taken, as a boy of ten or twelve years, after the second of those Exhibitions, about 1859 or 1860, by my father, to the Provincial Fair, as it was called at the time, to see the exhibition of Art in 1860. In the so-called Art Section of the Provincial Fairs there were daguerrotypes and photographs and hair jewelry and sketches of scenery, and many phases of what was called Art at that time. Now, I am not going to detail the struggles from those early days until the present time. Most of us here have some idea what those struggles have been. What we should, I think, seek to do is to congratulate ourselves upon the effort that is going to be expended and put upon some kind of basis here as to the justification of what has been done in Art and what we seek to do. The public require that; politicians sometimes require that. We have, in Toronto and elsewhere, technical schools of great extent and of great promise. There are in the Toronto Technical School I do not know how many rooms devoted to Art or to drawing. There are many students there that are learning phases of industrial Art. This country cannot possibly develop its manufacturers unless we do have competency in industrial ART.



and many young people seeking to learn industrial art. But I should think that out of every hundred, ninety-five at least would not enter upon their drawing lessons at all if they had not a dream in their minds that they were going to be artists, that they were going to reach what is called High Art. The Ontario College of Art is the natural post-graduate course of a student who is learning drawing in the technical school. If he did not imagine that he was going to come to the Ontario College of Art and learn Art in its higher forms he probably would not begin at all. The bulk of them do not reach high Art in any very important form, but it is that dream which causes people to undertake Art, and which leads to our having in this country at the present time a very considerable Army of industrial Artists, whereas 24 or 30 years ago there were almost none. Any young man who developed any kind of ability and sought to earn his living by Art was forced to go to New York or to some other center. Now, the purpose of the Gallery in granting this site is a thing that I should like to explain. When the Charter of the Art Gallery was granted it was given, among its other powers, precisely the powers that the Ontario College of Art possesses. It was not intended that we should ever carry out those powers in any definite way; they were obtained because it was thought wise to secure a wide Charter, and the College of Art obtained this Charter at that time. Therefore it was necessary that we should affiliate the body that was going to carry out some of the purposes named in the Charter of the Art Gallery. Moreover, if this School is to do its duty and we to do our duty by it, we will have to keep in the



Art Gallery a great collection of casts and some collections of paintings and engravings and other objects of Art such as will be, in a sense, lessons to the students here, and will enable the student to appreciate what High things in Art are like, to have some sense of the atmosphere of high things in Art. This brick building in this Georgian style of architecture was a condition which the Art Gallery imposed upon the Ontario College of Art. It is, however, a beautiful building, and I do not know that a more useful style of architecture could have been selected; but our purpose in having the building built as it is is to connect it by a high brick wall and a brick balustrade and a formal garden with the old Grange, with the hope that some day a similar building will be erected on the place of the Grange, and we shall have a long line of Georgian buildings facing this old garden and connecting this part of the property with that part of the property, where a modern gallery with a modern form of garden will exist. At the present time the surroundings are about as unhappy as they could possibly. The City of Toronto is not carrying out its promise to demolish those buildings or to complete these grounds. But that is the dream of the future - a line of brick buildings here in Georgian style facing this garden, a modern gallery on that side facing a modern garden. Just one word more. This Ontario College of Art has already in recent years produced two or three students of the abler school, whom I shall not name; \* it does not have to look forward to a future to justify itself. Artists have left the College of Art in recent years who have justified themselves, and I look forward to a time when



This College will in fact be affiliated with the University, and the University itself will have a department of High Art, so that the public will understand that the College teaching Arts leading to the High Arts, as opposed to a technical school teaching drawing in another form, is a natural part of the tertiary education of a country, the University education of a country; that <sup>it</sup> is just as fundamental and just as proper that a University should have a section of High Art and have affiliation with an Ontario body of Art as it is that the University should have affiliation with the Conservatory of Music or any other branch of knowledge. I must demur absolutely to the idea that high music and high art and other things are outside the practical life of the people, and high education. They are part of the practical education of the people, and are just as essential to the well-being of a country like Canada as economics or science or any other Department of human understanding. I congratulate Mr. Reid on this building, and I think we may all, as citizens, look forward to a day in Ontario which may before long put us in as advanced a position as countries like Australia, where a vote of labor men put Art away beyond anything that we have ever had in this country so far as public encouragement and public grants of money to aid Art are concerned. (Applause)

THE CHAIRMAN: In looking over this brief history you will see that the Ontario Government is represented by twelve members of the Council; that is, the Ontario Government appointed twelve members, and in addition to that they gave the Ontario College of Art standing as an



Ontario Government institution. Under those circumstances it is certainly most fitting that we should have the Premier of the Province to lay the corner stone of the new building; and after I have read the list of articles which will be placed in the cylinder that goes in the stone I will have great pleasure in calling upon Premier Drury to lay the corner stone.

(After reading the list of documents to be placed in the cylinder) You see we have pretty fully covered the ground that was necessary to be covered in connection with this important event of laying the corner stone of this building. I have very great pleasure now in asking the Premier to lay the corner stone.

THE HONOURABLE E.C. DRURY, PREMIER OF ONTARIO, then proceeded to lay the corner stone, and after declaring the corner stone well and truly laid, amid applause, he said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the last time that I was upon this property was during the life of the late owner, the giver of this property for this purpose to the City of Toronto, the late Goldwin Smith. The occasion of my seeing him was to carry the greeting of a small and struggling organization of farmers in appreciation of the help and kindness that had been given to that organization by the celebrated and ~~sumner~~ public-spirited scholar and author. This occasion I regard as a particularly happy one, because I think that this building, now begun and to be carried to completion, will occupy a very important place in the life of this community. I am not an artist. If I were to draw the picture of a horse I should be compelled to adopt the



tactics of Artemus Ward, who felt himself compelled to write underneath it "This is a horse", so that the people would know what it was. But I do appreciate the beautiful, and I do also recognize that in the growth of any civilization - and we are now producing a Canadian civilization of which Ontario is the center and the heart (Hear, hear) that will be distinctly Canadian and not an echo of England or of the United States, but which shall embody the life and thought of the Canadian people - (Hear, hear) - art is entirely essential in order to give proper expression to that Canadian civilization. So far as I can understand, Art has always been a growth that went with the development of any particular civilization; and I believe that Canadian Art should express the spirit of Canada, just as the spirit of Canada must be expressed in a dozen, a hundred, other ways, in order that we may contribute the real thing and the least thing of our national life. I hope, sir, that this Institution will develop what is beautiful in Art, because while I am not an artist I appreciate paintings that are not a mere conglomeration of cubes and lines and angles. Perhaps I am not cultivated enough to understand that. I take Art to be the representation of something that is beautiful in life, something that is outstanding in life, and I believe that Art should interpret to us the beautiful that is found in life around us, the great moments of life, the great circumstances of life. That, in my humble judgment, is the function of Art; and I hope that this



building of which we have laid the corner stone today will do its part in the development and enrichment of that Canadian life which should be, and which is, dear to all of us. I thank you. (Applause)

THE CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Education, Honourable Mr. Grant, was unfortunately prevented from being present by having to receive a deputation, which came in just as he was leaving, and he regrets extremely that he is unable to be present; but we are fortunate in having the late Minister of Education, Dr. Cody, and I will now ask Reverend Dr. Cody to speak.

REV. CANON CODY, D.D., LL.D: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Grant regrets extremely that he is not able to be with us this afternoon, but he will allow me as his predecessor, perhaps, to speak for him as well as for myself in connection with this auspicious occasion. The outlines of the history of this organization have already been given, and are in printed form before you. I am glad that during my term of office I had some share at a critical stage in the development of this organization. A deputation from the Ontario College of Art came to the Department and asked for a largely increased grant, a grant of more than twice the amount that had been given in the past. It seemed to me at the time that they made a very good case, and that they indicated that as the years went on there would be a constantly increasing demand, and a rightfully large demand, upon the resources of the Province for the maintenance and development of such a



College as that, but I felt at the time that if the Province was to be called upon - as it ought to be called upon - to provide the necessary financial support, the Province as such should have some direct control of the governance of the institution. And so, with the full consent of the old Council, a new Act was passed whereby the Governor-in-Council, that is the Cabinet of the Province, appoint twelve as against eleven Councillors of the Institution. That makes this Ontario College of Art in a very definite way a child of the Province, and one of the organs through which the Province of Ontario will express its encouragement to Art. The step that has been taken today by the erection of this new and magnificent building has been rendered possible - let us gladly acknowledge it - by the forward policies of the Government of the Dominion of Canada for the promotion of technical education. As you know, some years ago the Dominion Government made a grant of about ten millions of dollars for the furtherance of agricultural education throughout the different Provinces. Last year the Dominion Government determined to pursue the same course in furthering the development of technical education throughout the Dominion, and they assigned the sum of ten million dollars to be given, on the average a million dollars a year, for ten years, whereby the various Provinces should develop their technical work. The terms upon which this grant were given were terms that demanded from the Provinces receiving grants a corresponding effort. This Province of Ontario spends upon technical education, and



has been spending upon technical education, more than any other Province in the Dominion. Naturally it will have the larger share, therefore, in the Dominion Government grant for technical education. But the fact that the Dominion Government has so generously helped technical education, coupled with the fact that our own Province has generously responded, makes it possible for this great material development so far as the building is concerned. That has made it easily possible for the Province to answer the demand for a grant of a hundred thousand dollars for the housing and equipment of the Ontario College of Art. Perhaps if I may be allowed to say just a word for the Department of Education, that Department owes a great debt of gratitude to the Ontario College of Art. All the Art specialists in our country schools have been trained in this Institution. Every summer the Ontario College of Art conducts a summer course in Art for teachers in the Public, Separate and High Schools of the Province. Last year I think the number present was \$ 140, and during the eight years of the existence of this Ontario College of Art no fewer than 1,200 of the teachers in our elementary and secondary schools have been trained in Art in this Institution. The teaching profession and the Department of Education in the Province are therefore under a great debt of gratitude to the Ontario College of Art. They look forward most hopefully to further assistance and the development of a still better trained group of teachers in our schools. May I venture also to say this: One is perfectly astonished to find out how few boys and girls there



are who, if caught young enough, do not develop some appetite for Art. The number of scholars in any given school who respond to teaching in Art is very large indeed. I suppose few are altogether void of it. The same is true of the teaching of music. If boys and girls are dealt with at an early stage they do respond in the great artistic departments of music and art. Surely the result of the work of this Institution through the schools will be <sup>the</sup> creation of a keener appreciation of that which is beautiful; and as we all know, the objects of education must always include the fostering of the love of truth, the love of goodness, and the love of beauty; and the love of beauty takes its honourable place with the other two. Perhaps there is one other feature to which I should refer. The old title of the Central Ontario School was of "Art and Industrial decoration"; now, as has already been pointed out, I think by Sir Edmund Walker, in days gone by when any Canadian youth wished to fit himself or herself for higher work in Industrial Art he had to go across the line, and we were losing to our friends to the south of the line some of our brightest boys and girls because we were not able to provide for them that higher training in art that they rightly demanded. If we are going to develop our textile industries - and the textile industries are among the greatest industries in the Province of Ontario - we must provide in Ontario itself the necessary training in Industrial Art. This Institution will be able to meet that demand in ever-increasing measure. This



College of Art takes its place as the Institution of Higher Art, of higher training, alongside of the Conservatory of Music and all the other Departments that are linked up with our University. We may with good hope look forward to a day when, as the Prime Minister has so happily said, we shall express our own natural <sup>ion</sup> spirit in Art and in Music as we are already doing in manufacturers and in commerce, in military matters, in agriculture, and in all the thousand and one vocations of life.

I am sure that the Department of Education and all the educational interests in the Province offer their heartiest congratulations to the Ontario College of Art as it enters upon a new and happy chapter of its existence. (Applause)

THE CHAIRMAN: In 1917 the Ontario College of Art became affiliated with the University of Toronto, and Sir Robert Falconer, President of the University of Toronto, will speak to us upon the connection of the College with the University.

SIR ROBERT FALCONER, K.C.M.G., LL.D: Mr. Premier, ladies and gentlemen, at this hour it would be quite improper for me to detain you at any length, and really all that remains to be done, I think, is to pronounce the benediction upon behalf of the University with which this College has been associated, expressing the hope that the connection with the University that has been, I trust, mutually beneficial in the past, will become closer in the years that are to come. We have heard this afternoon, very gratefully, about the function that has been already performed by this College of Art, and of its beginnings in this community. That this



is only the beginning of its career we are all persuaded; and I think we have also come to recognize that all those of us who are working for the development of the intellectual and spiritual side of our civilization must work together, that we must cooperate, and stand side by side. We have a great deal to encourage us in this community and in this country. The future is very good indeed, and judging by the past we can form no conception as to what we may attain and do. When we observe the development of this City, see the comforts in which people live in the residential parts, and observe the general good taste in the homes, we surely must believe that there is a great deal of potentiality that under wise direction, and especially if that direction is begun early enough, may result in the very great expansion of Art in all directions. The beauty of life, the opportunity of enriching life by beauty in all directions, is surely almost limitless, because it depends somewhat on comfort, and the prospects of material comfort in this country are limitless. Those prospects then, coupled with the real ability to develop on the lines of Art, surely mean that as we stand here this afternoon we can see no horizon at all which we cannot develop. Therefore I shall simply close by saying that we in the University who are associated with you hope that our connection will be closer, and that as our future is illimitable, so yours also may be. (Applause)

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have shown you today that we have a number of very good friends, and that we have very strong support behind the Ontario College of



Art. I think we have shown the necessity for the College; we have shown how we have struggled to get this College; and the future has certainly been put before us in glowing colours. But we feel that we want the sustaining interest of all the varied activities of Toronto; we want all to take a pride in this Ontario College of Art, and to realize that it is theirs, that it belongs not only to the Province but particularly to the City of Toronto where it is built; and I bespeak for this College your sustaining interest, your active interest, in the work of this Institution.

(Applause)

The proceedings closed at six o'clock.