

Danish founders. Our language is the richer for words of Danish origin. Our common law is enriched by the legal customs that once flourished independently in Danelagh.

Let me give you an example. England used to be divided into administrative districts known as Hundreds, and people came for justice to the Court of the Hundred in which they lived. But the Danes called their districts not Hundreds but Wapentakes. This development of Wapentake Courts is peculiar, I believe, to the Danish colonies in England, and to the practice of these courts principally we owe two systems that are fundamental to our Law and our Constitution. The first is the system of trial by a sworn jury. As a prelude to a trial in a court of Wapentake twelve leading men of the district swore with relics in their hands not to accuse the innocent nor protect the guilty. The second is the principle, first asserted in England, that where opinions differ, that of the majority must prevail. For it was ordered that if the twelve men differed in their judgements, that of a majority of eight of them should stand, and the acceptance of the decision of a majority governs all our democratic institutions to-day.

That is but a single example. If there had been time, I should like to have given more, particularly those that remind us of your great contribution to agriculture in my country in earlier times. For you know, it is not only in this country and in the past century that Danish farming has been an example to the world. A thousand years ago your ancestors came to districts in Britain, many of which had, so far as we know, never been brought under agriculture, and by their work of cultivation made these lands prosperous. But in later years we also have learnt from you. In 1882 the first co-operative dairy in the world was founded in Denmark, and the large and important co-operative movement in my country owes its inspiration to yours.

I hope I may be forgiven for asking you to travel so far with me into past history but there is great profit in it. For as Grundtvig, the educationalist and founder of the Danish Folk High Schools, said: „Knowledge of the past is the only means of understanding the present and laying wise plans for the future“. These thoughts of the past teach us some of the reasons why the understanding between the Danish and the British peoples is so strong at this present, and how many the benefits we may hope to gain from it in the future.

To-day you are commemorating a great event in the development of the Danish Parliament. You have invited me to represent the British Parliament at these celebrations. In the name of the British Parliament and peoples I thank you for this honour. May the future of Denmark be peaceful and prosperous, and I pray too that as comrades in the pursuit of peace the bonds that unite us may grow ever stronger as the years roll by.

Oversættelse.

De fejrer i dag hundredårsdagen for den grundlov, der indførte fri forfatning i Danmark. Gennem den lov indførtes det indskrænkede kongedømme, idet kongen regerede gennem en af folket valgt rigsdag. I spidsen for de forskellige ministerier kom ansvarlige ministre. Og sammen med dette politiske fremskridt kom de andre rettigheder, som er dyrebare for vore to nationer: trosfrihed, pressefrihed og talefrihed.

Disse friheder har andre folk opnået gennem hårde kampe og tunge ofre. I Danmark blev de, i forståelse med landets borgere, tilstået af en konge, til hvis ære De i morges nedlagde en krans.

Året 1848 var i Europa et stridens år, næsten uden sidestykke i fredstider. For Danmarks vedkommende var det også højdepunktet af en nedgangsperiode, der havde strakt sig fra Napoleonskrigene. Og dog blev Deres rigsdag skabt under denne nedgangsperiode, og det førte til store resultater. Det er intet tilfælde, at den frie forfatning, der indførtes i 1849, faldt sammen med guldalderen i dansk litteratur. Jeg kan som eksempel nævne Søren Kierkegaard og H. C. Andersen, og et århundrede, der var begyndt så ulykkeligt for Danmark, viste trods krige en betydelig fremgang i velstand. Det er mig en stor tilfredsstillelse at tænke på, at de mål, vore to nationer har sat sig, er i høj grad ensartede, og at vore måder at nå målene på er omtrent de samme. Dette er ikke så underligt. Afstanden mellem vore lande