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TO

LAKEHEAD CHAPTER

THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO

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Thank you for your introduction, both for what you were kind enough to say about me, and, more important, for what you were discreet enough to omit. It's a great pleasure to be with you for this special ladies' night dinner and dance. My wife and I thank you for including us.

Congratulations to the Lakehead Chapter for once again sponsoring a highly successful and productive seminar today on topics of great interest to our profession. On behalf of APEO, I would like to add the Association's and my own thanks to the various participants who contributed to the program.

However, a successful seminar depends on the ratio of eating to meeting. That is to say it should be nicely balanced as between business and social activities. And you have managed to do this, as those of us can testify who are enjoying this very fine climax to the day's events.

In some respects, as far as my presidential term is concerned, this year could be described as the Year of the North. This is my third visit to Northern Ontario within a month. I spoke to the Sudbury Chapter on October 7. The following week Council held its first ever meeting in Northern Ontario, at Sault Ste. Marie. This weekend I am here at Thunder Bay and in April, as you know, APEO holds its annual general meeting at Sudbury, another first.

My distinguished predecessor--four times or so removed--Murray Patterson, used to describe himself as the mobilest roamer of them all. Using Thunder Bay as his headquarters, he logged an incredible mileage in fulfilling his presidential commitments. I am not trying to emulate him, but like him I attach a great deal of importance to meeting the members of our Association and relaxing with them. It is an added bonus when, on occasions like this, their wives also form part of the company.

Hubert Humphrey once said, "Life should not only be endured, it should also be enjoyed." It was also he, or more likely his wife, who said, "Behind every successful businessman (or engineer for that matter) stands a surprised mother-in-law."

Within the last month also, in addition to my northern trips, I have also had the opportunity to meet all five Regional Congresses--the Northern Congress at the Soo and the other four in Toronto on the afternoon of our Awards Dinner.

Apart from his youthful vigour and stamina, Murray Patterson enjoys one advantage I don't possess. Years in the classroom have enabled him to develop a speaking voice that can stand the stress of constant talking. The exposure I have had at one stage last month left me almost voiceless. I came down with an attack of laryngitis.

That reminded me of the story of the economist who was in great demand as a public speaker. A have speech, will travel sort of person. He was once asked to speak in a remote part of Pennsylvania when he was struck with laryngitis on his way there. He didn't want to disappoint his audience

but he didn't feel he could risk his voice.

"I think I can solve your problem, sir," his chauffeur volunteered. "I have heard your speech so often I know it off by heart. Why not let me give it?"

"That's a splendid idea," replied the economist. "Nobody knows me there. I'll put on your uniform and sit in the back of the hall. You can wear my suit and give the speech."

So they stopped along the road and changed dress. On arrival, the chauffeur made a flawless speech. In fact, as it was his first time delivering it, he put all he had into it.

However, after the applause had died down, a fellow got up from the audience and said, "Would you mind answering a question?" Before the speaker could stop him, the fellow posed a question on monetary policy of extraordinary complexity, the type of question designed to show off the brilliance of the questioner as much as anything else.

For a moment, the chauffeur cum economist was nonplussed. Then he turned to the fellow and said, "I am surprised a person of your intellectual capacity would ask so stupid a question. In fact, to show you just how simple-minded it is, I'll get my chauffeur sitting at the back of the hall to answer it."

As your president, it is my pleasant duty on occasions such as this to bring you greetings from Council and the Association. My trips to Northern Ontario this year and my own experience in the past have confirmed the vitality of the northern Chapters and the importance of the contribution you make to our affairs. You are an integral part of the Association and I do most sincerely congratulate the Lakehead

Chapter--all 365 members at last count, one for each day of the year--on the work you are doing. Today's seminar demonstrated fully the effort you are putting out on behalf of the profession.

One of the APEO's objects in both the old and the new Professional Engineers Act is "to establish, maintain and develop standards of knowledge and skill among its members."

In pursuing this object, I see a need to stimulate in young engineers the excitement of new enterprises and technologically-based growth businesses. This, in turn, should generate a desire to attain a broader and more appropriate knowledge and skill base, thereby leading to a more complete engineer--a person for all seasons.

The seminar today, touching on topics of immediate and future concern to engineers, indicates your commitment to this objective.

Since this is a social occasion, sponsored by the wives' association, the last thing I wanted to do tonight was to mix too much business with too little pleasure. In congratulating Lakehead Chapter members on their accomplishments, I want to thank their wives for the part they have played in making these possible.

For some time now I have lived with two women--my wife and daughter--we have two sons also, both engineers to add some male balance--I know how much women are part of an engineering family and the sacrifices they make so that their men folk can pursue their careers.

I don't know if our wives think that as engineers we are handy to have around the house. Like Murray Patterson, I have always taken the view that if it works don't fix it. If it doesn't work, well, don't call an engineer. You can get an electrician or a plumber--for about twice our rate. Good repairmen never go hungry.

APEO recognizes the services rendered by members to the Association, particularly in the Chapters, through the Order of the Sons of Martha. In many ways, the Marthas of our Association are the wives, without whose encouragement and support, these services by their husbands could not be provided so readily and willingly. The words of Kipling:

"It is your care, in all the ages, to take
the buffet and cushion the shock
It is your care that the gear engages
and the switches lock,"

apply as much to you as those who are registered members of the Association.

On behalf of APEO, therefore, ladies, let me thank you for your services to the profession. How nice it is to see so many of you here tonight.

Engineers should try to avoid the trap an ardent golfer once got himself into. A friend reminded him one day that if he devoted so much time to golf his wife would leave him.

"What a pity," replied the golfer, "If she does, I'll miss her."

As engineers, we have to keep constantly in mind that wives are part of the engineering team too. We have to work together. A great philosopher once said--I think it was Gordon Cuthbertson--"Nobody will ever win the battle of the sexes. There's just too much fraternizing with the enemy."

Occasions like this bring us together. One of the reasons I have put such emphasis on visiting Northern Ontario during my presidential term is that I want to try to remove any sense of isolation that may be perceived to exist between faraway chapters and headquarters, as it were, in Toronto. There is a tendency to think that the further remote or the smaller a Chapter is, the less a part of it is of APEO and the weaker its voice is. In my experience that is not so.

In this connection, I am reminded of the story of the captain and his chief engineer who constantly argued about which of them was more important to his ship. Failing to agree, they decided to swap places one day.

The chief mounted the bridge and the captain descended to the engine room. After a short while, the captain suddenly appeared on deck covered with oil.

"Chief," he yelled, wildly waving a wrench, "you'll have to come down here. I can't make her go."

"Of course, you can't," replied the chief engineer. "I've run her aground."

The moral to be drawn from this story is that each of us is important to the smooth running and successful operation of APEO. We all have a part to play.

In my 11 years on Council, the Northern Region has had vigorous and effective representation by spokesmen who have never left us in doubt about their views. This is particularly true of the Lakehead Chapter members who have represented the Northern Region in my time on Council. Murray Patterson was the first APEO president from this region. His services to the Association were monumental and, as chairman of the Practice and Ethics Committee, he continues to serve in a vital and essential capacity. (Check) We are continually indebted to Gordon Cuthbertson for the contribution he makes to Council deliberations.

I can't stress enough the importance of keeping open the channels of communication between Council and the Chapters. The well-known Canadian writer, Harry Boyle, once said: "Without communication there is no society, whether it is a hive of bees, a troop of Boy Scouts, a bar association or a nation."

In turn, Chapters must communicate with their members and involve them in their work. Here at the Lakehead I have seen ample evidence of that, and I congratulate you on your efforts.

Effective communication had added importance now as we move into what could be the final stages of the revision of the Professional Engineers Act. Some of you have already made a considerable contribution to that work, and I thank you for your efforts. But we will need input from all of you when the final draft act is distributed, as we intend it shall, to the membership in general. We do not know exactly when

that will be, but we expect it will be very soon. You will hear more about that through Dimensions or through your Chapter.

One of the most impressive events on the APEO calendar is the annual Awards Dinner. The recipients are people who have demonstrated excellence and outstanding achievement which are the hallmarks of Canadian engineering. The awards program is a reminder of the important role engineers continue to play in building our nation and our communities. Their work affects the human condition since engineering is for people.

Incidentally, the Awards Dinner in October was an occasion of pride and satisfaction to those of us who participated-- as it was to you in the Lakehead Chapter--in that one of the recipients of the Citizenship Award was Sydney Halter, whose services to this community so richly merited the honour. (Any others from Lakehead recently?)

Excellence is the hallmark of our profession, as I have said, and it is the goal to which we should all aspire. That is the message I would like to leave with you.

The time has come to draw these remarks to a close. Many speakers know how to rise to the occasion, but few know when to sit down. My wife and I again thank the members and wives of the Lakehead Chapter for your warm welcome and generous hospitality. It has been a pleasure to be with you. And now on to the dancing. Let joy be unconfined.