
Foreword

DONALD CREIGHTON was one of Canada's foremost national historians. I first learned of him through his books, which excited me, like so many Canadians, with the drama of our history. He wrote with a passion and a style that few anywhere could equal. His writings about people, nation, and empire shaped the understanding of a generation of Canadians about their past. Later I was fortunate to become a member of his graduate seminar at the University of Toronto where he instilled the virtues of imagination, research, and controversy in his students. He was a superb teacher, always interested and always demanding, who helped to train many of the professional historians now at work in Canadian universities.

After his death in 1979, a group of family, past students, and friends, inside and outside academe,

under the direction of the Honourable Pauline McGibbon, collected monies to establish a special lectureship in his memory. The purpose of the Donald Grant Creighton Lectures is to bring to the University of Toronto a distinguished scholar in the field of history to deliver a series of public lectures on a topic of general interest which, where appropriate, will be published as a book. The hope is that such a contribution to the life of the university and the profession will stand as a legacy to a man who was throughout his life devoted to the pursuit and the expression of knowledge.

Donald Creighton loved grand themes. That was one reason why the selection committee asked Professor William McNeill of the University of Chicago to inaugurate the lecture series. Professor McNeill is a world historian whose work has delved into many aspects of the human experience. Among his many books, for example, are *The Rise of the West* (1963), *Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500-1800* (1964), *Venice, the Hinge of Europe 1081-1797* (1974), *Plagues and Peoples* (1976), *A World History* (3rd edition, 1979), and *The Pursuit of Power* (1982). At various points in his career, he has been a Fulbright Research Scholar, chairman of his department at the University of Chicago, a Guggenheim Fellow, George Eastman Visiting Professor at Oxford, and a president of the American Historical Association.

Professor McNeill chose as his theme for these lectures the problem of nationality and community, a problem which Donald Creighton had tackled throughout his career as a Canadian historian. Professor McNeill treats this issue in a world context: his account begins with the first empires of recorded history and reaches up to the present day. The result

is an imaginative and persuasive description of the way in which different peoples have struggled with ethnic diversity, or in the Canadian context 'multiculturalism,' in their efforts to build stable political units.

It is unlikely that Donald Creighton would have agreed with the interpretation that Professor McNeill places upon events. But I am also sure that Donald Creighton would have enjoyed the exercise. He was a man who relished a good argument.

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