

CANADA AND THE EMPIRE

A PILGRIMAGE OF INQUIRY

I.—THE NORMAN LINK

By Sir Evelyn Wrench

For several years conflicting reports of events in Canada have been reaching Great Britain. The enthusiasm which gave birth to the confederation of the original four Provinces in 1867 was said to have waned and its place to have been taken by a local separatism. Canada's real interests were said by some to run from north to south and not from east to west; eastern Canada being sundered from the west by nature in the forests, muskeg, and rocks of Northern Ontario, the great railroad pioneers of the Canadian Pacific had uselessly fought geography in the eighties. The future alignment of North America, it was asserted, would be a grouping of the Maritime Provinces with New England; the creation of an independent French-speaking Dominion of Quebec; the absorption of Ontario by the eastern United States, already its spiritual home; the union of the Prairie Provinces with the American States south of the international line; and the union of British Columbia with the American Pacific Coast States. Such, more or less, were the broad outlines of the picture.

Could Canadian sentiment have changed so radically in the couple of decades since the War? A pilgrimage to North America, begun last May and just ended, was inspired by a desire to obtain an up-to-date survey of conditions. Obviously such a journey in the spring should be started in Quebec Province, just emerged from its long winter, the stems of the birches and the tin-covered spires of the little churches glistening in the May sunshine, the village gardens ablaze with lilac blossom, and the borders of the wayside roads carpeted with bunchberry. Memories of talks with political leaders before the War were an added urge not to be resisted.

LES CANADIENS

During the first weeks there was an inevitable sense of bewilderment caused by conflicting standpoints. The French-speaking section of the people was said to be intoxicated by its growing power in a Canada where immigration had stopped since the depression and was bent on separation. At long last "the Canadiens" were coming into their own. A leading dignitary of the Church was reported by the Press to have stated before "L'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française" that "the corporative State offers the only solution of our present economic and social problems." Not till August, at Sherbrooke, did Cardinal Villeneuve put an end to separatist rumours when he said that "the Roman Catholic Church does not accept a patriotism which is a love of isolation, but one which extends to the whole country" and "is accompanied by a feeling of loyalty to our Sovereign King George VI."

French-Canada certainly bided its time. During the first three decades of the twentieth century the population of the Dominion was increased by an influx of 4,500,000 immigrants. Even so cautious a statesman as Sir Wilfrid Laurier told the writer in 1906 that in 40 years it would be 30,000,000 as a result of the great influx from Europe. Sir Wilfrid was merely reflecting the general optimism of the time. The possibility of a world war and subsequent depression was not envisaged in those days.

But the nightmare which haunted the minds of the Quebec leaders passed: French-Canada is not engulfed. Opinion in French-Canada was thus summed up to me last summer: "Confederation was an absurdity. Neither economically nor geographically is Canada an entity. The real Canada is the St. Lawrence area, which should be a French-speaking Dominion. The rest of Canada should either form local Dominions or be absorbed by the United States. French-Canada detests the twentieth-century 'civilization' of Hollywood, American radio programmes, and a certain type of American magazine. No children in Quebec Province shall have their minds contaminated by the cinema. French-Canada is essentially conservative and proposes to preserve the spiritual heritage of its forebears, but it has no desire to cut off from the British Crown." Here was sufficient matter for study and a hint on the wisdom of drawing no hasty conclusions. Information received had to be checked in each of the nine Provinces.

A MULTIPLYING PEOPLE

The growing self-confidence of the French-speaking element in its future is very marked. A quarter of a century ago, during the flood-tide of immigration, land settlement, real estate speculation, and industrial development, English-speaking domination seemed assured. The possibility that Great Britain, in the near future, would have no surplus population to send across the Atlantic was not foreseen. North American history can show few more astonishing facts than the fecundity of French-Canada. The 60,000 French settlers at the time of Wolfe's attack on Quebec in 1759 have become nearly 5,000,000, of whom 3,000,000 live in Canada and the remainder mainly in the New England States. Even if a lower birth-rate should prevail in French-Canada, and unless there is some unforeseen exodus from Europe, reaching pre-War dimensions, there is every reason to expect that the majority of the Canadian people will be French-speaking within 30 or 40 years. In Quebec Province large families are still the order of the day. During excursions in the St. Lawrence region last summer I was shown the homes of families of over 20 children. A Canadian friend, who had just returned from a fishing trip in the Gaspé Peninsula, said that his guide, cook, and attendant, all three French-Canadians, had between them 39 children still living. If English-speaking Canada is serious in the desire to preserve its racial preponderance its inhabitants will have to regard the duties of parenthood more seriously.

Before the War there was little intellectual exchange between old and new France. To-day the French Motherland, albeit after a long period of neglect, is taking more interest in her offspring. Eminent members of the Institute, writers, and publicists visit Canada to deliver addresses. Distinguished French-Canadians, such as Monsignor Camille Roy, head of Laval University, are invited to France to speak at the Sorbonne and elsewhere. French books and reviews are to be found on many desks. Few things have done more to draw old and new France together intellectually than the posthumous publication of Louis Hémon's epoch-making novel "Maria Chapdelaine." Hémon, a young Breton, after spending four years in England, arrived at Quebec in 1911. He went to Peribonka, in the Lake St. John region, worked on a farm, and after confiding his masterpiece to the post in June, 1913, went west and was run over by a train in the wilds of Ontario at the age of 33. His

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story, translated into 15 languages, has reached a circulation of a million copies. It has done much to make known to the outside world the simple soul of the French-Canadian farmer. This year a committee to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of Hémon's masterpiece has been established at Paris, and "La Société des Amis de Maria Chapdelaine" has been founded both in Canada and France. A pilgrimage is to be made to the district rendered famous by the author. Fellowships to enable young French-Canadians to carry on literary studies in France are also to be created.

There does not appear to be any desire for a political *rapprochement* with the French Republic. French-Canada is self-absorbed. The turmoils of Europe seem very remote. There is, however, a very real attachment to the British Crown, which for nearly 200 years has safeguarded the religious institutions of French-Canada. Emphasis is laid on the historic link of a joint Norman descent; more than two-thirds of French-Canada is of Norman origin. Quebec Province has, however, little interest in the concerns of other parts of the British Commonwealth. Nor is this very surprising. There is little intellectual exchange between French-Canada and Great Britain, although Lord Tweedsmuir has made an important contribution to the cause of Imperial unity by associating himself with French-Canadian life. The speech delivered by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher in 1934 on the occasion of the four-hundredth anniversary of Jacques Cartier's first voyage to Canada is still gratefully remembered, including the arresting sentence, "I was born in a Colonial island, the Norman colony now called Great Britain."

There is real need for some way of enabling the leaders of French-Canada, apart from the few members of Parliament who come to London, to visit British seats of learning. Return visits from French-speaking Englishmen to centres of French culture in North America would also be highly desirable. Canada is heir to two great European cultures. At a time when outward events seem destined to draw the two Western motherlands closer, French-Canada, their joint offspring, should be a valued link. The intellectual coming together of old and new France is regarded in Great Britain with cordial sympathy. Nor is the passionate devotion of French-Canada to the faith of its fathers any bar to complete British and French-Canadian cooperation. In an age when a crude materialism threatens Christianity throughout the world the fact that on the banks of the St. Lawrence is to be found an essentially Christian civilization is reassuring.

To be concluded

ALLEGED FINANCE FRAUDS

DEFENCE OPENED AT OLD BAILEY

The defence was opened at the Central Criminal Court yesterday, before Judge Beazley, in the case of three men charged in connexion with a scheme for financing business abroad, alleged by the prosecution to be a new and dangerous form of fraud.

WILLIAM HENRY BILLAL QUILLIAM, 52, of Twickenham, CHARLES FREDERICK DAVIES, 51, clerk, of Harrow, and JOSEPH JACQUES LEONI HELOU, 38, merchant, of Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W., all on bail, have pleaded "Not Guilty" to conspiring to defraud such persons as might be induced to part with money to Heilbut, Symons and Co., Limited, and attempting to obtain money by false pretences.

QUILLIAM'S EVIDENCE

The defendant Quilliam went into the witness-box. He said he had been a practising solicitor, but he gave it up in 1922 to devote himself to financial business. The essence of the scheme in the present case was to convey property abroad to an English company, and for that company to issue debentures. He was responsible for the scheme, and Davies and Helou relied on him and did what he told them. The profit would have been when the bonds were issued. Until then it was a pioneer scheme.

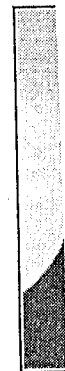
Had anyone fulfilled the contract, he continued, the loan could easily have been issued, but unexpected difficulties were encountered. He worked his hardest to get things through, and when the defendants were arrested there was £13,750 in the bank, which would have been sufficient for issues to the amount of £1,300,000. There was every reason to believe that the public would have responded, and, that being so, it was not necessary to have a large capital.

Regarding the contracts in the present case, the witness said that no civil action had been brought against him. No one suggested that

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CANADA AND THE EMPIRE

II.—DEFENCE

THE HOPEFUL WAY OF MIGRATION

By Sir Evelyn Wrench

The problem of defence, owing to the international situation, occupies increasing attention in Canada. In the years immediately after the War, when the Dominion looked to Geneva to preserve world peace, the necessity for increased expenditure on armaments seemed remote. The Federal Government may have considerable opposition to overcome when the subject is discussed at Ottawa in the near future. Quebec is 3,000 miles from the Pacific, and at the moment is not concerning herself with the needs of coastal defence in British Columbia.

Many Canadians do not consider the possibility of attack from Europe within the range of practical politics. They know that Great Britain, for reasons of Imperial strategy, had to embark on its programme of naval expansion. Certain quarters draw comfort from the thought that the United States could not, and would not, permit a European or Asiatic Power to invade Canada. Some of the Quebec leaders are more concerned with the menace of Communism and with a desire to obtain control of the mines, forests, and water power in the Province, at present chiefly owned by "foreign" capital. Public opinion, however, changes rapidly nowadays, and there is always the possibility that some new factor may arise which will enable the Federal Government to achieve their purpose. Events in the Far East have already had effect on the isolationism of large sections of opinion in the United States; they may also affect conditions in eastern Canada.

All French-Canadians are by no means isolationists. M. Henri Bourassa recently said: "I have no more use for the narrow, provincial French-Canadian who thinks there is nothing outside the Province of Quebec than I have for the English-Canadian who thinks the English are the only ones who can do anything right." Canada is for the most part fully alive to the "very great responsibilities shouldered by Great Britain," which were sympathetically referred to by Mr. Ian Mackenzie, Federal Minister for Defence, at Toronto before Christmas.

THE FLYING FACTOR

The Dominion will certainly make a welcome contribution to Imperial Defence, apart from strengthening the coastal fortification of British Columbia, by expanding both military and civil aviation and pressing forward the construction of arterial roads in the west. Canada is rapidly developing its commercial aviation; a regular coast-to-coast service will bring Vancouver within 18 hours of Montreal during 1938. Already the great mining centres of Quebec and Northern Ontario are largely dependent on the air for rapid communication with the outside world. Only those who have flown to the mining districts over vast tracts of uninhabited territory can appreciate the great part which aviation is playing in commercial development. The visit of Lord Tweedsmuir "down north" last summer has focused attention on what flying can do for industrial and mining possibilities in that vast untapped north-western area. Canada to-day possesses a body of pilots second to none, and an efficient commercial air service. In 1935 no less than 26,439,224 lb. of freight were conveyed by air. No part of the Empire can benefit more from aviation than this country of vast and sparsely populated areas. Certainly nowhere will there be a better training ground for aircraft personnel. Canadian progress in commercial flying was at first dwarfed by its powerful neighbours, but as soon as Montreal is brought within 18 hours of the Pacific, and within five hours of Halifax, aviation will enter upon a new era of expansion.

The problem of migration is closely linked with defence. A Canada with vast territories practically uninhabited in a land-hungry world is an Imperial menace. During a recent visit to Japan the density of population in that country seemed amazing to the recent arrival from Canada. The district between Tokyo and Kobe, traversed in an eight-hour journey, has a population greater than that of the whole of Canada. Yet there is much divergence of opinion on the need of migration in the Dominion. In common with other agricultural countries Canada has been passing through hard times, and the necessity of first absorbing local unemployed is strongly urged. Sir Edward Beatty, however, rightly points out that "there could be no more grave illusion than to believe that unemployment results from over-population and can be cured by reducing the number of people." A British investigator who writes on migration has to tread warily. On the one hand, if he advocates immigration at a time when there is still much local unemployment, he is accused of undue optimism; on the other, if he urges caution in certain areas he is accused of pessimism.

PROVINCE BY PROVINCE

The following condensed summary presents the situation as it appeared to the writer last summer:—

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.—A very real need for new blood exists. Youth migration on well-tried lines should be undertaken and farm schools started under the right local aegis.

Prince Edward Island.—A small Province with a high level of general prosperity offers opportunities for absorbing a limited number of carefully selected young men for whom local "big brothers" could be obtained.

Quebec.—Useless to attempt migration from Europe at present. Montreal, the second largest French-speaking city in the world, is seeking to place its own unemployed on the land.

Ontario.—Closely affected by industrial conditions in the United States. Probably a farm school on Kingsley Fairbridge lines to train children to work on land would be successful. Also a scheme for placing carefully selected youths, already partly trained in Great Britain, could be restarted.

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.—Until two or three good harvests are gathered local energies will be concentrated on local rural rehabilitation. Winnipeg since 1932 has moved many unemployed families on relief from the city with the object of enabling them to become self-supporting on the land. Oil and mining developments in the northern areas may of course absorb local unemployed and even permit immigration, if financed from Great Britain, but this is a matter of conjecture.

British Columbia.—Owing to its climatic advantages British Columbia offers the greatest possibilities for large-scale British migration, preferably by group settlement. No part of the North American continent more urgently cries out for population to develop its untouched resources. But so big an undertaking should be sponsored by a chartered company under expert and entirely disinterested local guidance.

There is little likelihood of a resumption of happy-go-lucky migration methods. The psychology of the stay-at-home Briton has to be remembered; he is showing little desire to go overseas. To prevent disillusionment it is essential that

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Canadian conditions should be realized in advance by the would-be settler. A prosperous future is offered to the tiller of the soil, but he must work hard and be prepared to face entirely different conditions from those to which he has been accustomed. French-Canadians, Scandinavians, Central Europeans, and farmers from the western United States naturally adapt themselves more readily to a life spent on remote homesteads in comparative loneliness. The task of clearing the land of trees is one which requires experience not as a rule possessed by the British immigrant. This is not to say, however, that many British settlers will not make good in the future as they have in the past.

Migration is a highly technical subject. Nevertheless I would suggest that in the immediate future attention should be concentrated on group settlement and on the establishment of further farm schools of the Kingsley Fairbridge type. Group settlement, properly directed, should rob farming of its loneliness during the winter months, as central community houses, equipped with wireless and other facilities for recreation, would be provided. The plan of bringing parties from the same area in the Old World could also be revived. Success for group settlement depends primarily on the selection of tactful and disinterested managers with the requisite local knowledge to advise settlers in the difficult early years.

A FAIRBRIDGE SCHOOL

The success of the Kingsley Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra, of which the writer first heard in West Australia, was responsible for a determination to visit the Prince of Wales Fairbridge School, opened three years ago, at Duncan on Vancouver Island. Hours spent there brought a stimulating experience. The farm school has 120 children, and it is hoped by degrees to increase the number to 300. It is exceptionally fortunate in having so experienced a principal as Mr. H. T. Logan, who has managed to banish the atmosphere of institutionalism too often prevalent in similar establishments. Grouped round the original farm are a chapel and dining-hall, a number of well-built bungalows, and a delightful school-house with pictures of Canadian flowers and animals on the walls, all of which seemed very luxurious compared with Lower School at Eton 40 years ago.

Fourteen boys or 14 girls—the ages range from five upwards—live in each house, presided over by a "mother," whom the children call "Mum." The inmates looked well and happy. On attaining the age of 16 they will be turned out sturdy and healthy Canadians, desiring to work on the land and familiar with local conditions. An admirable feature of the Kingsley Fairbridge scheme is that touch is maintained with previous scholars after they obtain positions with local farmers: this is one of the factors which have contributed to the great success of the work in Australia. One authority hopes that the Kingsley Fairbridge undertakings may be further developed in the future by the provision of a capital sum, repayable under favourable conditions over a term of years, to enable promising young men to become owners of farms when they have proved their worth.

There can surely be no more useful work than taking children from the drab areas of industrial Great Britain and fitting them to become useful citizens in the New World.

Concluded

The first article appeared yesterday.

CHOOSING SITES FOR R.A.F. STATIONS

PROF. ABERCROMBIE TO ADVISE MINISTRY

FROM OUR AERONAUTICAL CORRESPONDENT

Recurrent criticism of sites chosen by the Air Ministry for stations of the R.A.F. is to be forestalled in future by taking advice in advance. The Ministry will take its advice from one of the sources of criticism, and so may be said to have persuaded its antagonist to arm it with some of his own virtue.

Professor Patrick Abercrombie, who, besides being an expert in town-planning, is honorary secretary of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, has been appointed a consultant in the acquisition of sites for the expansion of the R.A.F.

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