



Come, Let Us Compromise

"GOVERNMENT is compromise," said Sir John Macdonald. I do not know whether Sir John was quoting or creating. But what he said was, in either case, one of those obvious truths which most of us constantly forget. We do not want government to be compromise. We want it to be all our own way. Compromise is a hateful word—it implies surrender, truckling, giving up, seeing the other fellow get something. We try our best to make it an ignoble word—one which it is a disgrace to utter. We say that "that chap is a compromiser," much as we say that he is weak-kneed, wishy-washy, unprincipled and lacking back-bone. Yet, without compromise, no national government could possibly go on; and none of the greatest and most beneficent enterprises which the world has ever seen, could have been carried through. Until the Almighty makes a new race of men who all think alike, compromise is the only possible basis for effective human co-operation.

WE ought to remember this truth, especially in this country, where there are inevitably so many divergent interests and ideas. To begin with, we had two chief races and two principal religions. Naturally they would not always think alike. What was to be done? If we were to hit together on equal and friendly and Christian terms, there was nothing to do but compromise. Happily, we could usually compromise in the best fashion by letting both of us have our own way. That form of compromise, however, is not always applicable to every conflict of opinion that appears. There are the divergent interests dictated by geography. Our Dominion is cut up into four principal sections—the Maritime Provinces, Old Canada, the Prairies, and British Columbia. Often their interests are divergent; and with regard to questions which must be settled by the Federal Parliament. It must be either compromise—or conquest.

I AM especially anxious that we should remember this to-day as touching the fiscal differences of opinion which are showing more plainly as the years roll by. There is no use our blinking the fact that the interest of the man on the prairies and the interest of the man in the Eastern city may not always be the same. If a national boundary ran from the head of Lake Superior to the North Pole, it is quite likely that the fiscal policies of the two nations which lay on either side of it would be different. But there is no national boundary at that point. Both these two imaginary "nations" are bound together into one; and both must live under the same fiscal policy. Obviously, either the one must be allowed to selfishly "hog" all the advantages at the expense of the other; or they must compromise.

ALL great nations are held together on this principle. The German Empire, for example, has within its borders such divergent populations as the Bavarian, the Prussian, the Rhenish, the Saxon. They think very differently on many subjects. Their interests are by no means identical. Yet they must live together. They do it by compromise. Local autonomy can accomplish much, by leaving each section free to do as it likes at home; but the broad, federal issues can only be compromised. Switzerland—perhaps, the most perfect democracy in the world—is a little nation of three races and languages—the French, the German and the Italian. Yet they get along with the utmost harmony. Plenty of other peoples have far more trying problems than we have, or ever will have; still they solve them. But this is only accomplished by those miracle-working words—Compromise and Toleration.

IT is easy and very human for a man to think that, if his own little business gets pinched by some compromise arrangement, the end of the nation is at hand—Confederation is a failure—the British Empire will soon be in ruins. Such men exist outside of Galsworthy's novels. But it is the business of the rest of us, who are not concerned in that man's particular vocation, to bring to bear upon him and his problems the vast forces of sanity which lie in disinterested vision, and to hold the balances fairly between all conflicting interests, insisting that the security and prosperity of the whole people must ever be the paramount interest. This is really the practical application of an old admonition—"Bear ye one another's burdens." There must be a com-

munal spirit if a community is to survive, be that community a family, a tribe, or a nation.

IT is equally true if it be an Empire. If any one section of an Empire is to pursue its own selfish and headstrong policy, without reference to the effects which it may produce in other parts of that Empire, there will soon be no Empire to bother it. We hear a lot about this supreme right of autonomy

from South Africa these days. It is England's business to worry about India; and if the workmen in the other parts of the Empire do not like their Labour policy in South Africa, why, they can stay away. South Africa proposes to take its own course, regardless of any one else. Autonomy is a sacred word in a free Empire—sacred as liberty in whose name so many crimes have been committed—but if no overseas Dominion is ever to compromise its own feelings or its own interests for the sake of the common good, the epitaph of the British Empire might as well be written at once.

COME, let us Compromise. It is not an ignoble proposal—it is as noble as the unselfishness of which it is the practical outcome. It is, I ought to say, the exemplification of enlightened selfishness; for surely we will all admit that, in the end, we will be better off to have preserved our Dominion and our Empire.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

Co-Operation in Canada

Number Two—Productive Co-Operation

Second of a Series of Three Short Articles

By W. W. SWANSON

Associate Professor, Department of Political and Economic Science, Queen's University

PROFESSOR SWANSON'S first article, in last week's COURIER, dealt with retail co-operation. It showed that co-operation in buying and selling goods reduces the price of goods to the consumer. It traced the outline history of the co-operative workingmen's societies in Great Britain and explained their success; due to no cutting of prices; to no division of profits before profits are earned; to letting much of the dividends accrue as investment in the business at current interest rates.

IT has been shown that co-operation in the retail business in England has met with remarkable success. But this is merely one form, among many, that co-operation assumes, as was shown in the discussion before the ninth annual Co-operative Congress, recently held at Glasgow. At this gathering there was a mere handful of representatives from this side of the water, as against a very large attendance of delegates from the chief European countries—340 from Great Britain, 100 from Germany, 100 from France and Italy, as well as many from other nations. It seems strange that Canada and the United States should be so unresponsive to the co-operative idea in the face of Earl Grey's statement that, if the delegates really believed in their work, they could realize a co-operative commonwealth co-extensive with the whole civilized world.

In the early dawn of the nineteenth century, a group of idealistic associationists arose in England and France, the most striking of whom were Owen, Saint Simon and Fourier. They emphasized the nobility of human nature and its capacity for almost unlimited achievement under the energizing power of association. Owen, indeed, did more than preach the doctrine of co-operation; he devoted his splendid talents and his great wealth to the cause, and founded societies in the United States and England. That his experiments failed, because of certain extremes to which his followers went, did not prove that his ideas were not inherently sound. About the same time Friedrich List, the great German economist, subjected the individualistic philosophy of the English classical economists to keen criticism. He stressed the idea that association of workers is as important as division of labour, to secure the most effective results. The famous doctrine of laissez faire—let things go—also felt the sting of his invective. Combination, and governmental control and aid of industry were, in his judgment, of the highest importance. Along with all this, after 1840, and especially after the dramatic events of 1848, in France, the smug, self-satisfied middle-class leaders were scourged with whips of scorpions in the hands of Proudhon and Louis Blanc. In answer to his self-proclaimed question: Qu'est ce qui la propriete? (What is Property?) he answers: Property is Theft! Only in community of interests, he avers, can property be justified.

STIMULATED in part by such thinking, in English form the co-operative movement rose in the early fifties of the nineteenth century. It is a movement which has little or nothing in common with Socialism; indeed, it has been attacked most bitterly by the Socialistic party. Beginning in a glow of enthusiasm, much was expected from it, not only in bettering the economic condition of the worker, but in its humanizing influences. And the results have been, in many ways, remarkable. In the United Kingdom there are co-operative societies of a hundred varieties, which cover the country like a network. These societies buy lands; they erect shops, cottages, schools and lecture halls; they write insurance, lend money, grant university scholarships,

and even compete with Cook in arranging holiday excursions. But, in the midst of idealism, they remember, in the words of a Glasgow speaker, that "it is the man who is passing his money over the counter who is advancing the movement."

Co-operation has been one of the chief instruments in the rehabilitation of Ireland. There farmers have combined for the purchase and sale of goods, with splendid results. In Germany, Italy, France and Russia these associations, based on mutual liability, and engendering mutual trust, have made for the economic betterment of the humbler classes, and have stimulated among neighbours a high regard for honour and justice.

Of all the forms, however, which co-operation has assumed, those associations engaged in production have proved least effective. According to statistics published by the British Board of Trade in 1910, out of £19,400,000—the total selling value of the products of co-operative manufacturing enterprises other than farmers' associations—the milling of flour and bread-making made up £10,200,000; the slaughtering industry produced £2,400,000; and cloth-making, £750,000. In this way, £15,000,000 of the total is accounted for. Of the remainder, the most important items are: Preparation of tobacco, £775,000; manufacturing of boots, £1,700,000, the making of soap and candles, £770,000. In addition, business was carried on in a small way in the printing, woodworking and engineering trades.

The main idea animating the co-operative movement in its distributive aspect is the eliminating of the profits of the private shopkeeper by giving them back, by way of dividend, to the customer; and, so far as production is concerned, that of eliminating or lessening the profits of the private employer and distributing them to the worker in the shape of extra earnings.

ACCORDING to statistics furnished by the Board of Trade in 1910, the Wholesale Societies employed about 17,000 productive workers, paying them £920,000 in wages. The Retail Societies employed 21,000 workers in production, and paid them wages to the amount of £1,210,000. The associated workers, with 7,300 productive employees, paid £368,000 in wages. This works out for the three groups, to £54 4s., £57 12s., and £50 8s. per worker. In the last class the worker is also given 30s. as a bonus, making his annual wage equal to £51 18s. These averages are certainly not in excess of those paid by private employers. Socialistic critics are undoubtedly correct when they charge the system with making poorer returns to the employee than does private industry. For example, the average earnings of the employees of the British railway companies amounted at the same period, to which the above figures refer, to £65 per worker.

Without going into needless detail, it may be justly said that the facts plainly show that co-operative production is successful only within narrow limits; and that even within those limits its vitality is of a feeble kind when compared to that of the ordinary capitalistic enterprise. In the great basic industries of Canada, where production is highly organized, little or nothing could be accomplished by any co-operative scheme. The system would break down from its own weight. Centralized control, centralized responsibility and individual initiative are essential to the proper functioning of a great industry. In the smaller industrial establishments English experience tends to show that the conditions of labour, in respect to wages and stability of employment, are scarcely as favourable as under private capitalistic production.