



CANADA TWENTY-FIVE YEARS FROM NOW

OUR POSSIBILITIES

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the opportunity which is now the prerogative of the business man.

Twenty-five years from now, for all this growth, Canada will be a more industrialised country than it is to-day. A larger proportion will live in towns than live in them to-day. It is no mere accident, and no mere wilfulness of human nature, which has brought it about that in all civilised countries in the world, even in Canada with all its undeveloped lands, the proportion of country dwellers to town dwellers has decreased. No "back-to-the-land" campaign will ever stop the scientific process which makes it possible for an ever-smaller proportion (except in wartime) of the working population to supply the agricultural needs of the whole. This is a good thing, despite its dangers, for agriculture *alone*, fundamental as it is and must remain, never yet made a country prosperous.

The poorest countries in the world, China, for instance, are predominantly agricultural, whereas for real prosperity, industry and agriculture must go hand in hand.

Canada has all the requisites of an industrial future. She is beginning to realise, partly under the stress of the War, the necessity of the thorough application of science to industry. She has a great, and in some respects unique, abundance of metals and minerals in accessible places. Her one great lack, the absence of coal measures except in the far East and West, may well be overcome by science, and already there are signs of conquest, in new methods of treating peat and lignite, in new processes for the manufacture of gas, and in the development of hydro-electricity. Twenty-five years from now the conquest may well be complete, so that, not only on the coasts of the Maritime Provinces and of British Columbia, and perhaps on the coal-fields of Alberta, but also clustering along the shores of the Great Lakes and down the richly-mineralised valley of the St. Lawrence, there will arise new and populous industrial cities. Let us hope that these new cities will not require bitter experience to teach them the lesson that they might learn from the unhappy history of older cities, that poverty and squalor are no necessary concomitants of the power and activity which increase the riches of the world.

It may seem strange to say so at this hour of menacing war-taxation, but a grave danger for Canada lies in her prospects of material prosperity. Twenty-five years from now much of her wealth, yet latent, will be exploited, and a portion of her people will be greatly enriched. There lies in wait, even more obvious in democracy than elsewhere, the subtle degeneracy of success, the complacency and hardening selfishness of wealth, the narrow ambition to power and mastery, and the yet narrower vanity which its acquisition fosters. If in the next period of Canadian history the only progress were economic, it would, under the present conditions of the acquisition and distribution of wealth, be an evil thing for Canada.

BUT I think there will also be a great educational awakening, I think there are signs of it already. In consequence, we shall see more clearly that wealth is but a means to welfare, an instrument whose abuse brings with it profound demoralisation, but whose rightful use is the condition of all that is worth having and worth seeking in life. We shall thus learn in greater measure the value of the inner interests to which wealth should be subservient, the value of wise and happy ways of living. And the War, in the longer retrospect, will enforce the lesson that the conditions of such living can be secured only if we make the business of the community our business, the well-being of the community our well-being, and no longer dare to entrust it blindly to the keeping of any set of



men, let them be the most honest and enlightened in the world, while we devote ourselves wholly to what we are pleased to consider our individual interests. So there will grow a greater concern in government, and a more enlightened, more continuous, and less capricious criticism of it. Twenty-five years on, we shall be a more educated people, socially and politically, than we are to-day, and our laws, especially as regulating industrial conditions, will reflect the change in our thoughts.

IN this reformation women will take an increasing part. Women have been more the slaves of circumstance than men, more willing than men to accept as inevitable the power of circumstance over life. The extension of the suffrage is even more significant as an augury than as a present fact. It inaugurates an age in which woman, overcoming the social inertia inherited from a now obsolete condition of life, will take her share in destroying the evils of environment. Nowhere do these evils, and particularly the evils dependent on existing economic conditions, reveal themselves more manifestly than in that circle of life which is nearest to the heart of woman, the family. But this greater emancipation of which I speak will be scarcely begun twenty-five years from now.

In certain respects Canada will have become more of a unity than it is to-day. The bi-lingual problem will have been solved, because the growth of education will have undermined the prejudices on both sides which now stand in the way of solution. The further development of industry and the diversification of agriculture will have made the problems of East and West more similar than they are to-day. The means of communication and transportation will have developed, for in no direction has science been more triumphant than in the annihilation of distance. It may be that then we shall travel by aeroplane or airship as naturally as we now travel by train, but whatever the means certain it is that, in spite of the still intervening wilderness, Winnipeg will have been brought much nearer to Toronto, Toronto much nearer to Montreal, and the walls of partition which distance now creates, will thus be broken down. From Pacific coast to Atlantic coast Canada will be more of a real community than it is to-day.

That condition will give greater opportunity for a national art and literature. I do not mean an exclusive art or literature for no culture worth having is exclusive, but distinctive, breathing the spirit of native reflection and not merely imitative of outside traditions. Thus far the only art which has attained a real Canadian expression, at once native and strong, is that of painting. The annual exhibitions at Montreal and Toronto reveal the awakening of a genuine underivative artistic spirit. They manifest a distinctive vision of those aspects of nature which are themselves so distinctive in our land, caught and treated with fresh vigour and originality, without narrowness on the one hand and without submissiveness to tradition on the other. A quarter of a century hence there will be, in every great city of the Dominion, a Gallery of Art to preserve for the country the greater artistic work of its sons, and stimulate the sense of pictorial imagination which they undoubtedly possess.

So much cannot be said for the other arts at present, and in the absence of clear signs it is vain to prophesy. If I may speak out what I myself feel, it is that in the matter of the other arts, and of literature more particularly, Canada has "moved as in a strange diagonal," subject to two diverse forces, of English and of American origin respectively, so that we have not yet expressed our own thoughts, perhaps we have not even found them. Here and there appears an individual note, which may be the beginnings of independent interpretation, in poetry, for example, in the work of Duncan Campbell Scott, Marjorie Pickthall, and others. Twenty-five years from now will the real interpreters of Canadian life, social, political, and economic, have arrived? Who can say? Who can bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? But, be that as it may, as I have tried to show, two conditions may well be realised, which are as it were a preparation of the ground for the heaven-sent seed, a broader education bringing with it a clearer understanding of our aims and our fulfillments, and, freed both from exclusiveness and from felt dependence, a greater national unity.

PEOPLE sometimes talk of "unchanging human nature," and human nature is the one thing under the sun that changes at all perceptibly! If a visitor had come to this earth ten thousand years ago, again a thousand years ago, and then again to-day, he would find scarcely any change that man had not made, and none of these changes he had made so striking as the change in man himself. Even a few years may suffice to revolutionise the thought and activities of man, as bitter experience has taught us all. How different the thoughts of men in every warring country to-day from what they were three years ago! How incredibly distant the year 1914 appears to-day! And quite certainly the thoughts of men twenty-five years from now will be very different from their present thoughts. The Great War of the nations will then be an historical background, the passions and the terrors of it will be dead; only the memory will live—perhaps it will live for ever, so far as we can say "for ever," in a new order of the world, a federation of the nations so based and so maintained that the catastrophe which befell our generation shall befall the world no more.

It is this incessant change of the minds of men, often so gradual as to be unperceived, sometimes so sudden that we call it revolution, which quite properly robs the prophet of honour alike in his own country and abroad. Just as a new undreamed-of discovery, the planetary nature of the earth, gravitation, radio-activity, may revolutionise a science, so a new event, the French Revolution, the Great War, may revolutionise society. It would seem as though nothing could be foreseen except the certainty of change.

And yet the change is not meaningless, not without direction. History is more than the record of aimless wonderings and fruitless disasters. There is such a thing, imperfect and fragmentary though it be, as the history of civilisation. And one thing this history certainly reveals is the way in which the growth of human co-operation marches, step by step, with the growth of human intelligence. The world has grown smaller and the area of real community has grown greater at each successive stage of the world's history. Therefore, with the profound lesson of the present before us, we can safely prophesy this much, that twenty-five years from now Canada will be an autonomous and yet integral part of a closer Commonwealth of the British peoples which, in turn, will be a part of a real federation of the civilised world. And this civilised world itself—how shall we dare draw for it exclusive lines?

I wish to say something of what Canada *may* be then, and by that I mean what Canada *will* be if her citizens care enough to make it so. With every discovery and every application of science, with every advance of organisation and co-operation among men, what *will* be becomes more and more what *we will* to be.

When people think of the future of Canada they usually think first of boundless yet untenanted areas subdued by the ploughs and tractors of a prosperous fast-growing population. Twenty-five years from now there will still be in Canada boundless untenanted areas. In Patricia, in the region above Lake Superior, in Northern Manitoba, and Northern Saskatchewan, in the Yukon, and the North-West Territory, there will still remain, as now, the wild and the waste; and they will continue to hypnotise the minds of those who think of greatness in terms of vastness. Some regions now desolate will then be peopled, the neglected agricultural land north of Ottawa, the fertile forest belt south of the Albany River, the arid lands of Southern Alberta and Saskatchewan (made fertile by vast schemes of irrigation), and the great promising lands of the Peace River, all these will resound to the blow of the axe, the call to the horse.

But the increased area of cultivation will be a minor part of the growth of Canada in the next quarter-century. Far more remarkable, will be the new organisation of agriculture through the development of the great co-operative associations, through the improvement of communications and of marketing systems, through the application of science to agriculture on a scale unknown in the past, so that farming will take on something of the complex character of industrial production, and give the agriculturist endowed with brains something of

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