

# The Dalhousie GAZETTE

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## So Much for the "Young Giant" Image

# A Rhodesian View of Canada

by ALLAN ABBOTT



Mr. Abbott, who makes his home in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, is a Political Science student at Dalhousie. Rhodesia, in the British Army and the Defence force of Rhodesia he has travelled in Africa, Europe and North America, and is particularly well acquainted with East Africa, Rhodesia and South Africa. Irritated by "ill considered" attacks on South African policies in the local press, he hopes this article may give him a chance to get in a few innings of his own regarding Canada. However, he adds his remarks should not be taken with all the seriousness of a Canada Council study on Canadiana, assuming, of course, that Canada Council is taken seriously.

Canada is so frequently criticized by outsiders that I hesitate in contributing my share to this cause. Moreover, as a guest of this country myself, I feel a natural diffidence towards commenting adversely about my host. Notwithstanding these inhibitions, I am going to speak plainly about certain aspects of the Canadian scene as these appear to me.

The criticism one hears most frequently in respect of Canadians seems not to extend to any marked positive qualities they possess, but rather to a lack of them. Englishmen may be noted for their attitudes of superiority, Americans for vulgar displays of opulence, Germans for being dull, humourless and incapable of subtlety. On the other side of the coin, British tenacity, American generosity and German inventiveness need no elaboration here. However, neither for virtues nor vices are Canadians especially noted. Rather do they appear preoccupied with attaining norms, establishing averages, being good citizens. The tendency of this trend is towards a dull, uniform, colourless, average, and an incredibly boring rational character.

This lack of positive attributes may be reflected in some degree in Canadian institutions. So many of these comprise a mediocre blend of British and American influences, completely lacking the greatness of either, and failing to display any distinctively and originally Canadian qualities. Politics are screamingly dull. On the rare occasion when any degree of warmth is generated, it is usually over issues (such as liquor and religion) that became extinct elsewhere in the world at the end of the Dark Ages.

Possibly as a psychological counter to such charges Canadians have developed a remarkable capacity to propagate illusions in respect to their country. Through Canada House in London, by radio, television and word of mouth, the "Young Giant" image has been produced. Endlessly and ad nauseam are we reminded of the limitless wealth, the endless resources, dynamic spirit, etc. of this vigorous, growing country. Now take a look at the reality of Canada as it confronts a visitor, still immersed in the wages of propaganda and reeling from the cliches.

Certainly no great wealth is evident. In fact what strikes one, especially in comparison to Western Europe, is the enormous widespread and very real poverty. Acres of trash-littered slums abound especially in the cities of Quebec Province and the Maritimes. As the rural vista unfolds the visitor is confronted with an endless succession of delapidated shacks sporting gaudy Coca-Cola signs, alternating with ramshackle and half derelict farm buildings.

And what of the robust youth blessed with the pioneering, frontier tradition? What of the healthy, fresh-air, adventurous, six-footers; brave, daring, spirited, yet invariably chivalrous in the frontier tradition? Here perhaps lies the greatest disappointment of all, for in comparison with that of other lands, the youth of Canada appears thin, unhealthy, pale and anaemic, nurtured on soft drinks, cigarettes, chocolate bars and late nights. Man-

wavering between the two conflicting poles and that, in consequence, the West would suffer ideological and economic, as well as strategic losses. They try not to think what would happen should the deterrence principle fail, but if pushed they are forced to accept a preference for mass annihilation over communism.

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Advocates of nuclear disarmament, however, reason quite simply that without nuclear weapons there can be no nuclear war. The deterrence principle may work, but for them the prospect of its failure looms much larger on the horizon. They dread the possibility of insanity in a leader, a UFO on a radar warning screen, or an error in communications. The continuance of the nuclear arms race for this group is sheer idiocy, serving only to increase tensions and fear, to promote suspicion and to undermine the sincerity of negotiations, not to mention the contamination effects of testing.

Even assuming there will be no errors, the disarmament advocates point out that deterrence is only effective so long as one side has no distinct advantage, but dread the consequences should one power discover a perfect defence against the ICBM, even on the basis of a temporary technical lead, and decide in its brief period of immunity to end the fear-filled dilemma once and for all by wiping the enemy out completely. And while they may see some hope that the two major powers will continue to be "reasonable," they shudder at the thought of emotion-packed and strife-torn nations like Israel developing nuclear programs. This threat seems particularly keen in view of recent scientific discoveries in Germany, which may so cheapen nuclear processes that any backwoods state can have its own stockpile.

Sooner or later, they argue, one or the other bloc must fall back on trust.

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But this is merely the shadowed outline of the dilemma. There are other aspects—economic, social, political, moral, religious, ideological.

And this is why the *Gazette* is here taking the coward's way out, presenting the problem, but suggesting no solution. We don't know one. We do know that we would prefer Soviet domination to complete annihilation. No civilization is, after all, permanent. Annihilations would be.

But as long as the possibility remains that deterrence might work, hopeful indecision will prevail.

That is the tragedy of the issue.

# LETTERS

...Finkus Dalhousianus...

Sir:

Has anyone considered a fitting tribute to that intrepid group which has so recently elevated the name of Dalhousie to unprecedented heights?

I refer, of course, to those gung-ho Dalhousie high school students and slide-rule simians, who boot beds, to the everlasting honour of this college, down the scenic highways of this province.

The concern of the bed-booters for the reputation of this university enabled them to transcend the fact that piffing colleges such as McGill, Toronto and the like were so afraid that they ignored the very existence of this contest. Our boys accepted the challenge of the huge Acadia to mount an offensive on the mark set by the great Waterloo College.

Our boys have seen to it that Dalhousie will be known from coast-to-coast as the college that will roll 'em when better beds are rolled.

The building of a Parthenon, the endowment in the Department of Psychology of The Bed-Botting Professorship, the laying of another 57 feet of sidewalk, all would be paltry tributes to the bed-booters. The coat of arms should be changed; the Brandenburg Eagle should be relocated; he should be made to rest in Springmaid Sheets on a Beautyrest mattress on a Boxspring bed. Perhaps we could have, chained to the bed, a few of the draught-horses-rampant that pass for students here: anything which would tend to consolidate in graphic form the public suspicion that Dalhousie is bed-conscious would be appropriate.

In short, Mr. Editor, something must be done to perpetuate the memory of this recently evolved species, **Finkus Dalhousianus**.

BOB SCAMMELL  
Law II.

## ...help...

Sri:

I am a third year student at the college. I remember two years ago somebody told me that there was a fellow student in the campus who travelled all across the Dominion by hitch-hiking during the summer. I really admire his adventure. For some personal affairs I wish to know him, but I know not enough people to give any information about him. Can you kindly help me find out the name and graduation year of this student.

HENRY CHENG  
25 Henry Street  
Halifax.

ners, on average, are appalling. There is little, if any, spirit of adventure abroad in Canadian youth. On the contrary, adventure for its own sake is rather frowned upon. Desire for travel seldom extends beyond a football team to Acadia, while Montreal represents a real challenge. As early middle-age approaches, unhealthy generations drop like flies to heart-attack or cancer.

Possession of great natural resources (for which God rather than Canadians should take credit) is somehow equated with rational greatness. This attitude overlooks the fact that the real greatness of a nation lies, and has always lain, in the character of its people. Neither the Greek nor the Roman civilizations depended on raw materials for their greatness. Likewise the more recently acquired greatness of Britain, Russia and the United States did not primarily arise through the possession of great natural wealth. Wealth existed, but as a concomitant to and as a product of a fund of human genius and character. Affluence provided by Nature is not to be confused with greatness of spirit provided by men, and in this latter can alone lay the touch of greatness of a nation.

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