

# There'll Always Be a Canada

by ARCHIBALD McCOLL

I KNOW that Americans have respect and admiration for Canada and are concerned when the newspapers report trouble or disaster here. Newspapers being what they are, trouble always has more news value if accompanied by violence or threatened revolution, and the newspapers had a ball over-publicizing the flag issue and the Quebec "separatist" incident.

The flag issue, if it is or ever was an issue, has been batted around for many years and ballooned out of all proportion by political promises. To their surprise French-speaking Canadians were told it was to please Quebec that Canada must have a new flag.

Canada was created and held together by a group of people who did not want to join the other "colonies" who became the United States. To this group belonged the people of Quebec. They were not worried about a flag and they wanted no part of a revolution. If they did not prefer to remain British, they *did* prefer the prosperity they were enjoying with little or no taxes. This was the largest language group then, and had they chosen to throw in their lot with the thirteen colonies or even to wait until the U.S. was established and accepted the overtures made to them then, there never would have been a Canada.

Going back a little further to the conquest of Quebec, if the citizens had united behind General Montcalm there could have been no conquest—and the reason they did not was simply one of taxes. The history of French rule is one of overtaxation which continues to this day. The British "heroes" who took Quebec were disbanded on the spot and stayed there. The government left a small garrison and nobody to collect taxes, so Quebec prospered.

Federation with other groups came later, 88 years after 1776. Quebec willingly joined the federated Dominion of Canada, and it is this federation to which Queen Elizabeth referred when she said in Quebec recently: "A dynamic state should not fear to reassess its political philosophy. That an agreement worked out a hundred years ago does not necessarily meet all the needs of the present should not be surprising."

Canada is big, bigger than the U.S., and it has big problems—land problems, trade problems, tax problems—the same problems apply to us all.

I am at present in the Miramichi Valley in New Brunswick where I am helping to build a bridge (see "Canada Has the Most," July, HGN). Here the population dwindled from 25,000 a hundred years ago to 3,500 before the last war. Why did they leave? The answer is taxes and land monopoly. Here they do not differentiate between land and improvements. A farm with a house on it is so highly taxed that it can never pay as a farm, so the land has grown back to brush and moose pasture, and most country places, if they are kept up at all, are hunting lodges or resorts for the well-to-do from the "Boston States."

All this I am newly learning, as a Canadian. I find that New Brunswick is famous for the brains it exports. Its people are well informed on most everything. If they do not understand (and some do) that the poverty of this district and the fleeing of brains and industry elsewhere, was due to the granting of great tax-free monopolies to the timber barons, they are looking for a way out.

The entire province has only 550,-

000 people, less than a third of the population of Toronto, and less than the population of Hidalgo County in Texas, where I lived a while, and yet it has more in mineral wealth than Texas has oil. It also has more people living in ancient one and two-room shacks without plumbing or heating or insulation—the result of taxes and more than a century of land monopoly and special privilege. Yet these Northland slums send boys and girls to colleges who then leave home and serve the rest of the world with their talents. This would be a fertile field for the Henry George School, because these people are not contaminated by communist or socialist influences, and have the capacity and desire to absorb education. My work is in the construction field and I know good men when I see them. Here I find most intelligent and capable men, all descendants of the old Irish and Scot settlers and the French Acadians.

Today the new immigrants go right by. They can see with only a glance and even their meager knowledge of the language, that something is wrong. Taxes, that is what is wrong. Here there is a \$20 poll tax for everybody over 18, even though they will not vote until they are 21. There is a 23 cent gasoline tax, so 55 cents a gallon is usual for filling a car to go to work, or a truck to haul pulp wood. A car license costs from \$35 to \$45 for a passenger car, but on a truck there is a business tax besides. This is the highest rate in all Canada, and Canada is the most overtaxed country in the "democratic" world.

No British country that I know of has a poll tax, and I know of no municipality which taxes a vehicle. Oh

yes, they offer a bonus—free hospitalization—with no charge or deductions from pay. For this they raise the price of whisky a buck a bottle, and the government sells all the whisky in the government store. Well, hospitals were always free anyway, because no one could afford them, so they went "on the county," as the saying was, unless they were visibly affluent.

The minerals discovered here afford the greatest tonnage of copper, zinc, lead and tin to be found in North America. I looked at the mining map—the mining land is all taken up by the giants of the industry that already control the lead, zinc and tin of the world. There is no tax yet, and these deposits may be held out of production for years, but the winds of change have started. I met the assessor this evening and he mentioned a heavier acreage tax on mining land to force development. I had not heard such an intelligent remark from an assessor in years.

Some timber limits have been released and a large pulp mill has been built. Two to three ships a week are carrying both the pulp and the wood to Italy. Two lumber mills, a wood products mill, and a large paper mill, started production this year, but they were given special tax-free concessions which will not save the people from their burden. I think they have a government which is determined to get something done and is feeling its way out through the darkness and the cobwebs of ages.

So American friends, do not worry about our flag—or our separatists. They are small issues designed to take the hounds off the trail and to mask the real dangers.

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The June-July issue of the Great Books Foundation's *Gadfly*, published the response to some 500 questionnaires on the subject of books in print for at least 50 years to be added to its newly revised list. Readers named 150 books they would like to see included, and among the 34 classics most frequently mentioned was *Progress and Poverty* by Henry George.