

Henry George's Influence In Canada

ADDRESS OF A. C. CAMPBELL, OTTAWA, AT THE
HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS

MY first word must be a word of thanks to those in charge of this Convention for doing me the honor of affording me opportunity to speak here. What an opportunity it is! I am allowed to speak of my own country, Canada, and Canada at its best—that is, as enlightened and inspired by that greatest of modern seers and lovers of men, Henry George. And I am privileged to address this audience, than which, I am sure, none of clearer understanding and finer sympathy could be assembled, in that audience being the daughter of Henry George, who carries on the work her father so splendidly begun. We are met in Henry George's native state, the state in which that great charter of human rights, the American declaration of independence, was made and signed, which declaration Henry George showed us how to understand and realize. Our convention is held in this world-famed city, this city of clear ideas and high ideals, the leader of cities of the United States in the practical application of the truths which the great prophet of our movement set before the world. It is for me the occasion of a lifetime.

I ask your indulgence while I give a few facts to illustrate Henry George's influence in Canada.

Early in the propagandist work which followed the publication of "Progress and Poverty," Henry George visited Canada. He found enthusiastic audiences, for the power of his printed words had made for him friends and supporters everywhere. Other speakers carried on the movement—Dr. McGlynn, Louis F. Post, James R. Brown, himself a native Canadian—and others. As elsewhere, there was an age of apostolic fervor. But that did not last. Yet, as elsewhere the movement lived in organic form in some places. My friend and colleague in the representation of Canada here, Mr. Alan C. Thompson, has been one of several steadfast workers in an association in Toronto which has carried on its work from those early days, and with results of which I shall have something to say later. But even where no organization was formed, or where none remains, individual converts spread the knowledge of the doctrines of Henry George and kept alive his memory. Time will not permit a list of those workers. But I name one case in my own city. Those of you who follow the literature of the movement have often seen quotations from the *Ottawa Citizen*. Some of you have seen the *Citizen* listed as a Single Tax paper. It is the oldest and strongest of our Ottawa dailies and probably wields a wider influence than any other newspaper in Canada. It is controlled by Messrs. W. M. and H. S. Southam, as good Single Taxers as any in this room. This is a remarkable instance of how the influence of Henry

George is kept alive in Canada, but it by no means stands alone. In every part of the country, and in every walk of life are converts to the Single Tax who, like the Southams, keep the movement active and effective.

Let me mention one or two ways—I could make it a score if there were time—in which the influence of Henry George has directly and distinctly affected public affairs in Canada.

In Canadian federal politics we have, traditionally, two parties. Actually there is now a third; but leave that aside for the present; I shall have to specify it later. Between the two great parties there is one continuing line of cleavage—the tariff. However these parties may differ on other things, on one point of fact they are agreed. They state with equal definiteness that Canada is the only country in the world that has reduced its tariff since the *Great War*. Canada is sometimes spoken of as a peculiar country. Well, there is one of its peculiarities—in a world whose nations are maintaining or building higher these fiscal walls that shut out others, Canada has made freer and freer the entrance of goods to its markets. And, if promises and universal expectations mean anything, there will be further marked reductions within a year. The governing party, called Liberal, makes a boast of this; the opposition party, called Conservative, regards it as ignominious, even shameful, and repeats its demands for a higher tariff.

Let me say, in parenthesis, that the free traders in Canada, including the Henry George people, declare that never in its history has Canada been as prosperous as now. And not only that, but judged by any or all of the standards which are usually applied in these matters, Canada is at least the equal in progress and prosperity of any other country in the world; and this notwithstanding that it put forth its full strength in the Great War from the very beginning to the very end, and suffered terrible losses of man power and money. But let me guard myself by saying that I am not much impressed with a prosperity which coexists with private ownership of land. However, people who like the kind of prosperity that we have are very much pleased with the plenteousness of that kind of prosperity.

Not only are duties coming down or disappearing and other taxes being reduced, but the enactment of protective imposts is made more difficult by the establishment of a Tariff Commission, a fact-finding body that sifts every application for protection. We have a Consumers' League in Canada, and that body is represented at every tariff hearing. Its representative is R. J. Deachman, as thorough a Henry George free trader as ever lived. If you could attend these meetings which Mr. Deachman is helping in the work of sifting, you would come to the conclusion that the influence of Henry George is very strong, at least at one important point of Canada's economic affairs.

You naturally ask how it comes that the ruling party in Canada is so strongly in favor of lowering duties. I

ould like to mention a fact or two. The present leader of the Liberal party and Prime Minister of Canada, is W. L. Mackenzie King. Mr. King is an original thinker on economic questions. Reading his books I think I can see very clearly the effect upon his thought of Henry George's influence.

Mackenzie King was Laurier's protege. Laurier introduced him to more than one audience as "the future Prime Minister of Canada." Laurier, you may remember, was defeated and driven from office by an adverse popular vote on his proposal to accept the reciprocity pact offered by the United States in 1911. This was universally regarded as a free trade defeat and protectionist victory. Laurier was as good a free trader as ever lived. He learned English, in large part, by reading the speeches of Cobden and Bright. But he was a careful reader of Henry George also. Here is part of a letter written in 1916 to Henry Timmis, a Single Taxer of Montreal:

"Anyone who has read Henry George's book cannot resist the conclusion that the taxation of land values is destined to triumph and be of general application. It is only a question of time, but you know what a long time it takes for an idea to penetrate, even in the most enlightened community.

"We have a special committee already at work upon this question and other connected subjects in the National Liberal Committee. We hope to have a report ready for the next general meeting of the Committee later on, and we hope to have the matter well in hand for the next Liberal Convention which I intend to call as soon as the war is over."

Laurier did not live to make good his implied promise; he died a few weeks after the armistice and weeks before peace was officially declared.

I am not trying to convince you that the fiscal policy of Canada is absolutely dominated by the spirit and ideas of Henry George, but surely one can hardly doubt his influence is there.

But let us follow this line a little further. Canada is a democracy. The government is not all; the dominant party is not all. The people rule, and to understand what is being done in government in Canada you must understand the people.

I have just given a case of Canada in contrast with the world—increased tariffs since the war in other countries but decreased tariffs in Canada. Let me point to another contrast. I submit to you as readers of history that it is true of protectionist countries generally that the very backbone of protection is the land owning agricultural class. It is so in Britain—the country squire is the very type of protectionism. It is so in Central Europe. The Junker, as this type in Germany is called, is to be found in all those countries, and in all is essentially the same. In that strong protectionist country, Australia, this is markedly true. In this presence I do not speak about conditions here. But in my own country I have expressed

the belief that when the vast protectionist temple of the United States is demolished, the corner stone will remain—an irremovable unchangeable body of great landowning farmers. So it is throughout the world. Canada is radically different. Our farmers, and more particularly that element of our farmers who are thought of as most typical, those who people our prairies and produce our vast surpluses of grain, are our strongest power in the movement for lower tariffs and direct taxation.

I spoke of a third party. That party originated in 1918, was made up of the farmers, and was strongly dominated by western ideas and western leaders. Let me summarize its tariff platform:

1. Immediate all-round reduction of the tariff.
2. Increase of the British preference—almost the first act of Laurier's government in 1896 was to give a tariff preference to goods from Britain, thus approaching the then almost perfect absence of tariff duties in that country so as to bring free trade with Britain in five years.
3. Acceptance of the reciprocity offer made by the United States in 1911.
4. Foodstuffs not included in that offer to be put on the free list.
5. Every claim for tariff protection to be heard publicly before a committee of parliament.

That is realized in essence in our tariff commission.

But this was not the whole of the fiscal policy of these people in that day. They have a resolution called in their official copy "Taxation Proposals." I read the beginning of it:

"As these tariff reductions may very considerably reduce the national revenue from that source, the Canadian Council of Agriculture would recommend that in order to provide the necessary additional revenue for carrying on the government of the country and for the bearing of the cost of the war, direct taxation be imposed in the following manner.

- (1) By a direct tax on unimproved land values, including all natural resources."

They go on from there. They want income taxes, inheritance taxes, and so on. We hear on our side of the line of the United States citizen who had sixteen reasons for not playing poker, the first being that he had no money. We understand that he was not requested to specify the others. I think we will agree that if these farmers could have got their first demand, the land values tax, they could have worried along without the other taxes for which they so carefully resolutely. But where in the world could they have got the idea of taxing land values?

The third party does not exist today in the form in which it was organized. A large part of its membership is now merged with the governing party, the Liberals. But this section still retains its original name of Progressives and is recognized as a driving element for freer trade as against those elements in the party that would favor re-

strictive duties. The third party organically at this time is known as U. F. A.—United Farmers of Alberta. Alberta is our westernmost prairie province. It is mainly agricultural and radical. In local—as you would say state—politics, it is under the strong control of the same element that make the nucleus of the U. F. A. in federal politics. In the federal arena these people are our strongest and most militant free traders. Not all are from Alberta, not all even are from our prairie provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. For instance our only woman member of parliament, Miss Agnes C. Macphail, daughter of an Ontario farmer, is a member of that group. Our few Labor members—strong free traders—usually vote with the U. F. A. The constituents of all these people are for lower tariffs. The dominant influence in our governing party, and the dominant influence outside to which they are most likely to pay attention is in favor of lower and still lower duties. And I give it as the opinion of one man who has watched politics for years that the present condition of affairs can be understood only by those who know and count upon, the influence of Henry George.

I have given nearly all the time allowed me to this one question of tariffs. But I must at least mention, seeing there is no time to discuss, a few other points.

A great Canadian enterprise—typically Canadian, I think—which during almost fifty years pressed for attention, declared itself permanently alive two years ago. I refer to the Hudson Bay Railway. It was decided to build north to a terminal point at Fort Churchill, to make the line part of the Canadian National Railway system, and to push it through to completion without delay. If the route would prove successful, the decision meant the building, sooner or later, of a city at Churchill.

Canada has had land booms galore, and the people are sick of them. The Minister in charge of this matter, Hon. Charles A. Dunning, Minister of Railways and Canals, decided that it would be humanly impossible to start off a town in those northern wastes with the initial handicap of a boom—or rather with the slump that would follow a boom. Therefore he commandeered for the public—we call it for the Crown, which gives it special sanction in our way of thinking—all the land in that region, including some relatively few lots that had been granted to private parties. Later, as local authority had to be asserted in the control of municipal affairs of the prospective city, the land not needed for railway and harbor construction was handed over to the Crown in right of the province of Manitoba. Churchill will be town-planned in advance, and land will be leased, as in a Single Tax enclave such as Fairhope or Arden. Hon. Mr. Dunning is a western man; he had learned something of the land question from the Single Tax movement. And Single Taxers have had more influence than any other one class in directing public policy in this matter. It is not, I think, the real Single Tax, but at least it prevents meantime the adoption of

the policy which has blocked and misdirected the growth of other cities.

Canada has a reputation for public ownership. Our Canadian National Railways, our Hydro Electric Commission of Ontario and other enterprises are examples. I shall not go into argument or description on these matters, but will only state what I believe to be a fact—and I am a native and life-long resident of Canada, and have been an observer of these matters all my life, and you see how old I am. I sense in Canada a feeling of perfect confidence in this matter of public ownership. We are not afraid of too much business in government nor vice-versa. You cannot scare us with the cry of Bolshevism. We see more or less clearly the principle in these things, and it is the straight Henry George principle as declared in his "Social Problems"—free competition where free competition is possible, public regulation where partial monopoly exists, and complete public ownership and operation of those services that are in their nature monopolies. And if any man says that Henry George's influence has not had something to do with bringing about that condition of public opinion, I will hand him over to Mr. Thompson who has kept the movement going and who knows.

In the matter of local taxation, we in Canada are conservative, like the rest of the world. But we have cities on our Pacific coast that exempt improvements partly or wholly from the general municipal tax levy. Throughout our prairies, farm improvements are tax free. In our second-greatest city, Toronto, dwellings of low value are wholly or partially exempt. Wherever such tax, or untaxed conditions exist, they are traceable directly to the influence of Henry George.

All this is as to the past. Now a word—only a word—as to the immediate and practical future. Since Henry George's day, an unknown world—universe, you may say—has been annexed to this, that mystic yet so serviceable universe of the ether. We use it by the name of Radio. Just what should be done about this is a question that arose in Canada as it has arisen elsewhere. Our government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire and report, one member of that Commission being Mr. Charles A. Bowman, a sound Single Taxer. The Commissioner made a unanimous report on the 11th of this month. I will not dwell upon that report except to say that no believer in the principles advocated by Henry George can read it without being impressed with the fact that its broad conclusions reflect the spirit and ideals of the founder of our movement. In saying that, of course, I express my own view; I quote none; I commit none. But I speak with the authority of an every day citizen of Canada when I say that in my own country we are sufficiently inspired by the teachings of Henry George to hold as one of the truths that are self evident that in the world of radio all men have equal and inalienable rights, and mankind can confidently rely upon the sovereign people of Canada to

to everything that may be possible within the power of one country to make those rights secure.

Henry George, Jr.

EXTRACTS FROM ADDRESS BY JOSEPH DANA MILLER, AT HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS

HENRY GEORGE was fortunate in his progeny. I need not refer to the distinguished lady who is a member of this Congress and whose great services to the cause have been more manifest of late years, nor to Richard George, whom genius visited in his glorified moments, guiding the hand that turned the insentient marble to those almost sentient lineaments with which we are familiar in the bust of his father and that of Dr. McGlynn and whose promise of greater achievements was interrupted by his too early death.

(Mr. Miller here told some stories of Richard George to show his sense of humor.)

But it is of Henry George, Jr., I design to speak, who in other respects was his father's intellectual heir, and followed worthily in his father's footsteps as writer, newspaper correspondent, lecturer, speaker, and holder of a distinguished public office.

It is not easy for any man to model his life and work in the career of the Great Emancipator. "Only himself can be his parallel." But as near as it could be done Harry did it. He had been his father's secretary and knew his innermost thoughts. He had accompanied his father on his lecture tour of Europe in 1883 and had made the acquaintance of many of the prominent men in England and on the continent. Later came his tour of Japan and his meeting with distinguished Japanese statesmen; and his visit to Russia, where he received the last message given to the world by Count Leo. Tolstoy.

Dying at 54 his life had been one of activity and varied achievement. It was not alone that he was the son of his father that he was engaged by periodicals and newspapers like the *Philadelphia North American*, the *N. Y. World* and the *N. Y. American* to furnish weekly articles, and that he was the Washington correspondent of these and other periodicals. But it was because of his own trained facility in this sort of work, his keen sense of values and his wide knowledge of men and things that gave importance and distinction to his writing, even writing of his necessarily ephemeral kind.

It is little any writer can do to leave any permanent memorial. The mass of books, even of good books, pass in increasing flood to oblivion. Only those works which mark an epoch, or in which some great central truth, or overwhelmingly important principle, is finally enshrined, or in which humanity is portrayed in luminous strokes, have an hope to endure.

The works which Harry wrote, with one exception, are not destined to immortality. His one attempt at a novel,

John Bainbridge, is best forgotten. In this Harry was out of his element.

The *Menace of Privilege* was a book for its time. It deals too largely with economic manifestations that have changed in character to have survived the period. I want to say, however, that there is one chapter in this work in which Harry approached the stately English of "Progress and Poverty."

[Mr. Miller read passages from the chapter entitled, "Civilizations Gone Before."]

One book which Harry George wrote will live—perhaps as long as the English language is spoken.

(Mr. Miller spoke of the debunking school of modern biographies and instanced recent lives of Washington, Matthew Arnold, Dickens, Poe, Victor Hugo, Heine. He quoted Andre Maurois, who said that a biography should above all be a portrait.)

In this sense, if in no other, the life of Henry George by his son is a great work and will live. In my opinion it is the greatest biography since Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. It must rank with the world's greatest biographies. If the literary critics were not so much concerned with the bright, slap dash censorious lives of the great struck off with amazing facility they would have recognized it long ago. But unquestionably a more serious and worthwhile generation will come to know it, for it is a great portrait, written with unconscious art, and it belongs to the arcana of great literature.

In the political field Henry George, Jr., won his laurels. In the 17th Congressional District of New York, normally Republican by from 6,000 to 8,000, he won in his campaign from the then incumbent, William S. Bennett, by a majority of 1,721, a notable victory, for Bennett was popular, though he was a standpatter and had voted for every increase of duty in the Payne-Aldrich Tariff.

It was one of the few Congressional districts in which the tariff was directly assailed and the only one in which free trade was openly and boldly proclaimed without equivocation. Mr. George challenged Mr. Bennett to a debate on the tariff which that gentleman dexterously sidestepped.

Our old friend Frederick C. Leubuscher managed this campaign and deserves some of the credit for the outcome. But it is not too much to say that one of the causes of the success in this first campaign made by the son of the prophet was the candidate himself. His speeches were strong appeals, manly, dignified, and free from the arts of the politician. Something of the simplicity of his great father was manifest to the voters of the district which drew to him the support of the independents. In the high-minded and honorable treatment accorded to his adversary he refused to take advantage of certain openings which a less punctilious swordsman would have availed himself of, taking to himself the high and knightly counsel,

"Tis not in mortals to command success,

But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."