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Canada and the Georgan Philosophy

By ARTHUR W. ROEBUCK

A SENATOR from Canada is expected to speak about Canada, and I suppose I wouldn't give away any secret if I were to say to you, our American friends, that I am just as proud of this little nation of ours of 14 millions of people—vigorous and active and important in the world as we are—as you are in your citizenship of the grandest, greatest and most powerful nation on earth.

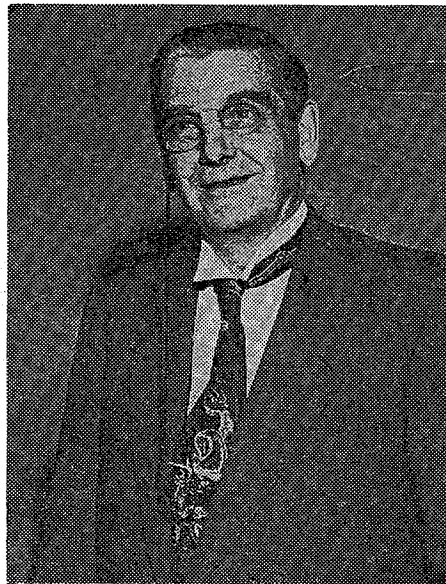
Canada is just a young country, very young. It was only about 400 years ago that Jacques Cartier sailed up the broad reaches of the St. Lawrence River. It is only about 300 years ago that settlement started in what is now Canada, and it was just about 200 years ago that the contest between the British and the French, for supremacy in the northern half of North America, was settled on the Plains of Abraham.

I think you will understand me when I say that we who are Canadians find a tremendous satisfaction in the fact that those little straggling settlements in the Maritime Provinces, and along the banks of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario, have extended themselves the whole way across the continent and formed a nation from sea to sea—the third largest territorial nation in the world, with a territory greater than all Europe, that supports 400 million people—a larger territory by the way, than the United States, and second only in its extent to Russia and China.

We're rather proud of having grown as fast and as successfully as we have, and then we find greater satisfaction perhaps in another growth. Without firing a single shot, with scarcely any unfriendliness about us, but rather with a perception of clearness on the part of all, we have gradually extended our status as a nation from a mere colonial dependency of Britain to a full and complete autonomous nation.

I think that's of some importance, too, when we judge of our ability to go on and make further progress. I can find some satisfaction in the growth of our ability to produce that has taken place in this 85 years. From a mere trickle of production that came through a few pioneer farms we have grown in economic power until our output is today positively stupendous. It is sufficient to make this little nation of ours an important factor in the world at large, and to give us political influence in the councils of the world that cannot be quite overlooked. That's *something* for a small nation. And then just one word more—we have achieved on this northern section of the continent, a standard of living practically equivalent with your own, and in consequence the highest in the world anywhere.

And, best of all, in spite of all this turmoil through which we have passed in the last few years, and the corroding effect of two great wars, we here in Canada have managed to preserve respect for the individual—his rights and dignity—I think equal to any place else in the world. No, I'll go a little further than that. I would have yielded the palm some years ago to



England—I do not do that today. I really believe that we have a regard today for the essence of democracy (which is the independence of the individual and the respect that we must pay to him and his rights and his dignity) as great, if not greater, than any other place in the world.

I know that you'll say that about the United States, but perhaps you will pardon me for this little chortle. I was *asked* to speak on Canada—and you know they do say that among the virtues of Canadians the one that stands out as tops, is our modesty. But in all events, you will accord me this, that I have done my duty in these remarks to the gallant nation that I have the privilege of representing in Canada's number one legislative assembly.

And so now I feel free, having done my duty in that respect, to tell you that notwithstanding the appreciation that I have of the progress already made and the admiration I have for my fellow citizens and my country, with its no doubt glorious future, that I am far from satisfied with conditions as I find them.

Don't you think, even if you *haven't* read Henry George, it's a ridiculous thing that in a country as great as this which I have described—with actual resources as great as any place in the world—that we have such a problem as that of unemployment?

It's just un-understandable—unless after a reading and consideration of our philosophy you realize that it is not so much the extent and the richness and resources of a country that count in that regard, as the extent to which those resources have been reduced to private ownership (monopolized), and the price at which they are held.

With our system of much too moderate taxes upon land values and with an unlimited rent and price system, in the very nature of things, the time must come periodically when prices of natural resources hitch up and up, and rise and

rise—the time must come when the exactions of mere ownership are greater than the ability of industry to pay. And when that time does come, then you have stagnation such as George described—unemployment, poverty and human suffering. That is the inexorable progress of events.

Of course you and I know how to apply the remedy. It outrages me to think of involuntary poverty in a nation such as this, in a country such as this. I don't mean those people who don't want to work—who would rather be poor than work—that's their business. And I don't refer to those who cannot work, because for those we certainly have a sufficient surplus. But I refer to those who are willing and able to work, who because of jug-handled economic conditions are unable to do so.

Isn't it a rather ridiculous thing that with all this inimitable space of ours, we in Canada, as you in United States, should have a housing problem? Our forefathers found very little difficulty in constructing roofs over their heads and building homes at a time when the building was done with whole logs fashioned with broadaxes. Even in those days, with primitive tools, it was possible for every family to have a home. Today, with all our scientific development and machine production, with all our systems and invention and all the rest of it, we are worried about how it is possible to provide a sufficient number of roofs to cover the heads of our families.

I understand that the minister of housing down in Ottawa is worried about this problem, and some people are advocating to him the expenditure of large sums of money for the building of new roofs over heads. But I really don't care how much he spends, with one provision, and that is that he raises the money that he spends from the taxation falling upon those lands suitable for subdivision, which are now held at exorbitant, fancy, crazy prices. That would do the job—and it wouldn't be the expenditure of the money that would count nearly as much as the raising of it. For indeed, if the money were raised by the taxation of land values generally, if a sufficient portion—a proper portion—fell upon those unused opportunities for the building of homes it would force them into use.

There are a number of things of course which seem to be necessary in Canada, as there are on the other side of the line. For one thing, it's my thought that we ought to have an honest dollar. Somebody mentioned it here this afternoon—not a dollar that is different when you repay a debt from its value when you incurred it—that's a dishonest dollar. There was a time when the British Empire and the United States did have money which was rated as strong as the Bank of England—as solid, they used to say, as the Rock of Gibraltar. Then we went into war, and we commenced to finance our first great war with promises to pay. The promises became so

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numerous and so great that we couldn't pay what we promised. Prior to that time we promised to pay in gold, and so they went off the gold standard and they left us with an irredeemable paper currency that depends for its value only on confidence, or shall I say sentiment?

I suggest to you that it is one of those fundamental rights of the human race to enjoy or to possess the products of your individual labor. I needn't stress that among you people—it is the right of the individual to own that which he himself produces, after he has compensated his fellow man for the raw materials which he has used in the production.

He should have a right to consume his own products and he should have an equal right to exchange them for the products of others. And if at any time you in the States feel that you are going into a depression (for we in Canada feel that our prosperity is oozing out as it has done in the past), I'll tell you the remedy—let's abolish the tariff between us and all those restrictions, financial and otherwise, that now harass and destroy trade, and interfere with production. Let's make a free border, every way except politically—we want to retain our own politics.

But let's have free trade, and I tell you that we would enjoy the greatest business boom on this North American continent we have ever known in all our history.

So if we were giving a prescription tonight I think I'd start off with a bill of rights. You, Mr. Chairman, were kind enough to refer to the fact that I kept the Senate talking for two whole sessions on human rights and fundamental freedom. And finally in that august assembly we passed unanimously (the other fellows stayed at home) a resolution in favor of human rights and fundamental freedom.

You have something in the shape of a Bill of Rights in the United States, but we have nothing of that kind in Canada although we have many rights and privileges and many good things in our statutes. I would follow that, I think, with an honest dollar, and I would follow that with certainly a very much greater freedom of trade than we now enjoy.

And then, last but not least, no, most important of all, the taxation of land values, and the forcing into use of these miles upon miles of valuable resources which we possess, and which now lie idle, uninhabited and just itching for the touch of a human hand.

Oh what a nation we could make! If only you could get the philosophy that you're teaching in these schools across to the Canadian people, yes, and across to the people of the United States!

What a continent we could have if we just had really, truly wise economic justice among us. We could get rid then, perhaps, of most of our charity and social services—and I'm for them under these circumstances. Well, with that picture in my mind, I want to thank you people who are the directors of these schools in city after city who have come here to join in this conference. In the early days of the single tax movement there was what was known as a Croasdale single taxer; you older men will remember that. And a Croasdale single taxer was a single taxer who did something for single tax. You, my friends, who are here and who have exhibited to me your minds and what you are doing as I observed you this afternoon—I

think that every one of you have earned the title of Croasdale single taxers—men who are doing something for single tax. You've been an inspiration to us in coming here. May I wish you continued energy and health and inspiration and a widening knowledge and greater ability in transferring the thoughts and senti-

ments in this soul moving philosophy of ours to the citizens of the United States, and helping us to do the same for the citizens of Canada. May God bless your efforts.

[The foregoing is a portion of an address delivered to delegates of the recent conference at Montreal, by the Canadian Senator from Toronto]