

Great Britain is having trouble with her possessions in the Western Hemisphere: Canada threatens to 'go American'; Newfoundland faces bankruptcy.

Britannia's Stepchildren

I. CANADA FEELS NEGLECTED

By GEORGE EDINGER

From the *News Chronicle*, London Liberal Daily

CANADA has a grievance against us. I knew why the moment I set foot in Quebec at Wolfe's Cove, which the French Canadians, for whom history stopped with Wolfe's capture of Quebec in 1759, insist on calling the Wolf's Cove.

I'm afraid poor Wolfe gets a poor show in present-day Quebec, where so much is done to keep green the memory of the old France that went before him. I found French books and magazines on sale everywhere, along with the latest newspapers from France, but I could not buy an English book in all Quebec.

I saw advertisements for lectures and debates on French politics and French painting. I was invited to a discussion on the French classic drama.

I expressed surprise to two gentlemen I lunched with at my hotel,

Monsieur Mackintosh of Levis and Monsieur Macgregor of Quebec. Neither Monsieur Mackintosh nor Monsieur Macgregor could speak a word of anything but old-fashioned French. Their ancestors had fought with Wolfe's Highlanders, but the country absorbed their families and now there is nothing Scots about them but their names.

Yet I managed to make them understand me when I asked whether this *ancien régime* atmosphere pervaded the Dominion outside of Quebec province as well.

'Oh no,' said Monsieur Macgregor reassuringly, 'You will find it altogether American.'

Meanwhile, the citizens of the half of Canada that is of British stock (it surprised me to find the proportion is little higher than it is in the United States) feel bitterly that so little is

done to encourage their struggle for the ideas and conceptions on which the Imperial connection depends.

They are chiefly bitter because, they say we do not understand them; do not appreciate the kind of help they look for. When an earnest young English politician started to talk tariffs and Empire preference in the train to Montreal, an elderly Scots Canadian lady told me it was like offering them a tip for having hurt their feelings.

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Rather unexpectedly an Ottawa business man assured me, over the dining car table, that a permanent English Repertory Company in the Dominion would do more for the British connection than all the tariffs ever devised.

'Why do you imagine we import twice as much from the States as we do from Britain, although you take far more of our exports? It's not because of tariffs. They're all the other way. It's because we've started thinking American. American films have done it, and American magazines and the American tourists. They know our problems and bother about them and like to come to our country and welcome us into theirs.'

'Why don't you ever write us up or read about us unless we're raising Quins or passing padlock laws?'

'Why slang us for letting Quebec go Fascist when it's 80 per cent French and the clericals work overtime, while there's not a Britisher will so much as bother to come over and give a talk on British ideas or British history.'

'See here! Every British Canadian visits the old country once at least.

Does any Englishman come to Canada unless he has to?'

I noted down remarks like these as they were made to me in buses and trains and steamers. I tried to argue that few Englishmen could afford the time and money for the journey. They said, 'Well, it's just as far for us, isn't it?'

'No, no, my friend, that won't do,' said an elderly French lawyer, one of the few pro-British and liberal-minded French Canadians I met. 'Does not every Englishman, from Anthony Eden to Bernard Shaw go to New York and for the most part to Hollywood as well? And does any one of them trouble to go by way of Montreal, although it's just as quick and a much shorter sea passage?'

'Admit that, unlike so many Frenchmen and Americans, your countrymen are not conscious of Canada.'

'But there's so much to see in Canada,' people said to me, 'It's not just paper mills and canning factories.'

And they talked of their 12,000 square miles of national reserves set there to teach the world how to keep a country beautiful; of the way they just saved the bison from extinction; of swimming in the hot springs at Banff set in perpetual snowfields; of flying over lakes in New Brunswick that human eyes have only seen from airplanes; of sailing up the St. Lawrence when a crisp dawn breaks over the thousand wooded islands.

And as the motorbus jolted me toward the American border, I began to think of all the things that we might do to ease this soreness.

I thought of cheap subsidized trips in masses across the Atlantic, and Anglo-Canadian youth camps in West-

moreland and Vancouver. I thought of group visits between factories and universities; of Shakespeare seasons in Toronto and Ottawa, and study groups and traveling scholarships and visits by people famous and unknown.

But when we reached the border at

last and the Canadian customs man, raising his eyebrows over my passport, said: 'British, eh? Well, we sure don't see many of you,' I began to despair lest Canada a century from now should become about as British as Monsieur Mackintosh of Levis or Monsieur Macgregor of Quebec.

II. SMALL RATIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

By THOMAS LODGE

From the *Fortnightly*, London Independent Monthly

THE Secretary of State has stated in the House of Commons that there is certainly no doubt as to the substantial economic progress made in Newfoundland under the Commission of Government. He made this statement at a time when the only two paper mills on the island were working restricted hours for the first time for years, and when the outlook for the cod-fishing—from which at least half the population of the island attempt to obtain a livelihood, miserably inadequate at the best—was blacker than it had been for many years.

That any real improvement in the basic economic situation has taken place is simply not true. Certainly one-third, perhaps one-half, of the population of the island is living under conditions for which it would be difficult to find a parallel outside the more squalid parts of the Balkans—underfed, ill-housed, scourged by tuberculosis and hopeless.

It may be exceedingly difficult to solve the Newfoundland problem; it is easy enough to analyze its main elements. The island has a population of approximately 300,000. There is a national debt of 20 million pounds,

and public expenditure is of the order of 2½ million pounds. Each amount is less than half the corresponding *per capita* figure for Great Britain. The bare unqualified comparisons have, of course, no exact value because Newfoundland has, on the one hand, nothing like the accumulated wealth or natural resources of Great Britain, and, on the other hand, no defense or diplomatic liabilities.

There are four, and only four, industrial enterprises of any importance. There are two newsprint mills—one recently acquired by the Bowater interests, and the other controlled by the *Daily Mail*. There is one important lead-zinc mine at Buchans and one very large deposit of iron ore on Bell Island. All four concerns are wholly owned by interests domiciled outside the island. Their value to the island is merely a wage and taxation value. Prosperity may bring an increase in wages; adversity a restriction in hours. Their products are wholly consumed outside the island.

The lead-zinc mine, at the rate of extraction in 1937, has a known life of about 10 years. At the prices of lead and zinc which ruled in 1937 it is a

prosperous concern. Bell Island has one of the largest known deposits of iron ore in the world. It was for a while prosperous as a result of the civil war in Spain which stimulated the demand for ore. It is an ore whose iron content compares favorably with the Spanish but which has a high silicon content entailing rather special furnace arrangements. Prior to the trouble in Spain, it had not found a ready market outside Canada (where it is used in large quantities by the Nova Scotian interests which operate the Bell Island mine) and Germany. Its extended use in England, apart from the artificial demand created by the Spanish war, is a function not merely of its technical value but also, and perhaps more, of the high policy of the international steel world—a world completely outside the influence of any Newfoundland Government, and perhaps outside the comprehension of the Dominions Office.

Between them, these four concerns provide a tolerable living for perhaps one-quarter of the population. There is a little farming—for 1937 the Commission estimated the total value of the produce at about \$3,000,000. There is a little logging for interests other than the two newsprint mills, and there are a few more tiny enterprises.

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The rest of the population, apart from the merchant, legal, clerical and administrative sections, endeavors to extract a livelihood directly from the fisheries, principally cod-fishing. According to the 1935 census, 35,000 males gave fishing as their occupation and over 34,000 described themselves as cod-fishermen. The latter is prob-

ably an untrustworthy figure, as when the Commission attempted to estimate the number actually employed in the different sections, they could only find a total of about 22,000. But unfortunately there is no doubt that at least one-half, and perhaps nearly two-thirds, of the whole population are dependent for their existence on the results of fishing of all kinds. For 1937 the total value of fishery products of all descriptions, at the point when they left the island, is given as \$6,800,000.

This is a gross figure, including the material cost of production in the form of salt, petrol, ships and sails, as well as the remuneration of the relatively large merchant and exporting class, which, incidentally, manages somehow or other to lead a life of moderate comfort.

What is left does not and cannot provide an adequate living for 30,000 fishermen. That much is clear beyond a doubt. In 1936 one of the St. John's newspapers gave as its estimate of the value of the gross production of the average fisherman for a whole year the figure of \$125, and as its estimate of the value left to the average fisherman when the supplies for his voyages had been paid for, just nil. I myself think that \$100 was nearer the true figure than \$125 and that the average fisherman ended the season in debt on his fishing operations. Either estimate conceals human tragedy. Today the situation is no better, but probably much worse.

The principal fish item is dried cod, which is a poor article of food sold to poor people in poor countries. There happen to be numbered among its main markets a disproportionate number of countries whose financial posi-