

## TOPICS OF THE DAY

BRIGHTER SKIES IN THE FOURTH YEAR: CRITICS OF IMPERIALISM:  
POST-WAR MARKETS: CANADA'S NUTRITION PROBLEM.

THE BEGINNING of the fourth winter of the war sees bright rifts emerging in the canopy of darkness and depression, which the successful aggressions of the sinister trinity of Fascist states have kept hanging over the world for three grim and weary years. Heartening news of victories, rolling in from different corners of the world, supports the hope that the fortunes of the war have at long last taken a decisive turn in favor of the United Nations. The smashing victory of the British Eighth Army at the Battle of El Alamein, the successful coup of the swift Anglo-American occupation of France's North African colonies, the frustration of the Reichswehr's sustained assault upon Stalingrad coupled with the success of the vigorous Russian counter-offensives, the clear demonstration of the fighting superiority of the American Navy over its Japanese opponent in a series of naval battles in the Southern Pacific, the devastating raids of the Royal Air Force upon industrial centres in Germany and Northern Italy, and the sacrificial self-immolation of the main body of the French fleet—all have combined to transfer to the United Nations the initiative which the Axis Powers had so long enjoyed. The latter must now bid farewell to any hopes of achieving domination over the world, and resign themselves to fight, for the retention of their ill-gotten gains, a difficult defensive battle with weakening strength against forces whose power for offensive attack will steadily increase.

But it would be premature to conclude that an early acceptance of defeat by the Fascist states is in sight. Mr. Churchill in his latest speech declared that nothing had occurred to justify "the hope that the war will not be long and that bitter and bloody years do not lie ahead," while President Roosevelt simultaneously counselled the American people not to be unduly elated or discouraged by the ups and downs of war. A more optimistic note, however, was struck by Mr. Oliver Lyttleton, the British Minister of Production, at Washington on December 2, when he spoke of the possibility of complete victory by the middle of 1943. A hope of shortening the war is evidently cherished by the strategists of the United Nations, for Mr. Lyttleton intimated that a decision had been reached

to employ all the available resources in a bid for decisive victory next year, and not to await the completion of more elaborate preparations, which would make possible an onslaught of much heavier power, in 1944. Victory in 1944 might come too late to save European civilization from a long night of eclipse.

The Russians' epic defence of Stalingrad may prove to be what Mr. Churchill would call the grand climacteric of the war. It has prevented the German High Command from achieving the two primary objectives of its Eastern campaign in 1942, the establishment of an easily defensible line along the western bank of the Volga from Voronezh to its mouth at the Caspian Sea, and the acquisition of control of all the oilfields on the northern slopes of the Caucasus. It has also inflicted a terrible drain in casualties upon the fighting power of the German army—and thereby it has helped very materially to set the United Nations well on the road to recover mastery in the Mediterranean. The battle for Stalingrad absorbed so many German divisions and such a large proportion of the first line strength of the *Luftwaffe* that the German General Staff was unable to provide Rommel with the reinforcements necessary to secure a decision when he was within a hundred miles of Cairo; and, when it saw danger gathering in the Mediterranean two months later, it lacked the resources for adequate precautionary measures against the British and American counterstrokes.

Some time, and heavy fighting, may be required to clean up the Axis forces which are now putting up a stiff defensive battle in Tunisia and Tripolitania. But once this task has been accomplished, the full fruits of a very skilful and well-timed dual campaign in North Africa can be garnered. Germany will be deprived of the invaluable supplies of foodstuffs, minerals and a variety of other raw materials which she has been obtaining from North Africa *via* France. Our own route of supply to India, and to the important bases on the Persian Gulf, through which Russia gets supplies, will be greatly shortened, and there will be available natural bases, not exposed to direct interference by the enemy, for an intensification of the air raids upon Italy and for an eventual invasion of that country by land forces.

The possibility of a deadly attack upon Italy, the weakest link in the Axis chain, is opened up at a moment when there is accumulating abundant evidence that the *morale* of the Italian people is exceedingly low, and that the great majority of them are sick and tired of the egregious Mussolini and his German masters. Evidence of the existence of an anti-war party, which

would gladly respond to Mr. Churchill's advice to overthrow Mussolini and make terms with the United Nations before ruin finally descends upon Italy, is discernible in the impressive memorial which is said to have been recently submitted to King Victor Emmanuel by an influential group of senators, generals and admirals. The memorialists assailed the whole calamitous policy of the Fascist régime, expressed their detestation of the alliance with Germany, and demanded a change of government, which would "free the country from foreign domination and recover for it the liberty of action which alone can save what remains." Such a move, made not by Socialists and Communists but by conservative Italian patriots of high standing, supplies convincing evidence of the parlous plight of Italy and, even if it produces no immediate tangible result, it suggests that when the allied armies can organize a full-dress invasion of Italy, they will encounter comparatively little resistance except from the occupying German garrison.

But even if Italy could be overrun and knocked out of the war, its end would not necessarily be in sight. The mountainous frontier between Italy and Austria is a strong defensive barrier, and the invasion of Hitler's *Reich* from that quarter would present gigantic difficulties. The natural strategy of the German High Command would be to withdraw their Eastern armies to the line of the Dnieper or even of the Vistula, and transform the *Reich* with some ancillary territory into a fortress. As General Sikorski, the Polish Premier, recently pointed out, Germany has still an enormous capacity for defensive warfare. Military experts like Mr. Hanson Baldwin of the *New York Times* estimate that despite the enormous losses in Russia she has still available over 300 divisions, and her industrial plants, although severely damaged in many places by air raids, are still turning out vast quantities of raw materials. The calculation would be that as long as Japan could occupy a large part of the energies of the United States in the Pacific, it would be possible to hold the German fortress against such forces as could be deployed against it, until war-weariness took a grip of the democracies and induced them to consider a peace of compromise.

So, if the struggle is not to be prolonged until the greater part of Europe sinks into irretrievable chaos and ruin, all the weapons of psychological warfare should be employed to the limit of their powers for the shortening of the conflict. Worse than useless in this warfare is a book like Lord Vansittart's

*Black Record*, which limns the whole German race in the darkest colors, argues that its barbarism is inveterate and incurable, and prescribes for it penalties tantamount to the permanent extinction of Germany as a major power. It is a godsend to Hitler and Goebbels as an instrument of propaganda for persuading the German people that resistance to the death is preferable to the perpetual enslavement which is planned for them.

Infinitely more effective for the acceleration of victory is *Listen Hans*, the latest book by Miss Dorothy Thompson, the American columnist. It embodies in its latter half a series of broadcasts, delivered in German between May and September in last year, which were addressed to an old German friend called Hans, but were obviously intended for the benefit of the whole German people. In them Miss Thompson, employing very skilfully her knowledge of the mentality, history, literature and philosophy of the German people, is unsparing in her condemnation of the wickedness of the Hitlerite régime. She warns them of the vast forces which are mobilizing for its suppression, and exhorts them to compass its overthrow in order to secure some mitigation of the punishments which await them. But the more important part of the book is a long introduction, in which Miss Thompson makes out a powerful case against the dismemberment of Germany, and outlines a programme of ten principles through which she believes permanent peace can be assured and the German people become again and forever part of the commonwealth of mankind.

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THE LIGHTENING of the war's horizon has been accompanied by an ominous spate of what might be called transatlantic bickering. The editors of *Life* started it with an open letter to the British people, in which they lectured Britain upon the necessity of shedding Imperialist proclivities and threatened the loss of American friendship. Resentment in Britain was fanned by a speech of Mr. Wendell Willkie, in which he criticized British policy in India, and pronounced in favor of an abandonment of all forms of Imperialism. Thereupon Mr. Churchill was moved to proclaim in somewhat truculent fashion that the British people meant to hold their own, and that he had not become First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. Next followed Mr. Patrick Hannon, M.P., one of the arch reactionaries of the British Conservative party, to make moan that the operation of the Lease-Lend

system was reducing Britain to a humiliating position of economic subordination to the United States. Mr. Willkie in a later speech paid generous tribute to the sacrifices of the British people in the common cause, but he refuses to stop his anti-Imperialist crusade; it says a lot for his courage that he dared to come on November 25th to that stronghold of Imperialist sentiment, Toronto, and restate his conviction that if this conflict is to be a genuine war of liberation, the leaders of the United Nations must banish all ideas of maintaining the old international order (which he described as the spawning ground of the present conflict), and must convince the peoples to whom freedom and new opportunities had been promised that there was an honest purpose behind all the fine words.

Such observations by Mr. Willkie about the British Empire have inevitably provoked condign wrath in not a few Imperialist bosoms. They have moved patriotic ladies and others to write him waspish letters of reproach about what they regard as his meddling ignorance. But the critics of Mr. Willkie should not forget that in very dark days of our fortunes he braved the dangers of the aerial blitzkrieg to hearten the British people by a personal visit, and that on his return from Britain, when the fate of the Lend-Lease Bill was trembling in the balance, he appeared before a committee of Congress at Washington and urged its immediate enactment with all the force at his command. In taking this course he challenged the powerful isolationist element in his own party, braved the wrath of the *Chicago Tribune*, and imperilled his own prospects of securing a second nomination for the Presidency from the Republican party. Soon afterwards, too, he became a courageously outspoken advocate of full American participation in the war. Apart from the fact that such moral bravery and such willingness to sacrifice personal interests for a cause are very uncommon qualities in politicians, Mr. Willkie has earned the gratitude of the peoples of the British Commonwealth for services which were of immeasurable value to it. If ever a man had the right to a tolerant hearing for his views, however unpalatable they might be to British ears, it was Mr. Wendell Willkie.

There is a case, too, for his quite moderate strictures upon British Imperialism, and it is not without a numerous band of supporters in Britain itself. Admittedly the British people have a very considerable balance of credit in connection with their colonial empire. They have introduced a rule of law and order to vast regions of this earth where, before their advent, barbarism,

cruelty, mental darkness and often famine prevailed. They have provided some of the physical machinery of civilization, and they have made a beginning with a process of intellectual education and other efforts to fit native population for eventual self-government. Moreover, a cardinal principle of British colonial policy is that the guardianship of native interests must be its primary concern, and in certain matters such as the administration of justice there has been an honest attempt to observe this principle.

But unfortunately the Colonial Office has connived at grave departures from it in the economic sphere. Britain has held most of her West Indian Islands for more than a century and a half, but in this year of grace the colored population in most of the islands is seething with discontent over economic plight and social conditions. Sugar and oil interests have extracted enormous yearly dividends from these islands by treating their teeming native population as a reservoir of cheap labor which they have exploited at will with calamitous results. The writer recalls meeting a group of young British naval officers who had been a short time previously engaged in suppressing riots of native laborers in Trinidad; they had mostly the outlook of conventional English Conservatives, but the sympathies of all of them were in favor of the native workers, and their language about the oil executives and sugar planters, whose ends they had been serving, lacked neither fire nor color. Successive British Governments, recognising that social and economic conditions in most of their West Indian Islands are not a good advertisement for British Imperialism, have appointed Royal Commissions to investigate their problems and suggest remedial measures, and a joint Anglo-American Commission is now engaged upon the same task. The Colonial Office, too, has been under constant attack for shewing persistent favoritism to the white settlers in the East African colony of Kenya, and the recent military debacle in Malaysia disclosed an ominous lack of enthusiasm on the part of the native population for British rule. So there is considerable evidence of a need for drastic reform in our methods of colonial administration, if the permanent retention of our suzerain trusteeship is to be justified.

But there is also another aspect of British Imperialism which deserves attention. More than two thousand years ago, Thucydides laid down the doctrine that democracy was incompatible with Empire, and one of the wisest men I ever knew, a Scottish Liberal reared in the Gladstonian faith, used to hold

the same opinion. He was an ardent reformer, a convinced democrat, and he was wont to argue with great ability that Britain would never become a real democracy as long as she retained her Indian and tropical empires. His thesis was that the substantial contingent of British people who found employment and got their living in these overseas empires supplied the hardest core of reactionary opposition to the democratization of the mother country and the progress of necessary reforms. For the most part, they enjoyed the privileges and prerogatives of an aristocracy, and inevitably they acquired a fierce anti-democratic bias. They were often people of wealth and high social position, and they infected with their bias a wide circle of relatives, friends and dependents. So he held that as long as this stream of anti-democratic infection was flowing continuously into the body politic of Britain from the overseas empire, the onward march of reformist ideas was bound to be slow.

Furthermore he argued that the immense profits offered to British investors by the skilful exploitation of colonial resources and native labor attracted vast sums of capital which ought, under a proper guidance of national policy, to have been expended on remedial measures for the mitigation of the terrible industrial squalor which afflicted large areas of Britain. If money which was invested in rubber plantations in Malaya and copper mines in Northern Rhodesia had been made available for the building of decent housing accommodation for the workers of Lancashire and the Clyde Valley, the working classes of Britain would, he said, now have been endowed with much better health and physique than the majority of them possess. They would have been able to send out to the Dominions an annual outflow of healthy and vigorous emigrants, well fitted to cope with conditions in new countries. There would have been no such danger as undoubtedly exists at present of the British stocks in both Canada and South Africa being reduced to a position of numerical inferiority to non-British racial elements, and proving unable to maintain the ascendancy of British traditions, culture and political ideals.

So Britain may have lost on the roundabouts what she has gained on the swings, and there are reasonable arguments for turning over at least a share of the responsibility for financing the economic development of her present tropical colonies, and for governing and educating their mentally backward native inhabitants, to other nations through the creation of some international organization for this purpose. The mother country

would then be more free to concentrate upon the improvement of social conditions within her own bounds, and to cooperate with the self-governing Dominions for the better development of their resources and the reinforcement of their stock of British people. But, on the other hand, it may be impossible for Britain to maintain a healthy national economy upon the meagre natural resources of her own island domain. She may find herself, like Holland, very dependent upon the trade and income derived from tropical possessions for the sustenance of her people in adequate prosperity, and even so strong a Socialist and internationalist as Mr. Julian Huxley argues in a recent number of *The Free World* against handing over the administration of the tropical colonies of European nations to the control of an International Commission acting under the aegis of a revived League of Nations. He favors instead a plan under which the nations now owning tropical colonies would retain the administrative control, for which their special experience would be very valuable, but would have to subscribe to a Colonial Charter which, for the purpose of erecting safeguards against the economic exploitation now complained of, would lay down certain definite principles about administration and development. They would agree to accept some form of international supervision, designed to secure that the principles of the Charter were faithfully observed. On some such lines a satisfactory solution of the problem of tropical colonies may be achieved.

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ONE OF THE PARAMOUNT problems which will have to be faced after the war will be the necessity of reconciling the natural desire of every country to develop its own resources and provide full employment for its citizens with the general desire to abolish restrictions on international trade and to promote the free exchange of goods and services. The Australian Government is already concerning itself about this problem, and has sent one of its chief economic advisers, Dr. Roland Wilson, to discuss certain aspects of it with British officials. The particular difficulty to be considered arises from the great expansion of Australia's engineering industries, which has been promoted by the need of producing large quantities of armaments and munitions at home. All political parties in Australia seem to be in agreement that this expansion of the nation's industrial equipment must not be sacrificed after the war, that the new industrial capacity must be employed to produce goods formerly



imported from Britain and the United States, and that for this purpose it must receive protection against British and American competitors. There has been a parallel development in South Africa, where a steel industry, started before the war, is now flourishing to such degree that it is capable of supplying most of the needs of the Union in steel products; also in Canada, which entered the war with a much broader industrial structure than any other Dominion, and has made an enormous addition to it by building new industrial plants of an aggregate value of over a billion dollars.

The natural consequence of these developments, and of industrial expansion in Brazil and other South American countries, is that British manufacturers will have to reckon upon a serious curtailment of their overseas markets for their exports, and such a deprivation will perforce affect the whole economic policy of Britain. In pre-war days it was her practice to pay for her huge imports of foodstuffs through the sale of manufactured exports and her receipt of income from overseas investments. But her ability to continue this policy will be greatly diminished by the contraction of her overseas markets, and the sacrifice of many of her overseas investments to secure dollar exchange. Already, since the war began, the acute shortage of shipping space has been responsible for the application of drastic and well-planned measures for the revival of British agriculture, and this year, thanks to abnormally good crops, Britain is producing from her own soil nearly 70% of her food requirements. Moreover British public opinion is also determined that British agriculture shall not be jettisoned as it was after the last war, but must be maintained in a condition which will provide decent livelihood for farmers and laborers, and maintain a prosperous countryside. Sheer economic necessity will be one motive for maintaining the present high scale of agricultural production in Britain, but another will be a general recognition that a prosperous agriculture is essential for a healthy national life and that farming must never again be allowed to become a depressed industry, as it was before the war broke out. It will be just as futile for orthodox economists to tell the people of Britain that they could increase their national income by letting agriculture decay and relying once more upon imports for the greater part of their foodstuffs as to advise the peoples of Australia and Canada that they should proceed to dismantle the new factories, which they have built during the war, and concentrate on the forms of primary production for which they have manifest advantages.

**B**UT THE ALTERATION of British economic policy, which has already begun and promises to endure after the war, holds for Canada very important consequences, which merit immediate consideration by our government. For many years the British market has been the most important outlet for the disposal of our exportable surpluses of foodstuffs, and the curtailment of its scope is now threatened at a time when there has been a remarkable expansion of our agricultural production. The present year has seen the three prairie provinces garner the largest grain crops in their history, and most of the other provinces harvest better than average crops. During October the agricultural income of the prairie provinces was provisionally estimated at 73 million dollars, a figure which represented an increase of 63% over the comparable income of 45 million dollars estimated for October, 1941, and the gain has been spread over the whole agricultural community. Part of it accrues from the bountiful abundance of the crops of 1942, but in the case of the large expansion of the outputs of bacon products and cheese the chief contributing factor has been an increased application of productive energy. Yet this enormous increase in agricultural productivity has been accomplished in a year when, according to official figures, there were 200,000 fewer persons engaged in agricultural pursuits than in the last pre-war year. Now, however, we are faced with a prodigious glut of wheat, and for our exportable surplus of this grain, which is estimated at about 900 million bushels, there are in sight no markets which could absorb more than one-sixth of that quantity during 1943. It is true that the advent of peace will probably be accompanied by a brisk demand for our surplus stocks of foodstuffs to feed the famine-ridden populations of the conquered countries of Europe, but it will be only temporary, as these countries will address themselves immediately to the restoration of their agricultural economy, and will have little or no money to pay for imported foodstuffs.

So a very thorny problem can be foreseen for Canada. She will find herself with a scale of agricultural production far in excess of the combined needs of her domestic consumption and her available export markets, and, if efforts are made to replace in agriculture the 200,000 workers who have withdrawn from it, the situation will simply be aggravated by the increased production which must result. Henry Ford has long held the theory that the United States has no need for her present quota of farmers, and Canada may find herself in the same position.

Now it is estimated that there are in Canada some 80,000 marginal farms, whose occupants do not get a decent return for their labors owing to the poverty of the soil, distance from markets and other factors, and who find life a perennial financial crisis. If there is to be a curtailment of our agricultural production, the obvious course would be to concentrate farming energy upon the more productive areas of soil, eliminate these marginal farms and set their cultivators to work in factories or stores.

But recently the mere rumor that consideration was being given at Ottawa to a programme which would forbid the growing of wheat in 1943 in certain areas of the West provoked a fierce outcry of protest, and any government which proposed to forbid the growing of grain, say on the southern slopes of the Laurentians between Montreal and Pembroke, Ont., would encounter a great tempest of indignation from that region. Moreover, even if a programme aiming deliberately at the reduction of the number of our farmers were politically practicable, any decision about it would have to be preceded by very careful consideration of social and moral problems involved. Farming is not merely an economic system for producing grain, bacon, eggs and wool, but it is a way of life. Wherever agriculture is vouchsafed a reasonable measure of prosperity, it produces a type of citizen which has always been considered a great asset to Canada. It is also an accepted commonplace that the health and general wellbeing as well as the freedom of society will be best promoted by having as large as possible a proportion of a country's population living on the land or at least in rural surroundings. It is arguable that the happiest, healthiest, and most creditable segments of Canadian civilization are to be found in regions like King's County in New Brunswick, Huron County in Ontario, and the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, where the bulk of the population is engaged in agriculture under prosperous conditions, and the towns are in the main marketing centres, devoid of large manufacturing industries. The preponderance which our urban population now enjoys over our rural is already too great, and we do not want to countenance any policy which will increase it.

So it would seem the height of political wisdom to begin without delay a search for ways and means to ensure for Canadian agriculture in the post-war years a standard of prosperity adequate to maintain a proper balance of rural population. The way to it has been pointed out by Sir John Boyd Orr, Britain's foremost expert upon the problems of nutrition, and the

grim necessities of the war have opened doors for the practical application of some of the policies which he has so long and persuasively advocated. Sir John's contention, which he proves by statistical chapter and verse, was that before the war at least 40 per cent of the population of Britain did not get enough daily food to sustain decent physical health, and that the consequences of this widespread malnutrition were not only deleterious to thousands of individuals but a handicap to industry and a source of enormous expense to the state. So he kept demanding a national food policy, and now he has the satisfaction of having witnessed its partial establishment. As the result of an equitable plan of rationing and the inauguration of an extensive system of communal feeding, the people of Britain and particularly the school children are, taken as a whole, better fed than they have ever been before; already medical authorities bear witness to a marked improvement in general conditions of health and in the physique of growing children.

Sir John Orr and his allies intend to insist, after the war ends, upon permanent arrangements for a food policy which will maintain for the whole population of Britain a standard of adequate nutrition, and the achievement of their aim would mean a very substantial increase in the consumption of food in Britain. But Britain is not the only country which suffers from malnutrition: this is endemic all over the earth. According to Dr. F. F. Tisdale and other authorities, the huge resources of Canada as a producer of food do not prevent almost as large a proportion of her population as of Britain's suffering from constant malnutrition, and the Federal Government has recognized the validity of this indictment by financing a nation-wide programme of education on the matter. The diminution of unemployment and the general increase of the purchasing power of the working classes through higher wages have during the war years stimulated the domestic consumption of food and provided better markets at home for our farmers. Perpetuation of the present level of industrial prosperity after the war ends is very desirable from the agrarian point of view. But we should also be deeply interested in the plans of Sir John Orr to secure the evolution of a nutrition programme on an international scale and, if this is unattainable, on an imperial scale. For his ideas he has the backing of influential politicians. Mr. S. M. Bruce, the former Premier of Australia, when he was his country's delegate to the Assembly of the League of Nations, repeatedly raised the issue of nutrition and food policy at its sessions, and

pointed out that, if all the member states of the League would adopt generous and enlightened food policies, a great many of their own social problems would be more easily handled and other difficult problems of countries ranking as primary producers of food like Australia, Canada and Argentina would have a solution in sight. If all the people of the world were guaranteed the scale of daily nutrition regarded as essential for health by authoritative experts, the problem of the now indisposable surpluses of food in countries like Canada would disappear, and there would soon be a demand for increased production of food and consequently room for more farmers to get a decent living in Canada. So it is clearly in our broad national interest that when the economic reconstruction of the world is tackled, any Canadian government in power should cordially support the idea of a cooperative nutrition policy for the whole British Commonwealth, and even advocate its extension to the whole world. But such support entails close political cooperation with other countries and, if Canada is to undertake it seriously and reap its full benefits for herself, there will have to be an end of political isolationism.

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