

## TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE ROYAL VISIT: A STRUGGLE FOR PEACE: THE SENATE OF CANADA: ADMISSION OF REFUGEES.

THE ROYAL VISIT has stirred us in the depth of our Canadian hearts. The coming of the King and Queen to our shores and their triumphal progress across the Dominion has been a great popular event that has left remarkable effects on our life. There has never been much place or opportunity for pomp and pageantry in our North American scene, and, indeed, at times, we have affected to hold the posturings and parade connected with royalty somewhat in contempt. Nevertheless, there is an element in human nature, deep, and possibly atavistic, that craves for ritual and ceremony. *Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.* The soul cannot live on abstract ideas. If loyalty to country and commonwealth, with all its gathered sense of gratitude for the past and hope for the future, has its place in the pattern of character, it requires a focus point for its devotion, a personal allegiance to give it vivid and emotional direction. Canada, in the present condition of her development as a nation rather than as a people, required nothing so much as a spectacular fulfilment for long-cherished aspiration. The visit of their Majesties has made Canada emphatically a nation, one, and indivisible.

King George and Queen Elizabeth have made a personal conquest of our Canadian affections. What a singular combination of graces in speech and bearing this happy couple have brought to their exalted office! The monarchy has a very delicately poised position in our political structure. In the last resort, it can continue, as indeed recent bitter experience has taught us, only on the basis of personal character and deportment. The King and Queen of a great Empire must not be mere lay-figures, dressed and crowned in the accoutrements of royalty. They require a certain personal distinction, beyond the performance of official duties, that can be described only as a royal touch. Doubtless, they rely much on public and private advice, but those personal spontaneous acts, by which the Queen especially has distinguished herself, are the sure evidence that we are the fortunate children of a great tradition in the occupants of the throne.

The royal tour was planned with an eye to maximum effectiveness. The landing at Quebec among our most ancient

European settlers in French-speaking Canada was a recognition of history. The bi-lingual facility of the monarchs in public and private gave a personal completeness to the gesture. When the delays incidental to a trans-atlantic voyage in spring threatened to wreck the arrangements, the curtailment of official ceremonies in Ottawa to leave time for the remainder of the tour set many a provincial mayor's heart at rest, and elevated the hopes of juvenile groups in many rural schoolhouses. Everywhere, with tireless goodwill and good humour, they displayed themselves to an adoring public, received public officials and (forget not) their wives, let little children shout themselves hoarse in their presence, attended public worship in obscure churches, drove day after day through lanes of cheering multitudes, many of whom travelled hundreds of miles for one swift look at a regular, royal King and, not less, at a real Queen. They could not have done more to satisfy the public craving for their presence, and they could have done a good deal less. The physical strain must have been immense, and if, as we suspect, they are people with sincere feelings, the emotional tension must have been at least as great. Canada owes them a deep debt of gratitude.

The visit will leave a permanent impress on Canada, the Empire, and, possibly, on the world. For ourselves, we now know that we have a King and Queen. They are no longer mythical figures who exist in pictures on the screen or in the newspapers. They do not merely live in London. They have been in Canada, and even (as is most likely) if they never return to these shores, we have emerged securely from colonialism beyond Dominion status into the full dignity of a nation. Moreover, the Crown has probably done for us what already it has done for Great Britain. We have become one in loyalty and affection for our own country. Already the strained relations between French and English Canada have been mollified. When the Rowell Commission Report appears, as we must shortly expect, the stage will be set for a new act in the unfolding of our Canadian drama. We have realised, what for many among us was impossible or, at most, an occasion for doubt and contempt, that the monarchy has a remarkable function in our political order. Its effect is as intangible as it is real. The royal line of Kings is the repository of history and tradition, the symbol of unity, and the pledge of a continued national existence, removed far beyond the ebb and flow of strife and party. Canada has become, authentically, a nation.

The necessary process of imperial re-integration has been much advanced. The dialectic of commonwealth relations has now moved into a new phase. We have claimed our freedom, and it is ours, with none to dispute its reality. The King has come into his own. Now, what shall we do with our liberty, for freedom can no more remain abstract and indeterminate than loyalty? This self-development of our nation has taken place within the imperial framework. The intangible, almost mystical quality of our loyalty in its final sanction is a sore puzzle to our rigid constitutionalists, who want everything down on a piece of paper or in the form of a parliamentary resolution. And yet, this personal allegiance to a throne is the very pledge and condition of growth within imperial relations. If for no better reason than the impossibility of finding a better bargain elsewhere, we had better remain within the Empire. The real question that lies upon our hands is whether, now that we have realised the unity of the Crown, we should not advance to some imperial executive authority. If, as we are assured, when the King is at war, we are all at war, why should not the whole Empire be represented in the advice upon which the Crown takes action?

As for the world, the events of the royal progress in Canada will not have gone unnoted. The visit of this simple young gentleman with his charming lady is in marked contrast to the swift descent of scowling dictators on their territories, and, at times, on the territories of other people. Here was no flatulent oratory, no language of jibe and menace; rather, a freedom of speech and intercourse that expressed the very genius of our political life. And yet, the bonds that are framed by such relations have a power to hold the hearts of men and women more effectively than any known to the methods of tyranny. Whatever else the dictators may bring into the orbit of their calculation, they are fools if they rely on Canadian disunity or any lack in Canadian adherence to the imperial cause. To that extent, we have moved nearer to the preservation of the peace.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE goes on in Europe. As we write (a necessary *caveat* in all comment on the swiftly changing events of the modern world) the battle has become immobilised in a condition of trench warfare. Both sides have dug in, and sit behind their fortifications in temporary but uneasy quiet. A "No Man's Land" of the Polish Corridor, Tunisia and

Ukraine lies between the lines. The Axis powers have been "nibbling", (to use Papa Joffre's memorable word), sometimes a large mouthful like the one-time Czecho-Slovakia, or again a hasty morsel like Albania. But, for the moment, they are held in check by the diplomatic manoeuvring of the British-French alliance. The new factors that have been introduced are the adoption of compulsory military service in England and the negotiations with Russia.

The sudden announcement that a modified measure of conscription had been accepted by the British Government had a sobering effect on the aggressive policies of the dictatorial powers. The ease with which the new policy was introduced is a revelation of the extent to which the British people are determined to call a halt to further concessions. Evidently, the opposition offered in parliament was rather formal, and, to that extent half-hearted in its expression. The Opposition groups of Liberals and Labour members had been pressing the Government to adopt a more resolute attitude in dealing with Nazi and Fascist presumption. They could hardly, with a clear conscience, put an obstacle in the way of Mr. Chamberlain when he proposed to give an unmistakable evidence that their policy was also his. The plea of the Labour party was not so much against conscription as to the effect that the Government had not gone far enough. Not only human life, but national wealth should be conscribed.

The pressure to adopt conscription came from without as well as from within. When events moved to a sudden crisis, with Poland as the storm-centre of Europe, the time had come for action rather than words. The British record was not so favourable as it might have been. They had talked much, and signed agreements, but nothing had been done. The failure to intervene when Germany annexed the remainder of Czechoslovakia was a profound disillusionment to those who had looked to Britain for a lead. There was a good deal to live down. Had the British people any more interest in fighting to preserve Polish independence than they had in maintaining the integrity of the noble Czech republic? Some guarantee was clearly demanded that the excuse of being unprepared should not be adduced once more. The answer was the introduction of conscription.

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war had a capitalist origin? True, the Russian people had built up a magnificent fighting force, but for the sole purpose, as they asserted, of defending the U. S. S. R. against the envious attacks of capitalist powers. Had they not proposed universal disarmament? And, although, the suggestion had been received with contempt and considerable reflections on the sincerity of the proposers, the Russians have not withdrawn it. They entered the League of Nations with hearty goodwill. Moreover, they had good reason to suspect that only a sense of desperate need drove France and Britain to look with any favour on their help. It must have been difficult for the Russian statesmen to forget the cool reception, or rather lack of reception, that had been given to their offered assistance in the September crisis. Not entirely without good reason, they surmised that nothing would have suited British diplomacy better than to set the communist and totalitarian powers at one another's throats, while the democratic governments enjoyed the spectacle of mutual destruction. Even now, there are considerable elements in British opinion that believe the world's most dreadful enemy is the red menace, and, if the choice must be made, they would prefer the doctrines of Berlin to those of Moscow. As one French cartoon put it—the only way in which Russia could become acceptable would be by the signing of an anti-comintern pact!

Russia is now in the superb position of holding the European balance of power. Such a situation must be thoroughly distasteful to many powerful interests in Britain and France. If a war must come (and that is still a very dreadful possibility) British and French territories will be heavily punished. Who can contemplate the wholesale destruction that would be carried on in the island of Great Britain? Russia would have much to gain, and comparatively little to lose. Her past record, and the avowed policies of communist doctrine, would indicate that the emergent confusion would be exploited to the full for the extension of international socialism. Certainly, whatever vestigial remains of civilisation were left after a world-conflict, it would be a splendid seed-bed for the rapid growth of revolutionary teaching. Would communism find its new frontiers on the Rhine?—possibly on the English Channel?

The most hopeful aspect of the present European condition is that Britain has been compelled to abandon her attempted isolationism. We must still respect all that Mr. Chamberlain accomplished at the Munich Conference. He believed that he saved the world from war, and no price was too high to pay for

the achievement of that end. As we now know, he probably averted the destruction of London, possibly a British defeat in arms. He had inherited the results of a weak foreign policy, which was so spineless that it amounted to no policy at all. The League of Nations, which had been described by Mr. Baldwin as the sheet-anchor of British foreign policy, was simply abandoned without any substitute. The result was just drift. Meantime, the resolute preparations of Germany went on, until Mr. Winston Churchill startled the slumbering British mind from its condition of repose. It is a very different British voice that now speaks in the councils of Europe.

It now looks as if we might get through 1939 without a world-war. Spain is tranquil, and even the Japanese aggression has come to a temporary halt. We will be very foolish if we lapse into a new condition of inertia. The old policy of balanced power has re-appeared, but the memories of 1914 ought to warn us that we cannot erect the structure of peace on that foundation. The time has come for pushing on beyond the present arrangement to a full acceptance of collective security. The League of Nations is still in existence. Let us repent, while there is still time granted to us. "Back to Geneva!" must be the new watchword. There, let a policy of generous forgetfulness lead to a re-opening of every vexatious question—Danzig, colonies, war-guilt—everything! Life is short, and there are values in European civilisation too precious for wanton destruction. A new generation of youth has appeared on the earth. Let us make some attempt to give them a new deal. If we fail, the year 1940 may see the opening of the darkest period in all human history.

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**T**HE SENATE OF CANADA startled us by their bold action on May 24. The gentlemen of the gilded chamber were by no means taking a vacation on that day usually devoted to patriotic holiday-making. In so far as a vote in the Senate accomplishes anything in our Canadian constitution, they tackled one of our gravest public questions in thorough-going fashion. They passed a motion adopting a Report recommending the amalgamation of our two railway systems. The majority was not large—25 for, to 21 against—but it was a majority. Moreover, the motion was carried after a debate of a singularly worthy character. For the Honourable Senator Meighen, it was almost a personal triumph. He was promptly disowned by Dr. Manion, speaking in "another place." This circumstance only enhances



the personal courage of the Senator in daring to withstand his political leader. Whether we accept his reasoning or not, we cannot withhold a recognition for the statesmanlike character of his speech on a subject that has dragged its slow length too long across Dominion politics.

Our Canadian railway problem has become almost hopeless. We are told that railways everywhere to-day have become a liability rather than an asset. Gone are the days when every speculator ready to adventure a dollar, and not infrequently to adventure even without a dollar, turned his thoughts to the making of railroads. A vast country was opening up, crying out for transportation. The question was who was to get his steel down first. Real estate and railways went together in these booming years. Fortunes were made and lost, and sometimes reputations. It was all part of that queer tangled story of adventure and speculation that inevitably accompanied the excitements of receding frontiers. Canadian history will always record the heroic adventure of brains, money and pluck that threw the tracks out across the prairie, up over the Rockies and down to the Pacific. Amidst the present-day distresses that have come upon railway finances, we ought not to forget that without the makers of railroads, Canada could never have become a nation. Gone, too, are the days when the railways were a solid, gilt-edged investment for the savings of careful people. "C.P.R." was almost synonymous with the financial good name of the Dominion. The automobile, carrying passengers and freight, has robbed the railways of their traffic. The rapid development of air travel will further decrease railway earnings. Immigration has practically ceased. The transportation of lumber, fish, fruit and grain has diminished with the years of depression. It has been a sad record of ruin for the railways, to which it is difficult to foresee any satisfactory ending.

Our railway question in Canada has special complications. For reasons into which no good purpose can be served by entrance, we find two diverse systems in competition or co-operation. One is owned and operated by the nation, the other is a privately-owned enterprise. So long as both were on a satisfactory economic basis, no great harm was done. The two systems were really much more complementary than they were competitive. At no time could we dispense with the services of either system. But, when losses began to replace dividends, the Canadian National Railway was in the favoured position of having its bonds guaranteed by the Dominion Government.

There was no effective business check on its expenditures, which admittedly bore no proper economic relation to income. On the other hand, the shareholders of the Canadian Pacific Railway had to whistle for their dividends, and that particular form of vocal exercise was rather an irrelevancy when its results were measured in dollars and cents. The question has been studied and re-studied. Commissions and Committees have brought in their reports. There have been some measures of co-operation adopted, but nothing effective has been accomplished.

For these reasons, the action of the Senate became an affair of national importance. C. P. R. losses are coming out of the pockets of the shareholders, and C. N. R. deficits are being met by the taxes of the Canadian public. Moreover, the Senate was almost the only body in Canada that could dare to face the question in a detached frame of mind. As was pointed out in the debate, the House of Commons could not summon political courage to tackle the problem. No party that dared to put railway amalgamation on its programme would survive an election. The railway men are a very considerable body of voters. They are powerfully organised, and have been able to enforce a high standard of wages. Moreover, behind the railway men are local interests. Consider the railway towns of Canada, with their army of merchants and shopkeepers. It is very difficult for men and women directly interested in the preservation of the *status quo* to rise above questions of personal and immediate advantage so as to take a national point of view. Only the Senate could have passed this motion, and, even then, we can hardly look for action.

The vote of the Senate provokes reflection on the place of a second chamber in the parliamentary institutions of democracy. The inability of the popularly elected House to face a really large question in a statesmanlike way reveals the flaws in the democratic system. Powerful interests can organise themselves in the country either to prevent or compel parliamentary action. They are popularly known as "pressure groups". Their number and influence appear to be on the increase. They unite across the country, either to deluge the members of parliament with correspondence, or to threaten defeat if their group interests are not fully met. They appear in every country—the Brewers and Trades Unionists in England, the Veterans in the United States: in Canada we have the prairie farmers, the railway workers and the Manufacturers' Association. There is a question of tariffs, or crop prices, or war bonus, or, in this partic-

ular instance, railway amalgamation, and the man whose voice goes unheard is the unhappy tax-payer who must foot the bill, and whose only effectiveness consists in his isolated, individual vote. It is very difficult for members of parliament to withstand the pressure of these groups: indeed, we know that they are powerless to do so.

The out-and-out democrat is likely to see in the continuance of non-elected second chambers an illogical and indefensible appearance in the apparatus of legislation and government. In Canada it has long been a habit to poke fun at the senility of the Senate, when any attention at all has been devoted to the company of elderly statesmen. By their very nature, second chambers tend to be conservative in influence and outlook, and they are regarded as the resting-place for last-ditchers and die-hards. Nevertheless, they have a function to fulfill. Whether it be the House of Lords in England or the Senate in Canada, somewhere and somehow, the counsel of detachment ought to be heard in the direction of public affairs. And, in this particular case, the Canadian Senate has expressed what many Canadians would like to say, if they were entirely free to express their minds.

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**T**HE ADMISSION OF REFUGEES raises a very practical question of public policy, particularly for the Dominion of Canada. We know that in Germany the Jewish population has been ordered, for the most part, to clear out of the country. For others, not necessarily Jews, but who are unable to bite the dust before the inquisitorial zeal of the totalitarians, the alternatives are escape or internment. The Secret Police have noted all who, prior to the present régime, were suspected of socialist or communist sympathies. The annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia has been accompanied by a terrorist pogrom against those who were known to be opposed to National Socialist doctrines. The concentration camps are full, and many not incarcerated live in daily terror.

A problem of great human poignancy has been created. Where are those unfortunate men and women to go? Many of them have been engaged in professional or commercial occupations. Their possessions and properties have been confiscated, and, in any case, they are not allowed to take any personal assets out of the country. Naturally, they look with hopeful eyes across the water to the less densely populated countries of the American continent, and especially to Canada. Here

they expect not only to find an opportunity to take up the broken threads of their existence, but to find conditions of democratic freedom. Numbers already have flowed into Holland, France and Great Britain, but their admission has been only temporary. Canada has been faced with a question of the policy to be adopted towards these tormented people who have had to fly from their homes, literally in fear of their lives.

A number of interested people have taken up the refugee cause, and a National Committee has been formed. Most universities in Canada and the United States of America have already taken some steps to provide home and work for distressed scholars. But there is an obvious limit to what can be done. Academic institutions are not generally in a flourishing financial condition. We have our own young scholars to consider in making appointments. Already universities have had their faculties enriched by the addition of distinguished men. Professor Einstein has found a home in Princeton, President Benes in Chicago, and Sigmund Freud is spending his declining years in London. Our universities have done noble work in relieving the afflictions of professors and savants. But what of the other refugees? There is by no means a unanimity of disposition to admit these extruded unfortunates to Canada. The opposition comes from different quarters, and for various reasons. It is pointed out, most properly, that already we have a considerable unemployed population on our hands. Many of these people come from urban life, and are not suited to take up work on the land. In any case, you need capital to take up farming operations, and many of the exiles have had to flee deprived of all they possess. Out in Western Canada, to which it might be expected that most of the refugees would go, it is pointed out that already great sections of the population are living in distressed conditions on public relief. However sympathetic our hearts may be, the giving of practical assistance is not so easy as might appear.

There is a good deal of latent anti-Semitism abroad in Canada. It does not go to the vicious lengths of continental Europe, but, nevertheless, in many quarters, the Jew is not wanted. He is regarded as anti-social, a shady man of business, and in every respect an undesirable neighbour. Moreover, it is contended that Canada has enough non-British population to assimilate into her life, without the introduction of new settlers from non-Anglo-Saxon countries. Thus the barriers are erected against refugee immigrants.

Those who contend for a more liberal policy suggest that Canada needs more population. Our land is very thinly settled.

And they further suggest that many of those European refugees are just the kind of people we want. They come from the intelligent, less supine elements in the countries under the rule of the dictators. Many of them are skilled workmen, who could introduce new industries. It is even hinted that some have considerable capital which they have contrived to smuggle out of their former homes, and now they are looking for new means of putting their money to work. Besides, it is said, Canada ought to make a gesture of sympathy at a time of acute distress. In the past, we have considered ourselves as a land of hope for the outcast and downtrodden. To our shores oppressed minorities have come, and here they have found new homes and new liberty. Long ago the exiled crofters came from the highlands of Scotland to Nova Scotia and Ontario. The United Empire Loyalists are a sturdy stock who maintain their traditions and virtues after the lapse of many generations. In later times, the oppressed have come from Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and other lands. Our history is largely one of settlement by refugees, and we have not lost in the process.

The policy of the Government is not in favour of mass admission of refugee people. It is evident that they are willing to give sympathetic consideration to individual cases. Already considerable numbers of Sudeten Germans have found homes in the West. The doors are not banged and bolted in the face of hopeless wanderers. What we have the right both to expect and to demand is a sympathetic attitude, if possible a modified policy of immigration, and above all, a welcoming hand for those who are being compelled to leave their native land for the cause of liberty, which every Canadian ought to prize.

J. S. T.