

# CANADA AS SEEN FROM "THE OTHER SIDE"

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IT is hardly too sweeping a statement to say that in Europe, with the exception of Great Britain and France, Canada is regarded mainly as a fur, fish, wheat and lumber producer. Also as a likely field for emigrants. Beyond Great Britain and France, it is true, there is another country—Germany—with a special "knowledge" of Canada with which I shall deal with at some length later.

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Geographically, for our European there is a vague idea of the prairies and the Rockies. There is no conception of the Maritimes, of Quebec or Ontario landscapes. The term "Laurentian Shield" conveys nothing. British Columbia is in Central or South America! The films have given some idea of Hudson Bay and the Klondyke. Canada's share in the Great Lakes is unknown, Niagara Falls are solely in the United States. Climatically, Canada is associated with ice and snow. The Dominion is a country without a history. And that's that! The population is presumed to consist of the descendants of European paupers and adventurers who emigrated to Canada in desperation, with the courage of men going on a North Pole expedition. That there is a great virile French population would come as a surprise. Our European is astonished to learn there are Red Skins in the Dominion, because his conception of the Amerinds has been culled from translations of Fenimore Cooper and his school dealing with the natives south of the border. Of the Constitution nothing is known. Canada is just another British "colony". That is not so surprising, because this is a subject confined to experts, and few people know anything even about their own Constitution.

Germany, that has caused the death, wounding, crippling and capture of thousands of Canadians, and has learned again at first hand how magnificently Canadians fight, has forgotten the last lesson they taught her in the First World War. Long before 1933 the Nazis had their cells in Canada, and they still have some that have gone to ground. They had their spies masquerading as shipping, travelling, immigration agents, and "scholars" touring the country with free transportation afforded them by the railroads—unaware whom they were harbouring. These "scholars" received every facility and hospitality that

those concerned could offer them, under the impression that they would "sell" Canada to Germany. This is how they did it. These agents and scholars, beyond sowing dissatisfaction and suspicion, organized Nazi groups among German settlers and urban bodies, establishing German newspapers, promoting and influencing the policy of some already established, appointing *Vertrauungsmaennner* (literally, confidence-men—in this case a suitable title and appropriate translation). Their task it was to spy and report on all Germans in Canada, and to collect material for card-indexing, the gist of which was forwarded to Hess and Himmler. They also collected large sums of money: voluntary contributions from sympathizers; by means of black mail from the reluctant. A typical example of many was a German waiter (a naturalized Canadian) at a Saskatoon hotel, who was approached late in 1937 by a Nazi agent and asked to contribute \$10. He refused, whereupon the agent said: "Ah! your brother lives in Duisburg, doesn't he?" The waiter paid! Nazi scholars met influential politicians and other leading citizens. They returned to the Fatherland to write articles and books against Canada and the Canadians, with an intentionally distorted view of the country, its people and affairs. They clamoured for Germans to have equal footing with French and English, to have German schools run on purely Nazi lines; they told the Germans that Canada was keeping them out of an empty country which, if it were settled by Germans, would be "properly run". They wrote and lectured to the effect that Canada was held in subjugation by the English, and with hardly any population should be thrown open to the Germans to colonize. They, the young nation of "have-nots", would show what they could make of it. Canada had no right to so much land and natural resources. They said that the 600,000 *Herrenvolk* (German figures) in Canada really made the country what it is, but are oppressed. One knows how the figures for the German population in recent censuses are arrived at. Germans enrolled themselves as Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, etc., taking advantage of the transference of German-held territory after the First World War. Many called, and again call, themselves Austrians, trading on the unfounded opinion that there are great differences between Austrians and Germans: actually the main differences are of dialect and discipline. But when it comes to the Germans putting out figures themselves of their compatriots in Canada, the mask is dropped and there is no question of Czechs, Poles, and Austrians.

The professors wrote articles and books describing the barbarous way Germans are treated in Canada, where they cannot speak their own language, where their religious life is systematically destroyed, where there are many more Germans than indicated by the "cooked up", or rather "boiled down" figures issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Hence, to the German, England's treatment of Canada is that she runs the country, steals its resources, and taxes Canadians to enrich the Exchequer, while English goods enter duty free and those of all other countries are kept out by high tariffs, the proceeds of which are purloined by the King. This balderdash is found in dozens of German books and articles on Canada. Up to the outbreak of the Second World War most of these books and many of these articles were recorded or reviewed by the *Canadian Historical Review*. Indeed, the September, 1939, number contained a notice of the second volume of a Dr. Lehmann's dangerous and mendacious glorification of the German elements in Canada, with its sneers, accusations and distorted figures. Few realize the dangerous influence of such books. Parenthetically be it remarked that at German Universities all teachers (Lehmann is one) whose subject was say Canada, the United States or England, etc., were expected to run down their particular country and its people, and to make them the object of hate and derision. The Nazi theory is that only he who hates a foreign country is fit to teach its language or impart information about it. This was called officially *Feindkunde* (knowledge of the enemy).

So much, or so little, on Canada and Germany. But these somewhat lengthy remarks are not uncalled for when dealing with Europe's "knowledge" of Canada.

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The Dominion has now definitely entered world politics. Her influence is growing. Her place in world economy is assured. There can be no withdrawal. Those in tortured Europe who looked to the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries as a future home for themselves and their descendants, away from the European turmoil, now look to Canada as the land of opportunity. Laurier's prophecy is coming true.

True, in the old days of mass European emigration to the United States the emigrant knew little or nothing about the country to which he was going. But times have changed, and it is in Canada's interest to make herself known to those

Europeans she is willing to receive within her gates, and to those who look upon her as the "promised land". It is equally incumbent upon her to keep out those who are potential time-bombs; the sowers of discord; parasites who despoil their host; founders of "cells"; mappers of the coasts; charters of coastal waters; industrial spies; political brigands *et hoc genus omne*, smuggling their way in as innocent tourists, immigrants, scholars or students of Canadian affairs.

Gorgeously got-up, well written and colour-illustrated booklets to further immigration (reduced to a trickle long before the war) are not enough and, indeed, not really a projection of Canada. "Ploughing in November in shirt-sleeves," as a caption of a sun-bathed prairie rural scene, with farmhouse and out-buildings, fat shire horses, Holsteins and shorthorns, snow-white upholstered sheep, and spotlessly clean fat pink and black pigs, crimson and blue agricultural machinery, and towering silos, such as are to be found only on experimental farms, are a misleading and too optimistic presentation. All this no more projects Canada in the right focus than does a railroad poster of Muskoka, the Chateau Laurier or Jasper Park.

When we except Great Britain and France from those countries where total ignorance of Canadian affairs prevails, this, of course, must be qualified by saying that there are a few professional historians, economists and scholars who really know the Dominion's history and economy, but there are very few outside these circles, in spite of the historical relations between Canada and France and England.

For the Frenchman the attitude to Canadian history is one of sentimental regret and nostalgia, with a profounder interest in the activities of the Roman Catholic Church and the survival of the French language than in economic and historical events. For the Englishman the approach is more military, constitutional and economic. But historians and economists in all countries can look after themselves.

What the writer of these random remarks is concerned about is the utter ignorance of the vast majority of Englishmen regarding Canadian history and, to a slightly lesser degree, regarding Canadian economic and political affairs. Of Dominion politics, when there is any attempt at an all-embracing statement by those who have skimmed them, the best you will get is: "Oh, they are simple. There are only two parties. The C.N.R. stands for Liberals and the C.P.R. for Conservatives.

You are either a C.N.R. man or a C.P.R. man." Well, there is more truth in that than in another remark you hear over here: "There are two parties in the Dominion, the one is for low, the other for high tariffs, but all Canadians are Protectionists." As for a third party, or other parties with preponderating economic interests and purely economic bodies—often confounded with political parties—there are jumbled ideas in which the old Wheat Pools, Grain Growers, the Wheat Boards, C.C.F. and Social Credit, etc., are all mixed up. This shows people have got hold of something at any rate. But what is astonishing is that although most of us have relations or friends in Canada, when one asks "Where is he (or she)?" the answer is: "Oh! somewhere in Ontario"; or: "On the Prairie." If the name of the town is known, then the province in which it is situated is not. And it is only within the last few years, owing to outstanding events, that most people here know that Montreal is not the federal capital. Only a few are aware that Vancouver is not the capital of British Columbia. And yet there is no dearth of English books on Canada, but their circulation is limited, and only a small number of books issued by Canadian publishers reach this country. It would be difficult in reply to the question "Can you recommend me a single book informing me on the whole of Canada?" to recommend one published outside Canada. Of books published in Canada *The Canada Year Book* would be most likely to serve the purpose. Those interested solely in the Dominion's history and requiring a complete bibliography, find their requirements met by a complete set of the C.H.R. A complete set of *THE DALHOUSIE REVIEW* is, of course, much more all-embracing and covers a vaster field of matters pertaining to Canada. But it would be hard to come by, outside leading libraries. This is also the case with the *Canadian Historical Review*.

The value of the knowledge of Canadian history to Englishmen requires no labouring. *Inter alia*, it would teach them to understand the development of their own history, because Canadian history is comparatively "recent", as seen from the traditional English point of view and conception of history. Canadian history, too, unrolls as "rapid motion", whereas English history, as a whole, does so as "slow motion". What often took centuries in England has taken much less time in Canada, where history has been telescoped. The clearing of the forest; the draining of swamps; destroying wild and harmful

animals; migration of peoples (the Americas are still the goal of the fourth migration of the peoples); settlement; assimilation of races, and of their customs, arts and even languages; the growth of cities and constitutional institutions have all been rapid, as measured by Old World *tempo* and standards.

Whereas in England with the assistance of archeologists, historians, sociologists and philologists we have to try to reconstruct (after much groping and guessing) the gradual growth of all that goes to make a country and its history, and whereas so much is still dark to us, and the verisimilitude of the reconstruction often doubtful, you in Canada can, with few exceptions of your earliest history, distinguish the unrolling of the whole process before your eyes in a generation or so. You have your happenings well-focussed as a guide for so much of the past. If we view it as "slowed down" to our own *tempo*, much becomes clear; reconstruction of the past is provided with an interpretative key and gauge. This helps us to understand how matters proceeded and developed in the dim distant days of English history. Briefly: we can learn the "mechanism" of our history by studying that of Canada.

Who, as a new-comer, knowing nothing of Canadian history, standing say in Winnipeg or Vancouver to-day, could possibly conceive how short a time they have been on the map? And yet, with only so much greater speed than Old World cities they too, of course, developed from the primitive to the modern. Only, all the past details of this development are known; no painful attempts at reconstruction (often faulty), no guessings and speculative piecings together are necessary.

In these cities stratum after stratum of various nationalities has settled down, married, merged and mingled to a homogeneous Canadian whole, so interwoven and patterned as to suggest tightly-knit fabric, which, coloured and diverse as it is, can yet be disentangled and studied in detail. This process of unification has contributed in a short time to the impress and tradition of the various cultures and languages till they have merged more or less in the same way as in Great Britain, always allowing, naturally, for different climatic and geographical entourage.

Let Englishmen go to Canada and study the quick-motion of her development; they will return to understand and interpret the slow-motion of Europe. The mingling of the races in the Dominion is just as instructive as that in Great Britain, and the

process as such was, and is—*mutatis mutandis*—the same, with merely the exception of the *tempo*. Hence interpretation and reconstruction will be so much easier, so much more conclusive and reliable. However, as far as the mingling of races is concerned, these remarks do not apply to the Roman Catholic Franco-Canadian and Acadian enclaves where there is little intermingling. Where there is, it leads to complete assimilation at the expense of alien elements. But here again the European may learn from the Franco-Canadian two main factors: that a different race can remain in its enclave undisturbed by and mainly undisturbing to the state of which it forms an integral part; that in a bilingual state one section need not try to impose its language and culture on the other. Indeed, any such attempt in Canada would fail in the long run and lead to disintegration.

If the average Englishman knew that Canada has not only a history, but a very stirring and picturesque one, and could be taught to appreciate it by some non-conventional and easy method affording a comprehensible approach, much would be gained. Perhaps a useful approach would be by parallel dates and events. In this way interest and comprehension should readily be developed. Naturally more time should be devoted to Canadian history *per se* in our schools; it should not be relegated, as at present, to a few footnotes and appendices, or at best just embedded in a general summary of the whole Commonwealth in colourless and unimaginative set-books. School-readers might do worse than include extracts, for instance, from such writers as Parkman. There should be chairs of Canadian history and culture at the universities.

Let us essay the approach of just a few parallel Canadian and English dates, and see if this would afford an approach to Canadian happenings and make it easier for English people to focus Canada's history. There is nothing new in this *per se*, but existing publications of parallel historical dates include too many countries. This is not to suggest that it is possible to separate countries into watertight compartments. No country stands alone historically.

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Let us, then, look at a few Canadian dates for sake of comparison without attempting rigid selections, just to see what perspectives are afforded by parallels. True, the reaction they release would not be the same with Canadians as with Englishmen. But we are concerned here only with exploring lines to

stimulate the latter's interest, because the former's knowledge of English history is for obvious reasons greater than *vice versa*.

According to the most recent historical investigation<sup>1</sup>, the coast of Canada was reached actually as far back as 1472 by a Dane named Scolp. Thus the European account of her history can now precede that of the United States by twenty years. (It would be futile here to mention the many other pre-Columban theories of discovery.) England in 1472 was in the throes of the Wars of the Roses. Edward IV was on the throne, and Caxton was about to begin English printing.

The traditional initial date of Canadian history is still, however, 1497, and our Englishman's attention should be aroused on learning that Cabot, when he discovered the coast of North America in 1497, was in the service of Henry VII. Granted, to Bristolians Cabot is more than the name of a bridge. And if the bridge has vanished, there is the Cabot Tower still standing (or was as these words are written.) Like Columbus, Cabot was an Italian. Labrador was his first landfall. In connection with the Cabot Tower we see the value of historical monuments for the perpetuation of historical names. They are an excellent aid to history, because they keep the past alive and stimulate interest.

It was also in 1497 that Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape. Only five years previously Columbus had reached the outskirts of the New World. As indicated, this was in England the early period of the Tudors, and the Middle Ages were just fading out. English cities were still walled to protect them from attack, just as later Quebec and other nascent Canadian settlements had to be stockaded to protect them from Indian depredations. And when the Englishman finds Canada had "arrived" as far back as the distant and dim Middle Ages, he has got his focus and atmosphere too. In 1524 Verazzano (another Italian) was sent out by Francis I in search of new lands and a route to China. Wherever he may have actually landed on Canadian territory, he gave it the name of New France. He may have been accompanied by Cartier. Be that as it may, on his first independent voyage to the shores of North of America, Cartier landed in 1534 in Chaleur Bay and at Gaspé. This is really the year of the birth of Canada.

At this date Henry VIII was flourishing and was laying the crow-bar to the walls of the monasteries. Latin was still

1. See G. Lanctot, *Cartier's First Voyage to Canada*, C.H.R., Sept., 1944, *passim*.



the language of English scholars. Cartier—who was also sent out by Francis I—took possession of the country for France. When he reached Stadacona and Hochelaga, some of the contours of the future Dominion were taking shape. Fifteen thirty-four was the year of the Acts of Supremacy and Succession, and when Cromwell became Vicar-General. Towards the end of Henry VIII's reign in 1541, during the course of a third voyage to Canada, Cartier wintered near Quebec. That is nearly seventy years before her permanent foundation. But even three years prior to this date (1608 the year of Milton's birth) a settlement had been established at Port Royal: the year of the Gunpowder Plot. Incidentally, the Acadian settlement was destined to change many times between the French and the English before it finally passed into the latter's hands (by the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713) during the reign of Anne. There is no country in the world with which power politics played shuttlecock and battledore to the extent they had with Acadia.

On the far-away Pacific, towards the end of Elizabeth's long reign, De Fuca discovered in 1592 the straits that perpetuate his name. Thus in little over a century the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the Dominion-to-Be are on the map. There is in connection with the exploration of the Pacific coast a name dearer and nearer to the English: Cook. He was not only present at the siege of Quebec and explored the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador a few years later, but also explored Canada's Pacific coast (1768). "Cook's Inlet" on Vancouver Island reminds us of that. To return to earlier years, Hudson had penetrated to the Bay only two years after Quebec arose on the banks of the St. Lawrence. By 1611 Brule had ascended the Ottawa and later discovered Lakes Huron and Ontario. He was followed by Champlain some years after. In 1622 (during the reign of James I) Lake Superior was included in the extension of discovery. Settlement along the St. Lawrence was furthered by the founding of *Trois Rivières* in 1634. A decade later, settlement extended far beyond Quebec; and Montreal rises on the river-bank in the year that saw the beginning of the Civil War in England (1642). Less than another century was to elapse till La Verendrye was as far West as Lake Winnipeg; and a few years after his sons sight the distant foot-hills of the Rockies, in the mid-years of George II's reign.

Hearne's journey to the Coppermine, the Slave River

and Great Slave Lake between 1770 and 1772 (that is some ten years after George III ascended the throne) are other fingers of exploration searching out the gaps on the map. In 1778 (the year in which Burns was born) Cook is in Nootka Sound, and soon the journeys of exploration through Canada's vast stretches bring Fraser to the river commemorating his name and Mackenzie overland to the Arctic (1789) and Pacific (1792). So much for a few dates of exploration. They serve as a rough sketch bringing us to the threshold of the last century, and lifting Canada out of the dimness that had hidden her.

Leaving exploration and harking back a hundred and seventy years, we see that it was as early as 1617 that Hebert, the first colonist, settled near Quebec. Thus we see emmigration of genuine colonists to Canada started as far back as the death of Raleigh. It was in the thirties of the 17th century that England took, *inter alia*, Antigua and Montserrat. None could then have foreseen that the British West Indies would in our century shift into Canada's orbit and become so closely connected by tourist traffic, trade and commercial relations as to assume *de facto* the position of Canadian tropical dependencies, a status they seem destined to assume *de iure* in the not-too-distant future. It was more than a significant gesture when Canada reached an agreement with the West Indies under the Canadian Mutual Aid plan, which is similar to the American Lend Lease plan, and certainly the war has drawn closer together the two units of the Commonwealth.

The Hudson's Bay Company obtained its charter from Charles II in 1670 when Charleston, Ca., was founded, and the French occupied Lorraine. In the same year that New Netherland and New Sweden passed into English hands and Parliament made peace with Holland (1674), Laval became the first Bishop of Quebec and impressed his personality on that city and its people and, indeed, on all future French Canada as powerfully as did John Knox impress his personality on Scotland and the Scots in quite another religious sphere. The year 1709 was that of the Battle of Malplaquet, and it saw another British invasion of Canada. Seen in perspective, there was a bewildering series of landings, seizures, repulses and restorations carried out, suffered and implemented by the French and English (and Americans too) before Canada was finally to become an English colony (1759) on her way to Dominionhood. But by 1709 the final act had not been played. By the

Treaty of Utrecht (1713) which terminated the Spanish War of Succession, Hudson Bay, Acadia and Newfoundland were ceded to Great Britain. Halifax was founded in 1749, the year in which Fielding's *Tom Jones* was published. Most of the early settlers in Halifax were Germans from the Hanover and Lunenburg regions then so intimately connected with the England of the Georges.

Perhaps of all the events occurring during the first year (1756) of the Seven Years' War, what is uppermost in the English mind is the Black Hole of Calcutta; and the Englishman who knows his Macaulay will have obtained a dim idea of the connections of that war with Canada from the well-known passage:—"In order that he (Frederick the Great) might rob a neighbour, he had promised to defend . . . red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America." In the course of the war the great French fortress and key-position Louisbourg was taken (1758), and Quebec the next year, when the death of Wolfe and Montcalm pointed the way to the united life of the French and English in Canada under one flag. Quebec like Port Royal had changed hands several times in the course of its history, till it finally came to rest under the Union Jack. It was also in this year that the French were defeated at Minden and Quiberon. The Treaty of Paris (1763) confirmed Britain's possession of Canada and Nova Scotia (with Cape Breton) and India. It was in this year that Canada's first Governor, General Murray, was appointed, and England also secured further tropical colonies in the West Indies.

When the *Quebec Act* was passed in 1774, George III was king and Louis XVI of France mounted his throne. In the religious, political and social spheres this Act can hardly be overrated. It placed Roman Catholicism in Canada on an equal footing with the Protestants of the conquering country. Indeed some sections of the English Protestants suffered under disabilities for generations in England after 1774. The Act also gave back to the French-Canadians their civil law. Above all, it admitted Roman Catholics to office over half-a-century before Catholic Emancipation in England, which is not yet really complete, as in the case of the Lord Chancellor's office. When the Act was passed, the French population of Canada stood in relation to the English of thirty to one. It was to become the French-Canadian *Magna Carta*, and as useful as the circumvallation of a mediaeval town. In this year Boston was occupied

by the military, the port was closed, and Congress assembled at Philadelphia.

The year 1775 saw the beginning of the American Revolution and led to the invasion of Canada in which Montreal was taken. The attempt to take Quebec, the key-stone of the country, failed. By the *Treaty of Versailles* (1783) England recognized the independence of the U. S. A.

In 1791 during Pitt's long first ministry, the Provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada were created. The Spanish leave Canada's Pacific coast and the Dutch surrender Ceylon to Britain in 1795: the year in which Keats was born.

When we get to the last century, we find that in 1811, the year of the Luddite Riots, and in which the Prince of Wales took over the regency for George III, Lord Selkirk established his colony in the present Manitoba, and Canadian settlement takes a jump to the West. Of the Canadian war with America (1812-14) during the period when Europe was liberating herself from Napoleon's yoke, we may say, historically recent as it is, that little if anything is known in England. It was just a "side-show" of greater events. As far as Canada and the United States were concerned, it was a half-hearted affair. In 1813 America attacks Canada, and Wellington enters France, and the Battle of Leipzig was fought. In the same year the Americans burnt Toronto (then called York) and the English retaliated in the next year by burning Washington.

Thenceforward Canada and the U. S. A. set the world an example of how two countries can live side by side on a three-thousand mile unfortified frontier and settle their difficulties peacefully. The vastly more powerful United States does not stand over Canada with the bully's bludgeon and threats of war, but deals with her as a sister state making and receiving concessions.

The political unrest and revolutions rife in Europe in the thirties and forties had their counterpart in Canada in the rebellions of 1837 in Lower and Upper Canada, when Queen Victoria ascended the throne. The rebellions resulted in Lord Durham's mission to Canada and the publication of his great Report in 1839: the fountain-head of all Dominion charters, as time was to show. In 1867 the birth of the Dominion was heralded by the *British North America Act*. Thus we see provision was made for a united Canada before the creation of the German Empire under Bismarck. By the B. N. A. Act.

the chain of straggling colonies, and the Great West, North and North West (where the Hudson's Bay Co. reigned supreme from its London headquarters) were linked and forged to a whole. True, only constitutionally so. For the rest Canada is a vast mosaic design made up of many geographical and ethnographical units. But 1867 saw also the loss of a great potential addition to Canadian territory when Russia sold Alaska to the United States for the price of a good year's salmon catch.

Henceforward dates of events in Canada are easily linked with those of England, and there is no difficulty in focussing events.

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The presence of so many Canadians in England and on the battlefields during the 1914-18 war brought them and the English in close touch and led to a widening interest in and knowledge of Canadian affairs. Conversely, it spread a knowledge of England in Canada. And yet, for some reason or other, the effect faded. In the war just ended, the process was repeated. This time the interchange of mutual relations and knowledge was more intense. On the one hand you had again vast numbers of Canadians in Britain, fighting shoulder to shoulder on all battlefields, and on the other the many thousands of R.A.F. men who were trained in the Dominion. Now a new start can be made, and the way is paved to sustain and increase interest in and knowledge of Canadian affairs not only in England, but in the rest of the Commonwealth.

Canada's growing influence in England and the world since the First World War, indeed due to participation in two World Wars, has strengthened and widened her position as interpreter between Great Britain, the Commonwealth and the U. S. A., and her intermediary position between the two great powers (for she is the keystone of the Anglo-American arch) has set her the task and enables her to draw them closer together and interweave them.