

light of changes of modern warfare. Undertaking his studies presumably at the moment when the island was being rapidly prepared as a great fighting base for naval, airborne and, if necessary, military operations of a decisive character, he is unlikely to have wished to observe and describe local strategic arrangements, absorbingly interesting as they might be. He has taken a broader sweep and his interesting chapter will help us to appreciate the important role which, as he puts it, destiny has thrust upon this country.

Other writers than those mentioned above have contributed to this volume.

Mr. G. S. Watts, of the Bank of Canada's research division, has written the chapter on the Impact of the War on Newfoundland. There is also an estimate, by one whose name, like that of the author of the Book of Numbers, is not given us, of the national income of Newfoundland. He reckons the pre-war figures as below the levels of income of the Maritime Provinces of Canada. Beside relevant tables, the book contains useful maps and diagrams, some of them the work of Mr. H. H. Cummings, M. A. To the whole work the chairman of the supervisory committee, Sir Campbell Stuart, has given a friendly foreword.

Regionalism: A Development in Political Geography

By F. KENNETH HARE

LITTLE attention seems to have been paid in Canada to the developing cult of regionalism, which has occupied much of the time of American social scientists in recent years. Regionalism is a concept of the geographers (of whom there have hitherto been few in the Dominion), but the importance of regional factors has been widely recognized by other social scientists, notably the economists, the sociologists, and those interested in public administration.

The importance of this subject in public affairs lies in its relation to government and political structure, especially in federal countries. The creation of planning authorities, for example, by the federal government of the U. S. A. has posed entirely new problems of boundary-drawing and political geography. Boundary-drawing in the Old World since the Congress of Vienna has

been primarily a question of reconciling the complex facts of nationality with the conflicting demands of the parties for economic and strategic advantages. In North America strategic and economic factors have been relatively less significant since the final demarcation of the Canadian-U. S. boundary. The Canadian provinces and the states of the Union, once created, have remained little changed; there has been no widespread need of or call for revision of boundaries. In many cases these federal units have been given boundaries which bear no relation to the facts of the terrain over which they were created.¹ This discordance of political boundaries with the regions into which the continent is divided geographically has led in recent years to the creation (or attempted creation) of authorities whose limits are defined more carefully with respect to geography, and whose powers lie intermediate between those of the federal and state governments. The drawing of boundaries

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¹Except, of course, for the division of the huge pioneer territories.

for such authorities (of which T.V.A. is the outstanding example) calls for the most careful enquiry into the precepts of regionalism.

What is Regionalism?

In 1934, when the new dealers were at the height of their influence, a technical committee was appointed by President Roosevelt's National Resources Committee to give an answer to this question, so that the delimitation of inter-state planning authorities should not be made without due attention to a supposedly vital aspect of the national life. They gave this answer:

Regionalism is a clustering of environmental, economic, social and governmental factors to such an extent that a distinct consciousness of separate identity within the whole, a need for autonomous planning, a manifestation of cultural peculiarities, and a desire for administrative freedom are theoretically recognized and actually put into effect.²

To the writer this seems like a mouthful which takes a lot of swallowing. But it sums up very nicely the position of the extreme regionalists in America.

The fact that the terrain, climate, vegetation and the other elements of the geographic background vary widely from place to place is obvious to everyone. Despite this variation, the character of the environment tends to remain fairly constant over wide areas; the transition from one type of landscape, of soil and of topography to another is abrupt rather than steady. The transcontinental railways of Canada illustrate this point remarkably clearly. From Renfrew to near Winnipeg, the scenery is almost invariant: forest, lakes, bare rocks, rushing streams; a monotonous wilderness which is part of the great Canadian Shield of ancient, highly changed and folded rocks. Then quite abruptly the line runs out into the prairies, and for eight hundred miles the landscape remains little changed,

flat or gently rolling, grass-covered or ploughed, almost treeless, utterly different from the Shield country east of Winnipeg. With even greater suddenness the line enters the Rockies, and from thence to Vancouver there is a third class of landscape, dominated now by high mountains or plateaus, deep, narrow valleys and fast-running rivers. There is little arable land, and the settlements cling to the narrow patches of flat land. Every Canadian is familiar with these "regions," in which the natural environment has well-defined characteristics.

Regions which depend on the type of land-surface are called by geographers "natural regions;" and it is recognized that the whole land-surface of the globe divides itself up in this fairly clear-cut manner. Natural regions are rarely as clear-cut as they are in Canada, but they are usually easily enough distinguishable for their boundaries to be drawn without much argument. Very often they are so important in the life of the communities that they receive special names: thus the Canadian speaks of the "prairies" to denote both a type of landscape and of the region dominated by that type, i.e. the southern parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Besides these natural regions, however, the regionalists distinguish a higher class called the "geographic" region, which is rarely coincident with any particular natural region, more often including parts of several of them. The unity of the geographic region is considered to rest on³ "a broad unity of interest and of relationship between man's activities, actual and potential, and environmental conditions." As so defined, the geographic region depends not so much on uniformity of the physical background as on facts of social and economic organization. It is here that the practical importance of the regional idea to the social scientist and administrator arises. For if it is true that there are broad areas of uniformity of social and economic

2. From "Regional Factors in National Planning," p. 138, Report of National Resources Committee, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1935.

3. J. E. Orchard, *ibid.*, p. 146.

adjustment to environment, it is clear that their existence should be of real practical significance.

There can be no doubt that such regions exist, though their boundaries are often ill-defined. The Corn Belt of the American Mid-West, for example, is an identifiable unit of this type, although it coincides with no one physiographic unit and has no sharp limits. It is clear to everyone that there is a very real unity of economy and social structure in this Belt, which includes much of the states of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio; moreover the economy is harmoniously adjusted to subsoil and climate throughout the belt. It is noteworthy that though this region coincides with no one political division, it is the home country of Congress' powerful farm bloc. The Canadian Prairies are another obvious case; here the geographic region coincides closely with the natural region of the western grasslands. This region extends into the north-west central states of the Union, i.e. the Dakotas and Minnesota, though the international boundary has introduced a highly artificial political dualism. The three provinces Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta can all be divided into a forested, infertile north and a prairie south; the real units are the combined forest belts of the north and the combined prairie zones to the south. The political divisions are here particularly at variance with geography.

Regionalism and Regional Planning

In the old days of pioneering, of land-occupation and of rapid growth of population, the non-coincidence of the political unity with the geographic regions did not matter very much. But to-day it is a serious inconvenience in administration. We have just cited the case of the great wheat-growing prairie region of the north-west, which is divided into no less than seven states or provinces (Montana, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta), and is also split in half by the international boundary. Moreover, no one of these

political units is wholly within the cultivated prairies. In all these units there are small parts of several totally unlike geographic regions. In Minnesota, for example, there is a narrow strip of rich farmlands of the prairie type, along the western boundary, in the Red River Valley: the south-east third of the state is a land of small livestock farms, devoted to the dairying industry; while the north-east is a barren, cut-over land of low hills, housing the world's richest iron-ore field. Within this one unit, then, there are parts of three utterly different geographic regions, each with its characteristic forms of adjustment to environment, and so of economic and social structure. The three have nothing in common with one another, and inevitably strike up links with their corresponding regions in other states.

It follows that it is difficult to carry out programs of co-ordinated economic and social planning through the existing political units. The natural unit for such planning is the geographic region; by definition there is a "homogeneity of economic and social adjustment to environment" in such regions, and they are therefore well adapted to serve as the units of administration in a planned society.

A recent example of enforced recognition of a regional unit in legislation was afforded by the Dominion's Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act of 1935. The Act was passed in the middle of the disastrous eight-year drought which hit the prairies in 1930, just after the Wall Street crash. The combined effect of crop failure and the economic depression led to widespread distress and abandonment of land in the prairies, as every Canadian remembers. The effect was felt throughout the prairies, in Alberta and Manitoba as well as Saskatchewan, in the American prairies as well as in Canada. It was plain that relief measures would have to be taken at the Dominion level, and that they would have to ignore provincial boundaries. The

1935 Act referred to the grassy plains of the three prairie provinces. The precise limits over which it has functioned, were decided by an expert committee in 1937, who not unnaturally limited the application of the Act to the true prairie belt.⁴ A series of inter-provincial committees have advised the Dominion Department of Agriculture on policy, and the bulk of the work of administration has rested with a directorate based on Regina. The establishment of a planning and rehabilitation authority of this sort within the three provinces has necessitated special financial and juridical arrangements between the provinces and the Dominion. The geographer would ask whether these arrangements would be necessary if the political units bore more relation to the geography. Inevitably there will be other problems which will require inter-provincial action extending over the whole prairie area. The P.F.R. administration is the nucleus of a regional planning organization which is admirably defined geographically.

Similar inter-state problems of government have arisen in the United States. In the words of the National Resources Committee "5. . . the major problem areas frequently overlap State boundaries and yet cover only a part of the whole Nation. Production areas, manufacturing areas, lines of transportation, corn, cotton, citrus, coal, watersheds, timber, are no respectors of political boundaries. Some of these areas, such as the Northeast, the Northwest, the Southeast, are marked by so many fundamental natural, population and cultural factors, that they create a regional consciousness in the minds of their inhabitants. The fact that State boundaries are firmly embedded in the Constitution has led to a search for means of setting these regional or sub-national

interests into the framework of the American Nation."

The solution of these American problems has been made difficult by the complexity of the regionalism. No two geographers can agree about the overall regional divisions of the country, though it is easy to pick out certain clear-cut regions like the Corn Belt, the Great Valley of California and the like. The regional division of the less prosperous areas, where economic and physical planning is very necessary, presents many problems. Two primary types of organization have been made:—(a) the inter-state compact; and (b) regional authorities or organizations created by the federal government.

The inter-state compact is a device made possible (because not expressly forbidden) by the constitution: it is possible for any two states or more to enter into compacts about matters of mutual concern. The consent of Congress is required, but otherwise there is no obstacle to such agreements. Many compacts are now in active existence, perhaps the best-known geographically being the Port of New York Authority (New York and New Jersey). This device has been used, primarily for problems which call for a straight division of labour, profit or responsibility in some fairly simple, easily-defined problem. Typical is the division of oil-rights or of water supply. Largely because of administrative difficulties the inter-state compact has not been too successfully used in genuine regional planning.

The nearest approach to such success is the Colorado River compact to regulate the use of the river's water. The drainage basin of the Colorado is an enormous area of arid or semi-arid plateaus, whose rainfall is insufficient to support anything but scrub, or at best, cattle-ranges. Studded about the surface of these plateaus are certain major mountain ranges of the Rocky system. These highlands receive a much heavier precipitation than the plateaus, and from them flow the Colorado and its

4. See "Report on Rural Relief . . . in Western Canada, 1930-37," Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. For a general account of P. F. R. A. work, see "P. F. R. A.: A Record of Achievement," 1943, Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

5. From National Resources Committee's report referred to in (1).

tributaries, including the Gila and Green Rivers. The compact was designed to share the river's water equitably between the contracting states of California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. This water was to be used for irrigation, which is essential for agricultural development, for water supply and for the generation of hydro-electric power. Agriculture is the main source of income throughout the basin, though it is closely rivalled by mining; no other occupation has comparable importance. The contracting states aimed at increasing agricultural efficiency, and output enormously through increased irrigation, and at assisting the mining industries by the provision of large quantities of cheap electric power. In a very real sense, then, the purpose was regional planning on a vast scale. The enormous construction program involved the building of such giants as the Boulder and Parker Dams on the Colorado and the Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River (a Gila tributary); much of this work was carried out by federal agencies under federal powers which were ostensibly designed to improve navigation, so as to conform with the Constitution.

On the whole, the material results have been successful, largely because of the enthusiastic encouragement of the Roosevelt administration. The engineering work has been nearly completed, and there has been a major increase in the area of irrigated land and in the availability of power. It has been difficult, however, to maintain internal discipline, and co-ordinated uniform planning over the whole region has fallen by the wayside to some extent. In any case it must be stressed that although the Colorado Basin does lie within one geographic region, that region extends far beyond its watersheds.

Regional Planning Authorities of the Federal Government.

The interstate compact suffers from two major weaknesses:

- (i) it cannot in most cases create a unified planning machinery for the

whole of a geographic region;
and

- (ii) its successful operation depends too much on the voluntary discipline of its members.

It was to overcome one or both of these defects that the idea of federally-created planning authorities was devised. These authorities can be made to have jurisdiction over any area that the federal government pleases (States Rights permitting), and hence are well-adapted to regional planning schemes. The extent to which they can be used to enforce discipline on the states concerned is another matter, but at any rate they are no weaker in this respect than the interstate compact.

The three best-known authorities are TVA and the Regional Planning Commissions of the Pacific North-West and New England. Of these, the title "authority" ought perhaps to be reserved for TVA, which alone has successfully functioned as an overall planning agency with virtual autonomy within its bounds. The others were created as central bodies for the co-ordination of both federal and state planning schemes; their function was to be less comprehensive than that of TVA. The readers of this quarterly must be aware of the character and achievements of all three. But much can still be said about their geographical adequacy.

The geographic region, we said earlier, is by definition, an area in which there is considerable homogeneity in economic and social structure, based upon adaptation to a characteristic environment. TVA has been much criticised by geographers because its area of jurisdiction is in no sense a geographical unit. The Act by which it was created said that "it was to aid . . . the proper use, conservation and development of the natural resources of the Tennessee River drainage basin" and to bring about "the economic and social well-being of the people living in said river basin."⁶ The Ten-

6. Section 22, Tennessee Valley Act, approved by the President, May 18, 1933.

nessee River flows through a highly diverse area, including parts of several major geographic regions which extend far outside the valley. It rises in the forested Appalachians, which extend north-eastwards to the Hudson River. Its lower course, however, is across the broad central lowlands whose central axis is the Mississippi River. Diversity, not uniformity, is the geographical character of the valley.

The great success of TVA has stimulated many other valley planning schemes, each based on the assumption that the river valley is the best unit for planning purposes. This idea has been hotly disputed by the geographers; they argue that a drainage basin has only one advantage for such purposes—that it is easily delimited. The objection seems to the writer quite valid. It is hard to think of a single drainage basin even roughly co-extensive with a geographic region. The average basin is as geographically diverse as the average state or province: and there is no gain in creating new units as arbitrary as the old—at any rate from the geographer's standpoint. TVA has worked miracles in its own sphere, but there are areas outside that sphere whose problems are identical with those of the marginal lands of the Valley; for them there has been no TVA fertilizer, no free education in good husbandry, no cheap power, no co-ordinated planning beyond what can be provided by overworked federal or state agencies.

Much the same can be said of the New England and Pacific North-West Commissions, though these were created through the spontaneous recognition of community of interest between the member states. Both, however, function over an area of wide natural diversity; neither New England nor the Pacific North-West are to-day definable strictly as geographic regions.

The Proper Place of the Region in Political Organization

We are faced, then, with a paradox: Existing political units are subject to

strain and inconvenience because they bear little relationship to regional divisions. To meet this urgent problem, both federal countries have created regional administrations whose authority lies somewhere between the federal and state levels. Yet these new units are in most cases as geographically diverse as those they were designed to assist. The success of TVA, its geographical arbitrariness notwithstanding, poses the question whether the geographical region is, after all, a useful unit in government. The political scientist must answer this question, but the geographer can testify as to its importance.

The merit of the geographic region without doubt lies in its uniformity of relationship between economic activity and the physical environment. Within it, any problem which affects the economy of part can reasonably be expected to affect the whole; and the soundest way of meeting the problem is to treat it right across the region. This is precisely what TVA fails to do; within its own boundaries it has functioned successfully right up to the watershed and even beyond. But the problems of each partial geographic region within the Tennessee Valley extend beyond the watershed and are hence being tackled piecemeal, by one authority within the Valley and by others outside it.

It is sometimes said that a planning unit gains by geographical diversity⁷; that a multiplicity of endowment encourages economic self-sufficiency within the unit. It may be doubted, however, whether even a limited gain in such self-sufficiency would really be to the national advantage; nor would it be feasible in the America of to-day, where trade and commerce are adapted to nation-wide markets. We return, then to the basic thesis that economic and physical planning is best undertaken in geographic regions as a whole. Only within such a framework can an inter-state problem be tackled effectively.

⁷ See views of H. W. Odum in his "American Regionalism" (with H. E. Moore), Holt, 1938.