

TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE GENOA CONFERENCE: WORK NEEDED: SCOTTISH, NOT-HIGHLAND: ORIGIN OF PICTOU'S NAME: "CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM": A CROSSLESS CREED.

THERE are flatly contradictory assertions and beliefs with regard to the Genoa Conference. The more sanguine maintain that it was a success, the phlegmatic that it was a complete failure. To judge between the two contentions it is necessary to determine the exact purpose of the Conference, and to deduce from the degree of approximation to the achievement of that purpose the extent of success or failure. The avowed aim of the proponents of the Conference was understood to be the negotiation of international agreements whereby military and economic peace might be restored to Europe, and a return of prosperity might be made possible. The abstention of the United States from participation dealt the Conference a severe if not a deadly initial blow. France agreed with manifest reluctance to be represented, and only on conditions which were certain to hamper and restrict proceedings. Belgium aligned herself with France. Great Britain, under the guidance of Mr. Lloyd George in his most optimistic and enthusiastic spirit, was the prime moving force in favour of the Conference, and hoped to be its chief guide. Italy gave her general support to Britain. The neutral countries apparently counted for little either in the organization or in the deliberations of the Conference. To it came Russia and Germany in such an unrepentant frame of mind that they defiantly entered into an irregular agreement between themselves. Such were the constituent elements of the Conference. Did these presage success? In a military sense there was no war being waged in Europe. The only hostilities being formally carried on were between Greece and Turkish rebels in Asia Minor. It can scarcely be said that any immediate war was seriously threatened; for however willing Soviet Russia may be to attack her neighbours, she is not in possession of the necessary "sinews" for the purpose, nor is she likely to be able to secure them unless they can be borrowed from some one with more money than brains. Militarily the Genoa Conference left the situation practically unchanged. In that respect it accomplished nothing. Was it more

successful economically? Its purpose was to stabilize currency, restore international credits and make possible the resumption of international trade. Did it effect any of those aims? If so, which, and to what extent? In reply it can only be said that the information available with regard to the proceedings of the Conference does not justify a positive statement. It is alleged that much moral good was accomplished by bringing the representatives of so many nations together and enabling better understandings to be formed. What evidence is there in support of the contention? Day after day the Conference was on the verge of disruption. Russia and Germany, which should have come to pray, remained to deceive and try to bully. The amusing part of the bullying was Russia's attempt to force the more or less solvent nations to furnish her with a loan in support of which she had neither character nor security to offer. Germany was a little, but not much, more modest in her demands. France stood inflexibly firm in her position. It is almost as difficult to conceive what Mr. Lloyd George can have hoped to accomplish as it is to see anything he did effect.

WHETHER it was a success or a failure, the Genoa Conference is a thing of the past, and its sequel at the Hague is not likely to justify very high hopes. There is a deepening suspicion in the public mind that things are so badly out of joint economically, that something quite other than any Conference or series of Conferences is needed to set them right. Conference has come to be regarded as nearly if not quite synonymous with talk. Talk is not conducive to work, and work is what the world needs just now. If there had been much less talk and more prompt action at the Versailles Conference, the first after the war, things might have been in a much more satisfactory state than they are. Talk, and the fears and suspicions which it engenders, are contributing more than anything else to the present world unrest and inactivity. Talk, no matter how earnest or sincere, is never going to stabilize any nation's currency, restore its trade or improve its credit. Russia, the most insoluble of all the talked-of "problems", is simply something to be "given up" for the present. She is a wreck, made so by her own people. She has obliterated the means of production and almost of sustenance within herself. She submits to a government which she loathes and fears, and which no one can respect or trust. She has destroyed almost all her possessions, is producing nothing, and consequently has nothing wherewith to trade. She has neither national character nor available assets on which to borrow. She positively refuses to acknowledge past debts or to restore

the property of which she has robbed foreign nationals. Who is to lend her money? What sane private financier would think of doing so? To furnish her with an international loan would simply be to supply her on credit—when she has no credit whatever—with goods for which she would be unlikely to make any return. Canada lent Roumania twenty million dollars after the war, “to promote trade” with her. Roumania bought Canadian products to the amount of the loan and no doubt found them very useful. After consuming them, the thought of paying even interest on the “loan” apparently did not occur to her. Probably it never will. On what grounds money should be lent even to Germany which has some credit left, however little, although she owes most other countries, does not appear much more clearly. She is not being allowed to pay her war indemnities because she can pay them only in exported goods, and such goods would compete with and ruin the industries of the recipient countries. Why lend her more money to enable her to produce more goods for export and waste more money in reckless extravagance at home? The simple truth,—and the sooner it is recognized the better,—is that nations, like individuals, can recover from disaster only by industry and thrift. Nations, like individuals, have got to restore themselves, not to be restored by others. They have, first of all, to produce the wherewithal of trade, and next to re-establish their characters for trustworthiness. Thereafter, trade will naturally spring up and credit revive. No amount of talk, no multiplication of Conferences, can or will obviate the necessity for these preliminaries of any revival of confidence. Nations which still have the power to trade will have to trade where and with whom they best can, leaving their neighbours to do likewise or do without trade. A wrecked world is not to be restored suddenly by any artificial means. Time, patience, and much of both, will be required. In the meantime it is manifest nonsense to get excited over the agreement between Russia and Germany. That agreement changes nothing. Those two countries trade with each other as far as conditions will permit, as naturally as do Canada and the United States, and for a similar reason. Neither can revive fully without the other. If the desire of the world is for the most extended revival of trade possible, it should rejoice at the Russo-German agreement. It can work no immediate mischief. It may do some good. The distant future may safely be trusted to care for itself.

PICTOU is one of the counties of Nova Scotia and one of the constituencies of Canada which specially prides itself on the

intelligence of its people and their educational achievements, and has its claims generally and generously admitted when they are not made too vociferously. Pictou is preparing to celebrate, on the 15th of September, 1923, what some of its people are pleased to call "the 150th anniversary of its settlement." What it, in reality, intends to signalize is the arrival of the ship "Hector" with a band of Highland Scottish immigrants. The actual, permanent settlement of Pictou had been begun six years before the coming of the "Hector" by an organized and well-equipped company of settlers from Pennsylvania, composed of Lowland Scottish and "North of Ireland settlers. The selection of "Hector Day" as Pictou's natal day" was arbitrary and accidental. When a certain anniversary was approaching, a money-raising scheme for some public purpose was being contemplated. It was found that the tenth of June, the day of the arrival of the brig "Hope", bearing the Pennsylvania settlers, was not suitable for the occasion, and the later date of September fifteenth was chosen. Thus began the fiction of the "natal day," and from it sprang the assumption that Pictou was in origin a Highland Scottish settlement. As a matter of fact it was nothing of the kind, but owed its inception and early progress mainly to the "Hope" pioneers, to the South of Scotland band which came the year after the "Hector", and to the friends of both bands who followed them, chiefly from the extreme southern shires of Scotland. The old cemeteries of Pictou testify to this fact. The "Hector" party, according to the list given in Dr. Paterson's history, consisted of 58 men, heads of families or single, of whom only 27 settled in the county. The other 31 went elsewhere. On January 1st. 1770, three years before the coming of the "Hector", there were 17 families settled at Pictou, and a total population of one hundred and twenty. The township was regularly organized, with a full, effective list of town officers. It was comfortably supplied with live stock, and was raising considerable food supplies. Settlers were coming and going. For the year ending 1769, there had been 67 arrivals and 36 departures, leaving total gain of 31 in population for the settlement during the year. There is every reason to believe that similar or larger gains were made during the three following years prior to the arrival of the "Hector", so that its contingent of 27 actual settlers in the county made comparatively little impression. The population remained, and for many years continued, preponderatingly North of Ireland and Lowland Scottish. The Highlanders did not begin to come in considerable numbers until a quarter of a century later, when immigration on a large scale to the whole province set in. "A roll of the inhabitants of Pictou or

Tinmouth capable to bear arms," dated February 12th, 1783, shows not more than 25 per cent of Highland names, and probably many of their bearers really came from the Lowlands. The first great accession to the population came with the disbanding and placing at the close of the American war of the 82nd. British Regiment whose men were settled largely in East Pictou. There is scarcely a Highland name to be found in its long list of land grantees. When the Highlanders really began to come in strength to Pictou County they found its shores, main river valleys and more accessible districts occupied, and so, partly of necessity, partly from choice, settled on the hills, the slopes and the more distant valleys of the interior. Another reason for the wide-spread idea that Pictou was originally a Highland county probably is that there are so many "Macs" among the names of its people. The popular impression is that "Mac" denotes Highland origin. Nothing could be further from the truth. Outside of the great, well-known clans there are few names beginning with "Mac" in the Highlands. The home and centre of the "Macs" is in the old Principality of Galloway, comprising mainly the shire of Wigton and the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, with parts of Ayr and Dumfriesshire, in the extreme south of Scotland. "McGregor," for example, is unmistakably Highland; "McCulloch," is quite as unmistakably Gallovidian. Almost any unusual "Mac" name that can be thought of is of Gallovidian, or of Irish Gallovidian origin. At the present time Pictou is distinctively a Scottish county; but there is at least as much of Lowland as of Highland blood in the veins of its people. It was Lowlanders and North of Ireland men who founded and established the settlement, and opened up the county to trade and industry.

PICTOU County has another distinction. It, almost if not quite alone among the counties of the Dominion, does not know the origin of its name. The name, absolutely without reason, was formerly supposed by some to be a corruption of Poitou. It was even so spelled in certain public documents of a century ago. But the oldest known French maps and publications give it as "Pictou." Dr. Paterson, in his history of the County, sets forth a number of more or less fanciful guesses at its derivation. He admits, however, that "when such differences of opinion exist among the learned, we are obliged to leave the matter unsettled." But are we? Is not the question too interesting to be thus given up? Let us at least enquire further. The name first appears in connection with French explorations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, more than a century in advance of settlement—on the maps sent home by the explorers.

Those explorers, at that time, had had little or no intercourse with the Micmac Indians of Nova Scotia, and were ignorant of their language. They gave names to the places which they visited, in accordance with some outstanding natural feature, some incident of the voyage at the place named, or some religious association. The name Pictou first appears in the sketches of a voyage which, quite evidently from the descriptions, followed the northern shore of the peninsula of Nova Scotia from the Strait of Canso westward. What is now called "Pictou Harbour" was approached from the east, and was named "Riviere Pictou". It is, in reality, a river estuary, and was so regarded by the earlier British settlers. They spoke of it as Pictou River, and of its three affluents respectively as West, Middle and East Pictou River. Pictou River proper is a tidal stream four or five miles in length from the tributary river-mouths to the "Harbour mouth," and a little over a mile in average breadth. Across this, at the entrance to Northumberland Strait, extends a long, narrow sand-bar or prong of land, confining the exit of the River and the ingress of the tide to a channel of only a few score yards in breadth. When they came to this river, sailing from the east, the French would see from their decks over the low sand-beach a wide stream flowing from the forests of the interior, and apparently choked at its mouth. Not until they were directly at the entrance to the Harbour, would they become aware of the narrow opening close to the western shore. This, all who know the locality will readily perceive, is what they must have seen and experienced. What would be the natural name for it, from their point of view? A projection of land, such as the Pictou beach, is known in both French and English as a gaff or hook. We are familiar with it in such a name as Sandy Hook, etc. The French word for our words "gaff" or "hook," is "pic." The French word for "all," is "tout," pronounced "too." As we recall what lay before their eyes, is there not an irresistible suggestion in this? They saw a river (Riviere) a mile or more in width, "gaffed" by a "hook" (Pic), and narrowed to a hundred yards or so at its exit—"all gaffed," or "hooked," as they had supposed, and as anyone approaching from the sea might still suppose, until directly opposite the narrow opening. "Pic-tout" might not be "good grammar," but French sailors of that time were no more concerned about grammar than are their English congeners of to-day. So, "Riviere Pic-tout" (Pictou) probably went down on their maps, as the "feature name" of the place, to be afterwards copied as "Pictou," and Pictou, without the final, silent letter, has remained to this day. The name is self-explanatory in spoken French. This may be a novel suggestion, but

that does not detract from its probability which is based on circumstances and known language, not on mere fancy and wholly imaginary Micmac.

THIS is a very sick world just now—sick nigh unto death—and its illness is far more mental than physical. Its physical or economic constitution was of course very seriously affected by the war, and hysteria supervened. It threatens to become chronic. It is not only Governments but peoples that are afflicted. The primary symptom of the disease is the insane delusion that pious aspirations and legislation are panaceas in national, and Conferences in international, affairs. "Christian Socialism" is the fancied cure-all in community concerns. Christian Socialism may always be recognized, as has been aptly remarked, by the manifest fact that it is neither Christian nor Socialistic. It is epidemic sentimentalism become acute. It "means well," and does ill. It mistakes "the heart" for the mind, and the feet for the head. Because Christ was helpfully sympathetic, it imagines it can be sympathetically helpful, that is, can worse than waste its sympathy and still do good. It is an advocate of "standards of living" without standards of service, standards of pay without standards of work, and standards of luxury and amusement without regard to economic laws or conditions. Its prophets are of the innocent faith that everybody can be made comfortable and happy by the fiat of the benevolent, regardless of production, of what there may be to distribute, and of whether labour functions at twenty-five per cent of its normal capacity or at a hundred per cent. An old adage has it that when the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be. The world is quite unlike the devil in this respect. The sicker it becomes, the more incorrigible it grows. And there is only one promising medicine for it, to wit, *starvation*. Nothing but hunger, apparently, will restore men to their senses and enable them to realize that it was the alleged author of "Christian Socialism" who declared that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat. That is the old, beneficent, natural cure for lazy and greedy man. Men began by having to work, and work hard, for a living; they will end in the same way. What they shall eat must always depend, in the long run, on what they can produce or find. It is much harder in these times to find than to produce. From the closing of Eden's gates until now, man has been fated to earn his living in the sweat of his brow, and it has been the very best thing that ever happened to him. He will find it so until the end of time. There is no tonic so good for him as a little hunger, to revive his taste for work and thrift. But the

idea that everybody should "sympathize with the poor workingman" is the prevailing fad, and will have its day. All thought or expectation of corresponding duty from him to the public is out of date for the time being. Few care, or have the wisdom to recall and try to comprehend the full meaning of Christ's declaration that His Kingdom is not of this world, or to recognize, when they couple His name with Socialism, that present-day Socialism is, above all things, of the earth earthy, that it concerns itself exclusively with the material and temporal, and is the very concentrated theoretical essence of human selfishness. Its characteristic doctrine is Force, not either Love or Duty.

Of Duty was the first recorded word
 Of Him who lived to seek, to guide, to save,
 When He, within the haughty temple-courts
 Of old Jerusalem, held high discourse
 With those who prated of their Social Rights.
 He said to anxious friends who sought Him there,
 "Do ye not wist, my Father's business calls?"
 And little praised He even duties done
 Save when they sprang from hearts attuned to good.
 Yet those, His followers who claim to be,
 With minds absorbed in gross material thoughts,
 Now preach of "property" as if it were
 The all-important thing for every man,
 As if on it depended rise or fall
 In aught that worthy is in human life.
 They call for livings "standardized" to meet
 The envious wants and covetous desires
 Of such as scorn the teachings and the ways
 Of Him who had not where to lay His head,
 Yet lived a life of helpfulness sublime
 And happiness in sense of duty done.
 The Mammon-priests would raise a gilded cross
 Whereon to sacrifice the Lord afresh.
 Their Crossless creed exalting over His,
 They prompt the people to acclaim their choice;
 And these, to parody His trial scene,
 Reclaim their new Barabbas, not their King.

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