

# TOPICS OF THE DAY

NEW PARLIAMENT AT OTTAWA: CANADA'S TRADE WITH BRITAIN:  
PROBLEMS OF POPULATION: THE WAR AND LITERATURE:  
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THE FIRST SESSION of the new Federal Parliament of Canada has provided convincing evidence that it is an immense improvement upon its two immediate predecessors. In each of them there existed a very unhealthy situation, in which the Liberal party possessed such an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons that it could afford to treat with contempt the comparatively feeble Opposition furnished by three discordant groups, whose members saw eye to eye on very few issues and could not muster among them much debating power. This unfortunate state of affairs has now been terminated by the reduction of the Liberal majority to very narrow dimensions, and for the first time since 1935 an effective and vigilant Opposition, which is essential to the successful working of parliamentary democracy, is active at Ottawa. In this welcome change the chief factor is the notable reinforcement, both in numbers and in quality, which the Progressive-Conservative party secured through the last general election. It has now among representatives in the House of Commons a sufficient number of competent parliamentarians to sustain a prolonged debate on any subject. Moreover its leader, Mr. Bracken, has made the fullest use of the talents at his disposal by organizing his followers in a series of groups, to each of which was assigned the duty of becoming informed specialists on an important phase of national policy. As a result, the Progressive-Conservatives were able to subject Ministerial measures and policies to intelligent constructive criticism, and to force eminently desirable modifications of some of them.

Mr. Bracken is not and never will be a parliamentarian of first-rate calibre, but he has acquired a proper conception of the Leader of the Opposition, and has revealed a surprising tenacity in debate as well as almost aggressive confidence in his own powers. His outstanding lieutenant has been Mr. J. M. Macdonnell, one of the older recruits produced for the party by the late election. His long experience in the world of finance has equipped him to be a very formidable critic of the Government's financial and fiscal policies. Since he is essentially a moderate, and completely free from partisan rancour, his criticisms and views have begun to carry considerable weight in the country. Major-

General Pearkes, V.C., has also shown a capacity for parliamentary work, which is very rare in eminent soldiers, and two younger members with fine war records, Lieutenant-Colonel Merritt, V.C., and Mr. Fulton, have also made very promising debuts in the House of Commons. Thanks to this much needed reinvigoration of the Progressive-Conservative party, its performances during the session have created a very favorable impression in the country, and it has already regained from the C.C.F. party the title, which it had forfeited in the last Parliament, to be regarded as the most powerful antagonist of the Liberals. The superior prestige of the C.C.F. during the war years was largely due to the great parliamentary abilities of its leader, Mr. M.J. Coldwell; he still remains the most attractive speaker and lucid debater in the Commons, but he is handicapped by a dearth of able lieutenants, and he acquired no recruits of notable quality from the last election.

The C.C.F. has also to contend with the persistent vendetta pursued against it by the Social Credit group, but it need not fear comparison with them in any way. Time was when the province of Alberta sent to Ottawa contingents of Federal representatives whose average ability was higher than that of the members elected by any other province. Lord Bennett, Mr. Frank Oliver, Dr. Michael Clark, Mr. C. A. Magrath, Senator W. A. Buchanan, Mr. Justice Bury, Mr. G. G. Coote and Mr. E. J. Garland were in different Parliaments men of mark, whose talents brought credit to their province and gave it an effective voice in the councils of the nation. But, since a majority of the voters of Alberta became infected with Social Credit, they seem to have lost their old powers of discernment in the selection of parliamentary members. At any rate, the Social Crediters, who represent three-fourths of Alberta's constituencies in the present Parliament, have, with a few exceptions, been earning for themselves the reputation of being fanatical; men who scorn the normal processes of reasoned discussion and intelligent controversy. They spend endless time harping upon their pet panacea for the world's financial and economic problems, but they never propound any practical plan for applying it. Posing as fervid pro-British patriots, they preach an old-fashioned Imperialist gospel, which is antiquated even in Toronto. Scenting a sinister international banker behind every bush, they see nothing but evil in any kind of international authority, and during last session proved perverse but unsuccessful obstructionists of various measures designed

to provide the foundations for a new world order. In short, most of them were nuisances, who made no serious contribution to debate, and the voters of Alberta should discard them as soon as possible, if they want to recover credit for an intelligent use of their franchise.

Naturally Prime Minister King and his Ministers, after their long spell of over-mastering ascendancy in the Commons, do not like the new order of things at Ottawa. They are no longer able to treat Parliament as a rubber stamp for the swift endorsement of their bills and policies, and they have had to take cognisance of adverse criticisms on the part of the public, as in the case of the tariff increases embodied in the last Budget and subsequently withdrawn. The Government front bench remains fairly strong in debating power, but since there is an ominous scarcity of capable parliamentarians among the English-speaking Liberals on the Ministerial back benches, and many of their French-Canadian colleagues are handicapped by their inadequate command of English, the Government has often been worsted in debate. So there has been a real revival of parliamentary democracy at Ottawa, and it should produce a more intelligent discussion of public issues and more efficient administration of the country's affairs.

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**T**HE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM immediately confronting the King Ministry concerns new trade arrangements between Canada and Britain, and practical negotiations between the two countries will begin shortly after the opening of the new year. British people have in prospect some easement of their financial difficulties through the succour which the United States has undertaken to provide, but they remain gravely impoverished by the war. The maintenance at a decent standard of living of some 45 million people on a restricted insular territory, which has no valuable natural resources except coal and the best pastures in the world, presents a truly desperate problem. Peace has brought them release from danger to their lives, but little alleviation of their trials and hardships, and they are still compelled to practise in their mode of daily living a sterner austerity than in the worst days of the war. By all accounts they are at the moment in a curious but quite intelligible temper. They are too enlightened politically not to be conscious that some kind of strong world authority must be created to end the international anarchy which was responsible for two world-

wide bloodbaths in thirty years, and to give vigorous backing to its creation. But otherwise their mood is definitely nationalist and self-centred. They are oppressed with a sense of humiliation that as a world power they have now been relegated to an rank inferior both to Russia and to the United States, and they are decidedly out of patience with the policies which both the Russians and the Americans have been pursuing since the war ended. They feel they are being asked to shoulder an unfairly heavy burden of responsibility for the solution of problems like the imbroglio in Palestine and the rehabilitation of devastated countries, and they are sick and tired of having the policies which they adopt for these problems made the target for what they regard as ill-informed criticism. So they are now showing a disposition to make the restoration of their own financial and economic fortunes their primary concern, and they intend to be very hard bargainers in their trading negotiations with other countries, including Canada.

The recent actions of their Government in refusing licenses for the import of many kinds of manufactured goods from Canada and forbidding British ships to victual in Canadian ports have aroused resentment in certain quarters in Canada, and on the surface they seem a rather poor requital for the generous gifts of money and supplies which Canada made to Britain during the war years. The British Government has explained that the ban upon imports of Canadian manufactured goods is dictated by sheer financial necessity, and will be gradually relaxed as soon as an improvement in Britain's external financial position permits. But the measures which have been taken have not created in Canada an atmosphere favorable to generous trade concessions and provisions of credit to Britain. Yet at the same time our Government cannot afford to disregard the fact that the poverty-stricken countries of Western Europe and the Orient will be poor customers for Canadian products for many a long day; that substitute markets in the Latin-American countries will require time to develop; and that the United States is not likely to encourage any great flood of exports from Canada. So the prospect is that Britain will continue to offer the best available market for the disposal of our heavy exportable surpluses of foodstuffs, and that it will be a fundamental interest of Canada to promote her economic recovery by every possible means within the limit of her resources. But the British have definitely served notice upon Canada that there must henceforth be an

equitable balance in the trade exchange between the two countries, and that, if Canada cannot see her way to sanction a much greater inflow of imports from Britain than existed in the pre-war years, Britain will perforce be compelled to curtail her annual intake of Canadian goods. Any serious curtailment of this would spell hard times for many of our natural producers, and so the King Government in its negotiations with Britain will have to choose between earning their displeasure and alienating many of our industrialists by lowering tariff barriers against British goods.

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THE population of the world and its distribution deserve more serious study than they receive, because changes in the latter have a vital bearing upon the fortunes and policies of nations. Moreover, the problems involved merit special attention at a time when the political structure of the world is being drastically reshaped. The upheaval of the late war has prevented the great majority of countries engaged in it from compiling accurate data about their population since 1939, and the last generally authoritative data are figures published in the League of Nations *Statistical Year Book* for 1940, which placed the total population of the world at the end of 1940 at 2,170,000,000. From the same source the following data about its distribution in different sections of the world are given: Asia (excluding the U.S.S.R.), 1,154,000,000; Europe, (excluding the U.S.S.R.) 403,000,000; the U.S.S.R. in Europe and Asia, 172,000,000; North America, 184,000,000; Africa, 157,000,000; South America, 88,500,000; and Oceania, 11,000,000.

In the present century the largest growth of population has occurred in certain sections of Asia. In the last 40 years, health measures enforced by the Government of India and an increase in the area of cultivable land through irrigation schemes have accelerated the pace of the population of that country's growth so much that it has risen from 284,000,000 to 388,000,000. In 1870 the population of Japan was estimated at 35 millions, and at the outbreak of the war it had been doubled. In China a high rate of increase has been nullified continually by the ravages of famine, but in 1939 its total population was estimated at roughly 429 millions.

When the Japanese are confined to their home islands, they will perforce be compelled to curtail their recent rate of

increase, which was about a million per annum, or starve. But if China enters upon an era of peace and industrial development, accompanied by improved sanitation, she can be expected to have about 600 million people by 1990, and the forecast is that the population of India will then exceed 500 millions. Rapid expansion of the population of Indonesia can also be safely predicted, and therefore authoritative statisticians calculate that by 1990 China and Southeastern Asia will between them have an aggregate population of over 1,550,000,000. These figures indicate that it will be extremely difficult for the weakened nations of Europe to retain permanently any kind of Imperialist domination over the areas which they have controlled in this region of the earth. Russia, including Siberia, whose population was placed in 1939 at 172,000,000, has suffered tremendous losses of men during the war, but both her quota of child-bearing women and her annual birth-rate have remained so high that her population in 1990 is forecast at 325 millions. Accordingly, if the populations of Japan, Turkey and the Arab countries are taken into account, there is a distinct chance that by 1990 Russia and the Asiatic countries together will have between them nearly 2,000 million inhabitants, a figure reasonably near the total population of the world in 1939.

Against this mass, the other "white" countries of the world apart from Russia will numerically be in a very inferior position. Allowing for the white population of Africa and Oceania, relatively small in both cases, they could muster between them in 1939 about 675,000,000 people. But in the pre-war era in Europe only the Balkan countries, Italy and Poland had a high reproductive rate, and the populations of countries like Britain and France are faced with a decline. Moreover, famine and disease are expected to take a heavy toll of lives in Europe this winter, and if Germany is cooped up between the Rhine and the Oder, she cannot possibly support her present population. Consequently Russia, if she keeps the states now behaving as her satellites tied firmly to her, will in 1990 possess more man-power than the rest of Europe together. Furthermore, she will probably have nearly double the man-power of all the Anglo-Saxon countries combined, as their total population, now estimated at about 210 millions, is not likely to rise above 250 millions by 1990.

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THE REAL LITERATURE of the Second World War has yet to be written. Upon the strategy and tactics of the war a substantial volume of interpretative writing and comment has been forthcoming from the pen of authoritative experts like Captain Liddell-Hart and Major George Fielding Elliot, and there has been a considerable flood of books, written in impressionist "journalese" by enterprising war correspondents, among whom the late Ernie Pyle, an American, and Alan Moorehead, an Englishman, have deservedly earned pride of place by reason of their arresting style of writing and their gift of imagination. But the outflow of poetry both in quantity and in quality has been far inferior to what the shorter war of 1914-18 produced. During its course, a long list of gifted young poets—Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Allan Seager, Joyce Kilmer, John McCrae and Julian Grenfell are some of the names that occur instantly to one's mind—were moved by that war to write poems which will have an abiding place in the literature of the Anglo-Saxon race, and both Germany and France produced some poetry which will survive. But there has been no comparable stirring of the Muse of Poetry during the struggle lately ended, and the high praise lavished upon the verses of one young English poet, Alun Lewis, who fell in action, is an indication of the meagreness of the war's poetic stream. As for personal narratives of experience during the war by fighting men, or novels based upon experience, it is perhaps premature to expect them at this date. Books like *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, *The Spanish Farm*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Her Privates We* and *Undertones of War* were not published until several years had elapsed after the end of the First World War. But long before it ended, at least two notable books, Ian Hay's *The First Hundred Thousand* and Henri Barbusse's *Under Fire*, were given to the world, and there has been no counterpart of them in the late war. Among the personal narratives which have so far been published, two books are outstanding in their quality, *Pipe-line to Battle* by Major P. W. Rainier, who came to an untimely end through injuries suffered in a fire in a hotel in the Red Lake mining camp in Northwestern Ontario, and *Beyond the Chindwin*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard Fergusson, of the Black Watch, who was the commander of a column under the late General Orde Wingate, the strange and fascinating character who before his death in an aeroplane accident attained international fame as an amazing organizer of guerilla warfare first in Abyssinia and

later in Burma. Lieutenant-Colonel Fergusson tells a stirring story with great literary artistry and, if any better books are written about this war, they will be worth reading.

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ON DECEMBER 12, the United States Cruiser *Augusta*, on which the *Atlantic Charter* was signed, conveyed the ashes of Philip Kerr, seventh Marquis of Lothian, who died in the winter of 1940, while serving as British Ambassador at Washington, to the Clyde, and a few days later the casket containing them was interred in the ancestral vault of his family, the Kerrs of Ferniehirst, amid the ruins of the ancient abbey of Jedburgh in the Scottish borderland. In accordance with the wishes of Lord Lothian, the service at the grave consisted of short reading from the Bible and the text-book of Christian Science, a faith of which he was a zealous devotee in his later years. The aristocracy of Scotland, which through the generations has been a very expensive burden to the country, has never been lacking in the military virtues, but in the last century it has produced only three men of first-class brains: namely, the 8th Duke of Argyll, who was the friend and Cabinet colleague of Gladstone, the 5th Earl of Rosebery, the brilliant and erratic genius, who after holding the office of Prime Minister for a brief unhappy spell relapsed into political insignificance and never fulfilled his early promise, and the late Marquis of Lothian, who was the ablest and most attractive figure of the trio.

Philip Kerr, as he was better known, was endowed with a fine brain and a singularly sweet character, and from his youth onwards he devoted himself in a spirit of complete disinterestedness to the service of his country and the whole of mankind. An aristocrat by lineage, he was a practising democrat in his ways of life and general outlook. No other British politician of his generation had such a sympathetic understanding of North America and its inhabitants, or so many warm personal friends among them. All his days politics were his ruling passion, but he was not a normal type of politician, for he never sought office and held only a subordinate post in a British Ministry for a brief period. He had little patience with partisan political warfare, believing that without a moral and spiritual concept of man happiness was unattainable and most of our mundane problems were insoluble. One who knew him well wrote of him recently:



The effect of his philosophy on his daily dealings was to make him calm, peaceable, cheerful, industrious and immensely likeable. It was felt by all that his influence tended to unite men, not to divide them, to attract and never to repel, to encourage their virtues and stimulate their minds and to make them aware of their own deeper natures and their more lasting interests.

It is indeed a tragedy that his great and lovable figure should have been cut off in the prime of his powers and should not survive to give his powerful support to the movement for some form of genuine world government, which is now rapidly accumulating influential adherents through realization of the revolutionary consequences of the atomic bomb. Mr. Bevin, the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, and his Conservative predecessor, have both pronounced themselves convinced believers in its necessity, our own Prime Minister has ranged himself behind them, and in the United States a vigorous movement in favour of it is developing under the leadership of Mr. Owen Roberts, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court, and other eminent Americans. If Lord Lothian had lived, he would have been a strenuous labourer in this particular vineyard, as the problem of abolishing war and securing for mankind an assurance of settled peace was during his later years his chief preoccupation.

In his view, the most essential function of any state was to establish peace within its own territory, and this was achieved not by abolishing the use of force but by monopolizing it so that the legal violence of the state, i.e., police action, became irresistible. By this means peace, but not necessarily justice and liberty, would be assured within every state. But since the fundamental element of peace is the Government monopoly of the use of force or violence, the inevitable consequence is that peace in the positive sense of an organic institution can exist only inside sovereign states and cannot exist between such states. Consequently anarchy or the absence of government has prevailed in their relations and under a condition, when there is no monopoly of the use of force, war, which is the opposite of legal violence, must remain a constant contingency. So Lord Lothian held that this anarchy between sovereign states rather than the wickedness or greed or foolishness of nations and individuals was the prime cause of war, and that accordingly the only sure remedy for war lay in the termination of this anarchy.

He never minimized the difficulties involved in abolition

of the sovereignty of the separate states. But he perceived that there were available two methods for the attainment of the political unity of the world. One was the method of dictatorship, the conquest and subjection of the other peoples, which the Nazis and their sinister allies tried and came very near bringing to successful accomplishment. The second method was the use of the political instrument of federation, which alone could be acceptable to peoples committed to parliamentary democracy, because it guaranteed the preservation of fundamental human liberties. From such reasoning Lord Lothian was led to the practical conclusion that the most important political objective of the intelligent citizens of our democracies should be the federation of all the democratic states under a common Government. At one period of his career he was a zealous worker for the cause of the federation of the British Commonwealth, largely because he believed that it was a microcosm of the future world state, but before his death he had come to realize that this aim was too narrow, and had become a convinced internationalist. His thesis was that as long as the peoples of the world failed to achieve real political unity through some form of federation, they would remain in peril of being forced into it by the process of armed conquest, and it was the central theme of the many admirable speeches which he delivered to British and American audiences from 1936 onwards. His finest exposition of it was given in the *Burge Memorial Lecture* at Oxford in 1936, under the title "Pacifism is not Enough". If Lord Lothian were alive to-day, he would have found invaluable ammunition for his advocacy of a world government in the emergence of the atomic bomb. A competition in armaments on the level of the atomic bomb is unthinkable, and therefore somehow or other war must be finally abolished. But the argument of Lord Lothian, that only the establishment of some form of world government can assure its abolition, still holds good.

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