

TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE PROBLEM OF QUEBEC: FUTURE OF INDIA: THE TOP OF THE RIDGE: POST-WAR PLANNING.

THE PROBLEM OF QUEBEC has assumed a new gravity with the results of the national plebiscite. Whether we like it or not, the St. Lawrence province is strongly, indeed passionately, opposed to the conscription of her sons for any unreserved participation in the Canadian war effort. In this respect, the people of Quebec are by no means singular. There are other groups, also of non-British origin, mostly in the western provinces, who are of the same mind. Their attitude is serious enough, but not quite in the same way. Quebec was and remains a partner in the union of Confederation that makes Canada a nation. On a question of vital concern in a time of war, apparently of such importance that its settlement required the extraordinary apparatus of a national plebiscite, French and English speaking Canada have come to a head-on collision.

The main effect of the plebiscite has been to reveal the folly of introducing this dubious instrument into our democratic government. The taking of the popular vote has not created the bad blood between the two nations of Canadian life, but it has accelerated its circulation. The majority party look for the Cabinet to accept the popular verdict and to become released effectively from their pledges in the only way any intelligent voter expected—by the enactment of conscription. On the other hand, French-Canada has become aware of herself in the most undesirable of ways—as a separate, minority group. The common danger to which we are all exposed, and the great cause to which we all adhere, should have united Canada as never before. Instead, through bungling and evasion, the French and English are engaged in mutual recriminations. A Fifth Columnist could not have accomplished worse results among us. The majority are now asking whether a minority is to dictate the national policies of Canada, and especially to hold us back from what is considered to be essential for the complete waging of war. The minority, on the other hand, fall back on old grievances, real or imagined, certainly long-cherished, and cry that they are misunderstood.

Questions of national unity, especially in time of war, inevitably arouse emotions of a violent and heated character,

but intensity of feeling may create heat and smoke rather than light. The problem of Quebec, like all other tensions in human relationship, demands that it should be understood. However, a rational approach is rendered difficult because of the irrational factors involved. In Quebec we are dealing with very powerful sentiments, compounded of strong loyalties to race, language and religion. These potent bonds are among the strongest in human life, but in Quebec they gain an added power through the influences of history and geography.

To maintain their distinctive character, the people of Quebec are inevitably driven to adopt defensive and self-protective policies. In the vital matter of language they find themselves isolated from the one hundred and thirty millions of people with whom they are in geographical and economic union. They have only to twist the dials of their radio sets to find the English language pouring in upon them. Or if they travel beyond Quebec, in the seats of government, in places of business, in the press and in common speech they find themselves aliens in an alien land unless they adopt the language of the great majority. To their fellow North-Americans they are a queer people, sometimes to their irritation they find themselves regarded as quaint, old-world and unprogressive. Consequently, they become militant in the defence of rights, and develop prejudices and suspicions, often where such attitudes are not justified.

The complaint of Quebec is not only that they are misunderstood, but that there is no desire on the part of the English-speaking people of Canada to appreciate the Quebec point of view. Their lives are rooted in a tradition which to their leaders has become a self-conscious culture. They are essentially an agrarian people, profoundly Catholic in their religious faith, with a love of family and a deep attachment to a distinctive way of life. Around them flows the great tide of North-American life, restless, acquisitive, aggressive in manner and outlook. In the pattern of its life Quebec is ancestral almost as China itself, with the same impermutable movement of existence in which the generations rise up and pass away. We others, even the oldest Canadians among us, are really the newcomers to the North-American scene. Moreover they assert with much bitterness that politically they have been grievously abused. To the English-speaking Canadian, conscription may be the very pledge of loyal adherence to a cause that has emotional attachments to the roots of our life as a British nation, but for the people of Quebec it has a very

different and most hateful connotation. They protest that during the last war the enforcement of conscription was fastened upon them with a ruthless disregard of their distinctive sensibilities. We are further told that, ever since, this wound to their feelings has been maintained as an open sore on every election platform, until the very word conscription has become a battle-flag against which they are always ready to fight in defence of their rights. All this may be deplorable, as indeed it is, but it has to be taken into account if we are to understand the mind of Quebec.

On the other hand, the leaders of Quebec ought to understand the outlook of English-speaking Canada. How far do they appreciate the exasperation their attitude of mind inevitably creates when they insist on rights, but say so little about duties? The isolationist outlook on international affairs has proved to be a fallacy that has already brought us to the edge of great perils. The French-Canadians should not be astonished when their plea that they are ready to defend their native soil but not to send any abroad not only irritates but enrages. What, ask members of the majority group, are we going to do with such perverse and defeatist ignorance? Are we to bind our national policies by surrender to a doctrine so utterly out of relation to the realities of a great world-conflict, in which we are fighting for our lives? Thus, Canada becomes divided against herself, riven asunder by prejudice and suspicion.

Quebec has become a problem for Canada, but also for herself. She wants to be in the Dominion, but equally she wants to remain apart. She is confronted with the unhappy distractions of a divided mind. With wise handling and a goodwill that does not degenerate into weakness, we may survive this crisis in our national life, but clearly the whole question of the Canadian future is raised. A federal constitution endeavours to preserve a delicate balance of interest and power between the partners, but if it is to develop beyond a mere *modus vivendi* for divergent groups, distinctive political virtues must be cultivated. A time of crisis is the test of its success. Many had hoped that the threat to our very existence in the present war might have provided the sense of mutual involvement in a common destiny that would have brought to a worthy fruition all the labors and hopes of the best that has been in Canada. It seems that we still have a long way to travel before we become a united nation. In any falling apart of our Canadian confederation, we all have much, but Quebec has everything, to lose. We need nothing so

much as a great renewal of faith in one another, that takes its rise in a still deeper confidence in Canada itself, and then the active promotion of a common understanding between the estranged sections of our life in this Dominion.

THE FUTURE OF INDIA developed a new urgency with the fall of Singapore and the Japanese invasion of Burma. The problem became concerned not with the possibility of breaking an old imperial tie but of exchanging it for a new enslavement. Britain had an explicit responsibility for the defence of India. By deliberate policy, in all devolution of authority upon Indian hands, ultimate control of the armed forces was reserved to the imperial authority. But it became a matter of gravest practical importance that the Indian people should be united in a supreme effort to repel the Japanese invaders. Accordingly, the momentous decision was taken that the Indian leaders should be liberated from a long pre-occupation with questions of political status by a firm offer of Dominion self-government within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Thus, suddenly, a new and unexpected turn was taken in the long history of British-Indian relations. The order of intercourse between the two parties was completely reversed. In place of Indian demands being pressed on a reluctant imperial power, the overtures now began from the British side. The discussions were conducted on Indian soil by a British envoy, who was notoriously favourable to the Indian contentions. Under these favourable conditions, hopes ran high that this momentous gesture would not only accomplish its immediate purpose but would also advance problems that had proved insoluble for years, to a new and happy stage of reconciliation.

Sir Stafford Cripps was unable to realize the project, which owed a great deal to his own bold statesmanship. But it would be a grave mistake to conclude that his mission was a complete failure. Much has been gained: indeed, probably far more satisfactory results have been attained than would have been possible under the establishment of Dominion home-rule. In spite of the desperate circumstances under which the offer was made, there was no reason to doubt its sincerity. The British Cabinet was not playing for position. The occasion demanded courage, good-will and faith, and in that spirit a settlement of the Indian question was conceived which a year ago would have seemed impossible. What has now been revealed is that the main

obstacles to the happiness of the Indian people arise at least as much from unresolved disunities among themselves as from their attachment to the British Raj. But, with the coming of quieter times and calmer judgments, a completely new beginning can be made in a future endeavour to solve the problem of Indian government. Such is the great good that has been achieved by Sir Stafford Cripps's journey to the Orient.

A Chinese wit is credited with the observation that the modern skies have been darkened by the flight of chickens coming home to roost. Even under the threat of invasion and with the long-demanded boon of *swaraj* at last a firm proposal, the old questions that had trailed across conference after conference, debate after debate, could not be submerged. The impasse that led to the great refusal was an Indian deadlock. The Congress Party wanted more than was offered: the minorities feared that the overtures went too far. The two antagonistic doctrines could not be reconciled, and Sir Stafford Cripps came home disappointed but hopeful and, so far as we can judge, leaving no bitterness behind to disturb the future.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who speaks as the Congress leader, maintained the intransigent position that Britain has not the right even to offer Dominion status to India. The future of India is a problem for Indians themselves to settle. His proposal is to call an All-Indian conference to decide on a constitution and apparatus of government. He cuts the knot of history by making every question open, including that of the British connection. He himself leaves us in no doubt as to where his own ideas would lead the destiny of his people. He believes that the British Empire is in process of dissolution, and that this course of events will be greatly speeded up by the present conflict. Mr. Nehru does not grieve over this spectacle of imperial decay, and from the practical point of view can hardly be expected to conceive a great future for his country by continued relationship within a political group that must shortly break up. For him, India must be set free to shape a new destiny, and his prophecy is that, as an Asiatic people, she will have her future affinities with China and Russia.

The optimism of Mr. Nehru is not shared by all his fellow-Indians. They have the gravest fears that the minority groups would be overborne by the Hindu community. And it must be recollected that the minorities together are really a majority of the Indian population. They do not like the British rule, but they have not sufficient confidence in the Congress leaders to exchange their present regulated relations within the Raj for a

problematic future under a new constitution, in which all arrangements would be left open and undecided. Moreover, these so-called minorities provide India's warriors, and the real question is not primarily one of India's status, but of her defence. They want self-government, but within a constitution which will be determined before they begin the new adventure in freedom, and not as a result of the experiment itself.

The fears of the minority groups appear to be rather well-founded when we read of the Congress solemnly dictating its policy as one of non-co-operative resistance to the Japanese. The non-Hindu groups know very well that the greatest influence in India is still Mahatma Gandhi. Although this extraordinary man has apparently retired from active leadership of the Congress party, the spell of his teaching remains on the Hindu mind. A non-violent opposition to the Japanese invasion would certainly impede their progress, but the only final result would be a new and terrible enslavement. There have been grave defects in the British rule over India, and, as the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps declared in the most palpable form, the time has now come for a very great change in the whole matter of India's political status. But it must have appeared to the more moderate minds among the Indian leaders, and especially to her military men, that it would be a preposterous act of folly to reverse the process of emancipation for the sake of a doctrinaire theory, especially when it was to be adopted in dealing with a people like the Japanese.

In the result (or rather lack of result) of the abortive negotiations, the people who have gained most are those who have most at stake in the future of India. These are the toiling millions, the village folk, the vast inarticulate masses. In all the discussions about India, theirs is a counsel that is never heard, for they have no voice with which to speak, and if they had, they would not know what to say. There is no need to impugn the sincerity of Mr. Nehru, Mr. Gandhi or any of the so-called leaders of the Indian people, but for whom do they speak, except the comparatively small vocal group of the influential classes, many of whom have derived all their ideas of liberty from an abused western civilisation? These men have a great and noble vision for their country, and Mr. Gandhi has pleaded and worked for the liberation of the untouchables. But who can doubt that, in any conquest of India by the Japanese, the most grievous sufferings would be visited upon her helpless poor? The Congress party declare that the ignorance and illiteracy of these people is in itself the greatest indictment of British misrule,

but this assertion will hardly bear much examination. The bondage of poverty did not begin with the European conquest. The British rule may have brought many sorrows, but it did not inaugurate the principle of untouchability, or the rigidity of the caste-barriers. Native industrialists have not shown themselves more enlightened than the English in the new, modern era of manufacturing expansion. By a continuation within the Commonwealth, and with the status of a British dominion, the condition of the Indian workers would certainly not deteriorate: rather there would be considerable hope of their improvement. Whereas the Japanese, with their doctrines of world conquest, would reduce not only the village people but also the proud Brahmins to a condition of abject slavery.

The inevitable prominence given to these dramatic discussions has tended to obscure the important share that India had already taken in the war effort. Her troops have fought with their traditional gallantry in all the eastern campaigns, in North Africa, in Syria, in Malaya and Burma. India has provided a vast arsenal for the production of war material. These resources will be of decisive value in the great battles that still have to be waged before we can begin to think of any new deal in the East. It seems very apparent that the old white domination of the Asiatic continent has come to a decisive end, but, in the meantime, we must fight to secure that the new régime, whatever it may be, is not to be determined by a victory of the Japanese.

THE TOP OF THE RIDGE was the most encouraging image used by Mr. Churchill in an unofficial speech delivered at Leeds during the month of May. The Prime Minister was describing the conditions then reached in the course of the war. With his capacity for eloquent speech, he compressed into a vivid and memorable picture almost a history of the conflict. The eye of the listener was invited to see a climber making a toilsome and difficult ascent, but as the traveller raises his head, he catches a glimpse of the crest, when he realizes not only that the going will become easier, but, as Mr. Churchill himself suggested, an an inviting prospect will open up before his gaze.

Mr. Churchill's metaphor is heartening for several reasons—first and mainly because of the speaker himself. He has been the great prophet of our common cause, but he has never indulged our hopes with flattering words. On the contrary, no voice has kept on proclaiming more consistently the difficulties we must

encounter, or the prodigious efforts that must be made before we can begin so much as to speak of victory. Then the British leader's words lend support to a growing sense of confidence among ourselves that the balance of power at last is beginning to tip on our side. There are substantial grounds for an assurance that while the end of the conflict is still obscure, it is certain, and perhaps nearer than we dare to anticipate. As yet, we have won no great victories, and possibly we may have to endure more humiliating defeats, but in our hearts we now can say as never before "Hitler cannot win!"

Chief among the sources of our assurance is our ability to "say not that we have conquered but that we survive." Nearly three years of warfare have elapsed, bringing disasters and defeats that would have surpassed all imagination when we entered the conflict. Up to date, we have not won a single victory, worthy of the name. Our valour has consisted in endurance against overwhelming odds, and a will to maintain the fight even when driven from stronghold after stronghold. The war began with what seemed the incredible alliance between Germany and Russia. Poland, which we entered the fight ostensibly to save, was reduced to ruin before we could begin to send her help. Shall we ever forget the late spring and early summer of 1940, the swift succession of defeats, the desertion of our chief ally, and the humiliation of withdrawal from the European continent? The heroism of Dunkirk and the courage of the Air Force over London will never die, but they were victories only in the sense that we prevented the enemy from accomplishing his purpose. In 1941 we were unable to deter the Axis powers from overrunning the East of Europe, and when Germany tore off her cynical mask to attack Russia, the Soviet armies could only retire, unbroken and undefeated, to the gates of Moscow and Leningrad. If anything was needed to provide additions for the dismal record, it was the desolating defeats that accompanied America's entrance into the war, to be followed by a series of disheartening reverses in the Orient at the hands of the Japanese. To have lived through all this, and still to be alive, is a great cause for hope.

Have we seen the worst? Past experience modifies any temptation to indulge in optimistic prophecies. There are very great campaigns to be fought during this present summer. Terrible battles will be waged on the soil of Russia, where the enemy can be calculated to exert all his powers in an attempt to burst into the East. The Japanese have still to reveal their hands. Whatever part they have been assigned in the campaign,

they will certainly cause, at least, diversions of our allied energy and forces to many points on the Pacific fronts, even if they do not add to the already formidable list of their conquests. In North Africa, the tide of battle ebbs and flows across the desert. And everywhere, at sea, the grim struggle for naval supremacy will be carried on, with its contingent effect on the vital matter of carrying supplies to the corners of the earth. Disaster may overtake us at any one of these spheres of action; nevertheless, at none of them could we now encounter any final defeat.

Our growth in power to produce materials of war is an invincible asset. On this North-American continent we think mainly of the immense industrial organization now at work in the manufacture of armaments, and with illimitable possibilities. This work can go at an increasing tempo until we cover the seas with ships, darken the skies with airplanes, and multiply tanks, guns and ammunition. Their combined strength will be united into an irresistible force. We have hardly begun to mobilise our available man-power. While the industrial plants of Germany are blasted from the air, our work of production and training can proceed with comparative immunity from attack. But we should not overlook the very great manufacturing capacity of the British Isles, still maintaining a tremendous pace. Nor should we minimise the efforts of India, Australia, South Africa, and of Russia also behind her battle-lines. Moreover, we have food in abundance, and a growing means of taking it where it is needed. "Hunger's savage tooth" may yet bite deeper than any other weapon of war into the hearts of our enemies.

We have materials, and we have the men to use them. There have been times when a sense of numb despair has possessed our hearts, as we contemplated the onward drive of the German armies. A similar impression was left when we heard of the Japanese, appearing now here, now there, always able to assemble an army for some new attack before which our meagre garrisons were driven out or captured. Always we seemed condemned to fight unequal battles against overwhelming odds. But we forget that, for more than a year of the war, the British armies were left to fight the Axis powers, unaided and alone. Meanwhile the battle-fronts spread all over the world, and the threat of invasion to Britain itself remained. When the Russians came in, their entrance brought no relief, and by the time the Americans could send help, the Japanese had been able to work incredible damage. There have been great losses, but over against them we have an immense access in fighting power. Day by day, our navies, armies and air force gain in strength.

The offensive spirit now begins to take shape in forms more tangible than distant hopes. Plans for a second front get beyond demonstrations in public squares and psychological devices to rattle the nerves of the enemy. We have been compelled to act long enough on the defensive. Now we can tune our hearts to another battlesong than that of

"He who fights and runs away
Can live to fight another day"

Our enemies have no place to which they can run, except home, and we must pursue them there until there is no doubt of their utter and complete defeat.

There are other less measurable but not unsubstantial sources for our confidence. We have a great and good cause—the defence of humanity. We seek no gains except the liberation of enslaved nations, we grasp at no new power except the right to organize the world on wiser lines. Our enemies have no such moral support. Their plans of conquest, however they are decorated with fine-sounding names—*Lebensraum*, dynamic conceptions of history, the re-organization of Asia—are really dreams of world-mastery, which the human race never could support, and now has surely outgrown. Once the tide of battle begins to sweep in upon the Axis powers, there will arise a mighty tornado of aroused strength, in which all the pent-up anger of enslaved and butchered nations will join. Then a pitiless storm of vengeance will hurl itself upon our foes, that should add the last and greatest to all the memorable lessons of history that the way of transgressors is hard.

POST-WAR PLANNING becomes a more realistic exercise with the growth of hope concerning an early victory. The planners have been busy ever since the first shots of the war were fired and they have kept on with remarkable persistence, producing schemes, founding societies, writing books, publishing pamphlets and passing resolutions. For a time, they aroused considerable impatience among people who declared that there was only one immediate duty—to get on with the war. However, even the most determined opponents of what they often dismiss as utopian dreaming are generally found to have some private plan of their own. Usually such schemes involve a very drastic handling of our enemies, varying all the way from a complete extermination of the German nation to the permanent enslavement of the Japanese. It is great gain that the need for considered plans should be so widely recognised, the more intelligent the thought

that is devoted to the subject, the better result may be anticipated.

All plans, of course, pre-suppose an allied victory. We are fighting for the right to devise our own future against enemies who have published their designs for a post-war world to all mankind. How the three Axis partners are going to reconcile their particular claims to world-mastery against one another, is a problem on which they do not appear to have provided any information. Our immediate task is to secure that such a situation shall never arise, although the resultant collision of interests might have created amusing possibilities. Much will depend on the nature of our victory, not only its completeness, which may be taken for granted, but the actual alignment of forces that participate in it. What, for example, will be the strength of the Soviet Union? And, how far will a victorious Russia be eager to exploit a chaotic Germany for revolutionary purposes to lead on, presumably, to a proletarian dictatorship? Where will France stand in the day of final battle? What of India? These questions are not raised to obscure the issues—rather to point out the imponderable factors that are involved, and to suggest that whatever plans may be devised they should provide for flexibility within a wide and general approach. Moreover the human emotions that are bound to be aroused, with the prejudices and memories that direct them, warn us against the fallacious suggestion of the over-worked term "blue-print". Happily, you cannot "blue-print" human life, and mankind, if given requisite freedom to do so, can generally be counted on to resist attempts at the process.

The more pessimistic of our prophets issue warnings that the measures requisite for winning the war inevitably militate against a satisfactory peace. Certainly, you cannot have a major upheaval without arousing violent emotions. The continent of Europe will be no Sunday-School party in the years that lie ahead. How will Poles, Norsemen, Danes, Dutchmen, Czechs or Greeks be able to think about Germans for a long time to come? But these are not the main grounds on which our gloomy forecasters dwell. They adduce two considerations in support of their sombre views—(1) that to wage a war against totalitarianism, democratic nations must themselves become totalitarian; we must relinquish the very liberty we are summoned to defend; (2) that the democratic powers will be so exhausted and impoverished that they will themselves be incapable of recovery.

These two points ought to be examined. They contain very obvious warnings, but there are compensating factors against

the possible dangers to which they attract attention. (1) Liberty and discipline need not be opposed. A nation may take upon itself the most exacting control of personal freedom and at the same time gain in moral stature, so long as the restrictions are self-imposed, and there is a general agreement upon the object for which the sacrifices are made. Indeed there comes a new access of patriotic feeling when a people pledges its entire resources to defend its rights. There is nothing inherently wrong with totalitarianism—it is the method of imposition and the motive from which it springs that provides a test of its moral value. Nevertheless, the heightened political devotion requisite for a supreme war effort cannot be long maintained. To such action there is likely to be equal and opposite reaction. Slackness and anarchy may ensue upon a time of excited industry and regulated life. This brings us to deal with the second argument of the foreboding mind. (2) We are certainly piling up economic troubles that seem to defy all accepted theories of the schools. While we in Canada are financing much of our own war expenditures from current revenues, nevertheless, we are creating enormous debts in the form of collective borrowing from ourselves as individuals. Moreover, we are sending vast quantities abroad, for which we shall never be paid. But with the example of international debts created by the last war before us, perhaps we should not be unduly concerned. What the war has revealed to us is the amazing capacity of a nation to organize itself for meeting an emergent need. Wage-controls and price-ceilings have been gladly accepted, with a curtailment of many articles that not so long ago had appeared to get beyond the stage of being regarded as luxuries. It seems that the best solution of our internal problems will be that of maintaining a war-time economy for quite a time after the war is over. If we do, there are real possibilities of returning to a more peaceful order without dangers of sudden collapse.

Our major problems in post-war planning are not concerned with our internal order, but with a new arrangement in international affairs. This war is the culmination of a long gathering Revolution in the world of nations. It is essential to hark back to the League of Nations and the causes of its failure. The futility of the Geneva plan lay not in itself, neither in theory nor in practice, but in the nations that adopted it—by far the great majority of the earth's peoples, even when we exclude, as we must, the United States of America. No first-class power really accepted the League idea, with its limitations on national sovereignty and its pledges to act in concert for common defence.

Mr. Streit, in his famous book, has endeavoured to fasten the blame for failure on the very principle of the League. He is correct in his diagnosis of the break-down, but the change to be made is not alone in name, but in ideals. There must be an acceptance of the rule of law in international affairs, based on a common civilization and then a will to surrender sovereign powers for the good of all. The bonds that unite the citizens of individual states must be extended to apply to nations. And, as we now see very clearly, there must be supra-national authority, with military power at its disposal to enforce its decisions. The devising of such a plan is the main post-war task.

The economic life has come to occupy a new importance in human affairs. The rapid development in productive capacity has followed upon the growth of inventive skill. The means of transportation between nations has become more rapid, so that a new interdependence of nations has made its appearance. The effect has been the building up of a new international order—the order of capital. At one time, men like Sir Norman Angel prophesied that the relations created by international capital were so close and intimate that they would actually make for peace. To-day we are not so sure. International capitalism has really nothing to gain from war, but its owners and directors are sometimes strangely blind. The effect of their commitments may act as a deterrent to strong action in a progressive cause when it is required. International capitalism, so far from being a war-monger, has really proved to be disposed towards the weak methods of appeasement. Over against the international cartels we have the rising power of international labor. A class-war is carried across political boundaries with the cry "Workers of the world, unite!" In future planning it must be kept clearly in mind that men often think with their stomachs and keep their consciences in pocket-books. Economic problems, if unresolved, may wreck the finest schemes of new world-building.

The success of post-war planning will depend, above all, on the extent to which we are able to register genuine civilized progress by the growth of a new spirit in man. An international order depends upon the emergence of humanity as an idea. Similarly, the only hopeful solution for economic questions is the view that production is for the use of men and not for the benefit of producers. All of this in turn involves a new and enlightened leadership, and a re-directing of public opinion through long-term policies of education.

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