

A Deep Sense of Injustice Smoulders in the Maritimes

By ALFRED CHILTON BLAIR

(Concluded from last week)

Attention may be directed to the utterance of a British Cabinet Minister. Speaking in Albert Hall, London, he stated: "As an old political hand, I may say, that the government will do what the people want. If they will exert their will, they can compel results." Such is the matured judgment of an astute, experienced English public man. Is there not wholesome food for serious cogitation in that strong and confident assertion for the million people in these provinces?

Justly as we may impute unsparring censure to our Upper Canadian fellow citizens the cause of our countless "grievances" involving continuous and incalculably great injuries and losses to these provinces; and surely, also, as our own members of Parliament and Legislatures during several decades can not be absolved from responsibility for the deplorable situation in which these provinces have been forcibly embedded is it not also painfully evident that the populace in general, of these provinces must stand arraigned before their own bar—not the bar of legal enactments, but that of searching, self-applied, introspection, for inexcusable neglect, guilty of culpable inaction, unable to submit denial of being constantly "asleep at the switch" in permitting their inestimably valuable heritage to suffer maltreatment and mutilation? It may seem insulting to the intelligence of the Maritime people—a sad commentary upon their admitted freedom from the reproach of mediocracy—that they cannot divest themselves of responsibility in large degree for the Maritime situation, in its process of evolution, going from bad to worse, steadily approaching a point where in the efflux of time it gives promise of becoming so helplessly petrified as to be unable to offer resistance of any kind, consequently affording easy prey to still further ravaging designs, together with opportunity to administer a final coup de grace that will effectively quench all hope of every recovering the embezzled Maritime "Rights" and heritage.

A passing observation may not be amiss regarding the relative growth of Canadian cities, confining same to those of major importance. Some of the figures may be over or under-stated. Exactness is not claimed.

Montreal in 1867 had, say, approximately 100,000 people, now claiming in the vicinity of 1,000,000 people.

Toronto, in 1867, say, approximately, 50,000 people, now claiming in the neighborhood of 600,000 people.

Hamilton, in 1867, say, approximately 25,000 people, now claiming some 155,000 people.

Ottawa, in 1867, say, 20,000, now said to have 125,000.

Quebec, in 1867, say 55,000, now claiming 130,000.

Winnipeg, in 1867, a small trading post, now claiming more than 200,000.

Regina, in 1867, nil, bare prairie land, now possessing over 50,000 people.

Calgary, in 1867, nil, ranching land, now claiming more than 80,000 people.

Edmonton, in 1867, nil, ranching land, now boasting population of 70,000 people.

Vancouver, in 1867, nil, forest primeval, now claiming in excess of 250,000 people.

Halifax, in 1867, say, 40,000 people, now claiming 60,000 people.

Saint John, in 1867, say 40,000 people, now claiming 55,000 people (although the latest census allows only some 47,000 people).

An average annual gain for Montreal of, at very least, 12,000 souls; for Toronto, 8,000; for Hamilton, 2,000; Winnipeg, 3,000; Vancouver, 3,700; Halifax, 300, and Saint John, 200. These are averaging annual increases during the past sixty-seven years.

According to the latest census returns, the percentage of increase for Saint John, for the period elapsing since 1867 would be in the vicinity of 15 per cent.—against, say, 900 per cent. for Montreal; for Toronto, of more than 1,000 per cent. Halifax would show apparently about 30 per cent. increase. And these figures are typical of the experiences undergone in numberless other respects.

And yet what are our "grievances," our "claims"?

What have our people to say for their somnolent attitude in face of the fact that there have been those in these provinces that have assiduously and passionately striven in late years to arouse them against the devastating operations, insidious or unconcealed, during the passing years that have been sapping the country of its vitality? Have there not been, as it were, "voices crying in the wilderness"?

Pondering the foregoing figures shall not their significance stir up a realization of what these Maritimes have been witnessing during the past sixty years? Those figures afford evidence of phenomenal progress on one hand, contrasting with stagnancy in this section, furnishing cause for deep mortification, together with most urgent reason for enforcing restitution and the implementing of all agreements and pledges so callously violated.

Contrasting the expenditures of the federal governments, successively, in the East and West, would it be inapt to be reminded of what was written a great many centuries ago, of "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel"? Snatching from a mass of grievances of almost incredible magnitude, there emerges one designated "Chignecto Canal." Gleaned from a history of Canada published in the year 1878, is the following: "A canal across the Isthmus of Chignecto between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had been in contemplation from earliest times. This Bay Verte canal will be one of the great works of the near future." Note "One of the great works!" Also "in the near future!" And still it is held up! Yet millions, yes, hundreds of millions of dollars have poured forth in prodigal stream for construction, enlargement and maintenance of canals in Central Canada, supplemented by a gracious benediction, via gratuitous provision of free tolls for transportation purposes! Furthermore the Maritime Provinces bear their proportional share of that vast outlay along with the continuous maintenance and repairs—while the projected Chignecto Canal, to cost probably no more than the annual outlay of the money involved in operating the canals in Upper Canada, serves the purpose, virtually, of a football! Does not this illustration fit in with the adage of the "gnat and the camel"?

Various have been the pretenses raised for withholding performance of the Chignecto undertaking, but our learned and able critic, W. C. Milner, has effectively in his clear and convincing articles exposed the shallowness of the reasons advanced for obstructing the carrying out of that project, his arguments seeming to be unanswerable!

Protests—indignant and wrathful—from these provinces are met by impatient, supercilious and entirely self-centred rebukes from Upper Canadian quarters. In barking back to far bygone years can these altruistic censors recall certain lines written more than a century ago by a fine English poet, containing the following lines:

"We're the sons of sires that baffled Crown'd and mitred tyranny, They defied the field and scaffold For their birthrights—so will we"

albeit not by methods involving fratricidal, sanguinary conflict.

That is simply what these long-suffering Maritime provinces demand, "just and unshorn Rights"—(their "birthrights")—which have been so flagrantly misappropriated.

The Maritime people will surely not be so purblind and incurably indifferent concerning the tremendous value of their heritage bought at incalculably great cost as to permit same to go by default and passively consent to stabilizing the statu quo irrevocably.

Once again it may be asked if it would not be altogether logical and rational to approach the Province of British Columbia, whose interests are so much in common with the Atlantic Provinces?

Surely these distantly separated ocean provinces acting in concert possess a key capable of securing their respective just rights.

Has the invincible spirit characteristic of the sturdy builders of a century (more or less) ago forsaken their descendants? Are we an effete people? Are we still willing to display a laissez faire attitude? Will not the natives of these provinces, with the tang of the sea about them, arouse themselves from lethargy and rise superior to political dictation casting aside the vicious fetish involving "spoils of victory"; all parties repudiating the accusation that loyalty consists in unbending allegiance to "party" rather than to the commendable alternative of devotion to the best interests of these neglected and ill-treated provinces?

Presenting a solid, indivisible front, four square to all the winds that blow, and in long deferred wrath, capable, if necessary, of setting the heather afire, shall they not determine to rest not until the festering sores have been definitely healed, once and for all?

Is it not quite time to cease employing the soft pedal? Shall matters be allowed to drift in the time-worn and utterly futile processes embodied in dispassionate appeals and argumentative approaches, pursued heretofore periodically or spasmodically, ending ultimately in arriving now here, failing to achieve the long-sought objective, and evoking scathing comments from shrewd outside observers upon the people of these provinces as lacking in the courage of their convictions, in permitting their indisputable rights and just heritage to pass from them for a mess of pottage, and consequently meriting the reproach of being a pusillanimous race?

Did not an outstanding statesman of world-wide renown—the Right Honorable Stanley Baldwin—express himself a few years ago significantly when in this country upon the situation of the Maritime Provinces in the Confederation! Apparently he was not a stranger altogether to the merits of our case.

With every fibre of being tense in the realization of injustice long endured, victory must surely be triumphantly achieved beneath uplifted banner, having inscribed thereon in luminous letters, as an appropriate and impelling slogan, the ancient phrase, fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.

In no martial sense and deprecating anything resembling sacrilege, may there not be caught and impressed into action a measure of the spirit throbbing and glowing in the wistfully appealing verses penned by a genuine citizen of this Dominion—

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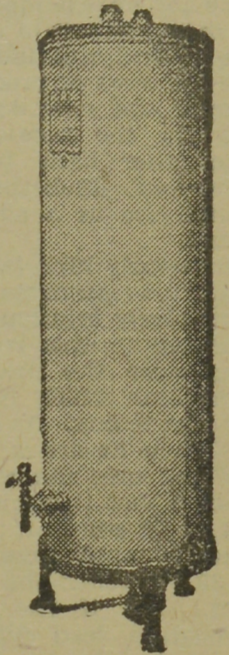
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Col. McCrea—who with countless multitudes of valiant young Canadians made, the supreme sacrifice where Flanders fields were drenched in a crimsoned flood—from which verse of infinite pathos is gleaned the following excerpt:

"Take up our quarrel . . . To you from falling hands we throw The torch: be yours to hold it high."

Shall not the response thereto, swiftly and heroically flashed back, be now as then:

"Rest ye in peace . . . The fight that ye so bravely led We've taken up."

Shall there not, therefore, be given willing, resolute enlistment to resonant summons demanding execution of justice without further evasion or qualification that will vindicate completely the claims of these Maritime Provinces, enabling them to emerge from enforced obscurity, so that in buoyancy of rejuvenescence they may arise exultingly to occupy their destined place of distinction upon a readjusted map of Canada, contributing thereto in symmetrical sense in no insignificant degree, and in their own innate worth and lustre appearing as a cluster of exquisite gems in Britain's matchless diadem of super-eminence and splendor?

Thus the baser elements provocative of profound discontent operating adversely to cohesion, tending always to the increasing development of ill-will, and if not corrected conducing to disintegration, transmuted by mystic process of alchemy into refined golden qualities, bringing to fruition a genuine spirit of esprit de corps, permeating universally this magnificent and wondrously favored domain from Atlantic to Pacific, with vision ever feeling the urge to scale still loftier heights, the outside world may be constrained to bear testimony that the Dominion of Canada in very truth, is people by a nation thoroughly imbued with the sublime attributes of "liberty, equality and fraternity" and in attainment of such glorious and exalting ideal justifying the affirmation—utilizing the uplifting words of an American poet—that

"Our country hath a gospel of her own

To preach and practice before all the world, The freedom and divinity of man, The glorious claims of human brotherhood, And the soul's fealty to none but God."

So that eventually, in years yet to be and not too remotely distant, the present all-too-regnant passion of gross materialism suitably rebuked, and supplanted by steadily enlarging recognition of the eternal verities, the Canadian nation—sublimated and irradiated—in pursuing the more excellent way, its component parts being knit together in bands of common fellowship and staunch attachment, operating along lines of all for each and each for all in an atmosphere efflorescing in, the essence of noblesse oblige may be enabled, be it ever so imperfectly, to merit the ineffable encomium that found utterance in the rapturous declaration of the inspired Psalmists that "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

"God of our fathers, known of old, Lord of our far-flung battle-line, Beneath whose awful hand we hold Dominion over palm and pine— Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget—lest we forget!"

THE END.

Feared Enemy of Dope Peddlers Bluntly Accuses Guilty

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ringleaders are often beaten by lack of necessary secret service funds.

"Obviously, the only way to tackle this thing is to get at the places where the stuff is being made and get the big wholesale people who are smuggling it in. That is why the Central Narcotics Intelligence Bureau was started.

"Look at our police figures—a very reliable guide. In October, 1929, there were 5,681 convicted addicts in prison. Last year there were 674—a reduction of 5,007 in five years. Figures for traffickers are still high, but they are falling rapidly."