

**WHILE  
THERE IS  
TIME**

**STEPHEN LEACOCK**



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*While There Is Time*  
The Case Against Social Catastrophe

*by*

STEPHEN LEACOCK

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## PREFACE

In writing this book I have drawn to some small extent on my previous work on the subject, such as *Afternoons in Utopia* and *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice*. For the concluding chapters I have made use also of articles recently contributed by me to the Toronto *Financial Post*.

I have tried to write with honesty and fairness, not attributing mean motives to any body or to any party.

STEPHEN LEACOCK

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## CHAPTER I

### THE GATHERING CRISIS

I call this discussion *The Case Against Social Catastrophe*. I do not call it the *Case Against Capitalism* nor the *Case Against Socialism*. This is because I am afraid that unless we take thought while there is yet time, a far worse thing than either socialism or capitalism may come to us—a social catastrophe which may mean wreckage of all that we have taken so long to build. What I mean is that there may be forces let loose upon us which will get beyond the control of those who set them in motion. Plans for social betterment which originate in the best motives may be hurried forward so fast, with so little mature consideration as to break the ranks of society.

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A grave danger, a great crisis is gathering in front of us. It is a sombre cloud on the horizon which rises so fast as to threaten to darken the whole sky. This is the dispute as to private enterprise and state control. Private enterprise is called by those who oppose it the profits system, and capitalism. State control means, in an ill-defined way, the taking over by the government of the industry of the nation. At present this dispute is still only argument. The danger is that it may turn to worse. While there is yet time we must agree by the way or disaster may fall upon us.

The war has given a peculiar intensity to this controversy. People contrast their past hard times with the “prosperity” of the war, under which there is work for all at high pay and where the plain people, the working people, in spite of all taxes, all rationing, all artificial shortnesses, receive more not only in money but in goods than they ever did in peace. They feel that the end of the war will bring an end to this, that they will be back again on low wages, with unemployment all around them, the black care of a narrow home and the cold and insufficient charity of a dole. This gives them a sense that they have been cheated, that there was plenty there all the time but that the rich took it all and left them nothing. This also makes it seem that the people were cheated after the last war; that soldiers came back to poverty; that the rich closed up their ranks; that brotherhood was over and servitude began again.

This belief easily leads to the further conclusion that the poor have always been cheated, that the world’s work has always been carried on by the weak under the compulsion of the strong. The slave became a serf, the serf became a factory hand—but whether slave or serf or hand, he got nothing but his bread. Hence the dream of a new and better world in which somehow all will work

together and the welfare of each one will be the welfare of all. The new power of machinery, the new control of resources seems to put this new world within easy reach. In all this indictment there is so much that is true that it can only be met with truth. Only by admitting all that is true in it can we hope to cast out what is false.

The close of the war, even with the best good will, is almost certain to bring a severe shock to employment as it is, to wages as they are, to the short lived “prosperity” purchased at war’s awful price. Half a million of disbanded men, a million of war plant employees, “let go” of necessity by employers with no further contracts will be thrown on the country. Free enterprise will not know how to look after them as well as state enterprise did in hiring them for war. A mass movement will sweep the country. Where will it sweep it to?

It is not the victory of a political party that is to be feared. In and of itself the victory of a new political party in a British country means no more than a revolution in South America. The new party just become the new *ins* who replace the *outs*. The responsibility of office sobers the delirium of opposition. Things just go on. If that were all we had to fear wise men might well sit back and watch it all go by, as it has these eighty years, a circus procession in the street with a couple of new attractions.

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But there is more than that. The impetus may prove too strong. A storm may break that no shelter can withstand, flattening the country as does a cyclone. A wild attempt to set up a new system—crude, inadequate, the work of anger and revenge—may break our existing commonwealth, our links of common life, our daily task, our daily bread. Once started such a cyclone of disaster cannot be stopped, or only by a long and weary struggle, an exhaustion that permits a new start. Such chapters as this, we would have thought, could never come into the pages of our history. We must see that they do not come into it. While there is yet time, we must find means to agree.

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Our only safety is to be found in truth and decency. We must get at the truth of this bitter social indictment, must admit all that was wrong and urge all that was right.

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A large part of the social indictment is true. We have been too indifferent to poverty for a hundred years past. We made no real attempt to remove it. We let children slave in factories, paupers rattle their bones over their stones in the one pleasure drive of their life (to the graveyard); we watched the slums fester, the weak die; we left wealth unchecked and privilege unshorn, looked only at the glorious “progress” of the machine and looked away from the submerged humanity below.

Individually we were each powerless to stop it all. But few even gave it tears.

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This is not to say that private enterprise is a wicked thing. In its proper field it is the real incentive to action, the real path to progress. But it must be restricted to its proper field. It is not true that *property* is wicked. Property in the sense of something to call one's own, one's very own, is the deepest, the dearest instinct of our nature. Those whom we love are in a sense our "property," our own. Property in land—one's own house and garden, if it were but weeds, one's own farm, if it be but in the bush, all *that* is the very breath of life in the nostrils of those who love the open field; love the creative sense of working with nature, not at the bidding of man.

Not property is wrong, not profits are wrong, nor money nor gain, but the swollen disproportionate gain that can turn a monied group to be the bosses of their fellow men. Not property is wrong but the abuse of it, not money but the too much of it, not wealth but the uneven iniquity of it.

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Here then we have a gathering protest against things as they are arising out of a vision seen in the lurid light of war, of things as they might be. It seems self-evident that man's industrial power, so colossal for destruction, should easily be sufficient to meet the reasonable and decent wants of decent people. To many of us, in and out of parties, this gathering protest takes on all the appeal of a great crusade. Nothing else but such a victory over poverty and want can ever atone for the martyrdoms of war. Nothing else can ever make the world seem straight.

At the present moment we like to formulate all that we attempt in charters, documents and points. Hence this new movement for social betterment has already been formulated in outline by the great labour parties, by peoples' congresses, by a hundred individual reformers. It has never been stated in broader or more sympathetic outline than in the Six Points laid down by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with a human kindness that recalls the Sermon on the Mount. The points are aimed, as they should be, at the goal: they disregard the means; they refuse to consider money; they know no such word as impossible. Here they follow:—

(1) Every child should find itself a member of a family housed with decency and dignity, so that it may grow up in a happy fellowship, unspoiled by underfeeding or overcrowding, by dirty or drab surroundings, or by mechanical monotony in environment.

(2) Every child should have the opportunity of an education till years of maturity. This education should be inspired by faith in God and find its focus in worship.

(3) Every citizen should be secure in possession of such income as will enable him to maintain a home and bring up children in such condition as described in paragraph 1.

(4) Every citizen should have a voice in business or industry which is carried on by means of his labour, and the satisfaction of knowing that his labour is directed to the well-being of the community.

(5) After the war, every citizen should have sufficient daily leisure, with two days of rest in seven, and an annual holiday with pay, to enable him to enjoy a full personal life.

(6) Every citizen should have assured liberty in the forms of freedom of worship, of speech, of assembly and of association for special purposes.

Incidentally I may say that of all the Archbishop's clauses the one that strikes me as having an overwhelming appeal is the plea for two days of rest and holiday every week. This would transform our working life. To many millions of workers it would restore the lost world of their schooldays, when the break of Saturday and Sunday made up for all the rest of the week. "Let me go fishing on Saturday and loaf all Sunday," says such a one, "and you may have all the rest." In pure theory this item of social reform is the easiest. The world's work of five days would easily satisfy the world's needs of seven, and even if the world worked seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, it could never satisfy the world's caprices. But in reality this reform is the hardest. It is one of the things easy to do if everybody does it, impossible to do one at a time. It belongs with phonetic spelling, universal disarmament and other such dreams. Yet sometimes dreams at last come true.

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This broad platform of what we are beginning to call social security corresponds closely to the recommendations of the (Sir William) Beveridge Report prepared for the British Government and to the semi-official reports made under the auspices of our Dominion Government. Still more notable is the endorsement of this general idea of the responsibility of all for the welfare of each as given in the "Second Bill of Rights," recently presented to Congress by the President of the United States. The first "bill of rights," commonly so called, is found in the first ten Amendments appended en bloc in 1789 to the Constitution of the United States of 1789. These guarantee political freedom, the right of free speech, free assembly, freedom from arbitrary government, from illegal arrest, from cruel or unusual punishment. The clauses bear the stamp of their epoch in being negative, not positive: They forbid ill-treatment of the citizen but, of themselves, they neither feed nor clothe nor shelter him. He is still free to starve. A hundred years has taught us that liberty bakes no bread. The milestone of progress is marked with this change from the negative obligation laid on the state to let people alone, all that was asked in the

morning of political liberty, to the positive duty of the state to help people on their way, a lesson learned not in the first joy of the morning of hope but in the burden and heat of the day.

None of these platforms of social security count the cost: none of them explain, to use the simple business term, “where the money is to come from.” I think it well that they do not, for this indicated field of government expenditure seems to me the first charge on the list, taking precedence of everything else: and I am one among the many millions of people who think that these things can be done.

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But unfortunately there are many people who calculate in what they call cold dollars and sense, as contrasted with warm philanthropy and say that no such security program is possible, that the available capital and income of the nation cannot cover it. They will tell us that the whole of our national wealth in Canada is only estimated at \$25,000,000,000 (official statistics of 1933) with a corresponding income of \$2,795,000,000 or 277 dollars a year for each of us. That of course includes the infants and the children. But even if we count only the gainful workers you find only an average income of 1,100 dollars to support a household of four. No one would get far on that in the way of extravagance.

Moreover, so the same calculators argue, it wouldn't help much if we spread round the super-incomes of the super-rich over the mass of the people. In one sense the incomes of the super-rich bulk large in the public eye. It is true that in the reckless days before the great slump of 1929 certain rich people of the Canadian metropolitan cities thought little of spending ten thousand dollars on a single party festivity. That looks a lot in the lump, but little when spread out thin. The top-stratum of 473 of our income tax payers show a combined income of \$50,000,000. Spread that round among the rest of us and all we get is about four dollars a year each. Better let the rich keep it and we can have the fun of looking in through the windows at the party.

Let us add that our national debt has been increased by the Victory Loans till it now has gone beyond 6,000,000,000 dollars, in other words, more than a year and a half of our national income. Hence our average family wage-earner with about 1,200 dollars a year is in debt 2,000 dollars with no great chance apparently of ever getting out of it. Where is there room inside that, asks our critic, for the grandiose scheme of schools and colleges, leisure and holidays—all the cultivated decent life of the Archbishop's new world?

Now personally I take but little stock in such an argument. I am convinced that calculation of economic efforts in terms of money-value gives an entirely misleading light. Such a calculation is vitiated everywhere by the fact that money values arise out of scarcity, that plenty of everything is worth nothing.

We can never find out the best direction of human effort for the satisfaction of human wants by calculating how best to create money values. But the trouble is that this form of argument leads a great many people to say straight out that our gilded social security is impossible: that we must hark to the hard work (honest toil, they call it) of earlier days, to the self-respecting independence, the sturdy individualism—in other words to the long slow poverty that looks so ennobled in life's retrospect, so dreary day by day.

Such a return is not possible. The world at large will not accept it and the very suggestion of a recourse to it only drives people to denounce the existing system under which we live and to lay at the door of private property and private enterprise our failure to enter a promised land already clearly in sight. What has happened shows us the failure—we will not say the fault—not only of our statesmen, our capitalists, our bankers, but of all of us who lived in the world as it was and acquiesced in it, and dulled our eyes to the sight of poverty, our ears to its complaint.

Before the outbreak of the war we had many thousands of men out of work and on relief, and thousands more tramping the streets begging for work, hating to sink to the level of cold charity.

I'm ashamed of that, aren't you?

Before the present war the dole that we gave to a workman out of work was just enough, hardly more, to keep him and his family from actual starvation, actual death by cold—a few dollars a week.

We told them it was all we could afford, yet look what we can afford now, for the Germans, when we have to.

I'm ashamed of that, aren't you?

In the days before the war, a man out of work could not find an acre of ground that he could dig. It was all *property*. In a country with millions of acres lying in the sun! He couldn't find a tree to cut for firewood. In a country where the forests and woods extend to the towns themselves—all property!

. . . Is that right? People hungry within sight of food, cold within sight of fuel.

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We have to take counsel then how best we can set things right using all that was good in the past, cutting out the wrong. Now such a discussion can only be of use if it is carried on without animosity, without prejudice, without any of that make-believe antagonism which seems to be a necessary evil of democracy. It is the weakness of our politics and parties, of our free speech and open discussion, that it leads us to pick up sides, swear ourselves in as Liberals or Conservatives or what not, and after that to carry on with only one ear and one eye—the other obstinately shut.

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Parties, I admit, are necessary to the practical conduct of government in peace time. Without them we should just have a brawling chaos of individual opinion, a bedlam of cranks each outshouting the other. Parties at least secure unity and permit reasonably free government to be carried on, whereas if it were entirely free it would fall to pieces like an anarchist's congress or a free-for-all debate in Ireland. Nor does it matter in times of pleasant peace, safe from any great national crisis, if party operation carries with it a certain spice of party humbug, and make-believe animosity and mimic denunciation of imaginary villainy pleasant as peace itself; What better fun than election time, with Grits and Tories denouncing one another?—one candidate compared to Machiavelli and the other to Judas Iscariot, and both doing business on Main Street.

It is strange how we have carried these mimic party animosities down the current of our Canadian politics . . . : life long “Grits” as inconvincible as life long “Tories”; men beyond argument and above correction.

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For our present purpose, then, we have to start from the fact that we are all of us decent people—outside of the criminal classes and perhaps even inside them, except as to a man's own specialty. We recall from one of W. S. Gilbert's ballads the name of Good Robber Brown, who was “the kindest hearted man who ever cut a throat.” Outside of his specialty, he was all right. So are we all. At any rate I am convinced that the great mass of us are people who share in our degree a common love of our country with a certain common selfishness for ourselves. And in reality and on a large scale the other people are so few that they don't count. If this were not so they would destroy us, as we have seen other countries destroyed.

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So we will understand that a Conservative means a tremendously decent fellow, a little hipped, we admit, about the past, and not liking to change things. He's got an idea, good fellow that he is, that he'd like things to go on just as they are. Thick in the head? Oh, no, not at all, how could you think that? firm, if you like, not thick.

Similarly, let's understand or let's pretend that a Liberal is another decent fellow, singularly level headed, clear minded; so much so that if he sees things not working properly he's willing to change them. Why not? He has a fixed notion of moving forward, not tearing up the past by the roots but trimming the branches of the trees, and, remember, he's a perfectly reasonable man, open to argument and conviction, unless you start by calling yourself a Conservative and him a Liberal. That coagulates his fluid mind into solid matter. Of course for any topic on which the Liberal party in parliament has already voted, the reason is all out of him.

Beside these two is the “Socialist,” whose very name for many people settles the case against him beyond argument. History confuses him with Nihilists, Anarchists, Terrorists—men wearing black masks and carrying dynamite bombs, taken straight out of the old Drury Lane melodrama of the 1880’s. The Socialist of our day has nothing to do with these people. Our typical socialist is an idealist. Does that mean a nut? No, certainly not. It means a man with a vision, who sees in his mind’s eye a re-made society where there is no more poverty and want, where the welfare of each becomes the welfare of all and the world becomes the beautiful garden that it might be. This is the vision that has haunted mankind down the ages, to be realized, if this earth denies it, somewhere when this earth is done. And to the socialist as to the eye of faith that removes mountains, it all seems so easy, so simple—nothing needed but the willing brotherhood of all.

How then can such decent people quarrel? How then can they let themselves be drawn collectively towards the brink of disaster by their very disagreement? The fundamental decency of all people—of all that we need to think of—is either a basic fact of society or else is all our labour vain, our talk idle. One recalls the refrain of the once popular London music-hall song, “He’s all right when you know him, but you got to know him fust”; or Mark Antony’s admission in regard to the assassins of Caesar, “So are they all, all honourable men.” And I don’t think that Antony said it in irony. It was the pity of it that appealed, that honourable men could fall so far apart.

So will we then in this discussion take our start from the fact that we are all honourable men: that a Social Creditor from Alberta or a member of the Bloc Populaire from Chicoutimi, P.Q. is all right when you know him and so is an Orangeman from Orangeville. We will agree that an old fashionable Tory from the most old-fashioned street in Toronto who hasn’t changed his opinion for a hundred years is as good as an old-line Grit who altered his only fifty years ago, or an up-and-doing Enthusiast who changes his opinion as easily as he changes his shirt, in fact easier. We are old good Canadians. Others need not read.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

In this and the following chapter I propose to discuss private enterprise and state control. I will try to show that each of them is admirable in its place, disastrous when carried beyond it. Private enterprise has been the motive of man's economic life ever since Adam was invited to leave the Garden of Eden and put it into operation. Overlaid by tyranny, pressed down into slavery, almost but never quite stifled out of existence by the lack of the liberty that is its life, it made its way down through the ages, a motive as indestructible as physical energy itself.

State control, on the other hand, is by descent, in part at least, the offspring, the outcome of what was once the overlordship essential in a barbarous age but tending to consolidate itself into an enslaving tyranny which forced the many to labour for the interest of the few and almost, but not quite, extinguished the freedom of private enterprise. But its form is so altered today as to obscure its origin. Now in a complex age of power and machinery state control becomes the necessary setting inside which private initiative operates. Private enterprise is the *power*—the head of water, the voltage of electricity, the pressure of steam, the expansion of gas, in other words, the motive force; state control is the machine that directs and turns it to use. Neither can function of itself. Each is the complement of the other. Private enterprise, extended unchecked and free, means the enslavement of the weak by the strong. State control, expanded into all-round socialism, means the enslavement of the individual by the state, followed by the seizure of the state by organized gangs of bosses. The world has seen both these things—the by-gone slavery of the cotton mills of Lancashire of a hundred years ago as a product of unregulated enterprise and the enslavement of half Europe today by the seizure of State control by organized brute force.

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But in Canada our discussion of these things at the moment is all distorted and prejudiced by the assumption that private enterprise and state control are contradictory terms and still more by the new obloquy which is being attached to the term “private enterprise.” No name is too bad for it. It is labelled the “Capitalist System,” by a queer irony that thus accuses every owner of a village house and garden as a capitalist, and the “profits system,” as if every decent farmer with a bag of wheat to sell, every apostolic fisherman with a net of white fish for the local market were a man caught in sin. “Private

enterprise” now lies so low that like Caesar’s body, none do it reverence. People are forgetting that this that they deride, this liberty to work for oneself in one’s own way—this was, not so long ago, the new light of the world. This was the great freedom that gave to the world the democracy of the United States, that gave to Great Britain its greatest achievements and its grandest names and to the British Empire that outer ring of free Dominions that buttress its central strength. Private enterprise! Why, this is Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, this is Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson. It did not fulfil to completion all those earliest hopes that accompanied its inception. It did not, and we know now that it never could, in and of itself, abolish poverty and establish social justice. But with all its failures this doctrine, this gospel of individual liberty and private rights is the greatest boon, in the material sense, that ever came on earth.

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Turn back the pages of history. Nor let anyone think in his impatience to be forthwith at argument that history is out of place. It is not possible to understand the world of today without a knowledge of the world of yesterday from which it sprang. The main motives of social action belong as well to the past as to the present.

“The poor you have always with you,” so at least it seemed for ages. Among primitive mankind, shuddering in the dripping woods, alternately warmed and frozen, gorged or starved, poverty was a part of life itself. No primitive language has a word for “poverty.” Even among half-civilized men some had to be poor. Barbaric splendour, Athenian culture rested on poverty as the base of the social pyramid. The wisest people, the Platos and the Aristotles, said that it had to be so; there was not enough of wealth to go around, and so all that was to them highest in life could only exist on condition of the existence of a servile class.

Plato and Aristotle both declared poverty, even in its main Greek form of slavery, to be *natural*, an essential part of the necessary order of things. This assumption of inevitable social distinction between high and low, between “gentle” and “simple” as things that had to be, in other words the assumption of a class system, has carried down the centuries almost, if not quite, until today. Indeed in the older countries, certainly until yesterday in England, it lay at the basis of the thinking of many people, even of the best and kindest of people. It expressed itself in the rubric of the Established Church enjoining on each the duty of doing his duty in the state of life into which it had pleased God to call him.

It is indeed one of the distinctions between the older world and what we still call the new countries that this assumption of a class system (a fixed system as apart from the ups and downs of money) does not exist. In Canada it

died away with the feudalism of New France and the misplaced “aristocracy” of Governor Simcoe’s Upper Canada. In a country as happy as ours in its heritage of open land and forest the idea of the necessity of poverty was replaced by the idea of the necessity of work, the duty of each one to support himself. Hence the notion of a class system was replaced by the conception of a mobile society, its individuals now up now down according to luck and ability—as expressed in the common saying, “shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves in three generations.”

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But we were saying that this class system and the ideas that accompanied it, grew up because all through the centuries poverty seemed inevitable. The change from ancient times to mediaeval made no difference in this respect. For with all the external differences that separated the two epochs there remained in this regard the same environment and the same attitude towards it—poverty as man’s necessary lot redeemed as might be by charity and by the vision of a life to come. In the Middle Ages the rich lived in a rude and dirty comfort. The poor lived like hogs. Certain historians like to talk of the “rude plenty of the fourteenth century.” But it was rude indeed, a wattled hut, rushes on a dirt floor, a pig included, lots to eat—acorns, dead crows, all sorts.

As against this were the savage countries, our North America, where no one worked but everybody shivered. The shirt-tail savage in his blanket alternately froze and thawed. The “noble savage” of the poets, living on the plenty of “the chase” is just a fiction. In reality he had to chase himself.

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The march of poverty down the ages is stamped upon our literature. Our children’s stories which date back through the centuries begin with, “Once upon a time there was a poor fisherman,” or better still, “a poor woodcutter”: to be poor meaning to be honest and deserving. Hence the child’s social outlook began with a wistful pity for poverty but with the understanding of course that it was an inevitable part of life.

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Then came into the world a great light like the dawning of a new day over the hills. This was around the middle of the eighteenth century, in other words, in time’s long record only yesterday. At this period began the two great moving forces, the doctrine of individual liberty and the rise of machine industry that have since transformed the world. The advance of science and the progress of invention began to accelerate man’s power of production beyond all previous dreams. The purely abstract science of the previous century, the work of Galileo and Newton, here bears fruit in the practical works of Watt and Arkwright and Stephenson, the use of steam power, the invention of mechanical spinning and weaving, the smelting of iron with coal, all the new

glory of the machine—drab and dirty and clangorous but announcing a new world. Such was the Industrial Revolution that originated in England and within a century spread over western civilization, multiplying its power with every decade.

Nor was the advance only mechanical. The transformation of man's work was accompanied by a transformation of man's thoughts. The fires of the old theological controversies that previously absorbed the best intellects died low, religious toleration turning them to ashes—never quite dead, alas! but at least no longer obstructing the path of the new speculative thought. In the place of angry argument over dogma arose the new philosophy of individual rights, of individual happiness to be achieved by freedom. There is no need to delineate its origins in England, France, and America. It belonged in all three, and in all three changed and even revolutionized society, in America as the basis of a new state, in France by the overthrow of an old one, in Great Britain as a means whereby the treasured glory of the past was preserved by rebuilding it into the present. The Declaration of Independence of 1776, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 and the Great Reform of Parliament that swept Britain like a tidal wave, delayed by the war era beyond its time but all the more powerful for the delay—these are the charter documents of individual freedom.

The sophist and the cynic may analyse as they will the doctrine that all men are born free and equal. There is no doubt of what the enunciation of this equality did in re-making the world. Yet even this was only one part, only one phase of the new light. With the new ideal of political liberty as the basis of just government went the doctrine of economic liberty as the basis of a new world of economic effort and reward. The whole clumsy structure of industrial life, the mediaeval survivals of regulated trades, the codes and restrictions that beset work and wages, the laws of migration and settlement that immobilized population—all such interference with free impulse appeared in the new light as only fit to be cleared away as debris of the past from the ground on which the new commonwealth was to rise.

With this began the science of Political Economy. Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) wrote it out with Scottish deliberation, taking twelve years to the task. In the half century that followed a hundred and one economists wrote it out in books, condensed it into pamphlets, converted it into laws and made it the guiding policy of Great Britain. John Stuart Mill writing in the middle of the nineteenth century asserted that there was nothing left in it for himself or any future writer to clear up.

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Thus rose the famous science of Political Economy, in its earlier days as dogmatic and self certain as its companions the physical or natural sciences. Its

proportions were, or seemed, as clear and simple as Euclid. Its tenets could all be written down, as the late Lord Balfour once said of Free Trade, on half a sheet of note paper. It was based on the doctrine that if everyone were left free to follow his own interest then his own interest would lead him as by an invisible hand (the phrase is that of Adam Smith) to advance the welfare of all his fellow men. Free competition would direct all single efforts in the direction most favourable for the common good. Capital would move where it was most needed; labour would be directed to exactly the tasks where labour would bring the greatest return; wages, even if not high, would always under free competition be at least as high as they could be. Production would adjust itself so that the output of a surplus of any commodity would be checked by a fall in its price and a shortage of any commodity would, by raising the price, issue a call for more labour and more capital.

This marvellous automatic machine needed nothing but to be let alone. *Laissez Faire* was its motto. Such things as combinations of labour and strikes, even if successful, merely aided, so it claimed, one set of workers by plundering all the others. In other words, any interference by combination or by authority or law with what was thought of as the “natural” course of industry was bound to be as futile, as ineffectual as an attempt to interfere with the physical laws of cause and effect, with the law of gravitation itself. Strikes couldn’t raise wages; law couldn’t raise wages. When it was first proposed to pass a Factory Act to shorten the cruel hours of Factory Labour, revealed in all their hideous outline by the Royal Commission of 1833, a leading economist of England (his name was Nassau William Senior) told the nation that to cut one hour of the factory day would bring the factory to a standstill. That hour, he said, was vital to the making of the profit which alone kept the factory in operation. Senior’s “last hour” they called it, and solemn dullards, as dull as the professor himself, took that last hour to their hearts as a consoling drug justifying them in doing nothing. One thinks with equal shame of Senior and of the people who believed him. They are dead this hundred years back but let us see that that spirit does not walk among us. And let us remember that in all such errors of thought or act in the imperfect and abortive free enterprise of a hundred years ago there is not one grain of responsibility or one iota of argument against true free enterprise that we can enjoy today.

One might ask in the words of the American comedians, “Why bring all that up?” The reason is, as said already, that the hand of the past lies heavy on the present. We are seeing here how it was that private enterprise got its bad name and the “profits system” fell under the obloquy of Senior’s last hour. I want to show that those who rant and rave against the “profits system” are ranting and raving against things that happened a hundred years ago—things that in our larger wisdom never need happen among us; that what happened

was not the fault of free competition but a result of the lack of it.

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It is only those who have read these pages of industrial history who realize the extraordinary prestige and influence of this doctrine of individual freedom in the economic world, now called private enterprise and the profits system. Its ascendancy came from the fact that it was not only an industrial doctrine but a moral one. The doctrine of economic liberty as enunciated by Adam Smith took its place alongside of the doctrine of the political freedom and equality of mankind as enunciated by Thomas Jefferson in the same year. It did not take its full place at that time, for war prevented it, but rather a half century later when the economists and finally John Stuart Mill gave to the theory its classical form recognized throughout the world. Mill's theory became a gospel. Revolutionaries, persecuted under European tyranny, secreted his forbidden books among their treasures and hugged them to their hearts. A generation of Americans in the United States took it all as axiomatic truth of which the circumstances and environment of their country seemed to afford the proof.

I do not doubt that the essential basis of this was all true. But this first proof, alas, both on paper and in fact was premature, all too simple, took too much for granted. It tried to show that by leaving everything to free competition the industrial world would obtain social justice. All prices high or low, it was claimed, were regulated by the actual costs of making things, all interest on capital freely and competitively used, must conform to the natural return, the natural increase of production which it made possible. The greatest proposition of all was that wages under free competition were at least equitable and socially just in the sense that each man got what he was worth and was worth what he got. If a common labourer got a dollar a day, and a skilled artisan a dollar and a half, the difference, it was said, corresponded to their different productive contribution: and if the manager of an industry received not a dollar a day but fifty dollars a day, that corresponded to the actual superior value of his services. The proof of it, so they argued, was seen in the fact that people were willing to pay him fifty dollars, knowing it would bring a return, whereas, they said, to pay fifty dollars a day to the artisans would bring disaster. Hence they reached the comfortable conclusion that every man gets what he is worth and is worth just what he gets.

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Running through all this argument is a track of fallacy as wide as a wagon-track and running round to where it began in what is called a "vicious circle." For we notice that in order to show what *natural* price is we add up all the wages that have been paid and declare that to be the cost and then say that the cost governs the price. Then if we are asked why are wages what they are, we turn the argument backward and say that since the selling price is so and so the

wages then can be paid out of it only amount to such and such. This explains nothing. It is mere argument in a circle. It is as if one tried to explain why one blade of a pair of scissors is four inches long by saying that it has to be the same length as the other. This is quite true of either blade if one takes the length of the other blade for granted, but as applied to the length of the scissors it is worse than meaningless.

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Limited though it is, this economic doctrine of a self-adjusting world has remained as the working outline on which all the later college economics have been based. But the pity is that there is no generally accepted and simple view, stated in language which ordinary people can understand, of the extent to which we need to modify it. We have denials of its validity *in toto* as from the socialists and the communists, substituting the impossible for the imperfect. And along with this the orthodox college economists have worked the old doctrine over, backwards and forwards, have introduced all kinds of subtleties and all kinds of analysis, translated it into mathematical formulas (which refuse to fit, being incapable of measuring social forces), turned a plain matter into a complex one, an everyday science into an esoteric arcanum, and get no further. Hence I do not think that any outside person—outside of college, I mean—can get much light on the problem of private enterprise from the textbooks. The elementary ones are too vague and too void of conclusions. The really advanced ones, dealing with graphs, curves, marginal satisfactions and saturations are quite unintelligible to the public at large.

Not theory but fact, the course of industrial history, soon showed the shortcomings of individual freedom in its unrestrained form. Wealth it could create: poverty it could not cure. It made the strong all the stronger; the weaker went to the wall. The story of the Factory System of England, let us say from 1820 till 1850, remains one of the darkest pages of social history; the hours of labour adjusted only to the limits of human endurance: children at work as full time workers at ten years of age, and many even at seven; and for wages just enough and no more to equal the “cost of production”—food, shelter and clothing enough to keep the worker at work—no more. The cost doctrine proved here only too true.

Indeed as time went on fact and theory both showed that the old argument had taken too much for granted. It seems amazing that so few people saw the false assumptions involved in this scheme of political economy, and the vital things to be taken for granted before its conclusion could be warranted. Originated in a nation of land owners whose tenure dated back for centuries, it took for granted the right of property and, above all, of property in land as an indefeasible right. It needed the environment of a new country which inspired Henry George’s famous book *Progress and Poverty* to open the eyes of the

world to the dubious aspects of property in land. Inheritance, plenary and unlimited, was also taken for granted, indeed it seemed the very basis of stable society until the new industry brought such huge accretions of wealth that men began to ask that the dead fingers of the dead hand should be opened wide to loosen the wealth they clutch. The cruel facts of the factory industry revealed the fallacy of “free competition” applied to the wages of labour when the so-called free bargain was between employers who could afford to wait and penniless men with starvation at their elbow, compelled to take whatever they could get. Indeed free competition in the means of production was presently seen to be of social value only if the strong, by reason of their strength, are not able to crush the weak, and vested interests cannot by the sheer security of their holdings take their toll of necessity.

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Much is thus made in the indictment of “capitalism” and the “profits system” of the suffering and misery of these days of the factory and the slum. In a certain sense the indictment is true but in another sense entirely wrong; indeed, it turns the case around the wrong way. Those things happened not because of free enterprise but for the lack of it. The parties to the bargain were not free, or rather one side, the employers, were free for they were able within wide limits that grew wider still with each advance of wealth, either to run their factories or shut them down: for a long time if need be they could live on what they had. What to them would merely be an enforced holiday would mean for the workers the strangle of starvation. Free enterprise to be really free both for employers and employees must mean for each side of the bargain a certain reserve power. Gradually the power of organized labour has supplied for the worker this reserve. It was cruelly long and slow in coming, with an arduous and painful path to travel. Slowly the twelve hour day of the workers of a century ago has been reduced to the eight hour day of the typical workers of today—a working day that still needs the supplement of a workless Saturday and of a fair plenty of holidays to break the year and an annual vacation to round it out.

Let us admit that this great advance is owed chiefly to organized labour. No mere increase of machine production power would of itself have effected it; nor economic argument; nor would the warmest humanitarianism, the sympathy of a Charles Dickens, or the invective of Thomas Carlyle, have ever asked for more than a part of it, no legislation of any party that ruled during that period in Britain or America would ever have sanctioned it. Time’s economic change has since then turned a full cycle. We realize that organized labour itself, granted a wide enough organization and a deep enough pay chest can become the social tyrant, especially where organized labour is applied to the vital services of our community life. All these forces of today must be

balanced fairly in our commonwealth.

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It was not however only the superior bargaining power of masters against men that broke down in the nineteenth century the free and fair operation of economic freedom. Other growths arising out of the nature and the increasing complexity of machine industry grew up to impede it. A chief one was monopoly, the situation in which the supply of some one commodity, some machine, some process—itsself perhaps necessary to ever so many other production operations—is held by a single seller. Monopoly played but a little part in earlier economic life. One reads of the “monopolies” in particular articles granted in Queen Elizabeth’s time to court favourites as a means of making money. But these were vexatious in some one particular rather than oppressive to industry at large. There were, of course, always “monopolies” in a sense in individual unique articles, such as a painted portrait. But these were of no real bearing on the world’s work and welfare: a man who protested at Van Dyke’s monopoly and his high price for painting his portrait, was free to paint his own. Always, too, there were the monopolies called patents and copyrights, arising out of a man’s natural right to the thing he made or contrived. These, in days of unchanging routine with less invention in ten centuries than we see in a year had no other affect than a certain salutary stimulus to the man of ingenuity or fancy.

Even John Stuart Mill writing of his system when nothing was left to clear up paid practically no attention to things sold under a monopoly. He looked on such sales as variations, as exceptions, as odd patches in a work of regular pattern. He speculates on what would be the price of a musical box in the wilds of Lake Superior—a musical box being one of those intricate little contrivances of the days before electricity made with patient ingenuity of the Swiss and tinkling out a little tune, wonderful in a world still without wonders. Mill says the price would be just what any one would give for it, a proposition just as true today or then. But if Mill had enquired what regulated the price not of a musical box in the wilds of Lake Superior in 1840 but of a gramophone in Winnipeg in 1940—that would have been very different.

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In fact Mill would have found himself in contact with that wide range of anomalies which grow up under what looks like free enterprise and free competition and which we have learned to call, both in common speech and in technical law “unfair competition.” Here are a series of situations and combinations of circumstances which have helped to cast obloquy on free enterprise just as much as did the power of strong employers to exploit weak labour. And the obloquy again is just as undeserved. This “unfair competition” is not the result and outcome of capitalist industry and the profits system but

merely reflects an unforeseen opportunity arising out of it.

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For people unfamiliar with just what is meant we may give one or two examples, based, for greater conviction, upon fact and history. Let us suppose that in an industry—we will say in the shoe-making industry—there are needed to carry on the entire operation, a series of perhaps a score of different machines each kind resting on a separate patent so that for any particular single process there may be rival machines in competition. Imagine that a patent holder has a particular process machine of undoubted superiority. Can he refuse to sell one except on condition that the purchaser also buys all the other machines of the set from him? An early economist would have said, “Why not? Freedom is freedom. The purchaser is not *forced* to buy *any*. He is simply told to buy all or none.” Our experience makes us answer differently. He is forced; the environment forces him. He is, as it were, “held up” to buy the machine. Similarly if the maker of a patent kodak, one of known superiority to the others on the market, will only sell it to purchasers who will also buy from him all their kodak supplies (paper and what not) here again, as we see it today is not free competition but a “hold up.” Consider the case of rival butchers in a country town. In Adam Smith’s day success went to the most efficient, the jolliest, the ruddiest, and the world wished him well of it. The other went to the wall—or went to America, or to the devil—and the world thought it just the place for him to go. But how different if the jolly ruddy butcher finds himself confronted not with the real competition of a genuine rival but with the power of a great organized company that can put a store on the other side of the street—bigger, brighter, jollier, ruddier and cheaper than his—and run it at a loss for as long as they like, till the original jolly butcher is crushed under the dead weight of it.

But all this only means that the world about us has greatly changed since our machine age began. It does not mean that there is any change in the fundamental human impulses that supply the motive power to run the world. “The world,” exclaimed an enthusiastic individualist of those by-gone days, “runs of itself!” To which we answer, “Not quite, nothing does.”

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I do not think for one moment that all that has been said abates anything from real merit and service of free enterprise, whereby each man (under fair conditions) works for himself. In it lies not only social justice but social inspiration. In it is that vital principle (the *élan vital*) which biologists seek to find to explain the life and growth of the animated world.

I believe this and I hope to show it. But to do so it is better to turn first to look at socialism, the alternative now so widely advocated since the bill of indictment, even when stated so reasonably as we have tried to do, has grown

so long, the need for some correction so evident that we can easily see why many people would catch at the suggestion that social betterment and social justice can only be obtained by scrapping the whole system.

Let us give way to such impatience for the moment and turn to Socialism. What we see there will open our eyes to what we have been missing.

### CHAPTER III

## THE UTOPIA OF SOCIALISM

Many of us will, I am sure, readily admit the great attraction that lies in the general idea of socialism. This is especially true in the case of young people of generous minds, old enough to see how much there is in the world about them of poverty, of hard work, and worse still of the fruitless quest for work of any kind with the alternative of a cold and insufficient charity. The socialist solution, work and pay given to everybody by the community at large, seems simple and convincing. It has the advantage that it can be explained in a few words, indeed the fewer the better since the simpler the outline the more convincing the argument and the happier the picture. This is because in reality there is only one thing wrong with socialism, namely that it won't work, and this conclusion is only apparent after one has thought it all out in detail and studied it in concrete fact. At first sight it appears in all the colours of the morning.

This attraction of the socialist idea in general is very evident for those who teach in colleges. Students who come to economic studies with a preconceived socialist idea, or at least sympathy, are among the best of the class. I am leaving out here the cranks whose ideas are already so deeply set as to prevent them from being students at all and to turn them into class nuisances. I am talking of students at large. And the young man who has caught the first enthusiasm of socialism has a keenness of interest and an actuality of purpose not seen in the generality of, so-to-speak, "hardened" students who take their studies as they find them as sailors take dirty weather.

Especially attractive too is socialism when it is put into the form of socialist "utopias," books about imaginary commonwealths of happy people organized under a socialist regime. These have gone round the world from the time when Sir Thomas More wrote his "Utopia" four hundred years ago, and each generation forgets that Utopia really means "nowhere." There are certain types of stories which, as it were, lift us out of ourselves into another world. In this lies the charm of the Desert Island Story read by boys of any age from nine to nineteen and on to ninety. The fascination of the Desert Island Story does not lie in adventure and danger as with the sea story where the pirates "swarm" over the side of the ship, with pistols in their belts, knives in their teeth, rolling their eyes and filing their nails, and are swept back off the deck with terrific volleys of grape, cannister, buck and bird shot. The Desert Island Story is altogether different and rests on a different impulse, that strange

impulse for “creating” something which lies in each of us. The idea is that of happy contrivance, of re-making the world for ourselves. From the first moment when the castaways succeed in making a fire by rubbing two sticks together (preferably over a flame) all is contrivance, ingenuity—man’s assertion of his superiority, his control of nature. Thus comes *Robinson Crusoe* down the ages and the feeble and over fortunate *Swiss Family Robinson* and the wonderful Yankees of Jules Verne’s *Mysterious Island*.

So with the Utopias of Socialism which indirectly have done so much to bias young and ardent minds in its favour. From More’s *Utopia* they follow down our literature, some forgotten, some half remembered, and some built into the history of social ideas as with Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* which captured the America of sixty years ago; down to the latest utopias of Mr. Wells where glorious super-beings appear sitting on sunlit hills in costumes of shot silk, their very names translucent—something like Sunray, Daffodil, and such.

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Indeed since we wish to explain in these pages the general idea of socialism and the socialist state we can easily approach it by this familiar Utopian form and formula. We have only to put ourselves to sleep for a hundred years, wake up in a marvellous Gothic hall, be presented to a sort of super-being—one of the head-pushes—in short like this:—

## THE SLEEPER AWAKES

On awakening I found myself as it were awake, and looked about me in order to ascertain, if possible, where I was. I found myself reclining on a couch in what appeared to me to be a large Gothic chamber—I might almost call it a hall—of which the lofty ceiling extended into a half darkness, while the hall itself was lighted by a soft and suffused light coming from I knew not where.

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A door at the side opened and a slippered attendant appeared (*This “slippered attendant” always comes to bring the sleeper to see the great boss*).

“Doctor Oom will see you,” he said.

I found myself, on entering, in the presence of a venerable being whose flowing robe and majestic beard lent him an air of dignity almost amounting to senility.

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(*Oom, after he has given the sleeper what are called “viands” (the only thing eaten under socialism), proposes to tell all about the socialist commonwealth.*)

“You wish to ask me,” he says, “all kinds of questions about the new world in which you find yourself.”

I took out my pencil and notebook and nodded.

“What shall I start with,” said Dr. Oom. “How about currency and coinage; would you like me to begin with that?”

“No,” I said, “never mind currency and coinage. I never had much grip on that.”

“The Gold Standard,” began Dr. Oom.

"I know," I said. "It was already doomed. Try something else."

"Would you like," said Dr. Oom, "to ask me about wages and labour and what is now the relation of the capitalistic classes, as you used to call them, to the workers? Let me talk about that, eh?"

"No, please don't." I replied. "I had got so fed up with that before I fell asleep that I really don't care about it one way or the other."

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*(But at this juncture a ravishing vision appears in the form of Rooshna,—Oom's beautiful daughter. She takes over the job from her father who conveniently fades out to a meeting of wise old men.)*

"Oh," she exclaims, "at last you are awake. How wonderful. Sometimes I used to think that you would never wake. But tell me what do you want to know about first? There must be so much to explain to you; how would you like to hear about our currency and coinage?"

"Currency and coinage!" I repeated with delight. "I can imagine nothing more fascinating. Do tell me about it."

"I will," said Rooshna, "and then after that, what about a little talk on transportation facilities?"

"Glorious!" I said.

"And then I know you want to hear about labour and capital and social insurance."

"Delicious! I can't hear enough of it."

But we have not the time at our disposal to listen to the description of socialist society as given by Miss Oom, and in any case those who do so have to marry her at the end of the book. So let us try to summarize for ourselves the general scheme on which a socialist society is supposed to work.

The first principle is that all the means of production belong collectively to all. Land, mines, machinery, factories and the whole mechanism of transport, these things are public property managed by the State. The workers in their use of them are all directed by public authority as to what they shall make and when they shall make it, and how much shall be made. On these terms all share alike; the cripple receives as much as the giant; the worker of exceptional dexterity and energy the same as his slower and less gifted fellow.

All the management, the control—and let this be noted, for there is no escape from it—is exercised by boards of officials elected by the people. All the complex organization by which production goes on, by which the workers are supervised and shifted from trade to trade, by which their requests for a change of work or an extension of credit are heard and judged—all of this is done by the elected managers—

For who else can do it?

In Socialist utopias these managers are depicted as grave and noble seniors like our Mr. Oom—a sagacious and paternal group, free from the interest of self and the play of the baser passions and animated only by the thought of the public good. Gravely they deliberate; wisely and justly they decide. Their gray heads—for the Utopians prefer them old—are bowed in quiet confabulation over the nice adjustment of the national production, over the petition of this or that citizen. Their own peculiar fortune they have lightly passed by. They do

not favour their relations or their friends. They do not count their hours of toil. They do not enumerate their gain. They work, in short, as work the angels.

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Socialists of today sharing the sensible idea that old men have had their day and that the new world belongs to youth, no doubt prefer to think of the managers as young. But young or old where do you get them? In the name of sanity where are such officials to be found? Here and there, perhaps, one sees in the world of to-day in the stern virtue of an honorable public servant some approximation to such a civic ideal. But how much, too, has been seen of rule of “cliques” and “interests” and “bosses”; of the election of genial incompetents popular as spendthrifts; of crooked partisans warm to their friends and bitter to their enemies; of administration by a party for a party; and of the insidious poison of commercial greed defiling the wells of public honesty.

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All this is bad enough when it disfigures democratic government. But with us after all there are still lots of other things to do besides work for the government. But when there is nothing else? When the only kind of work that a man can get is a job under a government manager, what then?

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For in the world of today, be it remembered, elective democratic control covers only a part of the field. Under socialism it covers it all. Today in our haphazard world a man is his own master; often indeed the mastership is but a pitiful thing, little more than being master of his own failure and starvation; often indeed the dead weight of circumstance, the accident of birth, the want of education, may so press him down that his freedom is only a mockery. Let us grant all that. But under socialism freedom is gone. There is nothing but the rule of the elected boss. The worker is commanded to his task and obey he must. If he will not, there is, there can only be, the prison and the scourge, or to be cast out in the wilderness to starve.

Consider what it would mean to be under a socialist state. Here for example is a worker who is, who says he is, too ill to work. He begs that he must be set free. The grave official, as the idealist sees him, looks at the worker's tongue. “My poor fellow,” says he, “you are indeed ill. Go and rest yourself under a shady tree while the others are busy with the harvest.” So speaks the ideal official dealing with the ideal citizen in the dream life among the angels. But suppose that the worker, being not an angel but a human being, is but a mere hulking, lazy brute who prefers to sham sick rather than endure the tedium of toil. Or suppose the grave official is not an angel, but a man of hateful heart or one with a personal spite to vent upon his victim. What then? How could one face a regime in which the everlasting taskmaster held control?

There is nothing like it among us at the present day except within the melancholy precincts of the penitentiary, and, God help the world, in the conquered countries of Europe.

Who can deny that under such a system the man with the glib tongue and the persuasive manner, that babbling talker and the scheming organizer, would secure all the places of power and profit, while patient merit went to the wall?

But let us turn from the management to the workers. All work, we are told, and all receive their remuneration. We need not think of it as money-wages, but, all said and done, an allotted share of goods, marked out upon a card, comes pretty much to the same thing. The wages that the citizens receive must either be equal or not equal. That at least is plain logic. Either everybody gets exactly the same wages irrespective of capability and diligence, or else the wages or salaries or whatever one calls them, are graded, so that one receives much and the other little.

Now either of these alternatives spells disaster. If the wages are graded according to capacity, then the grading is done by the everlasting elective officials. They can, and they will, vote themselves and their friends or adherents into the good jobs and the high places. The advancement of a bright and capable young man will depend, not upon what he does, but upon what the elected bosses are pleased to do with him; not upon the strength of his own hands, but upon the strength of the "pull" that he has with the bosses who run the part of the industry that he is in. Unequal wages under socialism would mean a fierce and corrupt scramble for power, office and emolument, beside which the utmost aberrations of Tammany Hall would seem as innocuous as a Sunday School picnic.

"But," objects the idealist, "you forget. Please remember that under socialism the scramble for wealth is limited; no man can own capital, but only consumption goods. The most that any man may acquire is merely the articles that he wants to consume, not the engines and machinery of production itself. Hence even avarice dwindles and dies, when its wonted food of 'capitalism' is withdrawn."

But surely this point of view is the very converse of the teachings of common sense. "Consumption goods" are the very things that we *do* want. All else is but a means to them. One admits, as per exception, the queer acquisitiveness of the miser-millionaire, playing the game for his own sake. Undoubtedly he exists. Undoubtedly his existence is a product of the system, a pathological product, a kind of elephantiasis of individualism. But speaking broadly, consumption goods, present or future, are the end in sight of the industrial struggle. Give me the houses and the gardens, the yachts, the motor cars and the champagne and I do not care who owns the gravel crusher and the steam plow. And if under a socialist commonwealth a man can vote himself or

gain by the votes of his adherents, a vast income of consumption goods and leave to his unhappy fellow a narrow minimum of subsistence, then the resulting evil of inequality is worse, far worse than it could ever be today.

Or try, if one will, the other horn of the dilemma. That, too, one will find as ill a resting place as an upright thistle. Let the wages, says the still more ideal idealist—all be equal. The managers then cannot vote themselves large emoluments if they try. But what about the purple citizens? Will they work, or will they lie round in their purple garments and loaf? Work? Why should they work, their pay is there “fresh and fresh”? Why should they turn up on time for their task? Why should they not dawdle at their labour sitting upon the fence in endless colloquy while the harvest rots upon the stalk? If among them is one who cares to work with a fever of industry that even socialism cannot calm, let him do it. We, his fellows, will take our time. Our pay is there as certain and as sound as his. Not for us the eager industry and the fond plans for the future—for the home and competence—that spurred on the strenuous youth of old days—not for us the earnest planning of the husband and wife thoughtful and anxious for the future of their little ones. Not for us the honest penny saved for a rainy day. Here in the dreamland of socialism there are no rainy days. It is sunshine all the time in this lotus land of the loafer. And for the future, let the “State” provide; for the children’s welfare let the “State” take thought; while we live it shall feed us, when we fall ill it shall tend us and when we die it shall bury us. Meantime let us eat, drink and be merry and work as little as we may. Let us sit among the flowers. It is too hot to labour. Let us warm ourselves beside the public stove. It is too cold to work.

But what? Such conduct, you say, will not be allowed in the commonwealth. Idleness and slovenly, careless work will be forbidden? Ah, then you must mean that beside the worker will be the overseer with the whip; the time-clock will mark his energy upon its dial; the machine will register his effort; and if he will not work there is lurking for him in the background the shadowed door of the prison. Exactly and logically so. Socialism, in other words, is slavery.

But here the ideal socialist and his school interpose at once with an objection. Under the socialist commonwealth, they say, the people will want to work; they will have acquired a new civic spirit; they will work eagerly and cheerfully for the sake of the public good and from their love of the system under which they live. The loafer will be extinct. The sponge and the parasite will have perished. Even crime itself, so the socialist tells us, will diminish to the vanishing point, till there is nothing of it except here and there a sort of pathological survival, an atavism, or a “throwing back” to the forgotten sins of the grandfathers. Here and there, some poor fellow afflicted with this disease may break into my socialistic house and steal my pictures and my wine. Poor

chap. Deal with him gently. He is not wicked. He is ill.

This last argument, in a word, begs the whole question. With perfect citizens any government is good. In a population of angels a socialistic commonwealth would work to perfection. But until we have the angels we must keep the commonwealth waiting.

There is no way out. Socialism is but a dream, a bubble floating in the air. In the light of its opalescent colours we may see many visions of what we might be if we were better than we are, we may learn much that is useful as to what can be even as we are; but if we mistake the floating bubble for the marble palaces of the city of desire, it will lead us forward in our pursuit till we fall over the edge of the abyss beyond which is chaos.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIALISM IN THE CONCRETE

But, it may be said all the arguments above are just theory, just generalization and theory that doesn't get down to actual facts, deals with abstractions, does not apply to actual cases, to our own people here and now. So let us try to view socialism in the concrete, to see how difficult it would be to operate it in actual detail even if we imagined its general principles at work, how difficult to apply it even with all the good will in the world.

We will begin with the difficulty which is involved by what is called by those who analyze and give names to these things, the problem of Consumer's Choice. It is true that nobody nowadays thinks much about the consumer; indeed it has been often said that the consumer is dead, that he died about the time of the last free traders. But in the old economics the consumer played a large part. The idea was that he had to be given just what he wanted, like a silk worm on a mulberry tree. Otherwise he wouldn't consume or he would go and consume somewhere else. Hence the satisfaction of the consumer was the guiding compass for the course of industry. At present of course we have all turned into producers. Everybody thinks of himself in terms of what he can earn not in terms of what he can buy with it. Give a man a fine job and he'll take a chance on living expenses. A man goes to live in a town not because he hears it's a cheap place to live in but because he hears that it's a good place to get work in. Hence if the consumer is not exactly dead at any rate he's lying fast asleep beside the grave of John Stuart Mill and the robins are covering him with leaves, torn off the customs tariff.

But in the palmy days of political economy the satisfaction of the consumer was, we say, the guiding mechanism of the whole system. That was what put it into gear, and the wonderful thing was supposed to be that under free competition without any legislation or any compulsion the consumer always got just what he wanted, just when he needed it. Take the famous case of "Bastiat's Breakfast." Bastiat was a French economist of the free trade days (he lived 1801-1850) who had not only an intense belief in the merits of a free competition system but an extraordinary power of presenting these in a novel and picturesque way.

So here is Monsieur Bastiat, as he describes himself, coming in to his breakfast in his Paris apartment, (Anno Domini about 1845) and what does he see? A miracle! Nothing less than a miracle! Look, coffee! Some one has been all the way to Brazil to get it. He didn't send them; and of all the brands of

coffee, exactly the brand of his predilection. And cream! Who went out and raised that cow for him years ago? And, bless me, sugar! Someone has been out chopping sugar canes in Cuba for him . . . And with that an omelette, rolls, sliced ham! A very miracle of a tableful, all brought and collected for him—just what he wants and just when and where he wants it. Monsieur Bastiat simply can't get over it, except by eating his breakfast.

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Now of course we need not share all Bastiat's ecstasies. But there is something in it just the same. Think of the wilderness of consumers' preferences in food and dress; think, if you dare, of feminine styles and fashions and changes, or even among our drab selves, think of my plain polka-dot tie (exquisite taste) and the flaring four-in-hand that you wear. If Bastiat's breakfast is a miracle, go and look at any departmental store of today. Here is tribute levied on all the world, articles on the counters for which provision must have been commenced years ago and which match and fit the needs, the preferences, the whims of thousands of customers of varying taste and fortune. Bastiat would fall down in a fit.

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Would there be any way in which a socialist government could take account of such a diversity of preferences and tastes? I am certain there could not be. All that a socialist government could do would be to try to reduce consumer's choice to its narrowest limits, to persuade its people to dress alike, live alike, play alike and enjoy the cheapness of mass-production that goes with mass-alikeness.

Let us set up for ourselves a scene of what would happen under these circumstances.

LITTLE SCENES UNDER SOCIALISM
SOCIALIZED PANTS

We are in the government Department of the Design of Clothes—section Pants, subdivision 1. Men's Pants. We are in the cutting room of Karl Marx Schnitzki, probably the greatest designer of pants since Pantsoffski.

He stands there, deep in thought, before the broad flat surface of cloth spread tight out for his design upon a vast cutting table. His chalk is uplifted in his hand. For the moment he stands motionless, absorbed, an artist in a dream. The other workers in the room have laid aside their scissors and stand in little groups, fascinated, watching the *maestro*. To this man's capacious mind, to this man's cunning hand is entrusted the creation of a design of pants which will embrace (the word is literal) some four million male beings. With only the variation allowed as between size 1, size 2, and size 3, all will conform to the socialized model of stream-lined zipper-fastened pants which is here to be created. On these bold strokes must rest a public satisfaction that will represent a saving of eight million dollars (two dollars a pair).

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The chalk descends. The hand never hesitates. The design sweeps across the cloth. The thing is done . . . An exultant “Bravo!” echoes through the great room. Bravo *Maestro*! No more work today—and very little tomorrow. A few minutes later the design of the socialized pants is shown to the assembled cabinet.

“This is the model,” says the exultant Minister of Clothing, “stream-lined zipper fastened and adjustable up to the neck.”

“Are there different sizes?” they ask. “What about the fit?”

“Three sizes, one for youths of fifteen to twenty, one for men of twenty to forty and for men of forty to sixty.”

“What about old men?”

“They use model three,” said the minister but they crawl in from behind and pull it up to their neck.

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From the first moment socialized pants were a success. Socialists, one cannot too often repeat, are easy going people, not cranks or faddists. Around the capital city they took the new socialized pants with the greatest good nature—a little pleasant laughter and a few jokes on the street just at first but that was all. The official *Gazette* was able to say editorially:—

“Socialized pants have undoubtedly scored another big success in the emancipation of mankind. The tyranny of fashion had been dealt a mortal blow, and we can say now in the words of Robert Burns, ‘A man’s a man for a’ that.’ We are glad also to report that beyond a little harmless grumbling there has been no active opposition to the wearing of socialized pants. A few obstinate old-fashioned Tories refuse to wear them and are walking on the streets in their shirt tails. The government, we are glad to say, have decided to ignore them. A few extremists in the ministry have urged that the government, being the government, has the power to use force, and if need be to shoot every man without a seat to his pants. But the general feeling is in favour of waiting for cold weather.”

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“I think then,” said the socialist prime minister in congratulating his colleague, “that we may consider that this forward step in the unification of fashion is definitely advanced. Socialized pants, gentlemen, have come to stay—”

“To stay buttoned,”—chuckled a minister.

“Zipped,” laughed the premier—poking him in the ribs.

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“But now,” he continued, assuming a more serious air. “These garments, I understand, were designed only for men.” He turned to the Minister of Clothing. “What about women?”

“I propose,” said the Minister, “that we discuss that *in camera*.”

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Or let us take, as a thing less needing theory than obvious fact, the question of banking under a socialist regime. Here I must confess that I can see no possibility of successful operation. Banking in its essence means the lending of money to some one who has not got money but who has got character and opportunity and will presently return the money with interest to the bank and profit to himself. That is what real banking means, as worked out, let us say, in Scotland and thence transferred to Canada as the basis of our system. Banking when it is restricted to the lending of money on sound, undeniable, realizable collateral is not performing its full function. It means only lending money to people who have it themselves. One would have to admit, in fairness, that if a socialist government could define collateral in sufficiently rigid terms it might

carry on a form of banking by printing money and lending it on deposit of such collateral. But the system would never get far; it would blow up by the pressure for loans on something less rigid than authorized collateral, and then for something less rigid again than that.

The true essence of banking lies in gathering up the idle funds of a mass of people, ignorant of opportunity or absorbed in other things, and in lending them to the right man for the right purpose. The test of the right man is that, by and large, he pays it back. Then what a bank really does is to distribute idle funds into busy employment, which means, when we translate it out of money into the operations which the money represents, that the bank facilitates the direction of physical goods and services from idleness to profitable activity. The banker, in looking for the right men to lend to, is another of Adam Smith's "invisible hand" men.

But with a socialist government of elected managers and appointed officials, none of whom has anything personal at stake, it is hard to imagine bank loans being made on a true basis. Some of those who discuss the problem tell us, and indeed warn us, that under a socialist regime it would be impossible to get loans without a special personal pull, without political influence. I prefer to see the question in a kindlier light and to think that under socialism the loans would be all too easy. I think of the kindly socialist-banker sitting in his office and dipping out loans out of the loan barrel. He listens with a tear in his eye to a plea for a loan of a thousand dollars, the main argument being that the applicant has no means of paying it back. The tear falls on the ledger and blots out the debt. But those blotted pages and unpaid loans mean sooner or later, inflation, national bankruptcy, collapse.

Or let us imagine, to make the picture kindlier still, the genial socialist banker handing out a loan to an equally genial customer, no tragedy about it, just, so to speak, good fun all round.

LITTLE SCENES UNDER SOCIALISM
A LOAN OUT OF THE BANK BARREL

"Well, Charlie," laughed the local manager of the Socialist Government Bank at Pleasantville as his visitor entered. "Here you are again."

"Here I am again, Joe," said Charlie, . . . shaking hands with the manager and laughing in turn. "You always say that."

"And I suppose," said the manager,— "Sit down, Charlie, sit down—I suppose you've come to take up one of those thousand dollar loans you owe?"

Then they both laughed.

"Well, no," said Charlie, "not exactly. The fact is I want another thousand. I think I am on to something pretty big this time."

“Wait a minute before you tell me about it,” said the manager. “I must just check over the loans you have out now.” He called from the door of his office.

“Miss Killboy, has the accountant come in yet?”

Miss Killboy turned from fixing her yellow curls in front of a wall mirror.

“He’s here,” she said. “He’s asleep in the vault just now.”

“Oh, all right, don’t wake him. I only want the current lists of overdue notes. I guess I can find it.”

He stepped out of his side office into the bank and returned with a docket of papers.

“Now, Charlie,” he said as he sat down and turned over the papers with his finger and thumb. “What’s this new thing you are after?”

“It’s big,” said Charlie, “It’s a plan for making beeswax from thistles.”

“By George!” said the manager with admiration. “You certainly are a wonderful fellow. Beeswax from thistles? Can you do it?”

“I don’t know,” said Charlie, “but I’m going to have a try at it. Do you know the idea just came to me the other night, sitting in my den, just suddenly, *just* like that. I poured myself out a drink of Scotch and soda so as to think it over quietly and calmly and the more I worked at it the better it looked.”

“But can you get a government permit to do it? You see, Charlie, that kind of thing looks very much like private enterprise, doesn’t it?”

“That’s all right,” said Charlie. “It appears it comes under the list of exceptions. You remember how the government—or rather the party even before they were the government—accepted the principle that they would never interfere with private enterprise in any case where it hadn’t a chance to succeed, and where it is no good even if it does?”

“That’s right,” said the manager.

“Well, it comes under that,” said Charlie, “so all I need is the money.”

“You promoters are wonderful fellows,” said the manager, “and where does the loan come in?”

“Well, Joe,” answered Charlie, “I’ve got to get the bees and the thistles and there’s the plant to put up—in fact a thousand will be just a start.”

The manager rubbed his hands.

“All the better,” he said. “All the more business for the bank. You’ll have to sign this, Charlie. You see this is private enterprise and the government won’t allow it except under proper conditions—no monopoly is it?—Anyone can buy bees—no unfair, et cetera, et cetera. I needn’t read it all. There you are. Sign there.”

Charlie signed the documents. Then the manager called to Miss Killboy, “Have you got a thousand dollars there?”

“In my bag, I have,” she said.

“Your own?”

“No it’s the bank’s—if you want it, take it—it’s all right.”

And with that Charlie shook hands and left with his loan.

Scarcely had he gone when Mr. Easy, the Government Bank inspector, came into the office. It always seemed a pleasant morning when inspector Easy turned up, with a laugh and a good word for everybody—a genial, comfortable man with a convenient memory so that he knew every girl’s name in the bank, even her christian name.

“Well, Nellie,” he said to Miss Killboy. “How’s golf? The accountant’s full, I suppose, is he? Ah! here’s the boss himself. Hullo Joe! How’s the trout fishing?”

And with that they sat down together over a cigar.

“How’s trout fishing?” repeated the inspector. “I hear they’re biting in great shape.”

“Great,” said Charlie. “In fact I was going to suggest going right out to Coldwater Creek as soon as you’ve got through here.”

“Oh, this won’t take a minute. Your cash is all right, eh? It was last week? Well, then it’s all right now. Can we get flies at the hardware store? Your notes overdue is what I specially want. If you think it’s too early still for flies I don’t mind using bait. You see up at Ottawa the department

wants all these overdue notes collected up and sent to them. There's an agitation against paying them, in fact quite a row started in parliament. They say its sheer tyranny to ask a man to pay a note that he can't pay."

"What will they do about it," asked Charlie . . .

"Write them all off into unredeemed assets. After all it just adds so much wealth to the country."

"Fine," said the manager. "I'll add this up in a second, and meantime—Miss Killboy," he called, "give me two dollars please out of the cash, and mark it 'flies receivable.'"

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And within a few minutes away they were speeding in the manager's car all set for trout fishing, the noise of the rippling river already in their ears.

Now let us turn to another standing difficulty under socialism, the problem that goes by the name of Art under socialism. The question here at issue is how to arrange for the output of "art," so that people who write books have a chance to publish them, and people who paint pictures and compose music have a chance to bring what they have done before the world; this means, in the second place that such people should be set free from other work, or from enough of it, to have time to give themselves over to artistic creation.

Generous youth settles the problem in one breath. What more simple than to have a board of experts, men of achievement and experience, to sit in judgment on works of art—manuscripts, and plays and pictures and melodies—and decide what is best, what is worth while to be put forth at the general expense of the state. It sounds, to inexperience, like justice and opportunity itself, but to those who know,—Ah, me, how different!

What are you to do against set judgments, accepted standards, experts of yesterday dull to-day? Will all the good will in the world give me—or anyone who knows what he is talking about—the open chance of an open market?

This is a matter of which I know all that goes with fifty years of experience—exactly fifty since my first marketed humour (under the free enterprise of a return envelope and a stamp) was sold in 1894. Since then, among more serious occupations and more solid writing, I have been a writer of books avowedly humorous. Under the present regime when I have written a book of humour I have to look round for a publisher who thinks the book funny. He doesn't need to laugh himself; publishers never do; he is selling a laugh, not buying it for himself. But if one publisher sees no laugh in the book perhaps another will, or another yet. If about a dozen publishers see no laugh in the book, perhaps there isn't any. But there's always the chance, always the open market and the prospect of a reward—modest perhaps in reality, but staggering in anticipation.

LITTLE SCENES FROM SOCIALISM
THE NATIONAL HUMOUR BOARD

## WON'T LAUGH

I have a vision of myself going before a Board (the national Humour Commission) to receive their decision on a manuscript which I have submitted to them.

They are seated in a handsome and impressive Board Room, strung along the sides of the great table, the chairman at the head. They are mostly men pretty well up in years, some of them, I regret to notice, rather sallow and dyspeptic looking.

I am standing humble and expectant.

"We have here," says the chairman, "your manuscript entitled—what is it called? Let me see, *Nonsense Novels*? You wrote this, did you?"

"Yes," I said. "I wrote it."

There is something like a groan from the Board table.

"Well," says the chairman, not unkindly. "I am sorry to say that the Board do not find these—what do you call them, *Nonsense Novels*, funny. I had the stories read aloud to them. They didn't laugh; in fact they were even perplexed."

There is a quiet, but not unkind shaking of heads about the Board Table.

"We wished however," continued the chairman, "to give your manuscript every chance and so I had it read also to the judges of the Supreme Court, not of course as a court—I mean in their private capacity. I regret to say that they not only didn't laugh but they took distinct exception to it. They say that a great many of the statements in the stories are open to question as illogical. This, for example—"

The chairman turned over the leaves of the manuscript—

"You say in speaking of Roman history that a '*centaur was a fabulous being half man, half horse, half unicorn.*' They object that that makes one and a half . . . and here again, you say, '*The young man leaped upon his horse and rode off furiously in all directions.*' They hold he couldn't."

There was a pause. The chairman laid aside the manuscript and said.

"Now we don't want in any way to discourage you. The government values literature and our National Board claim that they can laugh more over less, than would be possible if they acted by private enterprise."

There was a distinct ha! ha! round the Board.

"So you must remember that you may if you wish appeal past the Board to the Supreme Court. That is, of course, the same set of judges but they would be sitting officially as a court, and their time paid for. They might easily think things funnier under those circumstances. And remember also that you always retain the right to read this manuscript to yourself and to laugh as much as you like, or to read it aloud to your friends, subject naturally to their right of not listening to it. Well, we mustn't keep you longer"—he reached out to shake hands. "Bring us something any time you feel disposed. Good-bye."

The case against the practicality of socialism is even stronger than is indicated by these administrative difficulties. Underlying all of them is the still deeper weakness at the very foundation occasioned by the lack, under socialism, of a full incentive towards work, unless the work is allotted and carried out under the incentive of compulsion, a condition which converts socialism, as we have already said, into a prison. Under private industry the necessity of looking after oneself and the hope of bettering oneself supplies exactly this motive, the danger being that it may be applied too hard and convert private industry into the tyranny of those who have, exercised over those who have not. But socialism falls down here on what seems one of the basic principles of human life. We need—all of us—a certain amount of

compulsion to make us work: the alarm clock in the morning, the school bell—we will not say the schoolmaster's raw-hide; let us call it the written examination—the office that opens at nine, the boss. We need to save up money to get married—so run the well worn steps on life's upward pathway. Reaching the top we often find it empty, and wish we had lingered a little by the way, played truant now and again, so to speak—but that is neither here nor there.

So the trouble is, will socialists *work*? Those who have read the history of socialism and of the hundred and one socialist communities that have been founded, especially in North America, have flourished for a while and then fallen to pieces, will tell us of many instances of communities and fellowships not based on private gain where work was continuous and conscientious. They will speak of the many monastic orders of the past with whom to work was to pray; they will point to the silent, tongue-bound industry of the Trappists or to the notable success of the Rappites of Indiana. This was, a hundred years ago the community whose spacious farms and orchards were bought out by the noble idealist Robert Owen (1771-1858) to be, alas, the seat of the crazy babbling New Harmony (1825). But I think most historians agree that the instances where socialist communities were found to work hard represent cases where the members were inspired not by the economic motive of socialism, but by the animating spirit of religious faith. They counted the world well lost and if by accident they found it, gave it gladly away again.

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Nor can we in discussing the practical possibilities of socialism make any comparison, draw any parallel as between our country and Russia. There is no parallel to draw. Forty years ago Russia was a country of ignorance and illiteracy condemned by tyranny to a stagnation and poverty that were a mockery of its vast potential wealth. In that short time it has passed through revolution, slaughter, and famine to try to cover the ground we took long centuries to pass. Its internal, industrial advance is now matched and crowned by a national defence unsurpassed in history. Stalingrad ranks with Thermopylae. Yet even in Russia after a first attempt at uniformity of lot and equality of pay, it was found that the needed advance could not be made without the incentive of those extra rewards for extra talent, unusual endeavor and exceptional endowment which are as old as human history, and as deep set as human nature.

The Russian system, therefore, would yet seem far from its final phase. Indeed it may happen that the movement of the democracies towards what is called the "left" (extension of state action) may be met by a movement of the Russian system toward the "right" (private rights) and both may come together in the middle. But Heaven forbid that this country, to reach the happiness that

the future holds for us, must pass through such a Valley of the Shadow as that the Russian people had to pass.

In the preceding chapter this difficulty of work under socialism has already been discussed as abstract theory. Here we may show it as socialism in the concrete by picturing a community of socialists at work, or as near to it as they can get. In order to isolate them in the way all things in experimental science are isolated from external influences, we may imagine them as landing on a desert island.

## LITTLE SCENES UNDER SOCIALISM

### SOCIALISTS ON A DESERT ISLAND

So one day there came sailing to the island a ship of Socialists. And these had come across the ocean looking for a place to set up Brotherly Love. But they had been a long time in coming, for it is much slower to sail a ship on brotherly love than in the old Nova Scotia fashion.

So when the leader saw the Island it looked so fresh and green and cool that he knew it was just the place for a habitation of brotherly love. He called down the main hatchway, "Gentlemen, I don't want to trouble you or to disturb the ladies, but if some of you will come on deck I think you will agree that we have found just the very place we are looking for."

They came at once, after awhile, for they were the best-natured fellows in the world.

So presently they got the ship to the shore. They bumped a hole in it on the rocks but that didn't matter as they wouldn't be using it any more. They had speeches and sang community songs and went to sleep on the sands with the wind in their ears.

The next day the leader said, "Now, gentlemen, I suggest that we set ourselves to work for the production of food. Labour, ladies and gentlemen, is the sole source of value. I will, therefore, ask you to initiate with me the production of yams, mangoes, banyans, breadfruit and so forth, and the domestication of the wild dingo and the llama for their wool and of the goat for its milk and meat. We also search the rocks for guano eggs."

One shook his head. "It sounds like work," he said.

But the leader answered, "How can it be work if you get no wages?"

And another said, "Can't we have a little community singing first?" So they sat and sang.

After that—not that very day, of course—the work began, or at least it was supposed to begin. But the Island was so beautiful and so drowsy that it hardly seemed right to work. Even the leader said, "Don't over exert yourselves, ladies and gentlemen, and, above all, keep out of the sun. Mrs. McSpodden, don't try to catch that goat—you'll never get it."

So the yam field was a little scratched and then neglected, and they sat round on the grass in the shade of the trees and listened to the burbling of the little brooks, and the women made daisy chains of flowers and sang to the children, and it always seemed too early to begin work, and then too late, and then it was afternoon and then sunset.

So they ate what they had brought in boxes and crates and barrels, and each day there was less and less of it. "We must work," said the leader and yawned as he said it, and when they looked at him again he was fast asleep.

Then came all of a sudden the monsoon storms and rain, and great flashes of lightning that tore the sky, and wind and waves that smashed what was left of the ship. And there was no shelter and

no food and only hissing rain.

And when the monsoon storm was over the Socialist settlement of Brotherly Love was gone. There was nothing of it but here and there little fragments of human wreckage among the rocks and trees, and bits of coloured cloth—and even that the sun and wind tore and wore away every day. Perhaps some of the people made a raft of the broken ship and got away. But if they did it was never known.

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Yet if laziness were socialism's only fault it might be pardoned. Even laziness is better than fierce over-work that is apt to be set up under free enterprise when it is given its own way, the over-work that is induced by piece-work and by those subtle and misleading forms of "speeding-up" the worker which seems merely to offer special reward to the industrious but in reality lower the general average rate. There is in truth a reasonable and decent pace of work, mental or bodily, for going beyond which there is neither need nor social advantage but which free competition is inclined to push too hard. Lazy men have their place in the world in keeping it sane.

Now as long as Government enterprise and private enterprise exist side by side a certain amount of laziness leavens the lump. So it is today for example in the colleges, which are in a sense "socialism," that is, either state institutions or else trusts, and not in either case run to make a profit. Heaven help the professors if they had to show a dividend. In the colleges much of the work is lazy, some of it even drowsy. But that is the price paid for the residue—the real stuff, the work for work's sake that counts neither time nor labor, on which is built our science and our mechanism of life.

One may recall here the good old days of the Intercolonial Railway of forty or fifty years ago not as it really was, which doesn't matter to the present discussion, but as the good natured jokes of the day pictured it to be. Built as a political and military railway which could not be expected to run at a commercial profit, it amply lived up to this expectation. It was understood that all the passengers rode on passes; that the train hands came and sat in amongst them, talking local politics; that the train was stopped in summer time to pick raspberries along the track; and that if a passenger missed the train at a side station the train would go back for him, unless he'd gone on ahead. One might say that that is no way to run a railway but yet in a sense it's as wonderful as what we now call "service."

But the real trouble with socialism, the terrible danger which it conceals lies not with laziness but in another direction. Socialism as it grows complete leaves no way out, leaves no escape, and to maintain its hold must sooner or later fall back on force and turn to despotism, the iron, brutal rule of those in power organized against expulsion from it. There is no need to argue whether this is so. The world has seen it.

But this problem of escape we leave over for a moment while we turn to

see the way in which the impossibilities of socialism as now shown reveal why it is that private enterprise has become the basis of industrial society and must remain, as far as we can see, the only basis which does not carry the danger of a social catastrophe. The truth is that of late years, often from the very generosity of our hearts and our increasing eagerness for a better world we have looked too much at the defects and short-comings of private enterprise, too little at its merits.

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After all the private enterprise supplies a continuous and universal motive power to keep things going. The system of “every man for himself” corresponds to the fundamental prompting of human nature. The words taken by themselves, “every man for himself,” have a selfish, an almost brutal sound which permits a false interpretation. In reality when we talk of “every man for himself” in the social and industrial world we mean every man working not only for himself alone but for those near and dear to him—for a wife, for children, for aged parents who begin to lean on his support. A man working literally alone and solely for himself is as rare a sight as it is repugnant. Society could never be based on that. But the strong man whose capacity is as a tower of strength to those dependent on him is a great figure, one that in an earlier world before the days of machinery and associated industry was the basis of society itself.

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The proof of this inherent value of self help is to be found all about us. It lies as the root of the pride that any man who has made some little headway in life feels in his own upward career—not in the later, easier, successful stages but in its harder opening years. Let any such man tell you how he used to walk four miles to high school, how he saved his money dollar by dollar towards college matriculation, how he worked in a drug store in winter evenings and on a survey party on summer mornings. Ask him about helping his younger brother along, and note how he mentions without complaint as without pride, just as part of the record, that of course during all those earlier years he had to send “mother” ten dollars a month. With every one such man, worth listening to, you will find that help to others is always part of the story. I once heard such a narrator say in the course of his story, “then mother died and we saw daylight.” It seems strange, but he meant it, quietly and reverently, looking a long way back across the years. I have heard another such man talk of the crushing annual financial burden of seventeen dollars interest on the family bush farm and how the day came when he was able to earn it himself for the old people and came in and “slapped it down on the table.” Note that he “slapped it down on the table.” That’s the way—effort, triumph and defiance in every syllable of it.

The element of upward, strenuous effort is the true stimulus and motive of life. Our only care must be that it shall have fair play and shall succeed.

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Nor is it only in the effort of work that the principle of private enterprise vindicates itself. It shows equally in the satisfaction that comes with the reward—the possession of something that is one’s own. This holds especially with the ownership of a house, a home, a garden, all that falls under the “magic of property.” There are many of us to whom the ownership of a “little place in the country” seems the very ideal of human good fortune. So it is, if you hook it up with the family circle that gives it meaning. And the strange thing in this is, as with all magic fancies and fairy creations, that a “little place in the country” may be of any size from nothing at all to a palace. It may be a lake shore lot with nothing on it that the outside eye can see but on which possessors see already the cottage they are going to build, the garage that they mean to “run up,” the electric light that they “may” install, to say nothing of the flower beds already planted (you didn’t notice them; they are those weeds along the path). Or a little place in the country may mean a real stucco-and-half-timber cottage with a two acre lawn and garden and trees and a real hired man, or half of one. Or it may mean ten acres and a mansion and a man (an old soldier) and his wife in a lodge. It doesn’t matter what size it is; its all little.

I have no doubt that an English Duke looks on his family estate and “stately home” as a little place in the country. So does, or did, the Sultan of Turkey regard his quiet little harem out in the oasis—sixty rooms and a Turkish bath.

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With which, after all, the system of every man for himself does keep things going, and it does supply to the consumer that unending quantity of universal commodities, corresponding to all grades of income and shades of choice, moving automatically from the source of supply to the focus of demand. All we have to do is correct the faults of the system. And this is easy or hard to do according to the kind of people we are, to how honest we are, how much we have public spirit and private conscience. In the long run all depends on this. The spirit rules.

## CHAPTER V ESCAPE

The laziness of socialism, its drowsy work, its inability to handle money, its incompetence as to nourishing art and letters—these things could easily be forgiven, for they are shared by many of the best of us, and take away but little from that vague aspect of Utopia which is Socialism's chief charm. It is only when Socialism gets into full power and authority, when it assumes a hundred per cent control of industry that it develops another and a far different side, a harsh, forbidding aspect that turns ultimately to a hideous vision of brute force, to a reign of terror. This comes, as has been said above, when socialism covers the whole field, when there is no longer any escape into freedom, no choice as between working under a socialist boss or taking the penalty (prison or worse) for refusing to work. This does not happen where democratic government rules, for democracy, as developed in Great Britain and America, has come to mean a rule of alternating parties, now in, now out. A change of government does not mean a change of system. It may mean a wholesale change of office and with it an altered distribution of governmental favour. It may mean—has meant in the past, still means to some extent in the present—quite a bit of crookedness, of ill-gotten gain but a change of government does not mean disaster. Indeed for the ordinary citizen, not concerned with politics, it means, in days of peace, relatively little.

But socialism cannot tolerate a change of government at the polls. A country cannot alter its system of government with every recurring vote. Socialism has got to stay in office or vanish. In ancient Rome they used to say the Tarpeian Rock is close to the capital—supreme power on the one hand but near it a precipice of disaster. Hence socialism once in office must consolidate itself, must find something to depend on in case votes fail, must look to the control of the armed forces, of the police. Nor can socialism feel sure that the armed forces, as it finds them, can be depended on to do its will. Socialism must create “controls” of its own. There must come into existence all that hideous apparatus of official police and armed terror only too familiar in the picture of Europe today. We don't need to theorize on it. The thing is there.

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Now I do not doubt that if socialism were instituted in Canada (or, rather, if the attempt were made) great numbers of men and women, the young people, would break out of it into the wilderness where somehow they might live on their own. They would go as their ancestors did, pilgrims, loyalists,

pioneers and frontiersmen, the people who made this continent.

## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

I think that a novelist might write a wonderful story—(I would call it *Escape*)—dealing with the people who break away from the restraint, the prison of the iron frame of socialist regimentation which tries to hold them to their fixed task, to guide them under state rule, to circumscribe their lives with the pressure of the community, of committees, of choice by majority votes. They would want to get back to their own will and choice, to have some place and something to call their own, even if they had to reclaim it from the wilderness. And in Canada the wilderness is still next door, right there to the north of us.

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I would picture such people stealing away on a summer night from some leaf shadowed side street of some Ontario town—young people, a young man and his wife, getting ready—their motor car packed with their goods and supplies, their two little children roused from slumber to be stowed away in the corner of the back seat piled round with blankets.

“Not that! John,” says the girl apprehensively, as the young man puts in his double-barrelled shot gun.

“There’ll be game up there, Joanna,” he answers. “I have a bag of two hundred cartridges . . . But I’ll use it to-night,” he mutters, “if I have to—before anyone shall stop us.”

“Not that, John, never that!” she says, clutching at his arm.

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Thus their silent midnight departure and their escape—by unfrequented side-roads and bush tracks, avoiding the main highways—north, ever north, towards the country of their deliverance. From point to point they are secretly aided by confederates and passed forward on their way and their car sent back. At times a truck by secret arrangement helps them on their journey. Others have joined them, till they form a little group. Their course is like that of the famous “Underground railway” which once directed slaves secretly to freedom. But these are not of slave class: these are chosen people men and women of strength and knowledge and trained skill, with science in their brains, and artifice in their hands; young people mostly, with their children beside them but a few older people too, in whose spirit burns still the fire of freedom as in their pioneer ancestors of four generations back. North, still north! They have crossed the great railway lines that stretch across their path; they have avoided and left behind them the last of the mining towns and before them now is nothing but the rolling hills and woods divided by the great rivers of the north. What country, but Canada has such a background where those who will can call back three centuries of time, and redeem the errors of the past by the new adventure of the future. North, still north . . . They are reaching their last stages. On a broad far-north river there is waiting a steam tug, a hardy veteran of the past, the captain and deck hands, albeit it is a government tug, only too willing to give them surreptitious help and to carry them a long stretch on their way.

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We can visualize the scene of their embarkation in the tug, late at night, with but little light in the summer sky, the river in half darkness, the tug lying out in the stream, its deck lighted in part by the glowing fires of jack-pine that roar in its furnace. The faces of the captain and the deckhands are illuminated in the glow and the light reaches to the group of the refugees gathered on the shore.

“Everything all right, Captain?” calls John from the bank to the tug.

“All fine and clear,” shouts back the Captain. “We’ll haul alongside and take you on; we’ve got most of your stuff aboard already. There’s hot coffee here and a bite of warm food. Now, then, stand by there to catch our line.” . . .

The tug carries them for a hundred miles of river and lake, and from there by canoes and portages, as of two hundred and fifty years ago, when Frenchmen groped their way from New France beyond Mistassini to the Hudson Bay, they reach a favoured valley, already chosen by those

before them as their journey's end.

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In the country which they have reached, far away to the north in Canada beyond the great divide, there are still open and beautiful areas known at present only to the wandering parties of prospectors or to the swift view of the aeroplane. It is rolling country of wooded slopes. The maple and the elm and pine are gone but the hillsides are covered with spruce and white birch. There are river valleys whose sheltering sides are turned towards the sun, with alluvial stretches of fine soil along the bends of the stream. Rich grasses grow beside the waters. In winter all is rigid and desolate under the snow. The spring is tardy and still vexed with snow and storm and by the swollen torrents of the melting streams. But the long sunshine of the brief summer carpets all the valleys with flowers, and calls life to every grove and thicket with the song of the birds and the call of the water fowl. All the year round there is abundant game, in the cover of the spruce, and in the marshes beside the broken lakes, and fish leap in the streams and lie in the translucent water under the winter ice. It is a land not of plenty, but of enough for those whose energy can match its rigour.

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Thither come the free settlers. This is the open country that has become, as the net of state control tightens over the nation, the new haven of the refugees, the land of escape, where people can still work and live on their own. Secretly, yet with the knowledge and contrivance of many people who aid their flight, they make their way to the north. Here and there in the snug hollows of the river valleys they build their little settlements, patterned on the old plan of mingled self help and joint effort that has come down from the days of the pioneers, of the United Empire Loyalists.

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It is in such a spot as this that John and Joanna and those with them build their settlement, trim cabins of spruce with wide fireplaces and chimneys of limestone: garden plots laid out in the best of the alluvial soil along the river. A certain contact they can still maintain with civilization, surreptitious, illegal but with no one willing to denounce or impede it. Thus come to them from time to time letters from the outside, news of the world they have left behind. Their lot has all the bitterness of exile but all the stern joy of freedom. All day they work but never count the hours for it is work that each does for himself and those dear to him—a house, a home, a garden—the making of something, man's earliest inspiration. And with that too they join forces for common tasks too great for the strength of one.

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The government knows of the existence of these free settlements, knows of them yet hesitates to interfere.

Sometimes the thing is discussed in their cabinet meeting. "I tell you," says one angry member of the Socialist Cabinet, "them there places must be rooted out. They're illegal. They're in flat violation of the whole basis of the law of collective property. You've got to do something."

The Prime Minister shakes his head. One of the two of the older ministers murmurs their dissent. The speaker goes on.

"Break them up. Send in Mounted Police and arrest the lot of them. Burn down their houses. We have the full right to do it. When we became the government of this country it gave us the full right, didn't it, to use force? Every government does. We have the right to use the police, the soldiers to see that the law is carried out. What we say must be obeyed."

He struck the table with an angry fist. "That's the law Mr. Prime Minister. Carry it out!"

There were voices of mingled agreement and dissent.

The Prime Minister spoke with hesitation.

"I don't think we can," he said. "I don't believe that the people of the country would stand for it."

"The people of the country," snorted his antagonist, "who are they to decide? We are the *government* of the country. Let them learn that!"

"I mean," said the prime minister, "that the people, the mass of the people even if they fully

accept our new regime wouldn't let us go too far. After all they have the vote, and their elected representatives in parliament, if they wish to, can turn us out in a day. I don't believe they'd let us break up these"—he paused for a word—"these free settlements. These people in the wilderness seem to them to be something like, what, well, there's a certain I won't say sympathy but a tolerance for them. After all," he said, and his eye kindled for a moment with a different light, "our own great grandfathers began like them. Mine did—in the Talbot settlement—and those of many of the rest of us."

Warm voices of assent. "Let them stay, they're not hurting anybody."

"That's just it," said the recalcitrant member of the Cabinet. All those round the table knew that he was really a rival of the kindly old prime minister, meaning to usurp his place, and that he and a group about him meant to mould the government to their own way of thinking. "That's just it. That's the weak spot of our position. We're left with that threat of a majority vote, perhaps a sudden majority vote against us, hanging over us all the time. What we should do is to consolidate our position, see to it that the police are with us—pay them well to be with us, and fire them if they're not—make sure that the permanent force is under men we can trust, organize our agents in every city in every centre"—

The prime minister interrupted angrily, with a blow on the table.

"That isn't Canada!" he said. "That's Prussia. I'll have none of it while I'm here. Be damned to it!"

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So the settlements stayed on. Every now and then such discussions, though the public didn't know it, divided the cabinet; but nothing was done, and meantime the free settlements of the north grew apace. That of John and Joanna had grown to the appearance of a comfortable village round a village common, with its meeting house, its school for the children, its forge and its saw-mill and its grist-mill of solid limestone humming and murmuring beside the mill dam as it ground into meal the rough grains of the north. Communication with the outside world had become almost regular. The settlers made their way back and forward to the shores of the Great Bay, their sea coast, trading with fishing ships. Already some of them, bred to the sea, began to talk of building ships on the Bay, of trading across the ocean, and of a government of their own under the old flag.

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But such a situation couldn't last indefinitely. The plain breach of law involved was too clear. Sooner or later the government must act, and when they at last decided to act they did it, as all such governments are apt to, with a sudden ruthless severity that showed their own lack of confidence. We need only recall the expulsion of the Acadians, called suddenly to their fate, and gathered into their Church to hear their doom.

Such was to be the fate of these free settlement villages.

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It is an autumn afternoon. A bright sunshine floods the fading yellow grass of the hills and the wind sweeps among the hollows. The people are all at work around the hamlet gathering the harvest of their late crop in a latitude where harvest must push close against the oncoming winter. But the weather is still bright, the day almost warm.

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The people look up from their work to see horsemen approaching rapidly over the brow of the hill slope. It is a squadron of Royal Mounted Police, in that familiar uniform of scarlet, dark blue and yellow stripe, that has won honour throughout all of Canada and the homage of the outside world.

The people come gathering in from the outlying fields and woodlots. They cannot doubt the meaning of what they see. They group in little clusters, talking together, some in fierce denunciation of what they know is to come. "They daren't do it!" they say. "They daren't do it!"

But they are there to do it.

The police have reached the head of the hamlet. The squadron wheels and halts in a rough half circle in the open square.

The Inspector dismounts, leaving his horse to an orderly. “Gather round, you people!” he calls. “I have an order to read.”

He draws out a document heavily sealed, opens it and begins to read out loud in a high voice for all to hear.

But the gathered crowd of men and women, their children clinging to their hands as they listen, do not need, do not follow all the law terms of the proclamation. Only at certain phrases, as when the officer reads—“to be forthwith torn down and burnt”—there is a murmur that swells to a cry of pain, of indignation.

The officer finishes his reading. Then he speaks as a plain man talking to his friends:

“I’m sorry, you folks,” he says. “This is no fault of mine. The order came from Ottawa last night and I have to act on it. You have no choice and neither have I. Who is your head man here?”

The men push John forward in front of them.

“I’m the reeve,” he says.

“Then I’ll deal with you,” says the Inspector. “I don’t want to make this harder than it need be. Get your people to gather up all their things that they can carry. I’m to escort you over the divide and down to the ferry. You’ll all be taken on from there.”

He does not tell them where. There is no need to tell them that they are to go to a concentration camp to serve the three-year sentence imposed by a Cabinet Order.

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There is no need to depict the scene of sudden helpless anger, the outbreak of protest, the sobbing of the women and the silent fright of the children, clinging to their mother’s skirts and fearing they know not what. Fierce lights kindle in the eyes of some of the men and curses gather on their lips. Given half a chance they would stand and fight it out—blindly with no hope of ultimate escape. But there is not even half a chance.

The police troop sit their horses waiting. One or two even talk with the older children who have ventured near to look at the horses.

The officer is still speaking with the older people, advising them, making it all as simple as he can—himself humiliated, full of pity.

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Then suddenly!

A horseman appears approaching from over the furthest brow of the hill across which the Police have come, riding at full speed, and evidently, as the sun flashes here and there on his accoutrement, himself a Mounted Policeman. As he draws nearer they see him waving a paper, a document, in his free hand.

In a moment he is in their midst. He dismounts, salutes, and hands the document to the Inspector. “From Ottawa, sir,” he says.

The Inspector breaks the seal, reads and stands for a moment, motionless with astonishment. With a sudden word of command he calls the squadron to attention. Then in a loud voice to the silent, expectant people:

“I have an order here from Ottawa,” he reads. “*Stop all proceedings. Cabinet order cancelled. Settlers to remain undisturbed,*” and in a voice that is all his own he adds, “*I don’t know what it means, but I’m damned glad of it.*”

There is a great shout of relief, a sudden outbreak of emotions, of talk, of movement.

The officer turns to the messenger. “Do you know what it’s all about?” he asks, while John and Joanna crowd close to listen.

“Yes, indeed, sir!” the man answers. “It was all coming in over the radio. The government’s out, sir! Clean gone! Their own party rose against them in parliament when they heard of the Cabinet Order. . . . They forced them to resign. A new Tory-Grit Government was sworn in this morning . . . They say there are bonfires and illuminations in all the towns. They’re ringing the bells and blowing the factory whistles. . . . The whole country is wild about it! All Ottawa’s gone crazy, with processions in the streets and burning of effigies and carrying round old portraits of old prime ministers.”

“Oh John!” said Joanna. “Isn’t it wonderful; And we can stay on here, and make it our own free country and build it up in our way. How terrible it seemed and it has all gone like a dream!”

Only a dream! What happy hallowed words are those, in life or in literature. Only a dream! Fears all idle! Terrors all imaginary! Only a dream!

And what an inspiration! If in such a dream we get a picture of our country, torn, distracted, ruined—and then really saved from it, how wonderful to think that there is yet time, that opportunity has not gone, that the future is still all ours. Only a dream! Vanished with the phantoms of the night.

Do you remember Charles Dickens’s Christmas Carol? the old skinflint Scrooge the miser, who had ground the faces of the poor all his life and then in the vision of a Christmas Eve dream is warned of the fate that must befall him, the miserable end, the lonely unwept death, and he wakes. Let me quote it.

## SCROOGE AWAKES

Running to the window he opened it and put out his head. No fog, no mist, clear bright jovial stirring cold, golden sunlight: heavenly sky: sweet fresh air: merry bells. Oh! Glorious! Glorious!

“What’s today?” said Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes who perhaps had loitered in to look about him.

“Eh?” returned the boy with all his might of wonder.

“What’s today? my fine fellow,” said Scrooge.

“Today?” replied the boy. “Why, Christmas Day.”

“It’s Christmas Day,” said Scrooge. “I haven’t missed it. Hulloo, my fine fellow!”

“Halloo,” returned the boy.

“Do you know the poulterer’s in the next street but one at the corner?”

“I should hope I did,” replied the boy.

“An intelligent boy,” said Scrooge, “a remarkable boy. Do you know whether they’ve sold the prize turkey that was hanging up there? Not the little prize turkey, the big one?”

“It’s hanging there now,” replied the boy.

“Is it?” said Scrooge. “Go and buy it. Come back with it in less than five minutes and I’ll give you a crown.”

The boy was off like a shot. He must have been a steady hand with a trigger who could have got a shot off half so fast.

And that’s the way you and I can imagine a happy awakening out of some terrible dream of social catastrophe for Canada, waking to find that nothing has happened, that it’s all right, that the country is still here with all its assets, its unbound future, all ready for us to work on.

Come! Let’s put our heads out of the window, yours and mine, as Scrooge did. See! It’s just as bright a morning as his was, and as every morning is with us. And look down below—there’s a boy there, not a Tory boy nor a Grit boy nor a Socialist boy, not a political boy at all, just a real boy, a Canadian boy.

“Hullo there,” we call. “What country is this?”

“This country?” returns the boy. “Why it’s Canada.”

“Canada!” we repeat. “And it’s still here! It hasn’t disappeared in the night, and halloo, my fine fellow!”

“Halloo!” returns the boy.

“Do you know whether the *Natural Resources* that were hanging up all ready to develop are still there?”

“You mean the vast National Resources of Canada?” says the boy—“I should hope I did.”

“An intelligent boy, a remarkable boy, in fact a real, Canadian boy!”

“Do you think you could go and develop them? Come back with some of them in five years and we’ll give you five billion dollars for them . . .”

The boy was off like a shot—and as he went he seemed to multiply into a million boys.

## CHAPTER VI TO DEVELOP CANADA

So! There we are, then, mercifully delivered, and the evil vision only a dream.

Let us look about us at this great opportunity. How do we gather together in a great forward movement of progress and welfare all our vast assets, this empty half continent, these hundreds of thousands of men available for the work of peace on their return from war, a million others available when the war plants close, and with them the millions over the horizon waiting to join us and the great influx of capital goods ready to come from abroad for investment in cooperation with our people and our assets.

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Canada has an area of 3,694,863 square miles and a population of 11,506,655 inhabitants. In this area let us leave out of consideration all the resources of the vast space of the Northwest Territories situated outside of the provinces and beyond the parallel of 60 degrees. This is probably a monstrous omission. But we leave it out not as worthless but as still largely unknown. We are asking then, how does the remaining area (2,178,105 square miles) stand toward maintaining our 12,000,000 people and having room for more?

Take food. We raise in Canada 615 million bushels of wheat, about one-fifth of what the whole world eats. But to raise it we only use 22 million acres of a usable 352 million acres of arable land. We could increase any of our field crops three times over. Every increase of population would allow of more intensive cultivation. The physical yield of the ground under intensive small crops (market garden cultivation) could be made, in dead weight or in nutrition, twenty to one of what it is now. The soil of Canada, I imagine, could (physically) feed all western civilization.

The livestock and poultry that feed from our pastures could similarly be increased. It can be calculated that even if we increase our food crop for men and animals three to one, we could still have land to raise six billion hens (one acre feeds thirty).

Of our coastal fisheries there is no limit. On the Atlantic seaboard there are 15,000 square miles of inshore fishing waters controlled solely by the Dominion. The sheltered coast fisheries of the Pacific in Canada extend over 7,180 miles off shore. Our "productive" forests cover 770,000 square miles with standing timber (see *Canada Year Book*) that represents (estimate of 1938) 273,000 million cubic feet. The amount of this that is classed as sawmill

material in accessible localities would cut into 245,000 million board feet. This would build 25 million frame houses. To warm them we have 1,500 billion cords of wood; or we can use it as pulpwood and fall back on our coal.

Our geological survey estimates that Alberta alone has 16,588 square miles of coal beds containing 1,035,629,000,000 tons. With the other provinces that makes a national total of 1,200,000,000,000 tons. With our present population and present rate of use it will last 80,000 years. After that we must use water power which is eternal. The sun brings it back after we use it. It is still impossible to estimate the potential horse power of the unknown north. But of the available potential water power Canada has 33 million horsepower. This is about one tenth greater than all the water power developed in all Europe up to the war. So far Canada has not developed one quarter of it, and beyond it is a vast unknown reserve.

The mineral resources of the Dominion can only be described as colossal. All but a small proportion of the present production of metals comes from the Canadian Shield, the rim of rock encircling the Hudson Bay, and the Canadian Cordillera (the Rocky Mountains). The formations of the Shield include copper, gold, iron, nickel, platinum, cobalt, zinc, radium, chromium and rarer metals. Canada's production of nickel is over 85% of the world's output; for gold Canada is second only to South Africa, with an indefinite prospect of advance. "But," says the official Dominion statistician, "only relatively small portions" (of the mineral areas) "have as yet been intensely prospected and much has still to be geologically mapped."

Can we doubt that this country, duly developed, can support 100,000,000 people? The support for them is here now, under our feet, in the soil ready for seed, the forest . . . the axe, in the hidden caverns of minerals and in the waters murmuring in our midst. Nations in the large sense live on the physical assets of their country. It is possible for a nation to live as Great Britain does in large part on the use made of material brought in and manufactured and sent out and on the coming and going of ships; so too with Belgium and other such centres. But mainly nations live on their soil and our assets and our available country is as good as various areas which support 100,000,000. Upper British Columbia (census districts No. 9 and No. 10) has an area of 170,000 square miles and a (pre-war) population of 25,000. It has a similar climate, an average lower latitude (55° to 60°) and resources comparable if not superior to those of Sweden, which has exactly the same area and maintains a population of six and a half million.

The trouble is that we are misled by certain false appearances and certain preconceived ideas. One such false appearance arises from the fact that under modern conditions of machine industry and transport all new settlements huddle and concentrate in the centre. A country seems full because, young as it

is, it has a crowded metropolitan sea-port of, say, half a million people and plenty of them out of work.

Who could land at the port and city of Montreal today, fight hand to hand for a taxi, charge against blocked doorways, stand in line hoping for a room to sleep in, thirst in vain for a drink, jam into trains, suffocate in cars, block in the streets and jostle off the sidewalks, and still believe that there is room for a single extra soul in the Dominion of Canada. And now they are saying that Yellowknife, on the Great Slave Lake, our newest gold city, is crowded full. They are sleeping two in a bed. But all that means nothing. In most of the Northwest they are sleeping only two to the square mile. The whole scene is sheer illusion—Canada is as empty as ever—almost; still abundant room, abundant opportunity, life and all that makes it sweet, waiting here for uncounted millions of people, serene sky and empty plain, and rivers murmuring in the forest—nature’s temple, where we crowd and wrangle round the entrances.

And here we need to clear still further the ground of all the shale and debris of misconception that encumbers it. Our national view is clouded by certain ideas on national prosperity taken over from the past and warping our present vision. One of them is the notion of foreign markets, of sales to the foreigner, the idea that our industrial progress at home depends on our finding markets abroad.

This idea of “selling things” has run riot in our current thought. Especially has the selling idea been distorted all out of its place in its application to foreign trade. Here it joins forces with certain other and older errors (about the advantage of “taking in money”) to exalt the export trade and its profits to be the touchstone of prosperity, the measure of industrial advance. All wrong. There was something in it in earlier, more restricted days; to sell something abroad for cash was like the sale of a few eggs by a bush farmer to a tourist, turning the scale of the family budget.

I am not denying the merit and advantage of foreign trade within its sphere. Wilful exclusion of outside trade means national suicide, or at least malnutrition. We must obtain by foreign trade the things that we can neither produce in Canada nor conveniently do without. Such, for instance, are oranges and lemons, tea and coffee, nux vomica and coca-cola, and some others that I can’t think of.

But, for all other things, we can get them by foreign trade if convenient and, better still, by home production if possible. Our industrial life will adapt itself accordingly. Give us enough people at home, eating, drinking and being merry, and the foreigner can stay outside. He’s only half a bargain anyway; one side of a walnut, and his side may be rotten. Build the country up regardless of him. If we can’t sell our wheat and our fish, we’ll eat them; if we

can't sell fuel to the foreigners we'll keep warm ourselves; if they won't buy our cars we'll ride in them ourselves. All we need is enough of us, busy enough.

Throw away with that idea the smaller one that grew out of it, the idea of "tourism," the entertainment of "tourists" as a part of our method of advance. It is queer the grip it has on our community. We no sooner announce the initiation of some magnificent project such as the Alaskan Highway than we add apologetically that tourists will flock to see it. Will they? Let them wait till we're done with it.

Tourism is another empty economic nut, the sale of scenery and services—by a nation of guides and waiters—to outside people taking a vacation from the world's real work. Leave that to the Swiss who by their misfortune have little else to live on than tourism in peace and neutrality in war. Let them yodel-dodel on their mountains and wear rooster's feathers to look like William Tell. The Swiss are a fine people, a brave people, with a great history. But it is not for us to take on as choice the lot that has fallen to them of necessity.

On these terms let us see how we are to develop Canada. Now I take as the starting point of my thought that we must have migration, a great migration, into Canada in the period after the war. We must have a migration far beyond anything we ever had before. Our maximum figure of 400,000 in a single year (1913) must be multiplied many times over. It is not merely because we have room for the people but because we need them. I am convinced that unless we can have a great many people to support in Canada we cannot support the people that we have. Our immigration policy is, therefore, not one of philanthropic relief to others but of self interest to ourselves.

The point is that we have built up and expanded a vast industrial structure that is too big for our present population to keep in operation. The driving power of war moves it; without that, or a new mechanism, it will stop dead. The new mechanism is found in immigration, in the import of capital goods, in development of resources, in getting enough people into the country to open it up for still more people. It is not an endless chain but we won't live to see the end of it.

Without such expansion what meaning has the British Columbia-Yukon (Alaska) Highway? What use are the wells and pipes of Fort Norman, with no one to use the gas? Why turn back Ogoki power and the cascades of the North if it is but a turning water from tub to tub, both empty. The vast power plants, Shipshaw, the northern airfields facing Russia, the St. Lawrence seaway to the heart of America—what use or meaning has all that without people, more people and still more.

Now for ever so many of us in Canada our tie with Great Britain seems

vital, mutually vital, to us, to them; we are one people. To many of us, I say, any breach of unity on this question would disrupt Confederation. But to stay British we must see to it that our newcomers are British, or something so akin to it as to blend and fuse with the British Commonwealth as a natural part of it.

By British we mean here not necessarily British direct from the British Isles but also British at one remove or in a transferred sense, as are tens of millions of the Americans so largely kindred in first origin, bred in the same freedom, sharing the same language and literature, the same history as one people for centuries and after that sharing it as honourable enemies or as allies under arms. These we count as proper material for a British country along with those peoples of Europe close to us in race and history and culture, the Scandinavian peoples, in a sense our own parent stock, and the Dutch, old-time enemies and old-time friends, but always in mutual honour and respect.

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In this matter of large scale immigration we have to consider of course the ideas and the wishes of the French Canadians; not as a matter of legal obligation for in this the majority rules: but as a matter of common sense and goodwill and since any rule by the dead weight of a British majority is not a British way of ruling. The French Canadians object to immigration as lessening the proportional share of their race and language in the Dominion. The French from France have never migrated since the conquest and are not likely to try to do so now, except perhaps as Vichy fugitives despised of all men. But I do not think it difficult to open for the French Canadians a policy of "colonization" to offset the British policy of immigration. This means the filling up of the enormous area of French Canada itself with new "settlers in the bush," multiplying Maria Chapdelaine, and rocking the cradle so vigorously on the Peribonka and the Ashuapmuchuan that its progeny will pop out as fast as the immigrants arriving on the plains. This implies a large measure of Dominion aid to all such projects, and the extension of family allowances to the full size of the family without the grudging limitation suggested, it seems to me, unjustly and unwisely. All this, however, belongs in the wider discussion of the next chapter.

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Now in this new epoch of large scale migration and machine power we cannot develop our country on the old-fashioned one-man method of the pioneer with the axe, making a log house, the homesteader on the prairies in the sod hut, the prospector with a tin pan fighting bears with his bare hands. Such lives wrote into our Canadian history some of its noblest pages, welded into Canadian character some of its finest metal. But it is not for today. Time has moved on.

Turn then to what we can do to develop the country. The idea is to set on

foot such a vast range of public enterprises as will draw to it the addition of private enterprise by a sort of suction, and draw in millions of immigrants and billions of capital for the simple reason that all the people we have, and all the capital goods we command will not be enough for the situation. We need not ask here whether we are to rely chiefly upon private enterprise or on public works. It does not matter. We must rely upon both. Private enterprise, wide awake to its own advantage, alert to find new opportunities anywhere throughout the length and breadth of the country, willing to take a chance, will supply motive power and incentive. And we must give private enterprise a real chance, the opportunity for substantial profits, freedom from all forms of taxation that will kill initiative and lead towards industrial stagnation. We should be willing, I think, to give to private enterprise here and there the temporary advantage of monopoly, never in such a degree as to create a permanent vested interest but a monopoly of sufficient prospective advantage to induce an initial risk. The principle of "a run for one's money" contains an attraction that can call forth capital funds and individual effort willing to take a chance and stand a loss. Throughout all such encouragement to private enterprise it is possible, even if it needs vigilance, (the old time price of liberty) to protect the community against the unfair competition and illicit gain. I say it is possible, and I think it would prove difficult or easy according to the extent and amount of our public morality. With the animation, the inspiration of righteousness, the eagerness for a good world, crookedness will flee from us like a dark shadow. But it is only this inner light that can dispel it.

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And here we must remember that the greatest of our private industries is agriculture. Towards this our most earnest encouragement must be directed. We must give the farmer a chance. And we cannot do so by applying the socialist doctrine of taking away his farm. If we did, he would cry for it at night. We must see that he can stay on his farm! must gather up all that vast book entry of farm debt that comes down from the years of depression, write it off or write it up or write it down or whatever you do in order to put it, in Abraham Lincoln's phrase, "In the course of ultimate extinction." With that should go facilities for cooperation (still inside individual ownership), electric service for the agricultural area, the adjustment of transport and marketing and, for the great staple products, a certain frame of floor and ceiling prices that removes from the individual farmer the danger of disaster, and guarantees to the consumer also that his food is within his reach. But all this program of reconstructed agriculture is familiar ground, the only problem is how to fit it in with the other parts of a national policy.

But, all said and done, private enterprise cannot suffice alone to meet our situation, especially in the critical years after the war. As we have said, we

must set up a vast chain of public enterprise, moving not only for its own aims, but also to “take up the slack,” if need be, of the slackening chain of private enterprise in dull periods. The possible program is so wide that we need indicate only a part of it.

We need to replace and rebuild the whole of our public transport, a thing to be done without crookedness, graft or swollen company profits. We need in this as in all else the work of honest men. Without that the more we spend the more we lose. And in this case what the honest men are first to do is to think out what a railway is and what a railway train of the future is to be. They will find it to mean a broad straight track, level as a die, with no gradient but the rise above sea-level as you go inland, no curves, no twists, no level crossings. The trains move at 120 miles an hour and stop only at large centres. Trucks from factory to factory and from door to door run 100 miles as local traffic. For the longer haul trucks are swallowed up on board the great trains. The services are complementary, not competitive. So, too, if one had the detail to set it out, would appear the work of motor buses and private cars.

There is a story told of the early days of European railroad building when the routes selected used to wander round among hills and dales looking for an easy track. The first railroad planned for Russia was intended to connect St. Petersburg with Moscow. The engineers bent over their maps, planning twists and curves. The Czar of Russia took a ruler and pencil and drew a straight line from city to city and said, “Make it there.”

The story was told in its day as illustrating the ignorance of an autocrat. It should be retold now as a lesson in railway building. I’d like to have shown the Czar the railway line of his own date from Hamilton to Allandale and have had a good laugh with him. Best of all I’d want him to see the main line from Toronto to Montreal just where it leaves Toronto. Ever since 1855, when it was built, the railway within 16 miles climbs up 300 feet to the highland at Scarboro and then feels its way down 300 feet to the level where it started. For nearly 100 years every ton of freight has been needlessly lifted up that hill—and every passenger, no matter if he weighs 200 pounds, up he goes. All for the lack of a little shovelling.

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So we rebuild the railways. And at the same time we can keep a few more millions busy for 10 years at least reconstructing the cities and rebuilding altogether vast sections of the heart of them. For these sections, the best in situation and access, have been made the worst by the course of history, turned to slums, mean crowded quarters, streets too narrow. Yet the ground values are of incalculable utility, of incalculable money value provided—and this condition is everything—that you can control the rebuilding of it all on a total, and not a spot here and a patch there, which is all that private building could

do.

Expropriate it all. Shovel it up. Rebuild it with real streets, model factories and model apartment homes. Draw with a giant's pencil. You can house here a quarter of a million people, in quadrangle blocks with the backs of the houses turned to the streets, their faces on an inner courtyard, all grass and trees and fountains, where the children can play. Anyone who cannot enthuse on that is as dead as a paving stone.

But private enterprise can never do all that, if clutching and grasping for profit. And anyway the profit isn't there unless you control the whole operation, as only the State can do. Nor can state enterprise do it unless it works with clean hands, fighting graft, working under the inspiration of public-mindedness, of the spirit. Everything you will find, runs back to that.

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These are what are called "self-liquidating" enterprises of Government, bringing their own physical and monetary returns. There is room for millions more to work on "cultural" enterprises, bringing in a return beyond the calculation of dollars. Such preeminently are schools and above all, the school of the new future. This is a school with recreation grounds, with reading rooms, a place for all day. There are rooms here for serving school meals, for the school must supplement the home where the home is still so poor that it cannot supply an adequate life. And of the school meals, one, the mid-day meal, would be eaten, by custom, in common by the rich and the poor. It would not be "the thing" for rich parents to keep their children from it.

And for the rich and poor alike the school must supplement the home for companionship's sake. The school is the gateway to social progress, to that classless society of which we dream. Older people, adult people, are battered out of the shape they might have had and are not to be remade. But children are still in the making. To the schools are added the task of building up a whole range of cultural surroundings, things possessed in common—libraries, public gardens, amusements, museums, hospitals. Millions can work at them for years. There can be no unemployment till it is all done.

Even at that we have left out entirely what used to seem the main feature of development, the settlement of new country, of the open empty plains, the silent forests and the fertile valleys all unused, and the treasure ground of minerals under the soil. But here, as just said, we have no time for the methods of the past. The individual ruggedness of the pioneer wrote the finest pages of our history but we have turned a new leaf. New settlement must move as an army moves, going forward in a mass on a wide front. Before ever a settler comes, broad highways must be driven through the wilderness, like the Alaskan Highway (war's accident that peace time would never have discovered), with side roads, drains, culverts; and with power stations,

electricity and all that goes to abbreviate human labour in the wilderness. And with that, still before a settler comes, carload lots of fitted lumber, ready to set up school houses, meeting houses, hospitals—and when all is done settlement will move into its own, a new people in a new world carrying the old world with them.

In the light of this the silly question: Is there work enough? Is there food enough? Is there market enough? seem like the sniggering cautiousness of the Village Idiot, wary of novelty.

## CHAPTER VII PROVINCES AND RACES

All great industrial democracies share the problems of social justice and social security such as we have discussed. But in each country they present special aspects and special difficulties. In Canada more than in any other country the regulation of industrial society is complicated by the lack of legislative and racial unity. We have to fit everything into our fixed division, into provinces and our looser division (partly law, partly circumstance and custom) as between British and French.

Compare the case of Great Britain. It has its own peculiar initial disadvantage in its very limited extent of territory and natural resources which makes it dependent on the external relations of import of material, export of goods, shipping and world wide services of finance. Great Britain could not, even if it would, live on its own as we easily could in Canada and as the United States does perhaps to some 90 per cent of its economic life.

But for Social legislation Great Britain has the advantage of a unitary legislature (a Parliament of King, Lords and Commons) of plenary power. There is no law they cannot pass, nothing which (legally) is outside of their jurisdiction. When a decision of the courts (the Taft Vale Railway Case Decision) threatened all the funds of every labour union with possible confiscation (a thing that would have rendered labour union impossible and convulsed society), an act of parliament (1907) turned the law the other way, as easily as a juggler finds a rabbit in a hat. When the Scottish Churches decision handed over the bulk of the funds of most of the churches concerned in a proposed union to the little group of ministers, the Wee Kirk, who had refused to join it, an Act of Parliament took it all back from the Wee Kirk except enough to leave it as wee and as free as it wanted to be. And finally in 1936 the Parliament of the United Kingdom, of which the King is a part, removed the King off the throne with as little trouble and less legal redress than the passage of a "Montreal bill" in the Quebec legislature.

This is not to say that the Parliament of England does not frequently pass laws to apply solely to Scotland, or to Wales or to England itself. But it is not compelled to. It can apply anything as widely as it likes.

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Now in Canada we cannot get away from this divided jurisdiction as between provinces and races; more especially as the hearts of our people cling to the provinces as the basis of our history, and the hearts of a large section of

them are held in close affection to the race and religion of French Canada as distinct from the Dominion of Canada. But we can mitigate the situation by understanding it and make the most of it and the best of it by taking it as it is without attempting revolutionary change. Nothing within our sight can make Canada a country of unified legislation, or a country of a single speech. Nor, on the contrary can Canada live and flourish if divided into nine sovereignties and if one third of its people are forced back upon themselves as a racial unit and held in sullen isolation.

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When Confederation joined them in its fold, the provinces were as feeble, as ridiculous, one may say, as sheep just shorn that seem to shrink to half their size.

Deprived of their power, feeble in their finances, now losing many of their best brains summoned to Ottawa, the provinces were still further vexed by the fact that nearly all of them had been reluctant to join into federation. For the two Canadas the federal union was accepted as the only means of escape from the ill-assorted and unworkable legislative union of 1841-1867. New Brunswick entered in haste in loyal alarm over a renewed Fenian invasion and repented at leisure. Nova Scotia was dragged in by a vote of the assembly against the known wishes of the majority of the people. Its first delegates only went to Ottawa to protest against going there. British Columbia came in on the promise of a railway (1871); Prince Edward Island (1873) by being relieved of one.

By all the signs and portents, either the Confederation of Canada should have broken asunder or else the provinces should have withered and atrophied under the shadow of the federal power. And then the unexpected began to happen. A new era brought a new economy. Sources of revenue unknown in 1867 began to flow into the provincial treasuries—the new form of taxes on public utilities and corporations opened by the era of electricity and power; the increasing returns of the “succession duties” (inheritance taxes) in a community growing in wealth and numbers, and the new tax field opened up by the mines in what had been the wilderness. Greatest of all was liquor. The progress of the Temperance Movement was accompanied by a conscientious adherence to drinking. The wave of prohibition created so strong a resistance that the community was presently willing, even glad, to pay taxes on liquor at a rate utterly impossible in 1867. It is recorded that in the earliest decade of American Independence the imposition in Pennsylvania of a tax of 25 cents a gallon on whisky provoked what is known as the Whisky Rebellion (1791). We may never have had the gallantry in Canada to take the musket off the wall at 25 cents a gallon. But the present rate of tax, if imposed in Sir John A. Macdonald’s day, would have certainly provoked an open rebellion, with the

prime minister leading it.

So the provinces grew rich. All the richer because it turned out that the “Crown lands,” the public lands of the provinces, possessed new sources of wealth in their unknown minerals, and the once worthless scrub that turned into “pulpwood.” To make them richer the Dominion Government turned over to the western provinces, as if in repentance for its rapacity, all the public lands of the prairies (1931) with 26 years “compensation for disturbance” to the tune of \$6¼ millions.

Not only wealth increased but jurisdiction, scope of provincial power, widened with every decade. The Fathers of Confederation, as said, had given the Dominion everything and the provinces nothing. Then, to make sure, they proceeded to define everything and nothing, and that muddled it all up. In everything, for example, was included marriage; and under nothing was included the solemnization of marriage.

Most fateful of all was the fact that “property and civil rights” were put in, being next to nothing, under the provincial power. Nobody knows what it means. It is like the “due process of law” of the American fourteenth amendment, the source of 80 years of legal fun in the States. “Property and civil rights” under the interpretation of the courts spread, like a banyan tree, from its own roots. The decisions of 1935 denying to the Dominion Government the right to enact a labour code to regulate labour and wages, to set up minimum wages, and provide for old age, cuts the very ground from under our forward footsteps. In this tangle of jurisdiction the proper way out should be by legal amendment of our constitution. But we on the contrary are utterly bound hand and foot with a chain and a padlock of which we have thrown away the key. No Canadian statute nor people’s vote can amend the Constitution.

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One would naturally ask what we are to do about it all. To which the only answer can be that all we can do is to be fully aware of the danger that provincial autonomy may block the path of progress and to act accordingly. We cannot do everything nine times over; or step out boldly with nine feet first. What we cannot do directly we must do indirectly, reaching agreement all the more easily by being fully aware that disagreement means disaster. We may ponder here on Benjamin Franklin’s immortal phrase about all hanging together or all hanging separately.

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Deeper and more dangerous is the division as between French and British in Canada and never in a sense more critical than in the present hour under the strain of the war. In the days of peace that once were, many of us British people in Canada, and certainly most of us British people living in French

Canada, considered the presence of the French, of their separate language and distinctive culture, a decided asset to the Dominion. It seemed to us to balance and offset certain shortcomings of our own people. The hysteria of the swing to prohibition led us to admire the refusal of the French to be carried away. The province of Quebec, wrote Andrew Macphail, is the last refuge of common sense in North America. We contrasted, too, the tyranny of the Ontario Sunday with the wholesome outdoor Sunday of the priests and their seminary scholars playing games together. We admired the quiet contentedness of the French Canadian *habitant* and its contrast to the eager haste, the get-rich-quick, the quest for money of the restless English. We liked the stories that Dr. Drummond told us of Jean Baptiste coming home again from the States, or Louis Hémon's far-away-and-long-ago picture of the world of Maria Chapdelaine. Around French Canada hung all the romance of history, the appeal of a lost cause and the respect for a people happy in their own lot. Above this level of the plain life of simple people was the pride felt by the educated and academic classes of society living in a dual culture, in drawing upon two languages and two great literatures, on the traditions of two great nations.

It looks in retrospect like a beautiful landscape, now a deserted garden—the storm and sand driving over it. But we must see how much of this dual Canada we can get back.

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This is because the outbreak and the course of the war have thrown a high light on the ground, half shadowed in the days of peace, that separate the British from the French. When the war came it was only too clear that a much larger proportion of the French than of the British desired to keep out of it. Indeed, to speak frankly, there was no comparison. And a much larger proportion of the French than of the British were opposed to conscription. More than this, it became evident that to many, one may almost say to most, of the French Canadians this issue of participation in the war was not a matter to be settled by all-Canada majority rule. Quebec must decide the fate of Quebec.

Hence the danger on the horizon now is this steady drawing apart of the two races as if disillusioned with one another. The old rallying cries no longer call to the heart. Where now is the twin glory of Montcalm and Wolfe, the brotherhood of LaFontaine and Baldwin, each elected by the other's people in North York and Rimouski? Or the memory of Sir John A. Macdonald, doing everything for the French at the price only of a flag; and for their language, everything except speaking it. Or of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as British as the Empire itself, a crown jewel of its Jubilees?

Are those echoes dying out? Are the ashes cold on the hearth? There is a Latin motto which says that the falling out of mutual friends is but a renewal of

their friendship. Can it be so with us? Or do we realize that these were dead ashes from which no new flame can come. For the present hour reveals that this new glory of Britain that marks the British as the greatest people on the earth falls in a broken light on Canada. The glorious episode of Dunkerque, when every aiding seashore Englishman dropped back a thousand years and became again a son of the sea, was followed by the heroic defense of London under the Blitz of 1940, shouting back its defiance of "We can stand it!"—willing, if need be, to die unmoving on the spot.

These things sent a thrill of admiration and affection throughout the British world. Those who died did not die in vain. There was a rebirth of British spirit throughout the Empire. The song, *There'll Always Be An England* echoed in every heart and moistened every eye. All of us who were British born felt that we had done a noble thing in being so. Gilbert's jest came true and "in spite of all temptation to belong to another nation, we'd been born an Englishman."

Now what share have the French Canadians in this new pride, in this new birth of an ancient spirit? What share can they have? In all fairness we cannot expect them to feel as we do. But this new spirit reveals to us that anyone who would cut off Canada from its British connection must first cut off the lives of the millions of people whom this spirit inspires and animates.

But the French cannot share this pride. Nor can they fall back on a parallel pride in the glory of France. That may come later if once again the French people can get into their hands the arms they threw so foolishly away. It is not now. But in any case French Canada is not based on France. The Conquest brought a physical separation, the French Revolution a moral one.

So the French Canadians, in this new British ascendancy, are driven in on themselves, to hold all the more tightly to their idea of a "little nation," an isolated devout people, only asking to be let alone. Some even talk of an actual State, a republic of their own—a Laurentia presently to rise on the St. Lawrence, a dream place, beyond the world of money and rapacity and war—all their own. Who would not sympathize? Better a place of one's own with one's own people in the wilderness than alien rule in a paradise. But geography forbids Laurentia. The St. Lawrence is the gateway to a continent. They can't have that. Yet even a pleasant dream makes an unwelcome day easier.

It seems to me that on both sides we should try to realize the attitude of the other race and meet and match it where we can, and where we can't, say so. British people must realize that the French and their language and their religion are here to stay, and deserve to. The legal guarantees we gave should be rewelded with the guarantee of honest opinion and intention. The French are not going to disappear, and they are also not going to spread over Western or Maritime Canada.

Much of Canada, far the greater part of it in area, is not French, never has been and is never likely to be. It is false history to think of Canada (our present Dominion) as a former French colony taken over by the British Empire. The Maritime Provinces, apart from alternations of nominal possession and cession, and apart from the expulsion of the Acadians in 1756, had no great element of French in their actual final settlement. Prince Edward Island, as the Isle St. Jean, had but a handful of French settlers and refugees when it was taken over. Its real settlement, like that of Nova Scotia was mainly by British immigration, mostly Scottish. New Brunswick in its birth, settlement and growth was Loyalist and British from the soil up. Ontario as Upper Canada was opened up by the British Loyalists in what had been empty country. The Northwest was the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company sailing out of the port of London, and of their rivals (later partners) the North West Company from British Montreal. The influx into their service of French Canadian voyageurs and trappers bred the population of the Métis, the French half breeds of the Red River. But the country was British. Beyond the mountains British Columbia knew nothing of New France, nor of French Canada, nor of the French language, except as learned out of a school book brought from England.

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But all this does not impair the proper claim of French Canada not only to the privileges legally guaranteed but to the consideration arising out of our historic association.

There is however no sense in minimizing the actual separation that divides the two races, not paralleled, one may well imagine, elsewhere in the world. It is a separation that can never be bridged, unless the French Canadians give up their cherished ideas about schools and marriage in relation to religion. This they won't, within human vision. One should try to realize the completeness of this separation between the French and English in Canada even where they are thrown closely together as in Montreal. It begins with the cradle and follows them to the altar and the grave.

Children who do not go to school together can never know one another. And the two school systems are not only separate but built on opposite ideas, each a denial of the worth of the other. Stating each in its own terms, we find the French Roman Catholic school systems resting on the idea that no education is sound unless accompanied, unless permeated, with the teaching and the doctrine of the Church; that one cannot separate in the mind of the child its religious training (meaning its training in the dogma and the moral precepts of the Church) from its intellectual learning. If you do so you attain only to "godless" education, a hideous growth undermining faith, threatening the cohesion of society. Hence at every stage of education is the priest—let us

call him the good father—and his book.

But the Protestant to the contrary. As he sees a school, it is to be made, a place inspired by religion and morality, though cut off from the teaching of dogmas and creeds and rival articles of faith. Each day well spent, arduous and industrious, is a prayer. The honour of the classroom and the playground, the busy, happy day of honest effort and games that teach subordination of oneself, these things teach religion. This “godless” school, seen thus, is seen as the school that God loves best.

Marriage is another separating line, a gulf of division by religion that even love, blind though it is, dare seldom leap across. A French Roman Catholic, and that means practically all the French Canadians, must not marry a Protestant except with a pledge that children of the union must be reared as Roman Catholics. Nor is a Protestant form of marriage held valid, no matter what a perplexed law may say. The only real marriage, a sacrament of the church, is one solemnized by a priest. What can a Protestant youth do about this? Nothing, except to keep his eyes away from French girls—a thing not always easy to do.

It is true that the Irish Roman Catholics with the language of one race and the religion of the other, fall crosswise of this division. But they cross it only to perplex it, not to heal it. And they add to it, along with much good fellowship, a few animosities of their own.

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Nor is there any general remedy for this racial situation to be found in an attempt towards a universal bi-lingualism throughout Canada. In most parts of Canada French is not spoken at all. We cannot reduce our speech to one language and any dream of bi-lingualism, all over Canada, of people twittering away in both languages in Hamilton, Ont., Moose Jaw, Sask., and Victoria, B.C., is just a dream. Bilingualism is not so easy and so offhand as this. It only comes under very special circumstances of necessity, of opportunity and of daily intercourse, as in some of the two-language areas of unhappy Europe. Nor does it ever come when one of the parties concerned is British. We are but poor linguists. The average Englishman not only can't learn a foreign language but he can't even learn to try.

Such is the difficult relation of the two races that has to be taken into account in all our plans for national development and social betterment. There is no way in which we can obliterate or revolutionize it. We can only apply the policy generally favoured by the highest present statecraft in this country and wait till it all goes by. Each side must act fairly to the other. The French have no right in law or in history or in common sense to think of Canada as a combination in which all grave policy must depend on French Canadian veto or consent. The British have no right to misuse the British connection and the

British heritage to give an unfair deal to the French by sheer majority power.  
On those terms all depends on, and needs men of goodwill.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CANADA AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Our main concern in Canada after the war will be the development of this Dominion for the sake of our own welfare and for those for whom we hold it in trust. We shall be compelled to take some thought of the outside world. But for most people in Canada our relation to the outside world will in a sense be intensely isolationist. "Never again," will be our watchword. Never again must the flower of the youth of this country be offered up to the treachery and sin of the German people. Canadians will not be interested in the idea of educating the Germans; they will prefer to do it with a club.

Nor will it be possible for the day-to-day thought of Canadians and the day-to-day policy of our Government to turn on the dissensions, the minority races and the interlocking frontiers of Europe. The one aim of our insistence, will be that of physical security, not ink, not treaties, the physical security that can only be obtained by rendering German treachery and German brutality harmless by lack of weapons. We need no ropes of sand of the past League of Nations nor a New League armed as itself a sovereign state. We need a League only as a gesture—a sort of International Y.M.C.A.—powerless to threaten, attack or coerce.

For actual security we shall look to the associated power of Britain and America—not as running the world, but as preventing the world from running Britain and America. In that associated power we shall join but only by way of solidarity, not by way of splitting votes and dividing policy. Russia is obviously a great ally on the side lines but the national interests of the Russians are far away from ours, and will be till the Pacific world fills up.

With France, for some time to come, we do not need to count. Field-Marshal Smuts aroused wide criticism when he implied in his November London speech that after the war France would not appear as a great European power. But he spoke only what is fact. France has been impoverished, plundered, trampled under foot, its whole mechanism of war destroyed or confiscated. Worse than that. After the war over a million French prisoners of war will return from the starvation and brutality of Germany to settle accounts with over a million Frenchmen in France who "collaborated" with the Germans, and joined with them in the persecution of their fallen country. Over a million Frenchmen, and these the youth of the country, will return, if they still survive, from their forced slavery in Germany to settle accounts with the men who sold them into it. All over France the cry will go up against the

Vichy rule that tore down “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,” and defiled the ideals of a hundred years.

Take out from France the German armies and the Allied forces and what will be left? No one doubts the ultimate revival of France: its annals have been too glorious, its soul too high, its achievement too great to die. But for the present, for now, where is the great power that we can invoke and on which we lesser people can lean?

So too in Asia. China for the Chinese! You and I are all for it. Japan for the Japs, and even less if they can crowd onto it without tipping it up. The Dutch Indies for the Dutch—or at any rate none of our business.

Even on our own continent we need no new formal contracts or pledges or alliances. Pan-Americanism is a grand sentiment over which to drink sweet champagne in Lima, Peru or Santiago, anywhere, at the expense of the United States, which is commonly understood to foot all Pan-American Union bills. But Pan-Americanism in any sense of mutual alliance, pledge or guarantee has no reality behind it. We have learned to admire many things about the South Americans; their solution of the colour problem by going colour blind; their love of beauty that builds and adorns their beautiful cities, which not even a revolution is allowed to disfigure: indeed their revolutions themselves, not spread out as in England and America over years and years but carried out in a day with no disturbance of domestic life. But this happy continent is not for us to cement or guarantee; friendships, champagne, compliments, but political compacts—impossible.

Nor do we need any further tinkering with our own Empire. Field Marshal Smuts in his same speech spoke of the reorganization of the British Empire with larger Dominion units. But there he spoke as a South African for whom the whole sub-continent south of the Congo appears the natural area of a united government.

In Canada we are large enough to need no extension. Newfoundland, one may well trust, will take another look at our lion’s den and find it not a den at all. Greenland, too, we need to take over for air security’s sake, even if we have to pay half a cent an acre for it. But if the Danes, helpless to protect it, won’t sell it out, then let it freeze for another thousand years. We can manage.

There has been talk of our taking in the West Indies but the people who so talk are mostly ignorant of the simple fact that the West Indies are as black as a hat, and getting blacker. What kind of Canadians would they be, forbidden to enter the rest of Canada, and by custom and prejudice not marriageable with other Canadians?

Nor do we need to try to alter the structure of the Empire. The everlasting theorists always reach for a pen to write a constitution. In an unlucky moment they persuaded us to give the Empire a sort of constitution in the (Imperial)

Westminster Statute of 1931. Here is what happened. It was felt during the Great War that formal recognition should be given to the altered status of the Dominions. But nobody knew just what the altered status was. Imperial Conferences in 1926 and 1930 drafted clauses to explain the status. The Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Eire and Newfoundland) severally requested and consented to the submission of a measure to Parliament. Hence the Statute.

But has it been accepted? Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland in their "request" called for ratification by their parliaments. New Zealand ratified. Australia never has. Newfoundland ceased to be a Dominion in 1935. Eire in place of ratification traversed the statute with an Irish Act which leaves nothing of the Imperial connection except that the King of England is King of Ireland outside of Ireland. What that means only the Irish know. South Africa traversed the Statute with a Status of the Union Act, giving full legislative sovereignty to South Africa. Canada did nothing, thereby tacitly accepting the Statute. This creates the paradox that there is now no way to amend the Constitution of Canada except through the Imperial Parliament—as if the Statute had never been passed.

And what does the Statute say anyway? It is a riddle of the Sphinx, a Delphic oracle like the American Constitution of the States Rights days. Presumably the British Empire is indissoluble and also any Dominion can get out of it at will. Each Dominion has its own absolute say about the succession to the Throne. In other words, there can be (even without Newfoundland) six Kings at once—more than in poker. The legislative powers of each Dominion are unlimited; they can overlap as much as they like; and they do.

In other words, we have now got the British Empire on exactly what we may call a British footing, like so many other institutions in Great Britain; like the Beef-Eaters who don't eat beef; like the First Lord of the Treasury, who has nothing to do with it; like the Clerk of the Cheque who doesn't sign any and the Keeper of the Buck-hounds, who hasn't got any. Having thus reduced the Empire to an idea (perfectly intelligible to British people), it seems much wiser to leave it at that. At any rate it won't stand nearer analysis and closer dissection.

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Nor do we in my opinion need to vex ourselves with any discussion as to whether the British Empire in the counsels of the newly made world will act and vote as one unit or as five or six, and whether, similarly, Russia will act as one unit or sixteen. All such talk is mere academic chattering. No people with the power to do otherwise are going to stake the vital destiny of their country on a round-the-table majority vote, white, black, brown or yellow, from all over the world. We cannot imagine Canada losing out by one vote and having

to accept, let us say, Asiatic immigration. Vital things will be settled in some other way. Hence we do not need to prepare ourselves for such academic emergencies by trying to weld all the empire together with a unit, with a foreign policy settled for all by a joint board. The Empire simply won't and can't weld into that. Its different parts have not sufficient contact and relationship.

But in any special emergency all the Dominions of the Empire can endeavour for the sake of common sense to act on common ground in any large world question. They don't need to bind themselves beforehand. They merely need to "go into a huddle" as do football players in a rugby game. If they can't agree they must act separately: but in that case a prearrangement wouldn't have held them anyway.

You cannot visualize the Empire as made up of the United Kingdom and the Dominions each over against the others. It isn't so. The Dominions are like the spokes of a wheel each centred in the hub. The connections and contacts with one another are, as yet, very slight. What is Newfoundland to New Zealand, or even, what is Australia to Canada? Still more perplexing is the situation if India becomes a Dominion. What is India to Canada? A "Dominion," whose inhabitants we debar from our country, with whom we do not and cannot intermarry or intermingle, whose system of "caste" and "untouchable" consigns the 50 million people to the gutters of society is repugnant to our thought. Their way is not ours.

Two fixed points, two steady beams of light, enable us to see our onward path into the veiled future of a distressed world. One is our fixed relationship through Great Britain with the group of British Dominions, including Great Britain itself, which make up the British Empire. The other is our firm union of friendship in mind and purpose with the United States. This unity and brotherhood that has come to join the North-American English-speaking continent is one of the few bright spots in a darkened world, one of the few great advances in the destiny of mankind for which the last 50 years can take full credit. This union of hearts does not depend on the pen and ink of treaties, on the guarantees of legislation. It has no connection with the outworn political issues of possible annexation, possible conquest, possible absorption. All that is past. Our relation with the United States is based on the intermingling of the lives of our people, on hundreds of thousands of family relationships, on the common ground of our common education, the interchange of our journals, our art, our letters. With it goes the back and forward import and export of things not to be valued by a customs appraiser; the export of theology from Nova Scotia in carload lots of college principals and city divines balanced against the import of American mining from Pittsburgh. Stronger even than Sunday theology and work-day technical knowledge is our participation in our

common holidays, our Thanksgiving turkeys, the roaring stadiums and arenas that echo to our common games. For all this we need no further light nor guide but to keep on as we are, begging the politicians to keep out.

It has been said many times above and I repeat it, that in my opinion all our future must depend on the kind of future we deserve to have. The more we study political institutions the more we realize that they are entirely dependent on what we call religion, morality, righteousness. We are not necessarily thinking here of religion, in the sense in which many people use it, to mean the creed and the services of the Church, although for many, perhaps most of us, it is embodied in that outward and approachable form. And indeed for nearly all people of today the moral teachings of Christianity,—the Sermon on the Mount, the sublime ideals of duty and self-sacrifice held up in the New Testament, correspond so entirely with what they feel in their own hearts as to need no other proof.

Seen in this light all political contrivance is vain unless it is based on righteousness. Everything depends on the work of the spirit on the honesty and inspiration of the individual. Without righteousness the richer our country the more rapid our ruin. Give us men of goodwill, whose hearts are in the cause and our happiness is assured.

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

[The end of *While There is Time: The Case Against Social Catastrophe* by Stephen Leacock]