



LORENZO PARE

"You don't get your feet in too many dishes!"

— (continued from previous page)

"Certainly. We are very many, and becoming more."

"Birth-rate and birth-control are vital topics with us here. What is the position in Quebec?"

"Well, 99 per cent of French-Canadians are Catholics, and their Church forbids contraception; that is one point. The other thing is that we are a rural people—on my mother's and my father's side all my grandparents are in the country, so I know something about it—and their farming is all 'subsistence' farming; they grow their own food. In a town, or on a United States farm, another child is one more to nourish. In the province of Quebec it is two more arms to work. So our birth-rate stays high, because our people live in that way."

"Virtually a peasant people?"

"No. They own their farms, and that makes them not peasants. The farm goes from the father to the son, and the son cares for the big man when he is old, and his son cares for him. So they do not feel the need for this social legislation that you have here."

Electricity is Expensive

"Is there any exploitation by big business of these working people?"

"Oh, certainly. Take electricity, for one thing. It is expensive. It is in the hands of a very big trust, which controls hydro-electric power in the east, all round the Great Lakes. But the trouble is, you say to a French-Canadian farmer: 'Here is a big development; it is useful and modern; it makes work for hundreds of men; gives you milking-machines, radios, refrigerators.' He understands that. But you tell him 'This is impoverishing our land,' and you try to explain how, in the economics of big business—that is abstract. It means nothing to him."

"Does your 'big business' get its strength from the United States, or is it local?"

"Oh, no, not from the States. You must realise that we are Canadians and nothing but Canadians; our people may not have the vision, *en masse*, to protect themselves entirely, but if they thought another country was exploiting them, they would take the stand, I think."

"On the whole, though, you are conservative in Quebec?"

"Yes, but in the west where there are communities of Central Europeans,

they are perhaps not so rooted in their habits. I think they are readier to try experiments."

"You think the Alberta experiment with Social Credit could not have occurred in Quebec?"

"No, I don't say that, exactly. But that's a big question for just now!"

"Quite. Another question, then: What is happening to your rural people during the war? Are they going to the cities?"

From Farms to Cities

"I'm afraid this is a very sad story. I told you how they lived—they have been a strong and healthy people. With all the industrialisation that has been facilitated by electric power, there are many leaving the land, and you know what it is when young men come into the city. For the women it is worse. They are not very adaptable really, and I am wondering what will happen. You see, this is very important for Quebec, because our province is producing 50 per cent of the war industry of the whole of Canada. So I watch the future."

"Do you have any differences between French-Canadians and the English-speaking people?"

"We have our local quarrels, of course; but they are only local. The French-Canadians are all around the St. Lawrence, and that is Canada's gateway to the Atlantic. So naturally you don't allow one section of your population to get control of your gate, do you? We are not strong enough to make big trouble even if we wished to; but we don't. We are Canadians."

Chinese and Japanese

Conversation with M. Paré was delightful, but it could not go on all evening, for there were others who wanted to meet him. Another journalist came up, and the conversation drifted to the Pacific war. Then to China, and its post-war status, immigration, and inter-marriage between white and yellow peoples. The Chinese in Canada do not, according to Paré, have the same standing as they have here. He thinks that in Canada there is too much of the feeling "My dirty shirts go to him. I would not marry his second cousin." He was slow to believe that jealousy between Europeans and Chinese in New Zealand was not marked, and sounded agreeably surprised to hear a group of journalists assuring him that New Zealanders respected their Chinese citizens, and were really fond of them.

The New Zealanders, on the other hand, were interested to hear from him that the Canadian-born Japanese is "Much worse than his father—more surly and aggressive." There are about 25,000 Japanese in Canada, and those who were on the Pacific coast have been moved into the interior.

"Are you Canadians really aware of the Pacific?" we finally asked him. "Do its island peoples feel like neighbours, or are they as far out of your mind as, for instance, the South American States are out of the New Zealand mind?"

"Well, our Pacific coastline is just as long as our Atlantic coast, and all our economics is built up on foreign trade, so we cannot afford to ignore our Western neighbours."

"But at the east you have your St. Lawrence gateway, and at the west you have the Rockies."

"I know what you mean. We have our links across the Atlantic—religious, cultural, economic. We need links across the Pacific, too, and our people want to know what there is on the other side. Perhaps that is why we are here now."

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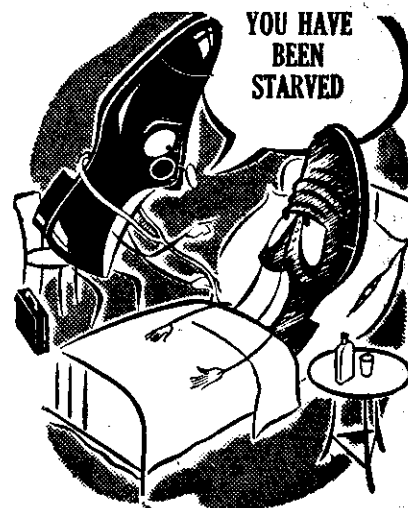
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