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CANADIAN AND NORTH AMERICAN HISTORY

By J. Bartlet Brebner

It is notorious among students of history that a change in point of view, in one's observation post, as it were, produces change in historical judgment. Sometimes these changes involve different emphasis or sense of importance, as when one compares French and German evaluations of their own and each other's national contributions to general European history. These are probably negligible except to dispassionate outsiders. On the other hand it is sometimes possible by changing the point of view for insiders to detect in otherwise quite familiar history unsuspected identies in contour with more general historical development elsewhere. In this way they can build up larger categories for historical evidence and effect profitable simplifications of the historical pattern.

The procedure of matching contours, or of merging the local in the general, is of course particularly applicable to neighbouring societies and polities and even to groups of them in apparently complex areas, if the observer can secure the detachment which, it must be admitted, we usually achieve only in relation to events which do not immediately affect us. Historians need not go the whole way with Hegel or Marx or Spengler, and yet they may admit an increasing inclination to think of Mediterranean history as a whole, not only down to the days of Roman Empire, but after it until the Mediterranean was (relatively) abandoned in favour of the Atlantic. It is a little less easy to get rid of the idea of the " Frenchness " of what were really European revolutionary movements in the last quarter of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries, and still less easy to merge the Russian revolution with preceding and contemporary tendencies towards bureaucratic dictatorships and planned national economies. Yet the procedure is a winning and productive one, when applied, for instance, to Japan and China, or Scotland and England. A notable recent demonstration of this is the work of Scottish historians in linking up their country's renaissance with the growth in Britain of trade and industry, and with the rise in land values which followed agricultural reform.

The method of applying North American, that is, continental, contours to the histories of Canada and the United States is very useful. Their environments and economies have more similarities than differences. Their basic populations, French and English, have been subjected to very similar influences for three hundred and twenty-five years, and exchange has gone on between them in varying proportions for almost two hundred and fifty years. Certainly it has been the habit of European and Asiatic observers to lump all North American history together, even to the extent of ignoring differences which few trained North American observers are prepared to neglect. It seems probable, then, that North American concepts, with some notable exceptions, will serve as a sort of historical litmus paper when applied to the events of Canadian history.

These North American generalizations emerge from the written history of both countries, in spite of the tendency of their historians to lock

up their findings in impermeable national compartments.[1] To use an analogy from physics, there is, inevitably, osmosis between them. Probably one could detect it best from a library in Europe, but here in North America we can get almost the same result by reading each other's history and living in each other's country. Most members of this Association have used the processes in one way or another and the results are already apparent in Canada and the United States, more notably, perhaps, in the former. The better educational institutions in both countries teach North American history as a whole or in closely related parts. Indeed, Professor Bolton at the University of California groups in his teaching the history of all the Americas, and his text-books and guides have won followers elsewhere.[2] It must be admitted, however, that the results of the wider point of view in written history have been meagre. It was recently revealed that one of the best known American historians of colonial life, had left Canadian historiography so thoroughly to his Canadian colleagues (as he said), that he did not know that one of his own American students had been publishing in Canada materials to fill a gap which he had deplored. It required a Canadian emigrant to the United States to point out to Canadians in a systematic way the remarkable analogies between Canadian and American political ideas and practice.[3]

On the whole we have merely begun the process and that is the apology for this paper, which is designed to be general and productive of discussion, rather than detailed and precise.[4] Its materials have been drawn from several years of study and contact with students and teachers in the United States. Particularly useful have been the prevailing attitudes and curiosities of academic Americans, and the discovery of what seemed notable to them in Canadian history. It is in the hope that the result may have some usefulness to Canadian students of Canadian history that some of these observations are set forth. They seem to group themselves in three divisions: (1) the instances where the continental interpretation seems generally valid; (2) the occasions of divergence and difference; (3) the revelations of the interdependence of the two economies.

II

There is little need to re-state the geographical character of North America and the non-conformity with it of the political sub-division, except perhaps to draw attention again to two features which we cannot afford to forget, and which can be seen to operate in some of the examples later to be discussed. One is the southward bend of the St. Lawrence system which brings it about that two-thirds of the Canadian peoples live in a salient wedge in the most thickly populated and most highly industrialized part of the United States. The other is the existence of the Laurentian Plateau, which has operated during most of Canadian history as a barrier between the St. Lawrence lowlands and the mid-continental plain.

The effects of these geographical features have been most notable in relation to Canadian population. Before the British conquest of Canada the French Canadians, except for the fur-traders, remained south of the

[1] Professor Tucker pointed out that historians were predisposed to this by the national allocation of state papers and other source materials.

[2] *See* H. E. Bolton, ***History of the Americas*** (Boston, 1928), H. E. Bolton and T. M. Marshall, ***The Colonization of North America*** (New York, 1920).

[3] W. B. Munro, ***American Influences on Canadian Government*** (Toronto, 1929).

[4] Members of the Association responded generously with comment, the most pertinent of which will be found in the foot notes.

Plateau and, in their extension of settlement, swung south from the Lakes before they reached Sault Ste. Marie, and began to supplement and replace the fur-trade with agriculture in the Mississippi valley as they had done in the St. Lawrence. As Professor Innis has shown, their entry to the North-West was not an occupation, but a circumvention of the Hudson's Bay Company in quest of the ever-receding *castor gras*.[5] For a number of reasons their occupation and use even of the valley lowlands was far-flung and thin, a sort of pre-emption of lands capable of supporting a much larger population. Then came the British conquest and immediately on its heels the increasing rejection of British authority in thirteen of the American colonies, which culminated in their independence. The medley of political causes between 1763 and 1783 for long led historians in Canada and the United States to group and describe the events in terms of the separate histories of the polities concerned, and it has, for instance, been relatively recently that Alvord, Mrs. Jackson, Stevens, and Innis have progressively brought out the truly North American contours which are revealed through study of the fur trade.[6]

We still lack, however, a sufficient group of studies of the movements of population. They are extremely difficult to make, but something has been done and there are some good guide-posts for more. Dr. Mackinnon, for instance, has tied up the land-hunger of the northern colonies with the waves of American settlement in Nova Scotia after 1760.[7] He has built his argument on American studies of how in the northern continental colonies privileged proprietorship and the Proclamation of 1763 were operating, and has demonstrated the North American result—that from Philadelphia to Maine the land-starved colonists took to small boats and went north to occupy the lands from which the Acadians had been driven.

The Loyalist migrations are another challenge, as Professor Sage has reminded this Association in his discussion of the Canadian frontier.[8] Distinguished historians in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain have done a great deal of work on the subject, and most of them have pointed out that the Loyalists were an extremely mixed group. Some moved from conviction, some were ejected, some were adventurers. Unquestionably many of them were almost unconcerned with politics and should be regarded as more or less conscious participants in the great North American migration to the west, who chose British North America for their road. The Germans of the Jerseys, Delaware, and Pennsylvania played a part in the movement. Wide-awake New Yorkers developed many of its roads and trails. Vermont sat on the fence during the revolutionary war, and soon after it a steady trickle of settlers from northern New England began to enter what is now Quebec.[9] It is well to remember that, unless an emigrant from the northern coastal colonies made his way down to the trans-Alleghany roads of southern Pennsylvania, North American topography tended to direct him towards Canada. In what

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[5] H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (New Haven, 1930).

[6] The contributions of these writers are considered in Innis, *op. cit.*

[7] I. F. MacKinnon, *Settlements and Churches in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1930). *See also* J. B. Brebner, *New England's Outpost: Acadia before the Conquest of Canada* (New York, 1927), and C. Martin, *Empire and Commonwealth* (Oxford, 1929).

[8] W. N. Sage, *Some Aspects of the Frontier in Canadian History,* Canadian Historical Association, *Report, 1928* (Ottawa, 1929).

[9] Professor Adair told of his investigations in some southern counties of Quebec where, in spite of an almost exclusively "American" population, there was practically no trace of Loyalists.

became Upper Canada the movement grew to very large proportions between 1783 and 1812, and gave rise to an ironical *soubriquet* which is revealing. "Late Loyalist" was the title of mock honour which Upper Canadians gave to men who came in years after 1783 and tried to secure the benefits and respect which the United Empire Loyalists guarded so jealously for themselves and their children. The war of 1812 found Americans in the majority in Upper Canada, particularly in the west. It is more than probable that a land seeker who made his way across northern New York state or up Lake Ontario would be likely to sheer off from the rough country of northern Pennsylvania and prefer the north shore of Lake Erie to the south. And in the days when the Indians were friendly to the British, the pioneer quite naturally would choose to settle where he and his family had some insurance against massacre. Here is an aspect of the "Loyalist Migration" which we should like to evaluate. It is impossible to do so confidently until we have a considerable number of local studies of the North Americans who entered the Canadas, perhaps even of those who entered the Maritime colonies. We need, as well, close comparative studies of land prices and land-grant administration in adjacent regions on both sides of the international boundary.

One can see the same geographical forces in operation between 1815 and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway line from Lake Superior to Manitoba. Professor Sage has drawn attention to the fashion in which the Canadian frontier of population ignored the boundary line and spread across Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota to come back into British territory again on the prairie.[10] It was no accident that Canada helped to provide railway builders for the Northwest irrespective of boundary lines, that St. Paul and Pembina were full of young men from Ontario, and that Chicago numbered them among her earliest and most vigorous citizens. Professor Lower has reminded us of how the Canadian Government tried to drive roads through the Laurentian Plateau and to induce settlers to gamble on its thin soil.[11]

We do not, however, apply our findings generally enough. For instance, almost every treatment of the history of what is now Ontario in the nineteenth century at some point or other deplores the loss of population to the United States and does so without admitting that for about seventy-five years, in days of roads and in days of rails, Ontario was a main highway to cheap lands, not only for the vigorous farm population of the Maritime Provinces or New England, but for the incoming European as well. Montreal had its advantages as an ocean port for middle westerners in the nineteenth century as well as in the twentieth, and water carriage such as the Lakes system provides has always been the cheapest for bulky goods like settlers' effects. We have thought of the Erie canal as a competitor of the St. Lawrence route. It was a supplement to it as well. Ontario could win from the stream only so many immigrants as she could hold in terms of land price and land value. Moreover, there was a sequel which, because it was separated from the "loss of population" period in time, is usually separated from it in interpretation. We know that before the Canadian Pacific Railway was built, and overshadowing the small resident population in Manitoba, the first influx of settlers to the Canadian prairies came from the United States. The immigrants were

[10] Sage, *op. cit.*

[11] A. R. M. Lower, *The Assault on the Laurentian Barrier, 1850-1870*, Canadian Historical Review, X, 4 (December, 1929).

the vanguard of the same movement which had passed and was passing through Ontario, and their kind have been coming in ever since, less conspicuously than the newcomers from Europe, but themselves often the children of parents who could not afford Ontario land.

While on the subject of population movement, it might be well to mention some other behaviour which is at least partially explainable in continental terms. Professor Lower has recently been urging that we try to measure our population problems by broader than Canadian criteria and the examples that he has given us are good.[12] It might be well for some student of Canadian history to undertake the systematic investigation of the more or less steady emigration from eastern Canada to the eastern United States. In Canada it is blamed on a great variety of things. In the United States there is a myth among otherwise well-informed people to the effect that, particularly among the French Canadians, it had its beginnings as a result of the rebellions of 1837. Yet in the main it seems to have been the accompaniment of the urbanization and the industrialization of North America. The man who goes from Halifax or Charlottetown or Portland to Boston, from Montreal or Toronto or Buffalo to New York, from Winnipeg or Minneapolis to Chicago, is obeying the same forces as the farmer's son from northern Saskatchewan who goes to Winnipeg, or any other rural Canadian who cannot bear to leave a city once he has caught on in it. It would be interesting, too, to demonstrate how factory workers from Canada in their emigration to the United States have followed its centre of industrialization westward. In the 90's the shoe-factories and textile mills of New England drew them, but in our own day they go to the factories of Michigan and the middle west. Under the circumstances, French Canada congratulates itself on having lessened the outflow and the complaints of loss are loudest in Ontario. Finally, it has been shown that the periodic protests in the United States against Canadian immigration bear a close relation to the problems of immigration from Mexico and the West Indies.[13] A protest against one at Washington is rarely unaccompanied by protests against the others. Of course the determinant is the state of the North American labour market and North America has always possessed an extraordinarily migratory labouring class.

It is unnecessary to make much comment on how similar ways of living are, wherever one turns in North America. The facts are very obvious, and because of the industrial predominance of the United States and the subjection of Canada to American advertising, they are in Canada usually lumped under the omnibus term of Americanization. But here again it is worth recalling that Canada and Canadians have played probably somewhat more than their proportionate part in designing the continental pattern of life. Scientists and inventors from Quebec to California sell their ideas, whether they be of ginger ale or preventive medicine, in New York or Pittsburgh or Chicago. The same thing can be said of many painters and writers and professional men. In fact, if Canadians were as self-conscious in the United States as Irishmen,

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[12] A. R. M. Lower, *Canada and the Problems of the World's Population and Migration Movements*, Canadian Historical Review, XII, 1 (March, 1931); *The Case against Immigration*, Queens Quarterly, XXXVII, 3 (Summer, 1930). *See also* D. McArthur, *What is the immigration problem?*, Queens Quarterly, XXXV, 5 (Autumn, 1928).

[13] M. Levin, *Control of immigration from contiguous territories, 1890-1921*, an essay for the Master's degree at Columbia University, now in the Columbia University Library.

Scotsmen, and Germans, they would have followed their examples and produced a volume or two on "The Canadian in the United States" or supported a nation-wide "Canadian-American Society." The reason they have not is not the negligible character of the part they have played.

Professor Munro has made unnecessary any references to North American influences on Canadian politics and government,[14] but perhaps one would be justified in asking for greater emphasis on Canada's North American character in the history of her foreign policy. Canadian representatives at Versailles, at Washington, at Geneva, at Imperial Conferences, and at other international gatherings since the war have shown unmistakably that they serve a North American power. Canada's share in ending the Anglo-Japanese alliance comes to mind, with its sequel at Washington in 1921, but there are other examples, and still more are bound to emerge from international economic competition, and from the bargainings with Great Britain, the British Dominions, and the United States, which have already accompanied the tariff-building of the post-war world.

Perhaps these identities of contour between Canadian history and North American can be most strikingly illustrated by means of analogy. There is, for instance, a remarkable analogy between the secessionist attitude of the Maritime Provinces towards Canada and the secessionist attitude of the old South towards the United States. But perhaps one can go further, and see in the present relation of the reviving South to the United States an analogy for post-war Canada and North America. For better or worse Canada became, between 1895 and 1930, one of the leading five trading economies of the world, not only in raw products, but in manufactures as well. In the same period the United States rose to the economic leadership of the world. The historians of the South are writing the history of their economic expansion in terms applicable to the United States. Those of Canada must explain Canada's spectacular surge forward, and it will be surprising if they do not do so most fruitfully in North American terms.

III.

Having said so much for the coincidence of North American and Canadian contours of history, it seems desirable to examine some of the cases of divergence. These divergencies are the elements in Canadian history which strike the attention of the intelligent foreign observer and it is our duty to attempt to explain them where possible in widely applicable terms, not only for the sake of getting things straight ourselves, but to make Canadian development intelligible to others. There are a good many of these divergencies, enough to make quite tempting the idea of taking the developments of Canada and the United States as examples for the refutation of a Marxian or economic interpretation of history, but two or three must suffice here.

Unquestionably the most striking feature of Canadian history to the outside observer is the maintenance of French-Canadian identity at

[14] Munro, *op. cit.* *See also*, D. McArthur, *A Canadian experiment with an elective upper chamber*, Trans., Royal Society of Canada, Third Series, xxiv, sect. ii, esp. pp. 79-82; and for Virginian and other American precedents affecting Nova Scotia, Brebner, *op. cit., passim.*

the cost only of one small civil war[15] and an approach to another. The United States has really had two civil wars and a narrow escape from a third—the War of the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the terrible struggle of the 60's. Canada had her rebellions of 1837-38, several serious divisions of opinion over the administration of the West, and the violent clash over conscription during the recent war. Yet one might say that the proportion involved in the relation of the French-Canadian population to the rest has been very roughly analogous to that of the Loyalists in 1775, of New England in 1812, or of the South in 1860 to the rest of the United States, and French Canadians have had just as much right to stress their long North-American heritage. In both countries there has been political liquidation of differences under a federal system, but in Canada the cultural dualism has survived much more strongly. Canadians are not a Franco-British people, they are two kinds of North Americans, even more so than the English and French stocks in present-day New England.[16]

Here, then, is a North American phenomenon of very great importance, but one which has usually been investigated in a journalistic way, in local, or in partial fashion. We need a study of French-Canadian nationality which will start with ethnical considerations and weave the full fabric from the quite special attitude towards the exploitation of North America, the cultural influence of the Church on the people and of the people on the Church, the apparently contradictory attitudes towards France, the development of a quite unique attitude towards Great Britain, the acceptance not only of the *laissez-faire* elements of British liberalism but of the active elements as well, the lingering antipathy to the United States, and the faith that time will make only more obvious the share French Canadians must have in the future of Canada and the United States.

One might go on to contrast the cultural conservatism of French Canadians with the eagerness to experiment characteristic of other North Americans. The prohibition of alcohol furnishes an example and one which has had its effect on North America as a whole. English-speaking Canadians are never unaware of the brake on impulsive national action which French-speaking Canadians provide. Yet North America provides us with a sharp contrast even in this matter, in that French Canadians who live in New England are less conservative than those who live in Canada, no matter how resistant to Americanization they appear to those who concern themselves with that process in the United States. One would welcome enthusiastically a sociological and historical study which, by comparative means, would bring into relief the differences between the million French Canadians in New England and the two and a half million in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces. Hitherto the studies have been either of Canada or of the United States. Why should we let ourselves be hindered in a social study by what to hundreds of thousands of North Americans was a negligible political boundary?

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[15] Professor Adair credited this circumstance to the self-control of the French Canadians and to the resolute control of the early English-speaking minority by the British Government.

[16] For this statement I can rely only on the observations of many inhabitants of, and visitors to, the parts of New England which have been invaded by French Canadians. But *see* A. R. M. Lower, *New France in New England,* New England Quarterly, II, 2 (April, 1929); M. L. Hansen, *The Second Colonization of New England,* ibid., II, 4 (October, 1929); L. I. Dublin, *Population problems in the United States and Canada,* (New York, 1926).

The opening-up and settlement of the Canadian West seem at first to be simply characteristic parts of a general North American process.[17] The immigrants from the East turned north after rounding lake Michigan, and the covered wagons followed the Mississippi and Red rivers into Canada. Even when one jumps to the Pacific coast one finds that the human activities which peopled it first, whether fur-trading or gold mining, were elements in a process which began in Mexico in the early sixteenth century. Yet contrasts emerge in the later period. In the first place, Canada's covered wagon period was very short, for the building of railways in the northwest of the United States and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway came within twenty-five years of the first conspicuous entries of the immigrants. Most notable of all, however, is the contrast afforded by relations with the Indians and by the general problem of law and order. The story of westward expansion in the United States is to a regrettable degree a running commentary on the text "the only good Indian is a dead Indian," and even to-day sensitive and informed people in the United States find cause for indignation in the treatment of the surviving aborigines. In the matter of civil order the stage is filled with sheriffs, and *posses*, and *vigilantes*, and federal troops. The record of Canada is much better, and it should be to historians not so much a matter for complacence as for explanation. Why did Canada have only one small conflict with the Indians? Why did Indians flee the United States and come to Canada? Why was a skeleton force of Royal Northwest Mounted Police able to preserve order to the degree it did during the pioneer period in the West? Where the human beings concerned and their environments were so similar in the United States and Canada we should not be satisfied with superficial answers.[18]

The problem cannot be examined in detail here, but it is suggested that one great element in its solution can be traced back to the seventeenth century. The French in North America had on the whole a very different record in their dealings with the Indians from that of the English. Unquestionably in this difference religion played a large part. It is not denied that there were Protestant missionaries. A generally prevailing contrast was apparent, however, and one great reason for it lay in a difference in outlook characteristic of the Calvinistic and the Roman Catholic theologies. Until the early nineteenth century it was difficult for most Calvinists of whatever affiliation to conceive that the Indian might be predestined to salvation. To the Roman Catholic he was always, from babyhood to old age, a soul to save. Moreover, it was the *coureurs-de-*

[17] Professor Martin said that his recent investigations showed that while, as in 1868 and 1872, the land-grant systems of the United States were imitated, yet the process of settlement depended really upon good times. Professor Innis added that the immigrants from the East or from the United States brought in the latest agricultural machinery and that where, as in this case, mechanization came late, it developed much faster.

[18] Sir Robert Borden credited the enlightened Indian policy to the continuity of British control and to the tendency on the part of Great Britain to interpret the treaties of cession in the spirit rather than in the letter. He was supported by Professors Adair and Burt, the former of whom emphasized the heritage from Shirley and Johnson and contrasted Canadian central, with American state, control of Indian relations. The latter saw the generous policy taking shape in the days of Pontiac's conspiracy and during the period (1783-1794) discussed in his own paper for the Association. Professor Martin reminded the meeting of the long and successful record in this regard of the Hudson's Bay Company, a most important consideration in the history of the West after immigration began. Dr. Kenney said that he had been particularly struck by the fact that in the United States the wilderness was a place where a man could do as he pleased, whereas in Canada settlement had been preceded by great legal formality and carried out by orderly entry under centrally-appointed officials.

bois, to a far larger degree than the Scottish servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, who intermarried with the Indians. Most of the intermediaries by blood between aborigines and European stock, therefore, spoke French and owed allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. Thus Canada had always a shock-absorber between the peoples, and she owed it chiefly to her French and Roman Catholic origins.

The question of frontier law and order is very complex. Present day North American contrasts in the administration of justice are acceptable evidence that there has been a somewhat deliberate difference in choice made between the summary and rather ruthless process and the long-drawn out and careless. It can be found explicitly as early as 1754 in Nova Scotia where determined policy laboured to keep the law as well as the constitution clear of a New England taint.[19] From then on the evidence goes to show that in bar associations and courts, rather more conspicuously than in legislatures, there has been a considerably successful effort to retain the English character of law and justice. Unquestionably political affiliation goes far to explain it, but it would be unwise to be satisfied merely with that. The frontier theory of North American history, that enthusiastic elaboration of Prof. F. J. Turner's reasonable suggestions,[20] obviously will not serve. It would seem that we need histories of Canadian law and justice and that the task must not be approached purely in terms of heritage. Attention to the beginnings of such work made in the United States may save us from mistakes. If the studies begun by Professor Goebel[21] continue to reveal elsewhere in the United States as much local peculiarity as he has found at Plymouth, intending historians of the law in Canada will do well to encourage detailed local studies of a functional character first. Perhaps out of one of them we shall get a realistic picture of what happened in the early days in the West and be able to explain confidently what is at present a perplexing contrast between the histories of Canada and the United States.

One could go on with contrasts in the development of the two countries, but one more must serve, and it is chosen because some day, decades hence, it is going to be provoking to the student of man's effort to create social wealth and publicly owned services. For a century and a quarter, let us say from the days of Robert Owen, men have been making actual experiments of this socialistic sort and, because of its newness and its reputed liberty, North America has been the scene of scores of them. In our own time, however, the scale has changed from the free roads and bridges, the village commune, or the "five acres and a cow" of the nineteenth century, to such vast enterprises as the electrical system of Ontario, the social services of Great Britain, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand; the railways and irrigation works of India and Canada; or the complete state designs of Mexico, Italy, and Russia. To-day the United States, among the advanced countries of the world, professes to be the one most thoroughly opposed to public ownership and public operation of public utilities. Her surrenders, as in irrigation for instance, are concealed in

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[19] "The Rights of Englishmen," being chapter IX of Brebner, *op. cit.*, and particularly pp. 243-248.

[20] *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920). For interesting criticism see J. L. McDougall, *The Frontier School and Canadian History*, Canadian Historical Association, *Report, 1929* (Ottawa, 1930); and B. F. Wright, *American Democracy and the Frontier*, Yale Review, XX, 2 (Winter, 1931).

[21] J. Goebel, *King's Law and Local Custom in Seventeenth Century New England*, Columbia Law Review, XXXI, 3 (March, 1931).

a mist of denials of anything but free individual enterprise. In Canada, both the federal and the provincial governments have been far more amenable to the current of the times and have, from time to time, been more honest in admitting what they have done. At any rate, a contrast remains, and one which emphatically needs elucidation. At the risk of making what may prove to be an unjustifiable guess, it is suggested here that an important reason has been that Canadians have shared North American optimism, but have done so without a proportionate share of North American wealth. Since 1825 Canada has always had more public services in the way of canals and railroads than she could afford. By borrowing abroad, she anticipated the future more boldly than the United States and with less wealth. The way out has been to let the Government shoulder the burden, for the nation insisted on having the services even when private enterprise failed to make them pay. The exciting prosperity of 1924-1929 and the example of the United States have recently seemed to obscure the process. It remains to be seen whether competition in a neo-mercantilistic world and exposure to the influences of the United States will make Canada more or less inclined to subordinate the individual and his interests to the designs and property of the whole people as regimented and arbitrarily unified in the apparatus of the state.[22]

IV

The economist and the historian, with active assistance from the statistician, must work together in making clear the last of the fields of enquiry under discussion, that is, the interrelations of the two great economies of North America. They must also co-operate in interpreting what the representatives of the two peoples have done artificially to modify these interrelations. In the process Canadians can give thanks for the Bureau of Statistics and for the editorial skill which makes the annual *Canada Year Book* so usable a guide. Yet statistics are bare and they exist only as an instrument for the processes of economics and history, and it must be admitted that in Canada much more of that work remains to be done than in the United States. No one has written an economic history of Canada because no one can until many such studies as the one Professor Innis is to sketch for us have been completed.

The one which he has chosen for investigation commands attention if only because around it has arisen the most enduring cause of disagreement between Canada and the United States. The North Atlantic fisheries have produced a sort of diplomatic no-man's land. The trouble began in the sixteenth century and when it intrudes in the general narrative, most of us push it aside because of its very tediousness. The next few months, however, should see the publication of two historical

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[22] Sir Robert Borden, in his remarks, referred particularly to the Canadian National Railways which were organized while he was Prime Minister. He recalled the war crisis which necessitated the nation's assumption of the burden, and said that he had chosen British administration of the Suez Canal as his model. Instead of creating another government department, he set up a corporation which should be owned by the Canadian people. He added that in the United States a railway cannot go into the hotel or steamship business as in Canada, and that even participation in mining and other businesses is more restricted. Professor Innis felt that, once the St. Lawrence system began to be developed for communications, the magnitude of the operations committed government to participation, and that, generally, Canada's late and rapid industrialization involved projects of such magnitude as to make public ownership natural. Professor Martin drew attention to the interesting effects of the co-existence and competition of public and private utilities.

investigations which promise to give us a clearer picture as far as the past is concerned.[23] We should be able to evaluate with same exactness the economic considerations which lay behind the political activities and agreements with which we are familiar. We should be able to speak with more reasonable certainty about why Prince Edward Islanders of a generation ago confused federation and the steamship and modern fishing methods in their minds as they sought a reason for the emptiness of Charlottetown harbour. We should be able to think in terms of a North American situation instead of being confused by the differing aspects which it has had to observers in Newfoundland, Canada, and the United States.

There is no strong objection to our abandoning the particular for the general in examining the related economies. We have seen the Albany trader move to Montreal after the British conquest of Canada,[24] and the French-Canadian *bourgeois* and *coureurs-de-bois* provide the field force for the American fur companies after the Louisiana Purchase.[25] We have a fairly clear picture of the demands in Canada and the United States which brought about commercial reciprocity from 1854 to 1866 and defeated it in 1911.[26] Yet only in the last few months has an effort been made to investigate the extraordinary circumstance that in spite of tariffs and reprisals between Canada and the United States and arrangements for imperial preferences, economic forces broke through these barriers, and from 1867 to about 1910 the two countries took a larger and larger proportion of each other's products.[27] Of course, compared to contemporary tariff walls, the barriers raised by Canada and the United States before 1914 seem puny, and, relatively, one might almost talk of the relation between them as one of free trade. North American neo-mercantilism, like Canada's fifth place among the world's trading economies, is an almost contemporary growth. Moreover, one should not be misled by the word tariff. Before 1919 there were no effective barriers to the interdependence of Canada and the United States and the reason is not far to seek. The two countries needed each other's products and could buy them from each other more cheaply than elsewhere. Canada could supply the deficient United States with most of her wood-products, nickel, and asbestos, and the United States took from fifty to eighty-five *per cent* of Canadian production. The United States could supply deficient Canada with anthracite coal and iron ore and Canada took almost all her supply from the neighbouring source.

Some day we may get an economic history of Canada which uses, as the successive criteria of her development, her inclusion in a mercantilist empire, her fiscal independence in an almost free-trade world, and her rise in a neo-mercantilistic world to the point of being a financial and

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[23] The Yale doctoral dissertation of R. G. Lounsbury on the North Atlantic Fisheries in colonial times, and the Chicago doctoral dissertation of C. E. Cayley on the fishery relations of the United States and Canada.

[24] Innis, *op. cit.*

[25] H. M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade in the Far West*, Vol. 1.

[26] A comprehensive appraisal is W. G. Swartz, *The proposed Canadian-American Reciprocity Agreement of 1911*, Journal of Economic and Business History, III, 1 (November, 1930). *See also* C. C. Tansill, *The Canadian Reciprocity Treaty of 1854* (Baltimore, 1922).

[27] *The Canada Year Book* of various dates provides the statistics conveniently. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace proposes to devote a volume of its *Studies in World Economy (International Conciliation*, New York, monthly except July and August), to this subject. The analysis in H. L. Keenleyside, *Canada and the United States* (New York, 1929) is admittedly a summary one.

industrial, as well as an agricultural, competitor in most of its markets. When it comes to be written, the most difficult part of the story will unquestionably be that of the years between the depression of 1912-1913 and that of 1920-1923, for it must be admitted that the accounts of that decade which we have at present either in money values or in quantities of products, in national wealth or in productivity, in foreign indebtedness or in domestic assumption of debt burdens, are extremely difficult to interpret clearly. It seems possible to explain the Canadian prosperity of 1895 to 1913 as the accelerating payment of dividends on the capital so painfully and disappointingly invested between 1850 and 1890. But how can one explain the dizzy progress of 1924-1929 except in terms of what happened to all North America between 1913 and 1923? Perhaps the present world depression will give us a clue. Perhaps our present concern about the halting re-entry of the Russian granary to the world from which it was excluded in 1914 will make us think about what the world (and Canada in it) did to remedy the deficiency.

Contemporary politics, however, make dangerously untested footing for the characteristically wary historian, no matter how useful his interpretation of the past may be to those responsible for framing the policies of the present and future. Perhaps we should be justified in asking Dr. Skelton how accidental he thinks is the existing high proportion of ex-historians in his Department of External Affairs. Be that as it may, it is certain that in one field of the relations of the two great North American economies, he or any other servant of the Canadian Government concerned with international affairs can confidently call on the historical record as evidence of North American good sense. That is in the management of the continent's greatest public utility, the international waterways. At Geneva our Canadians have recited that historical record and pointed to the International Joint Commission so often, and have, in their detached North American way, used it so complacently as a contrast to the manifold unsolved international issues of Europe, that there is some danger of its becoming a bad joke in the League of Nations. But serious students regard it seriously and it is being carefully investigated in many places.[28] History shows that it was no accidental inspiration, but that it grew out of the coincidence in Canada and the United States of an international outlook which made it almost inevitable. Its record since that time seems to guarantee its permanence. It is not to be measured in terms of the internationalization of the Danube. Even if it were its record would be unique.

Let us rather regard it as one supremely sensible product of the historical forces which have been touched upon in this paper. To the United States it may serve as a reminder that Canadians have been and are willing to pay the economic price of separate political existence in North America. Darien robbed Scotland of the ability to do the same in Great Britain in 1707, but Canada has thus far pulled through her Dariens. To Canadians the Commission should be seen in proper North American as well as Canadian perspective, and if that is done, it will be a sturdy reminder of the responsibilities as well as the benefits of living at peace and living in fortunate North America.

[28] *See* R. A. Mackay, *The International Joint Commission between the United States and Canada*, American Journal of International Law, April, 1928. Two candidates for the doctoral degree at Columbia University, C. J. Chacko and Miss E. B. Sinclair, propose to discuss it in their dissertations for the degree. Miss Sinclair's master's essay, a preparatory study, is now available in the Columbia University Library.