

New Democracy Canada's Need, Says Herridge

Canada's Economic Problem Analyzed in Noteworthy Address By Former Canadian Minister At Washington.

Following is the text of the stirring address on the Menace to Democracy in Canada, recently delivered at Sydney by Hon. W. D. Herridge, former Canadian Minister to the United States:

"This is a world of wars. Those past and present seem but the promise of the ones to be.

"Unrest envelops us. Change is constant everywhere. Venerable customs are forgotten, old political doctrines abandoned, established standards of value torn down. The individual mind surrenders its being to the State and it looks for safe conduct amid the perils of the times.

"The power which bends the peoples out of their old forms of thought and action is the national impulse to survive, to prosper, to grow great, it is the universal will for security. Before its sweep, all things have been forced to give way; among them, liberty.

"For, in the judgment of some nations, liberty as we know it and security as they would have it, are not reconcilable. Democracy is to them a weak, old-fashioned, useless thing, a sort of ghost of yesterday, pale-faced beside the full-blown vigour of their new faith.

"In this unfriendly world, democracy still has its place and its power, though these are in doubt until democracy meets the new demands upon it and is made to work.

Goal of Democracy

"The goal is security, prosperity, contentment. Can democracy show the way? If not, what takes its place elsewhere; and here, in Canada?"

"If democracy can work in any country, it would seem that country should be Canada.

"This is the age of abundance. We are its first fruit. Here, there are the means by which to build a standard of living higher than any nation has ever known.

"We have a people of great capacity and intelligence. We have a powerful industrial machine and the skill with which to use it. We have boundless natural wealth. With these three fairly used, security should reign in every home throughout the land.

Situation Today

"Against this background of potential plenty, examine our situation. The industrial machine, the standard of living, the natural wealth, the majority do not encounter it. Nor does it seriously disturb the old levels of unemployment and want. Even to its favorites, it is an unsubstantial thing. Business responds to it as does a sleep-walker to a supernatural influence; and follows with slightest eyes, unconscious, helpless, the catastrophe. Our rescue formula is the bread line. Influenced by the placidity of officialdom, we dispose of crop failure as just another hot weather incident; when, in fact, it is a test of the practicability of Confederation.

"Certain parts of Canada move steadily from bankruptcy actual to bankruptcy official. Orthodox finance speeds them on their way. Our other national problems, feeding on neglect, have grown to be giants. We try to talk them down. The results appropriately reward our efforts.

"Economic night begins to fall upon the nation. What light remains is the unwholesome, lurid light which sometimes comes from gunfire. For the stimulus behind prosperity is the movement towards war. When that stimulus lessens, the flash will go out of business and we will sink into the depths of another depression. Democracy will be buried at the bottom of it.

"Providence gave us Canada to use, not to throw away. And I tell you that we are letting it go by default.

"Why do we every act, do we defy the teachings of this present time and try to turn time backward, to our own undoing?"

"Why do we drift on in the wake of a shattered internationalism, clutching the fragments of an economy which the modern minds of ancient nations are wise enough to jettison?"

"Why are we so old when we should be young, so dependent when we might be independent, so immobile when we should be on the march?"

"Why, with the power and right to nationhood, do we lack the will?"

Must Act

"Is it nothing to you that this country, by failing to meet the tests of nationhood and is nearly through? I think it is. Then we must act.

"Take what we have, and build a new world in Canada. Leave out of it, hardship and want. The only tools we need, are self-reliance and fortitude. We have them, haven't we which should be the fulfillment of every rightful hope there is a reason why the prospect of tomorrow, the promise of uncertainty, why anxiously rides the minds of older men, and

names, use the same old tricks, resort to the same old stupid practices. They are not even funny. From beginning to end, it's a wretched burlesque.

"Meanwhile, the people endure, there being nothing else for them to do. The highly favoured ones, selfrighteous, smug from ring-side seats elegantly look down upon this struggle for security.

"Who will retrieve the state, so that the state may help it? If reformed capitalism does not, then the state though unretrieved, will negatively support reactionary capitalism. If the state continues as it is, laissez-faire becomes the hand maiden of reaction; unwittingly perhaps, but for all that, a very useful one; as you will see.

"The uncontrollable will of humankind strains toward prosperity. Prosperity begins with our emancipation from the thraldom of the old order. Whatever action we may take to set us free, seriously disturbs that order. The state with the old mind must instinctively resist such action, not because, that action is wise or foolish, legal or illegal, constitutional or unconstitutional, but simply because it is action against the old order.

"Likewise, action on behalf of the old order will win the approval of the state with the old mind; whether that action is valid or invalid, fair or unfair; and even though such approval may involve the sly assent to un-Canadian assaults upon our personal liberties.

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"I sometimes think that a good many Canadians must have been born with a high opinion of their natural gifts, as constitutional lawyers; and that some of us have not recovered from that initial disability. For we are prone to surrender our laymen's prerogatives of common sense, and with feverish touch, attempt to rearrange the mysteries of the constitution's written word, without the remotest idea of the practical reasons for our doing so. Were we content to be just ordinary citizens, I am sure it would occur to us to first enquire the reason why we desire to augment or lessen the power of the federal or provincial authority.

"The clearly, the draftsmen of the constitution did not envisage the present basic economic problem and so may not have ensured the legality of the statutory measures necessary to dispose of it. And, I submit, that all the intervening extraterritorial tinkering has simply turned the constitution's original imperfections into complete absurdities; for which, reaction should make suitable acknowledgment."

MUST REFORM OLD SYSTEM

"Therefore if we want to go forward, so that abundance may serve the people, we must intervene and reform the old system. Or do we want to back it up? If so, we must gear ourselves down again to that standard of security in which the old system alone could function; we must intervene and curb those new influences which tend to turn low production and high profits into high production and low profits."

"Naturally, the people want to go forward. Naturally, the beneficiaries of the old system, want to go back. So reform confronts reaction; the people's need confronts the ambition of special privilege, prosperity for all, good wages, full employment, contentment, prosperity for the few, low wages, that measure of unemployment in which the old system ideally operated.

"I state the situation in this way because I see it in this way. It need not provoke our rancour or resentment. These are the weapons of defeat. And we succeed when we resolve to deal with this practical problem in an unemotional way.

"Action by the state is needed to take capitalism forward. Action by the state is needed to take capitalism back. The reformer knows that so also does the reactionary. And both know that if the system is not to go forward, it will certainly go back. For capitalism cannot stand still.

"There is no firm ground between the new capitalism whose purpose is maximum production with profits compatible with it, and the old capitalism whose purpose is maximum profits with whatever restraint upon production is necessary to obtain them.

"We all should have been warned of that. Yet in the treacherous middle ground—surely a no-man's-land—behold that governing body, the democratic state, mixed in purpose and performance, because it stubbornly insisted that its guide should be the blind facts of comparative antiquity.

"What has this country done that its economic truths should be spurned by the complacency of our leaders? They, with brave words, proclaim democracy's omnipotence and boast about our liberty as if they were the authors of it. But they should understand that, unless their service to democracy extends beyond their present official manhandling of it, democracy is condemned and their incompetence will be its executioner.

"Why do we harbour economic doctrines inconspicuously rejected by progressive nations, and cling to methods based upon a myth?"

"These hang us on a reef in the swift current of the world's advance. And in that ridiculous position and seemingly oblivious of it, officially and fervently, we give ourselves to make-believe. We, leaders of our people without substance and debate them with the awful solemnity of a falling mind. They make the same old speeches, call the same old

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"Likewise, action on behalf of the old order will win the approval of the state with the old mind; whether that action is valid or invalid, fair or unfair; and even though such approval may involve the sly assent to un-Canadian assaults upon our personal liberties.

"By the rules of the old order shall all these acts be judged; as to their morality and as to their constitutionality; and sentence passed accordingly. That's service to reaction; menial if you like, but mighty useful.

"I sometimes think that a good many Canadians must have been born with a high opinion