DEMOCRACY IN CANADA

TO-DAY there is probably more doubt in men's minds as to the best type of political institutions than there has been at any previous epoch of the modern world. Those who, during the American Revolution, demanded "Liberty or Death" had no doubt as to the blessings of the liberty which meant democracy. The leaders of revolution in France were certain that the path to human happiness was to be found in the liberty, equality, and fraternity which should follow the destruction of the Bourbon despotism. Later, in England, the people who secured the extension of the right to vote by the first Reform Bill believed that the nation's happiness hung on the issue. There was equal certainty on the opposing side; the Duke of Wellington could not conceive of a better system than that overthrown by the Reform Bill. In Canada, between 1840 and 1849, we find reformers describing with almost frantic earnestness the happiness certain to issue from self-government. But now this certainty is gone. Popular rights have grown; the people rule; no longer the rich but the poor control the state. The Whig party has disappeared because its tasks have been achieved and now its successor in England and in Canada, the Liberal party, is receiving its most staggering blows, not from Tories who desire no change, but from disillusioned believers in democracy who no longer hold the earlier Liberal dogmas. These, it is urged, have not touched the vital thing, the economic reorganization of society. The only person sure of himself is the man who wishes to leave things as they are, and he dreams of an impossibility.

The long-coveted democracy has thus brought new doubts. Many things in public affairs have deteriorated. The quality of most of the leaders in public life is probably not as high as it was fifty years ago. Parliament has more power, but political life has less dignity, if we may judge from some of the scenes in parliament. The editorial page of the daily newspaper is not as good as it

was, because the editor has now to reach not only the educated but the uneducated, and adjusts his tone to their needs. The cities in Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which, with their intelligence and movement, ought to be guiding stars in politics, send to parliament some of the poorest type of members to be found there, and in their domestic affairs often reward with the highest honours not men of distinction but the political intriguer and the demagogue. This is how democracy has worked, and there is no going back, for power can return from the many to the few only if the many consent, and this they will never do. Thus it has come about that thoughtful men are puzzled and fearful. They have entered a forest, and they know as yet no way out.

It is at such a time that the opinions of a veteran observer, who still retains faith and hope in political society, are best fitted to produce a steadying effect. Lord Bryce¹ has been for more than sixty years an alert student of politics. His classic work, *The Holy Roman Empire*, was written when he was barely out of his 'teens. He refers to events in the sixties as if they were the happenings of yesterday. Ancient Rome is as real to him as modern Washington. He has been a professor at Oxford, and a cabinet minister in England. He is the author of the most widely-read book interpreting the politics of the United States, and was the British ambassador to that country. He has travelled in every continent and studied on the spot every type of human society. No other living man has observed more closely, or written with greater industry, or greater freedom from prepossession or abstract dogma, than this amazing veteran. And he closes his book by saying that hope is "one of the cardinal virtues", and that "Democracy will never perish till after Hope has expired".

In this utterance, it is true, there is no dogmatic faith that democracy will not perish—but hope must perish first. If democracy fails it must pave the way to something better than itself, or mankind must cease to be inspired by the faith that life is not a vain battling to end in the dismal swamp of failure. Lord Bryce has chosen six democracies by which to illustrate his study: they are France, Switzerland, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and, not least perhaps, Canada. Four of them, it will be observed, are English-speaking, and naturally so, for these are the most advanced democracies. It is well to study

¹ *Modern Democracies*. By Viscount Bryce. Two Volumes. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada. 1921. Pp. xv, 508; vi, 676.

with these French democracy, the child of the revolution which shook the world. France remains a vast unitary state under a single legislature. Switzerland, on the other hand, is a loose federation, and for it Lord Bryce reserves his highest praise. He has not ventured to study British democracy in its home. In thus refraining he has seemed to give us Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Few are better fitted than he to analyse the democracy of Britain, for has he not shared in its government? For forty years, as he says, he has been a member of legislatures and cabinets in England; but this, he thinks, makes unbiassed observation impossible. We must respect his reasons, even though we think that his detachment would have been adequate.

Lord Bryce keeps his eye on democracy as it is, not as it might be, and defines it simply as the rule of the majority. If in a democratic state the majority is ignorant and corrupt, then democracy is ignorant and corrupt. We clear the ground at once of mystical conceptions of the sacred rule of the people. Plato thought that in Heaven might be found the idea of the perfect state. If so, its copy is not to be found on earth. The rule of the people is just the rule of the majority of men, and now of women too, in the state. It has never been proved that there is any peculiar virtue in majorities. Probably the minority is as often right as is the majority. Certainly the minority is right when it presses for some needed reforms for which it must win the reluctant consent of the majority. Orators may flatter a crowd by protesting that the people always think on a high plane. But the term "the People" has in each environment its own special significance. "The People", to the white orator in the Southern States, means the whites, to the exclusion of the blacks, who may be a majority. "The People," to the German demagogue in Silesia, would probably have meant the Teutonic and not the Slavic race.

Thus when we discuss democracy, we mean only the rule of the majority. Why has it come into being, and how has it worked? In confronting the first of these questions Lord Bryce places severe restraints upon himself. He is discussing not the origins but the working of democracy. He makes no attempt to analyse those impulses in man's being which make to him the liberty to take the wrong path more precious than the reward of taking the right path under constraint. There is no discussion of sovereignty or the social contract. Lord Bryce doubts, indeed, whether the desire for self-government is very strong in mankind.

What they desire is good government, and if they can get it without effort on their own part they are content to take no share either in setting up or in administering free institutions. The average man is rather like the indolent member of a club who wishes to be comfortable and is willing to leave everything to the committee, if only the machine is made to work smoothly. If he is denied what he considers his due, sooner or later he will make trouble. This is not to assert his desire to assume responsibility, but only his resolve to get rid of a nuisance. Men have fought tyrants not so much to assert their own right to rule but to get rid of cruelty and greed. Lord Bryce asserts that in England the people have not greatly desired political power. The Reform Bill of 1832 did indeed express a popular demand, but it was satisfied by a very moderate extension of the right to vote. Later extensions of the franchise to the masses have been made by the upper and middle classes. It is not clear that the mass of the women in England desired the vote when it came to them. It was the activities of a few educated women which brought it to women as a whole.

Now when democracy has come and we dismiss any mystical belief in it as a final form of government, we are free to confront in the spirit of reason its merits and its defects. In a good democracy, says Lord Bryce, the majority will show a high sense of duty, and the individual, since he is only one of many, will seek the welfare of the many and not that of himself alone. He will ask for no special privileges. Public questions are intricate and he must confront the labour of study to understand them. He will follow reason and not passion. He will be honest himself and demand honesty in others. If he seeks office it will be that he may render public service. Working with his fellow-citizens, he will not only recognise liberty and equality but will expand in the sympathy and kindness which the French called fraternity and Mazzini termed humanity.

We should deceive ourselves if we should hold that as yet any democracy has produced all these qualities. Democracy is due to a variety of causes. In America it grew up because equality of social conditions involved equality in political privilege. Democracy was fostered in Europe, in some countries, at least, by religious beliefs which, making men equal in the sight of God, tended to make them equal in the sight of each other. But the most potent cause of democracy has been the unwisdom, the scornful spirit, and the crude selfishness of ruling castes

whether regal, noble, or rich, which have stirred resentment and made the many insist on asserting rights inalienable, as they thought, from manhood. To take power from others does not, however, involve the capacity of the victor himself to exercise it. We may dismiss an unworthy physician and still know not how to heal ourselves. Democratic theory has gone wrong in assuming that the right to vote brings with it either the will or the capacity to use it well. The mistake was natural. To overthrow a tyrant has involved perils and efforts which have strained the fullest capacity of revolutionaries. Little wonder that they should assume that, with the despot gone, all would be well and should forget that in themselves were the same strains of selfishness which had made the despot and that, the old tyranny vanquished, they must confront the menace of a new one.

If they faced the future without misgiving they were, by so much, off their guard. "No government," says Lord Bryce, "demands so much from the citizen as Democracy", and he adds for our comfort that "none give so much back". The citizen has not, as yet, met well the demands upon him. When self-interest surged through other channels than those of despotism, the citizen was ill equipped to meet the new form of menace. To work a sound system men must be alert, unselfish, energetic, and industrious in public affairs, and the average man was none of these. Natural indolence is perhaps the greatest enemy of well-being. It is mastered by the love of power, by ambition to be great, by pride of position, by the promise of wealth and ease, by public spirit. Only the last of these would make man do his full duty in politics, and it has not yet become the endowment of the many. The average man is quite a decent citizen. That he takes pride in his country is readily seen by his resentment at contemptuous criticism. He believes in what is called in America his "home town", and is eager and enthusiastic in celebrating its glories. He would like to do his duty. But he has his own affairs to think about. He has little training for the task of judging the problems of politics, and he is apt to adopt the indolent belief that others can look after public matters better than he and to become passive. At the time, especially in a new country, politics offer the reward of publicity and power to the self-seeker, and of gain to the corrupt. These have the eternal stimulus of self-interest, and they make democracy their tool. Hence the demagogue, the boss, and the profiteer.

To meet these dangers the best capacity in the state is necessary, and it is too often not available. It is a rough task to gain and hold the suffrages of the many, a task uncongenial to the refined and the comfortable. In Canada at least many of these are either too much occupied with necessary business, or too lacking in public spirit to take part in politics. Inferior men take what should be their place. New agencies appear for creating or controlling public opinion and, most potent of them all, the newspaper press. "It is," says Lord Bryce, "the newspaper press which has made democracy possible in large countries." Daily the newspaper addresses its thousands. Its opinions reach nearly every home. Their anonymity produces the effect of an authority impersonal and mysterious. The individual leader can be in only one place at one time, and has the limitations of his personality. The newspaper speaks everywhere and always. Great is the power of iteration. The daily repetition of opinions becomes impressive. The indolent readily adopt opinions ready-made, and the newspaper tends to become the chief working force of democracy.

A newspaper, as Lord Bryce points out, has two aspects. The first is that it disseminates news and opinions. No one need accept its opinions, and it assumes no responsibility for advocating what it declares ought to be done. It is only a voice. Its other aspect is that it must be made to pay. In Canada it has become the chief means of advertising business. To do this effectively it must go to the many. The more readers it reaches the more it is paid for reaching them. It must appeal to the average man. It must meet enterprising rivalry. If its opinions are unpopular, its readers will tend to decline in number. Yet a democracy learns by a break with what is, and by turning to the less popular course of what should be. The newspaper may have to encounter the dilemma of the timid bather; if he tries to learn to swim he may drown in the effort, while if he does not learn to swim he may in some crisis drown for lack of this knowledge. How is the newspaper to rebuke popular error and advance truth, and at the same time to remain popular for business reasons? The tendency is undoubtedly to retain popularity at the expense of boldness of opinion. Few newspapers are prepared to sacrifice financial success to the sternness of truth, and yet the newspapers are the chief educators of democracy.

Democracy, in spite of inherent difficulties in its working, has undoubtedly achieved some great results. "Let cynics say

what they will," says Lord Bryce, "Man is not an irrational animal. Truth usually wins in the long run." If democracy yields sometimes to bellicose racial and religious passions, it shrinks from the penalty of war, and it did not cause the great world conflict. Democracies have proved more honest than oligarchies. In these the few have enriched themselves and impoverished the many—witness the reign of Louis XIV in France. Under democracy, in spite of corruption, moral standards have improved. For proof of this we need only compare Walpole with even a shifty modern prime minister. Democracies have shown greater political wisdom than oligarchies. Can any one doubt that if, thirty or forty years ago, England had had a real democracy, unchecked by oligarchic class influence, the Irish question would have been settled? Lord Acton once said that a roomful of great leaders, of Luthers, Cromwells, Richelieus, Napoleons, Pitts, Peels, Gladstones and Disraelis, would really make up an encyclopaedia of political error. These leaders would differ and wrangle, while the many, knowing where the shoes pinch because they are wearing them, would make straight to the cause of trouble. Democracies too are not ungrateful to their leaders. A Henry VIII at one stroke dismisses and ruins a Wolsey; an ill-balanced German monarch flouts a veteran Bismarck. But the people do not change their devotion so quickly and will reverence and follow leaders whose day is really past. The people like a man of courage, who takes risks, and they will follow him. Many a politician has failed because he kept his ear to the ground instead of carrying his head high in the air and appealing to the devotion of the crowd.

Canada is probably the third in Lord Bryce's esteem of the six democracies. Political defects are no doubt more glaring in the United States than they are in Canada—but remedial measures are also more active and effective. Canada has little to put side by side with the alert and scientific study of public affairs so general in the United States and one of the finest products of its universities. Like the United States Canada is a vast country with every right to face the future in confidence. The climate is stimulating, if in places severe, and promotes health. Nature, says Lord Bryce, has endowed Canada with coal in quantity only second to that of the United States. He does not lay stress on the fact that the great central and most populous regions of Canada, Ontario and Quebec, are without coal. Ontario at

least is tributary to the United States for fuel. Social conditions in Canada are favourable. Agriculture is the chief industry. Most of the farmers own their own farms; there is no landlord class. There are not many great capitalists, while there is a large number of well-to-do people able to cultivate the amenities of life. Labour questions are not dangerous. In Canada there is one great and menacing problem—the antagonism in race and religion between the French and the English. No other English-speaking country is haunted by a similar problem. One might add, however, that, grave as it is, it does not approach in seriousness the problem of the negro in the United States.

Lord Bryce's account of democracy in Canada is not, on the whole, very cheering. There are good features. Public order is well preserved. The judiciary is incorruptible. There is an honest, if not a very expert, civil service. Education is widely diffused and, among those of British origin who are native to Canada, there are practically no illiterates. The demagogue has been less in evidence in Canada than in any other of the six democracies except Switzerland. Party is less rigid than it is in the United States. Here, indeed, Lord Bryce might have stated the case more strongly than he does. Literally, party has broken down in Canada. Dozens of newspapers which, a few years ago, would have sung the party tune without reserve, are now neutral and non-committal. Municipal government has been on the whole free from corruption. Recently Montreal has had its scandals, but in the other large cities there has rarely been anything more corrupt than lobbying for jobs and contracts. In the smaller towns, of the east at any rate, the defect has been an undue parsimony which has shrunk from needed expenditure on education, on roads, and on sanitation. The legislatures in Canada are still respected, and there has been no such freak legislation as that in some American states which goes so far as to name the minimum length of the sheets on the beds in hotels.

If the good features of democracy in Canada do not unite to make a brilliant picture, its bad features are sufficiently alarming. There has been gross bribery in elections. Legislatures, if not municipalities, have been corrupted by money; charges have been proved against even cabinet ministers, and it is still true that financial interests have undue weight in governmental policy. The level of honour among politicians in Canada is lower than it is among those of Australia or New Zealand. There has been jobbery, waste, and extravagance in spending public

money. Public opinion is slack and not easily aroused. Above all, the best elements in the country have tended to hold aloof from politics, and there is a lack of dignity in public life.

This is Lord Bryce's indictment of Canadian democracy. It must be said that, in respect to Canada, his insight is less penetrating than it is in regard to either the United States or Switzerland. The reason is probably that he has made only a few transient visits to Canada, while he has dwelt long in the United States, and has been frequently in Switzerland. He overestimates the number of the French in Canada. They are not the two and a half millions which would make them about one-third of the population. There are fewer than two millions (a million more are in the United States) and probably they are less than one-quarter of the population. This result is, indeed, striking enough, when we remember that the three million French in North America are descended from not more than ten thousand immigrants from France. It is not quite the case that "of those in Quebec extremely few speak English". The French in Quebec speak English in a proportion greater than that of the English who speak French. Lord Bryce says correctly that the two races live apart, but it is doubtful whether "this separation is mainly due to religion". The English-speaking Roman Catholics in Montreal also live apart from the French. The reason is probably some subtle influence of tradition and training which makes people, differing in language and history, draw away from each other.

The chief defect of Canada is its lack of political education. There is not in the country a large class of persons qualified to form and to guide opinion. The urgent problems have been those of national development, involving the free expenditure of money. When governments are spending great sums, the need of eternal vigilance is urgent. Canada inherited its political parties from England. The Toryism of England was based upon realities in society. That of Canada, which in the early days opposed the securing of self-government, was merely terrified reaction. In an old society the steadying force of traditions made the fabric of society really immune to attack from either party. Grote the historian said that he had come not to care greatly which party won in an election, for each would be bound by the realities of life. In Canada, however, the fundamentals of political life were at issue. Tories charged their opponents with the resolve to break with their British allegiance, and to create either

a republic or to join the United States. In the absence of great issues, these appeals to passion were the staples in elections. No wonder that politics ceased to attract the finer minds. The tone of public life became worse instead of better.

In the five other democracies examined we find great variety. Despotism and oligarchies have usually worked on similar lines with a central authority controlled by one strong person or by a small ruling clique. Each of Lord Bryce's six states is unlike the others. It is for Switzerland that he reserves his highest praise. Of its four million people half a million own land and are under this steadying influence of property. The Swiss people are composed of three races, and in the federal diet three languages—French, German and Italian—have official standing. Fortunately racial and religious divisions do not coincide; the French, for instance, are partly Protestant, partly Roman Catholic, so that racial unity is not protected by the barrier of language and religion. In the smaller cantons of Switzerland it is still possible to gather all the voters at one place in the open air in order to make laws,—“the oldest, simplest and purest form of democracy which the world knows” (I, 337). Judges are elected and also even school teachers. There is direct legislation by the people, and the referendum is in constant use. The President, chosen only for a year at a time, has no authority greater than that of his six colleagues on the governing body of the Federal Council. Party, which, as Lord Bryce says, has been “worked to death” in England and Canada, barely exists. In a state so small the people can judge issues for themselves and do not need party guidance. Intimidation of voters, corruption by money, and fraud in elections, are not known. No titles or decorations are given by the state. If politics are humdrum and the salaries for office holders small, none the less do men of intelligence take part in politics. In Switzerland democracy secures pure and good government.

France presents many contrasts. Four million people in Switzerland have the function of government so subdivided that each little community is really self-governing. Nearly forty million people in France are under a single political authority, which appoints to even the pettiest offices in every part of the country. France has a stupendous centralized bureaucracy. It has parliamentary government without what has lain at the basis of parliamentary government in England, only two great

parties with recognized leadership in each of them. France has a dozen parties and no recognized leaders. New combinations of groups are always possible with a resultant change of ministry.

Mediocrity is the characteristic of the French politician. For the most part men of distinguished family and leaders in the great world of business are not active in politics. There is intense cleavage in respect to religion, and a press both very good and very bad, its bad elements, owing to a loose law of libel, going to extremes hardly found in any other country. The French deputy is likely to be a lawyer, or a doctor, or even a school teacher. He is busily active among his constituents and they will expect him when in Paris to select a domestic servant or to buy an umbrella. Petty commissions of this kind, the securing of small offices for supporters, occupy much of his time. His heart is in local politics and in personal issues. He is alert, keen, and resourceful. But the range of his interests is limited. There is so much to be done by a deputy with a government that controls all expenditure everywhere and maintains power by patronage! Personal questions are the most vivid in the French chamber and behind these lies a rather drab and sometimes corrupt democracy. If France once had a Richelieu and a Mazarin to rule her, she now has in their place the local lawyer or doctor with the school-master as his chief ally. There are no great national parties. No one party has even candidates for election in anything approaching all the constituencies of France.

In the English-speaking world we find still further variety in working democracy. New Zealand has a delightful climate; its people are homogenous; there are no racial or religious cries; and there is very little crime. As a unitary state, it is different from federal Australia. In both, the Asiatic is excluded—a call to Australia to fill her vacant spaces, if she wishes to continue this policy. In both socialistic ideas of government have gone far, yet in both, in contrast with the United States and Canada, we find the great landowner. In New Zealand, with a million people, one hundred and fifty thousand are said to live from salaries paid by the government. This carries on even life insurance and a great loan business, sometimes lending money at five per cent. when the bank rate is eight or more. While there has been honesty in details of expenditure of money, needed public works have been neglected and needless ones carried out for party reasons. The result is now a heavy burden of debt. The small field, the absence of political education of the people,

give, as Lord Bryce shows, the touch of commonplace to New Zealand politics. No very cheering message comes from a democracy which had a clear field in a new land. "Corruption is rare, but the standard both of tone and manners and of intellectual attainment is not worthy of communities where everybody is well off and well educated, and where grave problems of legislation call for constructive ability" (II, 338).

The same is true of Australia. There is little corruption; it has remained for Canada and the United States to be the most corrupt of the six democracies. Public order is well preserved. Ministries have been unstable, in sharp contrast with federal Canada, where ministries tend to endure too long; in ten years federal Australia had seven cabinets, while in forty-one years South Australia had forty. Mr. Hughes, the present prime minister of Australia, has said that life in Australia is itself a gamble. Wool is one of the great products and, in the not infrequent dry seasons, so large a proportion of the sheep die that only owners with large resources can go on. One result is the large estates in Australia. Each of the three English-speaking federations, the United States, Canada, and Australia, shows the characteristics of the period of its creation. The United States is the most conservative, until recently accepting changes in the constitution only reluctantly. Canada is in form less democratic, with its appointed Senate and the apparent strength of executive authority. Federal Australia, the child of the twentieth century, has more fluid politics. The term of the House of Representatives is three years. The Senate is elected by popular vote and is more radical than the other house. To be well-off is to be suspect and this intense class antagonism excludes from politics men of wealth and even the lawyer class. Labour has the upper hand. But a Labour ministry has to accept exact direction from the caucus of the Labour party. There is no foreign element such as has in the United States corrupted municipal politics. Until recently racial and religious cries have been little heard of. Now the Irish question troubles politics. With control by labour and with the government as a great employer, wages are high and efficiency is mediocre. Lord Bryce obviously thinks that Australia is gambling with its resources and in danger of financial disaster. But his counsel is, "Never despond; unexpected good arrives as well as expected evil. . . . The more highly educated class in particular may arouse themselves to take a livelier interest in public affairs and so send more of their

best men into a political career" (II, 260, 263). This is always Lord Bryce's solvent.

The greatest democracy, that of the United States, has for Canada absorbing interest. It is Canada's only neighbour. Canada is, indeed, the only considerable country in the world with but one neighbour. The United States has only two, Mexico and Canada, presenting sufficiently vivid contrasts. It is probably a misfortune for Canada that she is subject to but one type of adjacent influence, that of a nation much more populous and powerful than herself. Had she neighbours east, west, and north, the variety of influences would be more stimulating, if there was not the barrier of language. She would be, too, less dependent on the policy of one neighbour. In some respects Canada and the United States know very little of each other. Lord Bryce is the first writer to bring together in one book adequate studies of the working of the two systems. In each English is the prevailing language, and people of British origin take the lead in politics. Both countries are deeply rooted in British traditions. It is amusingly true that, however much the United States may protest its distinct type of national life, its literary and social traditions are intimately linked with those of England. Shakespeare and Milton mean more to the literature of to-day in the United States than does the work of any American author. None the less is it true that the Americans persist in regarding themselves as a new people whose birth dates from 1776. And in some respects they are.

While many people in Canada read American newspapers and are familiar with the names of persons prominent in American public life, it is still true that the people of eastern Canada, at least, regard the United States with an interest languid compared with that which they take in England. The great books which they read on literature, history, and politics are English, not American. In Canada there is little serious study of American institutions, while in the United States there is practically none of those in Canada. The people of Canada, familiar with the working of a system in which parliament has plenary authority, can hardly understand one in which the elected legislatures fill almost a secondary place. Except in municipal affairs, no one is elected in Canada to hold a specific office or to hold office for a specific period fixed by law. At any time a legislature may be dissolved or a prime minister may be replaced, without an election, by a bitter rival, if this rival can only command the support

of parliament. Canadians find difficult of comprehension a system under which one can know for years ahead the exact date at which elections will take place. Canadians find it also hard to understand a government which has no real cabinet, though the name is used in the United States. Few Canadians realize that there is not even a nominal cabinet in such a state as New York and that the American plan is not to have a collective unity in government, but to divide power, and, in the states, at least, to elect officials to do one and only one thing, whether it is to be a secretary, or a treasurer, or a maker of roads. Canadians only dimly understand how a county can be governed with no semblance of a county council by officials each of them quite independent of other elected officials. The election of judges; a city council with two chambers: to be asked to vote at an election for or against no less than thirty important issues and in addition several scores of candidates: such things seem to the average dweller in Canada freak politics.

Canada has developed under maxims of British politics to which no heed is paid in the United States. To people steeped in British traditions too much is left to chance when an elected ruler of the state is given full executive authority for four long years; the consequences seem too serious should the test of power show him not to be the right man. A prime minister certain to hold office for four years, no matter what might happen, is hardly thinkable in Canada. It has long been held in British constitutional usage that the second chamber must give way to the popular house if the people's will has been clearly indicated on the matter at issue, and that only the popular house can initiate votes of money. But in the United States the second chamber, the Senate, has greater authority than the House of Representatives; it can even propose votes of money. Americans, for their part, would find it hard to understand the Canadian system in which members of the Senate are appointed by the leader who has a majority in the House of Commons, and in which also the federal government has the power to disallow acts passed by the local legislatures. In the United States there is, for a variety of reasons, a distrust of legislatures, and many state legislatures are forbidden to legislate on a multitude of things. Capitalists sleep the easier because of such prohibitions. In Canada these nowhere exist.

Lord Bryce's summing up of the results of democracy in the United States, while hopeful, is certainly not flattering. The

system has fostered the accumulation of great wealth by a few; there are more men of enormous wealth in the United States than in all Europe. The state legislatures and, in a lesser degree, Congress, do not enjoy public confidence, and the system does not produce great men as leaders. The civil service is not equal to the needs of a great nation. In some states the judiciary does not command respect. Criminal justice is tortuous in its methods, and men clearly guilty escape punishment. State laws are at times so badly enforced that personal and property rights are not secure. The tone of public life is not high, and parties are ruled by selfish oligarchies. Organized wealth has too much influence in securing favours from the state, while, by way of reprisal, corrupt legislators levy blackmail from corporations by threats of injurious legislation. Lord Bryce explains elaborately how all these evils have come about. They are curable. The United States has a greater proportion of men educated at universities than any other country in the world, ten times as many as continental Europe, perhaps three times as many as Great Britain. There is a constant acute analysis of public issues, and this is having a remedial effect. Not only in the federal government, but in ten of the states, there are good civil service laws. A pathway through the forest is becoming clear.

In the United States the political pot is always boiling. The belief is that the oftener elected officials have to go back to the people for a renewal of their mandate the greater is the public security. When it was suggested that the cure for ineffective or corrupt judges was to pay a higher salary and to elect for a longer period, Lord Bryce heard the answer that the real cure would be a lower salary and a shorter term so as to keep the judges in touch with the people and to prevent any class consciousness. Here is that belief in a mystical sanctity in the people which gives them eternal wisdom. To enable the people to register the decisions so constantly demanded from them, a vast machinery is needed. Lord Bryce estimates that the men working the party system in the United States are more numerous than all the elected officials of the country and more numerous than those working the political machinery of the rest of the world. In this vast organization the workers are for the most part looking after their own interests. Naturally they desire to keep up the divisions of party, and the two-party system is probably more strongly entrenched in the United States than in any other country in the world.

It is easy to deride this eternal activity of the party machine. It is so bewildering that some electors give up effort at discrimination and vote blindly or do not vote at all. What is a voter to do when confronted by a ballot with scores of names, no one of which is familiar to him? Goldwin Smith used to say that, in the municipal elections in Toronto, when he had a choice among half a score of names, he used to take counsel from his butler and vote as he advised. The butler with his vision limited to local issues would know something about the candidates. The situation was not really so ridiculous as Goldwin Smith thought. The butler no doubt was reading closely his daily evening paper. He at least knew his men and, from the point of view of an inevitable democracy, it was a good thing that he should be so well informed. If elections are incessant, attention to public questions must also be incessant. In this there is political education, and Lord Bryce is of the opinion that the habit of frequent voting stimulates thought. The whole people become seriously interested in public affairs, and public opinion becomes the real ruler. In spite of the rigours of party, in respect to elections, the press of the United States is probably more ready to discuss public questions on their merits than is that of either Canada or Great Britain. One can read a great newspaper in the United States for weeks without learning to which side in politics it adheres. In Congress members break away from party more frequently than do representatives in other countries where the continued existence of a government depends on their support.

There is little doubt that, with striking differences, Canada is treading the same path as the United States. The one conspicuous failure in the United States is in municipal government. This has been largely due to the crowding into cities of a foreign population. This population is sometimes so dominant and arrogant that in New York, for instance, it was found impossible to put on the stage *The Merchant of Venice*, showing the Jew in an unfavourable light. To newcomers the franchise was conceded lightly with the result that the reverse of the old complaint of taxation without representation appeared, and there was representation—and rule—without taxation of the penniless invaders. The same phenomenon is beginning to appear in larger Canadian cities. As the United States has increased in population, the smaller has become the number of men possible for election to national office, since only a few can have a fame reaching the millions. National leadership is also becoming

more difficult in Canada. There are no nation-wide newspapers. It is hard to move British Columbia by cries effective in Nova Scotia. But difficulties of leadership are softened in Canada by the mode of choosing them. It is the members of parliament, knowing their men, who choose the leaders, and not conventions of a thousand people with bands and songs and organized shouts for favourite sons. But in Canada because the leader is chosen by the few, it is long before he is known to, and trusted by, the many.

Lord Bryce's book is full of wise maxims, the weighty product of a rich experience. It is an encyclopaedia of teaching in what should and what should not be done. This sober study is a call to the democratic nations to confront their intricate problems in the chastened mood of those who have dared to look facts in the face. There is nothing to cause despair, but there is equally nothing to cause any great exhilaration. It is comforting to know that in a great crisis the hearts of the people respond to the appeal for effort and sacrifice. For all time the spirit of the chief democracies during the great war will remain evidence that there is a nobility in the many which, when appealed to, will save the state. We know now that, in a great crisis, democracy is not weak but strong. It is in the daily humdrum that it proves weak. In personal affairs every one knows that vigilance in respect to small details, an insistent re-examining and readjustment of methods, is necessary to security. The private citizen must husband carefully his resources or confront blank ruin. For the state the same watchful alertness is needed. But state problems are intricate. Only a few understand them. If these are men of the right type, and the people trust them, all is well. But here is the weakness of democracy. Wealth and leisure make excuses for holding aloof. Leaders of coarser type rush in, and the working of democracy falls to the level of such leaders. There is no cure but in the self-sacrifice of good men to take their share in public affairs. The people will trust and follow the best elements in the community if these will undertake the labour of leadership. It was so unlikely a person as Machiavelli who said that the people are more prudent and stable than a prince, and show better judgment.

Has democracy, asks Lord Bryce, done anything for the soul? We may, with conviction, answer Yes. It has taught the people, however blindly, to ponder the problems of their own well-being.

It has fostered self-reliance and dignity of character among those who feel that they possess their share of authority in the state. It is slowly teaching alertness in checking the aims of designing selfishness. It has made articulate the needs of the people, even if it has not always found a remedy. It has effected searching criticism in public affairs, even though this is sometimes by the means of a scandal-mongering press. It has been the real friend of widely-diffused education. To-day, as a result of the stirring of democracy, there has come a phase of real equality, that equality of opportunity to learn which has made it possible for the labourer to read the same books and newspapers as the peer and to become his equal in intelligence. If the people possess all the wisdom that there is in the nation this wisdom has whatever increase in volume reading may bring.

Democracy has not brought purity in public life. It may be charged that it has not fostered fraternity among peoples, though this is met by its frequent and sincere efforts to befriend the down-trodden in tyrant-ridden states. It has not produced content. The growth of democracy is one chief cause of the wide-spread unrest of to-day. But discontent is not a vice, if it aims at helpful improvement and not at mere destruction. Democracy has not ended the authority of the few. Rather has oligarchy won a new authority by its sometimes insidious cultivation of the consent of the many. But this after all is, as Napoleon was wont to say, despotism by the will of the people and not by divine right, and what the people can do they can learn to undo. The best test of the strength of democracy is in the answer to the question whether those who have lived under it would be willing to change to any other known form of government. A chamber, as Cavour said, is better than an ante-chamber. Under the worst evils of democracy the people are at least free to exercise their own judgment and to make effective their own decisions.

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