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J. Eachern Smith, Manager

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ABOLISH COUNTY COUNCILS AND REDUCE THE COST OF GOVERNMENT

Canadians pay annually over \$700,000,000 in taxation which for a population of about eleven million constitutes a gigantic tax burden on the taxpayers of this young country. One outstanding cause of our high taxation is the high cost of government. In fact Canada to-day is probably the most over-governed country in the world and when taxpayers are finished paying those on the public pay-roll they have little left for themselves.

One of the first steps towards reducing taxation in this country is to reduce the cost of government. One way to reduce the cost of government is to reduce the number of governing bodies.

York County Council meets this week and for the next fortnight or longer we will be paying fifty men \$7.00 per day and mileage to carry on one branch of our government which we believe has long outlived its usefulness and which should be abolished. In addition to the sessional indemnities of fifty men there is the tremendous expense of the upkeep of a county administration.

What does the County Council do?

The County maintains a road system which is handled by the Toronto and York Roads Commission. Toronto is now trying to get out from under this arrangement and it is doubtful if the present set-up will continue indefinitely. The County maintains the Home for the Aged, collects a share of the cost of secondary education and hospitalization costs for indigent patients, makes grants to various Agricultural Societies, Libraries and other organizations, and has certain responsibilities in the administration of justice and the upkeep of the County Police force. The above constitutes practically all the essential duties of the County Council. There are few if any of these services which could not be better administered by the provincial government and the local municipal councils, thus eliminating the expensive administration costs of the county form of government.

Ontario is now well served by a Department of Municipal Affairs which is rendering real service to the people of Ontario in giving assistance in municipal government. This Department should make a thorough investigation of municipal government in this province with a view to reducing taxation. County Councils may have served a useful purpose in the past when means of communication was slow, but it is a relic of the horse and buggy days which should be done away with.

VOTE ON RADIAL QUESTION

Aurora Board of Trade has appointed a Yonge Street Traffic Improvement Committee and the aim of this special committee will be to obtain the co-operation of communities along Yonge Street from Sutton to Toronto in an effort to secure more safety for motorists and pedestrians using Yonge Street. This is indeed a worthy aim and the committee should have the whole-hearted support of public spirited citizens everywhere.

The most urgent need to-day is the widening of Yonge Street from Steele's Corners to Richmond Hill. The bottleneck created by the narrow stretch of pavement in this area constitutes a menace to traffic and creates a danger hazard for both motorists and pedestrians. Yonge Street from Steele's Corners to Richmond Hill should be widened this coming summer. This important artery of traffic should not longer be neglected by the Ontario Department of Highways.

Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Markham as municipalities are vitally interested in any improvement program as owners of the North Yonge Radial Railway. The uncertainty as to the future of the car line has been the cause of the delay in Yonge Street improvements.

There is a large body of public opinion in favor of the continuing of the present car service and there are many in the district who think the time opportune to scrap the line and get a bus service direct to the heart of down-town Toronto. In any move made for the improvement of Yonge Street the radial line is an important feature which cannot be overlooked. The line was purchased by the municipalities after a vote of the people and we submit that any negotiations on the matter must be after the people have expressed their wish in a general vote taken in the radial area. To clear the air and make way for a greater Yonge Street we suggest that a vote be taken at the earliest possible time on the question of continuing the radial line. A vote of the people will put an end to rumors and indecision and clear the way for Yonge Street improvement.

INDEBTED TO HOME TOWN

That all of us owe a generous debt to our home town is summarized in the following words taken from the Smiths Falls Record-News, and also suggests the spirit of giving something in return as a responsibility of every citizen.

"If all my citizenship accounts were balanced at this date, I would be the better. Haven't I all these years lived within the limits of the town and shared all its benefits? Haven't I had the benefit of its schools and churches? Haven't I had the use of its library, park and public places? Haven't I had the protection of its fire, police and health departments? Haven't its people during all this time, been gathering for me from the four corners of the earth, food for my table, clothing for my body and material for my home? Hasn't this town furnished the patronage for my business? Hasn't it furnished the best friends of my life, whose ideals have been my inspiration, whose kind words have carried me over the greatest difficulties?"

Many people do realize the benefits of living in a prosperous community by taking an active part in those things which help to make it so. If more would follow the thought outlined below, the better town it would be for all.

"I want to give more; I want of my own free will to give enough, that I can truthfully say, 'This is my town,' so that I can take pride in its prosperity, in the honour which comes to its citizens and all that makes it greater and better. I can do this only by becoming a part of the town, by giving it generously of myself. In this way only can I, even in a small part, pay the great debt I owe to my town."—Picton Times.

BOOKS THAT MATTER

MORE NOVELS

(Conducted by Anson Bailey Cutts)
The Dark Weaver: By Laura Goodman Salverson (Toronto: Ryerson Press). Price \$2.00.
The Rains Came: By Louis Bromfield (Toronto: Musson Book Co.). Price \$2.75.

Enchanter's Nightshade: By Ann Bridge (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart). Price \$2.50.

A Southern Harvest: Edited by Robert Penn Warren (Toronto: Thomas Allen). Price \$2.50.

This week, Mr. Silcox has asked me to conduct this column. In doing so, I shall quote from the Book Review Digest of the A. C. B. Reading Guide, the official quarterly of the Association of Canadian Bookmen. The four books treated here are outstanding among much excellent fiction this season.

Reading Circles and Book Fairs

First, however, I should like to assure the many readers who have written to us regarding the organization and conduct of Reading Circles that the A.C.B. Book Information Bureau is prepared to assist them in every way possible. It is our hope that many such Reading Circles will be undertaken in collaboration with the association during 1938, and that many Book Fairs may be organized. During 1937 such book fairs were held in Whitby, St. Catharines, Pickering, Guelph, Barrie, Goderich, Toronto and Montreal. These proved very popular, and we are ready to assist Peterborough and other cities right across Canada that are planning such treats for book lovers during the months ahead.

Drought-Sufferers Need Your Old Books

The Association of Canadian Bookmen also wished to call attention to the drive it is fostering for books to stock the hundreds of small lending libraries we are establishing throughout the drought areas of the Prairie Provinces.

Please help us to bring hope and happiness to those unfortunate fellow-citizens by sending your old books to the Headquarters of our Association, 20 Dundas Square, Toronto, or direct to Maj. H. G. L. Strange, Grain Exchange, Winnipeg, Manitoba. "Let us who have so much help those who have nothing."

Novels Recommended by the A.C.B.

The Dark Weaver: "Mrs. Salverson of Calgary, who has just published what, in my opinion, is the best Canadian novel of 1937, is building an English reputation while still under the curse at home of an original best-seller. In 'The Dark Weaver' she has written by far her best book. It is a full-bodied, many-sided story of European immigrants, who became Manitoba pioneers in the late 19th century, and their children who were of the right age to participate in the Great War, one brief incident of which is used for climax. Four distinct sets of people, differing in race as well as social status and outlook, are picked up in Europe and the causes of their transfer explained.

"Thrown together in the wilderness north of Winnipeg, with many others, these eight are followed in their new homes, where they make new friends and pick up new associates. Their loves, marriages and economic fortunes are graphically related to form a clear story pattern of dramatic intensity. As a community novel of the Canadian West, it is the best yet published, but Mrs. Salverson is too much the innate storyteller to lose her individual characters in a mass picture. Each develops clearer identity page by page.

"'The Dark Weaver' is not a sermon. It is a play, a demonstration, a coherent piece of Canadian life. It is first and last a story, and a good one."—William Arthur Deacon, "Globe and Mail".

The Rains Came: "The rains came to the Indian city of Ranchipur; but that was not all. In addition to the torrential downpour of the moonsoon there were an earthquake, a flood and a fire which combined to destroy a large part of the city, and to wipe out some nine thousand of its native population, as well as a scattering of its military and missionary Europeans. These were followed by the devastating outbreaks of epidemics of typhoid and cholera. Against this background of events, Louis Bromfield undertakes to make a study of two problems. The first, which is touched upon lightly, is the effect of the official attitude of the British conquerors upon their subjugated races. The second is the possibility of a New India—an India in which the ignorance, fatalism, intolerance and the stultifying complexity of her caste system have been so modified and moulded by education that she is able to select from Western civilization the scientific knowledge which she needs without losing her own national and psychological in-

tegrity."—Hunter Lewis, "Vancouver Province".

Enchanter's Nightshade: "Miss Bridge has written a truly delightful novel, suave and sophisticated in the best sense of the word, enlivened by sprightly incident and lifelike conversation. Her pretty young post-Victorian heroine (the period in 1905) is transplanted from England to act as governess in a titled Italian family of vast ramifications. Always in the background is the Italian landscape, a lovely setting against which is sharply projected the realism that is so characteristic an aspect of the Italian graciousness of living. The Vill' Alta clan—an aggregation of family connections rather than a single family—is in summer quarters, waiting to celebrate the hundredth birthday of its beloved Vecchia Marchesa—and its days pass in picnicking and visiting, in judicious studies for the young, and injudicious flirtations for the not so young. Passion breaks into the happy tale of leisure hours, and leaves suffering where ignorance and innocence were before. But Miss Bridge, with the clear-sightedness and hard realism of her Italian matriarch, lays bare the fleetingness of even grief and brings to an end a story that makes no concession to sentimentality on a note of valiance which maturity must accept as the actual example of life.

"'Enchanter's Nightshade' is not only excellent entertainment but extremely skillful art. It has everything that a light novel should have, vivacity and sensibility, and with it a harder grain of common sense that gives it seriousness.—Amy Loveman, "Saturday Review".

A Southern Harvest: "Robert Penn Warren has made an exceedingly good job of this collection of short stories by Southern writers. In the first place, 'A Southern Harvest' is generous in size, containing some twenty-two longish examples from the work of as many writers, together with an introduction by Mr. Warren and biographical notes upon the writers represented. All the work is of recent copyright, so that almost any reader may be sure of finding in it something worth while that he has missed. These stories are meant to be descriptive of Southern life or obviously rooted in Southern tradition, a mixed and stimulating bag of tales. For quality and variety, almost any other section of the country would find it hard to match."—"The New York Times".

"They could at least keep clean," says the go-getter. Yes, but people who must choose between bread and soap are always greedy enough to buy bread.

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