

E. A. PARTRIDGE.

"Partridge of Sintaluta "----"That Man Partidge."

Dreamer, visionary, prophet; all these terms could be , and were, applied to, "Ed" Partridge. Not only was he all three, he also possessed the ability to inspire others by his outlook. He had to be a dreamer else the vision he saw could not have been of the substance which would attract and inspire others. Prophets seldom have honor in their own country. Passing years have proven just how great a prophet of his time Partridge was. His concern for his fellow man was motivated by actual experiences met in his efforts at organization among Western farmers so that through those organizations, they could help themselves. First President of the newly formed Grain Growers Grain Company he ran head on into the vested interests from the East. The individuals comprising the financial oligarchy of the East, knew little and cared less about western Canada as they do to this day. Out of these experiences came the knowledge that the people of the west must learn to help themselves, even at the expense of alienating themselves from their predatory neighbors to the East.

Following a tragic accident on his farm which left Partridge a partial cripple for the rest of his life, he devoted much of his time to ¹²organizational work pertaining to his community and agricultural welfare in general. A diversified reader with a most retentive mind he did not hesitate to study other writers and their material or to adopt the ideas gleaned from them to reinforce his own concept of the

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good life. For this he was sometimes criticized as being only a "quoter", unrealistic; ~~and~~ a dreamer, which he was, with no apology. An outstanding fact about Partridge and one that set him apart from other dreamers and visionaries of our developing west was that whenever and wherever possible Ed Partridge tried to do something about it. Not content with continual talk about what ought to be done, with his ~~pep~~ on the phone, or by personal contact he would endeavor to get others to put their shoulders to the wheel that more knowledge might be obtained and by co-operative effort the community would benefit. Thus when the Home Bank went into Insolvency and the shareholders were faced with putting up double liability, Partridge, one of the original organizers of the Home Bank, got busy with his pen and out of his effort The Home Bank Shareholders Protective Association of Saskatchewan was formed. Each member of the Association contributed one dollar. Sufficient funds came in this way to enable the Association to obtain legal help and advice for those shareholders faced with liability. The end result was that very few if any Saskatchewan shareholders were forced to pay double liability. A different story from those shareholders in Manitoba who, in some cases lost almost all their savings, equipment and in instances, farms, through judgements against them that they could not meet. As Partridge had been instrumental in the organization of the Home Bank he felt a personal responsibility to do what he could to right some of the injustices facing shareholders when the bank folded up.

His indignation---

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His indignation at certain large shareholders apparently "In the know " who quietly disposed of their shares some weeks, even days, before the collapse of the bank, knew no bounds. Although he himself was a large/ loser in the enterprise this was no deterrent in his effort to organize the Association to protect other members against judgement.

A one time school teacher, inquisitive, seeker of knowledge Ed Partridge brought with him to the ~~west~~ developing West a sense of responsibility to community that was rare then and all too rare now. He felt that if people would organize themselves to gain one well considered objective at a time there could be nothing stop them. With five of a growing family, two sons and three daughters, family solidarity meant a very great deal to Mr and Mrs Partridge. The loss of their two sons in World War I and the early death of their elder daughter was indeed a blow to the family. To such a thoughtful, inquisitive man this meant a lot of heart searching. Other families had been bereaved by war, other families like the Partridges asked themselves the question "WHY"?

As the years after World War I brought the depression of the twenties and its aftermath, farmers saw prices for their produce decline with such speed that many were totally unprepared to face their losses. Not until 1928 did farming stage too much of a come back in the national economy. In the interval giant corporations consolidated their holdings and became ever more powerful in dictating the policies and control of governments. Our democratic process stipulates that no

party in power

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party in power can use funds for ^{election} expenses from the treasury. Campaign funds for election expenses were growing ever more necessary as the years went by. Either party tacitly obtained these from interested supporters. Wealthy business men, ^{or} corporations, ^{Corporations} and consolidated groups within the country often contributed largely and still do, to that party deemed most compliable to certain vested interests and their demand for permissive or protective legislation. Control of competition, which is the life blood and guarantee of durable goods in any country, was being gradually brought about by mergers and alliances with interlocking directorships. Public finance was flowing more and more into fewer hands. Governments desirous of selling bonds found their financial ministers being quietly advised to bring their influence to bear to soft-peddle certain pending legislation or they might be facing difficulty in selling their bond issue. A subtle form of blackmail that hamstrung the horse before it could even walk.

Men home from the battlefields of France read in their papers of a peerage being granted to a citizen for his war effort. As this effort consisted largely in "Post curing bacon", heavy injections of salt water to increase the weight- supplied by his company to the troops in France, is there any wonder that growers of hogs from which the bacon was derived, many of whose sons were buried in the soil of France- is it any wonder that those families became embittered and wondered if the war to end all wars " was not just the beginning of a long series of wars

series of wars of even more fury and destruction.

It was in this atmosphere of the early twenties that Partridge of Sintaluta tried to draw the attention of his fellow men in the West to the predicament that faced them, its origin, and the cure that he proposed. His health none too good and his body often wracked with pain, offset by a mind still as keen as a snake whip, he undertook to write his book, "A War On Poverty." The book was in fact a call to conference to those interested in their own well being and that of their fellow man. Men who would put the welfare of their country foremost. In other words true patriots.

The writing of this book required untold research both of past and contemporary history. Works of philosophers, political economists, historians, poets, all contributed. Published balance sheets of prominent companies were used to show how statistics were used to deliberately mislead the public as to the true nature of total profits accruing to many Canadian corporations. In many instances mergers were shown to be not in the best interests of the great mass of the public out of whose pockets these excess profits were taken and who could reasonably expect better service and goods for the extortionate prices they were paying. The general public apathy as to what was taking place in the early twenties was Partridge's chief reason for compiling his book "A War On Poverty." That and the man's innate desire to be of some practical use to his fellow man despite the physical incapacity he suffered.

Seeing the inadequacy of the Canadian political system

he felt

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that the average Canadian citizen deserved a better system of Government; in short a government that would serve the electorate and not ~~those~~ those interested solely in their own promotion and protection. The public was just not interested. A system of provincial education that taught no man to read or if he was able to read to understand what was written was having the desired effect upon a young and growing generation. Red herrings by the score were being dragged out to cloud every public issue. Any suggestion that we might ourselves, have a political economy that would give a larger share of our vast natural wealth to every citizen was either ignored by the news media of the day or else branded as a socialism of a kind that would ruin everyone. In other words the great majority of Canadians, were being told to keep on ^{being} good little slaves, ask no embarrassing questions, do as the Federal Government said and all would be well in this best possible of all worlds--for the politicians.

The Great Depression of 1929 came. Partridge of Sintaluta saw much of his prophecy come true. Men that had fought for their country in the war of 1914-18 together with their sons were riding the rods of freight trains from East to West, West to East, back and forth across Canada. Men who in their own right should have had employment found themselves begging from door to door across ^{the land,} ~~Canada~~. A country with natural resources to stagger the imagination. Through the little Saskatchewan town of Sintaluta on any spring or summer day Partridge could see

passing freight trains

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passing freight trains, crowded with men sitting on top of the cars going both ways on the main line of the C.P.R. crossing Canada. He found his own friends so busy trying to keep off relief or trying to get on it that they had no time to think of anything else let alone political economy. Victims of the greed of nations, it was enough if each day provided food, and shelter for the night. As they rode the freights across the vast wheat fields of Saskatchewan they could see food they could neither help harvest nor eat. The miracle is that there was no bloodshed. That was to come later in 1939, again on the far battlefields of Europe.

It was in this era of a dying age that Ed. Partridge and his youngest daughter moved to the West Coast. In poor health and crippled with arthritis Partridge died in Victoria, B.C. in 1937. His daughter Enid predeceased him in 1935. At the time of his death the world was rushing toward the chaos of World War II. Suddenly every man had employment. There were uniforms and guns for every enlisted man. Arms and munitions poured out of factories. Steel was transported by millions of tons and dropped upon a people who did not want it, by the sons of one Father upon other sons of one Father. Whole cities were blasted into rubble. Grain which at one time no one wanted, became scarce. Farmers again found work and because their sons who the nation at one time did not want, were now away fighting for that nation, they bought tractors to replace their horses and sons and produced grain as they had never done before.

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Although he had a vision of what was to come Partridge was part of none of it. He had tried to tell his fellow man in his own words and those borrowed from centuries old prophets and philosophers what would take place. A grave in a Victoria cemetery contains his mortal remains. But his spirit watched the conflict of those war years, their ambiguity and their destructiveness. Much of what he could see and ^{foretold} ~~foretold~~ has come to pass. He left behind an example of unselfish care about his fellow man. He is not dead, this friend, not dead ! He has but passed one step ahead !

The following is from the final chapter of 'A War on Poverty' a fitting epitaph for the author himself :

'When earth's last picture is painted,
and the tubes are twisted and dried
When the oldest colors have faded,
and the youngest critic has died;
We shall rest and faith we shall need it-
lie down for an eon or two,
Till the Master of all good workmen,
shall put us to work anew.

And those that were ^{good} ~~good~~ shall be happy:
they shall sit in a golden chair:
They shall splash at a ten league canvass
with brushes of comet's hair;
They shall find real saints to draw from-
Magdalene, Peter and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting
and never be tired at all.

And only the Master shall praise us
and only the master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money,
and no one shall work for fame;
But each for the joy of the working;
and each in his separate star
Shall draw the thing as he sees it,
for the God of Things as They Are.'

Rudyard Kipling.