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ANADIAN JEWISH



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Nous nous souvenons

NEW SERIES
NUMBER ELEVEN

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;
Remembering is the root of redemption.
(Baal Shem Tov)

ON JULES HELBRONNER

Compiled By
DAVID ROME

With an Introduction by
SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D.

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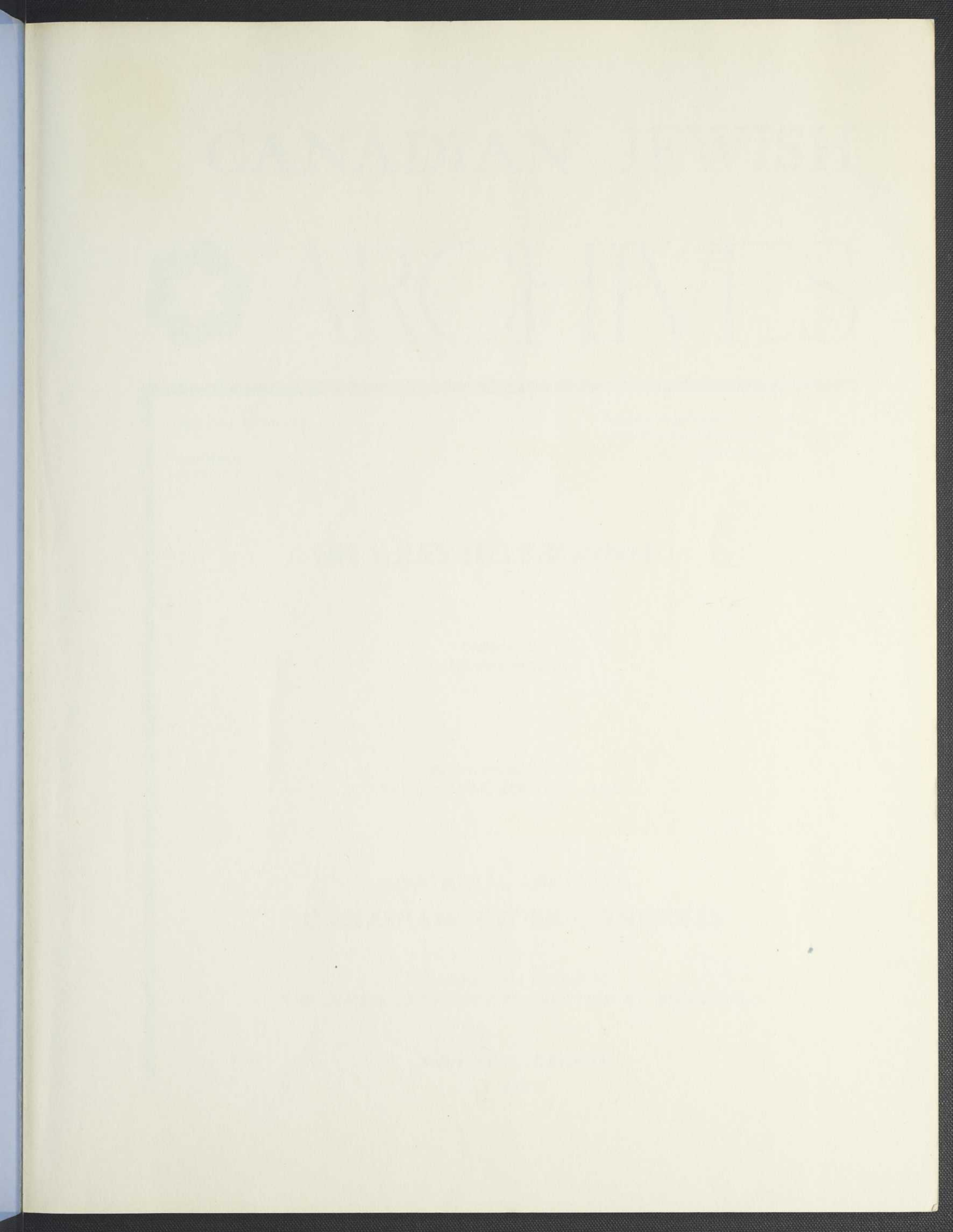
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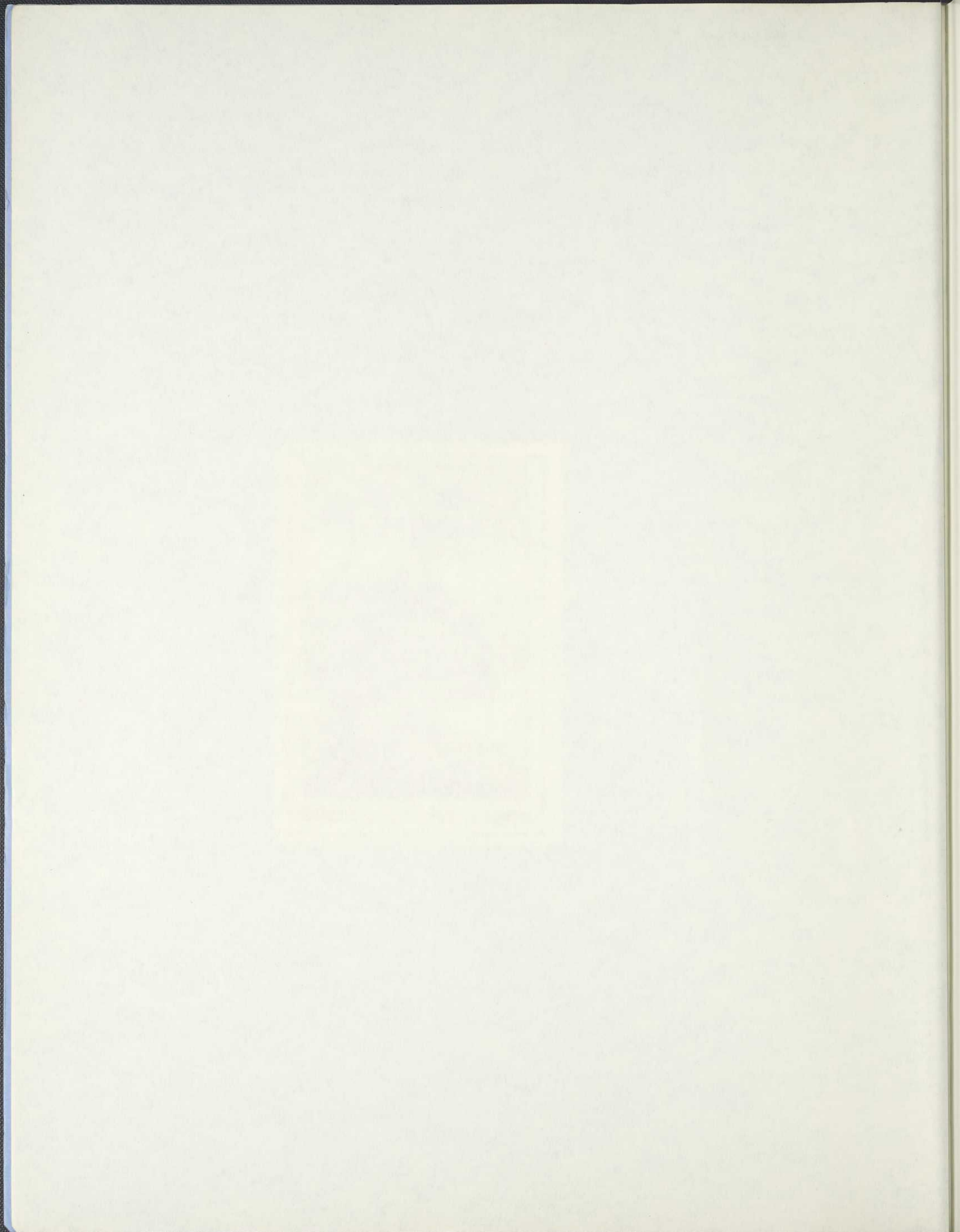
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NEW GOLD EDITIONS

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Forgetting is a sin to Holocaust
Remembering is the root of redemption
(Elie Wiesel)

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INTRODUCTION

Jules Helbronner may be known to readers of Jewish history. Abraham Rhinewine mentioned him in his The Jews in Canada (1926) as did B.G. Sack in his history; Shulamit Yelin has written of Robillard's vitriolic attacks on Helbronner and on the Jewish community; Mr. David Rome has himself dealt with the Jewish editor of La Presse in his The Early Jewish Presence in Canada and, most recently, in the Canadian Jewish Digest, vol. 18, no. 2.

However, an examination of the papers in the National Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress indicates that the story of this Alsatian Jew in Canada deserves a fuller treatment. The present work in effect compiles the published documentation on Helbronner and gives it a continuity which cannot but be vivacious.

From the barest reports Helbronner emerges as a fascinating and creative character, one of the major contributions of the community to the life of Canada. An honest man of great capacity; an altruistic public servant, especially to the numerous public of the poor; a man of probity who applied acerbic tests to situations often left unexamined; a spokesman for the inarticulate, he won such wide respect that even governments which disliked his views and programs entrusted him with missions of inquiry.

It is profoundly significant that this distinguished man operated in the francophone half of bilingual Canada. His language was French; the labor unions and institutions he nurtured were French Canadian; his Canadian politics were those of francophone east Montreal; the newspapers in which he wrote and which he edited were *la presse québécoise*, indeed the heart of French language journalism, as were, not unexpectedly, the journalistic enemies he made during a lifetime of crusading.

It is Quebec historians of the labor scene, from Laval and from Rimouski, who have discovered and are enshrining Helbronner as the man who devoted his life to find justice and welfare for the humblest, hardest working, most oppressed and enslaved working woman and working man of his beloved Montreal.

For the reader of Quebec history his career again illustrates that Jews are so deeply woven into the fabric of the nation that they appear early on both its anglophone and francophone sides.

The circumstances of historiography have often led our chroniclers to seek out the anglophone pattern. It is too much to pretend that a newer generation of students is on the track of judicious balance in drawing stronger emphasis on the French language side. Let us say that a newer apologetic motivation is making for this more just treatment.

Which brings us to the strange story of his Jewishness.

He was so different a Jew from his predecessor Jews of Lower Canada, and so different from the many Jewish people who immigrated to Montreal from further east in Europe than his native France at about the time of his arrival, that there probably could not have been any contact with him, not even in the common concern of poverty and of labor.

In the present state of our inquiries there are many questions about Helbronner's Jewishness.

We have every reason to believe that he was Jewish by origin nor did he ever deny being a member of the Jewish group.

But we do not know what meaning or implications this had for him. Nor do we know whether he held any religious convictions or shared any of the attitudes common to many in the Jewish group; or whether he was particularly informed in the multifaceted lore of the group.

Indeed, we know more about his high respect for the Quebec church than of his regard for Jewish civilization. Nor do we know at this time anything Jewish about his family connections or even about his own interment. We have a vague reference to his part in a French Jewish school in Montreal. Alas however, despite this, there is no confirmation that there even had ever been such a school in Canada.

But we know very much of his fury in the face of the antisemite's attack. At this point all vagueness ceases and a proud ferocity emerges; vast energy, an unforgiving indignation at truth being savaged, at justice being perverted, at isolated innocence being mutilated before the eyes of all without any restraining hand or voice to recall that there is right as well as wrong in the universe of mankind. All the strength of defence of life and morality comes to evidence. But this is a controlled strength, with skill in marshalling its arguments and weapons, albeit a dramatic skill, with an artist's verve. Its scenario includes the final settling of accounts, the tying up of loose ends, the forgiving of the minor accomplices, the condemnation of the ultimate wrongdoer -- the conscienceless, amoral spectator public.

The drama leaves us with a realistic conviction, as does the best of art, that with all the conspiracies revealed and foiled, and the evil antagonist punished, and the curtain down -- we are all the more aware that all is not right with the world, and that the protagonist's battle will ever have to be fought; that the conflict is a reflection and an exemplar of the moral conditions of Jewish society, of human society, its very existence.

The man in our investigation wrote little of his profound convictions and visions. The hard-working sociologist reporter was always with his pencil at the columns of his figures, motivated by the inhuman condition of half-starving mill workers being cheated of the only pennies and of the bread crumbs they could strive to obtain.

Equally complex is his antagonist Robillard, a strange small man, small in the measure of the loot he sought, a con man who earned \$40 a week, who squandered the poor men's earnings which he came to handle in order to furnish an extravagant office, who connived with his preeminent associate to extend an improper \$2,000 mortgage which was excessive by \$500 or \$1,000.

Even Robillard's very savings plan, which became the heart of the case, was not pure criminality. In the context of this society, it is not surprising that church and government gave him their hasty blessing. In a not too distant parallel, the insurance scheme of the Jewish Labor Zionist Farband found themselves in trouble with Ontario law, as S. Belkin tells us in his History of the Poale Zion Movement in Canada.

It would be entertaining today to stage a discussion of Robillard's scheme with a professional actuary.

What gives vast importance to the Helbronner-Robillard conflict is an unwarranted act of desperation by Robillard and his associate Denault.

When he felt pressed by the journalists of Les Débats whom he badly identified, the promoter of the scheme plugged in on a dynamo of a force and character he also probably ill understood. It was easy to utter the magic words, "Dirty Jew" without knowing or caring what genie he was uncorking.

But in point of historic fact Robillard became the first to bring across the Atlantic, to the American continent, to the ancient seat and see of Quebec, Drumont's fully developed, monstrous anti-Jewish coherent structure of lies which, when translated into political and governmental terms as Arcand visioned and Hitler achieved, simply meant Holocaust. In terms of specificity his antisemitism far exceeded Goldwin Smith's of Toronto of the eighties and seventies.

There was nothing in the annals of Quebec race hatred before Robillard to match his virulence or the profound roots of his antisemitism. He preceded by a decade the Jew hatred of Action catholique (née Action sociale), and the Association canadienne de la jeunesse catholique, the theology of Mgr. Paquet, the ritual murder teachings of Abbé Huot, the libels of Notary Plamondon which Ortenberg quashed, the continuous agitation of Tardivel fils -- and by three decades the menace of Arcand.

This is what Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit, i.e., Jules Helbronner, faced in response to what to him had become his daily work of examination of weaknesses in social Quebec.

It is little wonder this nightmare of reality energized him into dramatic, almost heroic, action.

In 1875 the rising political figure found it necessary to confirm his membership in the Commons prior to his entry in the cabinet as Minister of Internal Revenue. In the interests of this campaign Edouard-Sabry Richard established a weekly Le Journal d'Arthabaska at Arthabaska which appeared for exactly a year, October 27, 1877 to October 5, 1878. One of the editors was Jules Helbronner. Laurier was defeated in a highly contested campaign by D.-O. Bourbeau, who had the support of Mgr. Laflèche. The weekly continued while Laurier contested the Quebec-East seat with great success. But when the Conservatives gained power in 1878 the Arthabaska paper closed down for lack of funds. (André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin, La Presse québécoise, vol. 1, 1860-79, pp. 256-57, 259; R. Amalry, Histoire de la Province de Québec, vol. 2, p. 95)

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 their class

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 energized him into dramatic almost poetic actions in various

Robillard's act of contempt was being felt
 everywhere in his environment as it did in Robillard
 by Robillard himself.

In this regard, the of history that he wrote
 and in returning was particularly liked by many readers
 and returned the same as a result of his political views
 all sorts of ways and if Robillard's all political views
 that raised no political issues "two years" show signs
 gaining.

The story of Jules Helbronner is worth telling, if only because the Jewish voice of French Canada is heard here.

Helbronner's name is imprinted in the annals of the French language in Montreal.

The name Helbronner (or Helbronn or Heilbronner) is familiar to readers of Jewish history. It derives, as do so many Jewish family names, from a place in Germany.

Born in Alsace (Capital and Labor, issued by the Knights of Labor in 1904, gives the place of his birth as Paris), the son of a manufacturer, he fought with the French army in 1870. Four years later he came to Montreal and entered business for a time before opting for the press as a career. He became one of the most important journalists of French Canada in his time.

A few years after coming to Montreal, in 1874, his wife, Eugène Meusner gave birth to a son, Michel who was destined to become an eminent architect. The Gazette building was a product of his art. A daughter was to marry Louvigny de Montmagny, later of Ottawa.

Characteristically, what was probably his first venture into Quebec journalism was involved in the early career of Laurier.

In 1878 the rising political figure found it necessary to confirm his membership in the Commons prior to his entry in the cabinet as Minister of Internal Revenue. In the interests of this campaign Edouard-Emery Richard established a weekly Le Journal d'Arthabaska in Arthabaskaville which appeared for exactly a year, October 5, 1877 to October 5, 1878. One of the editors was Jules Helbronner. Laurier was defeated in a highly contested campaign by D.-O. Bourbeau, who had the support of Mgr. Laflèche. The weekly continued while Laurier contested the Quebec-East seat with great success. But when the Conservatives gained power in 1878, the Arthabaskaville paper closed down for lack of funds. (André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin. La Presse québécoise, vol. 2, 1360-79, Pp. 256-57, 259; R. Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, vol. 2, P.95)

In 1885 we find Helbronner among the contributors to the conservative monthly Le Drapeau. (Beaulieu and Hamelin)

Later Helbronner came to be connected with the Moniteur du commerce, issued by the Chambre de commerce, in 1881 before joining La Presse, the great daily he was to serve successfully as labor reporter, city hall reporter, economics writer and eventually, as editor in chief.

As Beaulieu and Hamelin, historians of the Quebec journalism put it, La Presse was taken over in 1889, five years after its founding, by Trefflé Berthiaume in a poor state (circulation in 1892, 20,500); he turned it into a profitable business and a national enterprise. His success was due in part to his far-sighted business talents and in part to the work of Helbronner and J.-A. Rodier who popularized La Presse in business circles. By 1913 its circulation was 121,000.

J.I. Cooper, author of Montreal, a Brief History, attributes the success of La Presse to Helbronner who made the newspaper a forum for the discussion of urgent contemporary problems. (Montreal, McGill University Press, 1969. P.68)

Noël Belanger and J.-G. Lalonde summarize La Presse policy during this period, "It recommends labor organizations; it opposes immigration which will lower wages; it approves Labor Day; it recommends compulsory arbitration or the setting up of arbitration committees; it invites workers to advance their education through evening courses; it summarizes the findings of the Royal Commission on the Relations between Labor and Capital; because of the power of labor organizations, there has to be greater harmony between employers and workers. The employer is no longer omnipotent as he had been, and the employee is no longer the powerless man who had recourse only to the brutal force of strike, incapable through his isolation to engage in normal combat against capital and capitalism. Participation, long under examination, will

wipe out the present conflicts between capital and labor." ("Les Réactions devant la montée ouvrière," in J. Hamelin, ed., Les Travailleurs québécois, 1851-1896. Pp. 186-87)

One of the most important of Helbronner's activities was a labor column he wrote for La Presse from October 20, 1884 to 1894 over the pseudonym Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit, a name which was a concentrate of French Canadian populism, labor, folklore and poverty.

"He dealt with his subject matter with profound knowledge and remarkable sensitivity," La Patrie later recalled. "He pointed the direction that labor was to follow."

The reporter of La Patrie recalled "A Frenchman by birth and in spirit, he learned quickly to love the land of his adoption to whose welfare he gave all his talent and energy." (Nov. 26, 1921)

His arch-conservative enemy, Robillard characterized his career, "He has made use of style all his own which has had the not very reassuring effect of strongly modifying the temperament of our working masses." (Le Pionnier, Feb. 9, 1902)

Fernand Harvey writes of him, "Helbronner is a little known personality out of Quebec history but is a fascinating subject of study. On the political level, he is a moderate reformer in his ideas, but an ardent defender of the working class. He seems to have integrated well into the French Canadian society of his time, possibly at a cost to the more radical ideas he upheld early in his career.

"Remarkable, even as a working journalist he was a member of the Chambre de commerce de Montréal, a paradox that would be unthinkable in our times."

He calls Helbronner's labor chronicle a masterly work.

"For years before the inquiry by the Royal Commission on Capital and Labor he constantly denounced the injustices suffered by Montreal's working class. He condemned the water tax system which penalized the workers' districts; he demanded better treatment of factory workers and warred against the various forms of exploitation which victimized them.

"But Helbronner was not content to denounce the situation. In his chronicles he also sought solutions to advance the physical, intellectual and moral condition of the laborers.

"He rejected class warfare and violent conflicts because, he felt, the worker is the first to bear the costs of such developments. In this spirit, he concluded that strikes are not a practical solution. His strategy for social transformation relied, rather, on the power of public opinion as mobilized by the press. So he led several campaigns to denounce outdated legislation and the absence of legislation in certain areas."

(Les Travailleurs québécois et la Commission de travail, 1886-89. Thesis submitted to Université Laval, 1976.

Pp. 65-66)

Jean de Bonville described him, "surely one of the most interesting journalists of his time", and paid him the tribute of entitling his history of the workers of Montreal at century's end with Helbronner's pseudonym, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit, Les travailleurs Montréalais à la fin du XIXe siècle. (Montreal, L'Aurora, 1975, 253 p.)

He characterized Helbronner's column as "lively and straightforward" a weekly record of social criticism, a battle to improve the lot of the low paid workers of Montreal."

At a time when the conscience of society had scarcely a name and the conditions of existence governing tens of thousands of residents of Canadian cities were at one of the nadirs of history, a fictitious "Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit," was in an untiring crusade on their behalf.

"He saw journalism as a weapon for the advancement of the welfare of the citizenry, particularly that of the working classes. He campaigned particularly to abolish the burdens which oppressed and discriminated against, the workers: the corvée, water tax, poll tax. When the water tax issue came up before the courts, Helbronner was named spokesman for the central Council of Trades and Labor. (De Bonville. "Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit, Ombudsman," in Le Maclean, July 1975, Pp.41-42)

Looking at the children, the Alsatian Jew behind the pseudonym of Jean-Baptiste proposed the abolition of work by children younger than 16, compulsory school attendance and the establishment of trade schools. "Children younger than ten are working ten hours a day for \$1.25 a week and find on pay day, after giving 60 hours of labor to their employer, that they still owe him 50 or 75¢ after the fines that the foreman had imposed arbitrarily for disobedience, for being late or for work badly done."

He fought for a 60-hour week to replace current 30-hour practice. He drew general attention to working conditions: in 1889 the walls and ceilings of a shop collapsed injuring a number of workers and killing one.

His early closing campaign of 1885 was mated by the gas companies who thought that they would lose. They offered some merchants a year's free lighting if they could stop this crusade.

Any introduction to the fin de siècle labor world, the work of Helbronner makes it clear, calls for a fuller familiarity with the living conditions of Montreal proletariat. De Bonville testifies that an objective analysis of working conditions based on a variety of witnesses and on contemporary statistics is enriched by the seriously documented commentary of this journalist dedicated to the working class. Columns of figures, tables and charts may indicate improvements of labor conditions over the decades, but do not reveal the mental conditions of men engaged in daily experience of misery.

"Are the workers satisfied with their condition? How do they resent this exploitation? The works of Helbronner inspire the quantitative and statistical data of working Montreal with a human vibration.

"To appreciate the worth of the man and the quality of his work we need to enter into the heart and the nature of human activity.

"In spite of some contradictions in political conduct and a certain vagueness in his conception of the labor movement, Helbronner offers sure and coherent testimony for a quarter of a century.

"Two examples will establish his credibility.

"From his coming to La Presse he began a campaign against City Council to purge certain abuses and to denounce

embezzlement and fraud. The campaigns for the abolition of the poll tax and the reduction of water taxes were mainly devised and led by La Presse and its city hall reporter.

"His polemic with the councillors is not fed by partisan prejudices. For example, during the small-pox epidemic Mayor Beaugrand had to intervene personally to ensure compliance with certain prophylactic measures, despite strong opposition of some citizens who were in terror of vaccination. The mayor was faced with this popular current, and Beaugrand was a liberal, while La Presse was a conservative paper.

"Nevertheless, Helbronner did not choose to defend the right of the workers to refuse vaccination, as a demagogue might have done; he called on them to bow to these needs and used his labor column to explain the nature and results of vaccination.

"But he did not, for all this, cease his campaign to improve municipal administration. More than once he called for an inquiry into its actions. In 1909 he gathered sufficient evidence to obtain a public inquiry into the irregularities and the corruption that were corroding the administration.

"He affirmed under oath before that commission, presided by Judge Cannon, that the corruption then reigning in City Hall in 1909 had already triumphed by 1884 when he became city hall reporter.

"Perhaps I can summarize my views by saying that any administration would be better than the present one. This since 1887. I was witness before the commission of boodlers, as they called it, the commission presided by Mayor Abbott and composed of aldermen. Already then, in 1887 what is happening now was happening at that time."

Judge Cannon recognized the soundness of Helbronner's testimony.

"Helbronner succeeded in imprinting his labor sympathies on the team of the newspaper where he worked. So much so that during the teamsters' and stevedores' strike of 1903 the workers delivered the rolls of newsprint needed by La Presse despite a general embargo." (De Bonville, Pp.15-17, 162-63, 187-88)

He remained with La Presse until 1909 except for a brief stay with the liberal Le Soir during the 1896 campaign.

Helbronner became one of the great personalities on the political arena of Montreal.

De Bonneville writes, "An immigrant of the Jewish faith, he was active in the labor organizations of Montreal. It needed no more than this for the anathema of François-Xavier-Anselme Trudel, the ultramontanist of the Estandard, to fall on his head. Robert Rumilly has called him a socialist and has connected him with the Ligue de l'enseignement of 1905. These judgements of Trudel and of Rumilly immediately make Helbronner an interesting man. In a world which its own historians describe as a monolithic clericalism, 'a Jewish socialist' deserves attention." De Bonville inquires into "the antecedents of this radical decried by his contemporaries and forgotten by a puritan national conscience."

When Helbronner joined La Presse it was no pro-labor institution he was entering. Despite his great value to the newspaper, there was probably tension every day of the twenty-five years he served it. Helbronner eventually became editor in chief. Although this fact has been questioned, there is courtroom evidence to reaffirm it.

In one of the litigations it was necessary to affirm that Helbronner was indeed editor in chief of La Presse. (This is on the record in La Presse of July 16, 1906 and La Patrie of Nov. 30, 1908)

The manner of his leaving La Presse in due course was evidence of the instability of journalistic positions at the time.

Soon after he arrived, in 1886, the proprietor informed him that the labor candidates in the current election were not to be mentioned in the editorial columns. Helbronner would not accept these instructions and offered his resignation. It was not accepted.

In the course of time the paper became strongly pro-labor. William Keys wrote in 1904, "Nor was that a bad stroke of policy on the part of the paper, for through supporting of the labor candidates and Mr. Heilbronner's masterly style of writing on labor matters, the circulation of La Presse began to grow more extensively and we have no hesitation in saying that to his work is largely due the fact that that paper occupies the position that it does today as one of the foremost papers of the dominion." ("Jules Helbronner," in Capital and Labor. Montreal, Dominion Assembly Knights of Labor, 1904, P.166)

De Bonville emphasizes that Helbronner identified himself with the underpaid oppressed, being himself one of them. Characteristically he found himself early in his career unable to pay his rent and was forced to borrow from his publisher. But soon after the employer declared bankruptcy before paying Helbronner his salary. The courts heard the law-suits; one demanding the repayment of the loan, the other demanding wages.

"He was a complex personality, the very incarnation of the French Canadian drawer of waters struggling against daily misery, heated defender of the rights of workers, the journalist who left his rooms, rent not yet paid, to bring his copy to the paper or to attend a meeting of the Knights of Labor or of a session of the Commission of Inquiry on Labor and Capital." (Le Maclean, July, 1975, P.42)

"His work on behalf of the working class is also marked by the stamp of authenticity. In 1885 he was one of the committee of seven to prepare the program presented by the Knights of Labor to the working class...."

KNIGHTS OF LABOR

Helbronner took a very strong stand in the controversy in regard to the Catholic position on the Knights of Labor.

The conservative wing of the Quebec church, in condemning this labor organization, was led by the diocese of the capital. Archbishop Taschereau enjoyed the support of Rome in 1884 in having the bishops of the province endorse its position. But the Bishop of Montreal knew the Knights from having them in his diocese (his was the only jurisdiction with the lodges of the Knights of Labor) and he found them quite harmless as far as church interests were concerned. Furthermore, American Catholic experience was similar to his own. He noted that bishops in Ontario and in the United States did not believe that the condemnation of the Knights in Quebec applied universally.

Some at least found the theological position of economic benefit for themselves. After the Quebec City printers' strike of 1888 was broken, the president of La Justice forbade all his employees from joining the Knights of Labor "because this is the desire of the religious authorities" (Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations between Capital and Labor, P. 1057, cited in Harvey thesis, P. 358)

It was in connection with the printers' dispute that his antagonist in L'Etandard had recourse to Helbronner's Jewishness. Very coyly he argued that it was not the Jewishness of La Presse's labor chronicler that disqualified him from participating in the dispute, it was that Helbronner was not Catholic.

Helbronner's response: "Are Protestants also similarly disqualified?"

Notably this discussion in the "Chronique ouvrière" was signed -- not as usual Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit -- but Jules Helbronner. (La Presse, Jan. 14, 1888)

The Bishop of Montreal Mgr. Fabre had met the head of the Knights and found a rapport with him. He publicly dissociated himself from Quebec and appealed to Rome to leave the problem to each bishop to deal with.

Helbronner was solidly with him. (Fernand Harvey. Aspects historiques du mouvement ouvrier à Québec. Montreal, Edition du boréal express. Pp. 56-63)

Tardivel's La Vérité was the journalistic advocate of the Quebec archbishop on this, as on all questions. Its attack was founded, it set forth, on its hate-fear syndrome that impelled its campaign against freemasonry.

Interestingly, the founding Tardivel, though by nature open to the halucinatory myths that lead a man to wildest acts, did not fall into the trap which identified evil freemasonry with the Jewish conspiracy. In this regard he was saner than his son who succeeded him at La Vérité.

In the French language only La Presse's Helbronner, who had himself worked to establish the organization, could not accept unflinchingly the papal condemnation which came about through the manoeuvres of Mgr. Taschereau. Intelligent and effective as he was, he conducted vigorous campaigns towards precise objectives for reforms called for by the needs of labor.

It was not long before Helbronner was vindicated -- with an assist from bishops in the United States. Cardinals Manning and Gibbons told the Vatican that the ban on the Knights had been prompted by inadequate information in the first place. They said, "We are alarmed by the danger to the church of appearing in our time as allied to the rich and powerful and adversary to the poor and the weak. Such an alliance, even if only a seeming alliance, would constitute an unprecedented evil, and would also destroy the sense of our history. As we see it, nothing like this should ever occur. The only power in the world which has been the protector of the weak and poor classes for eighteen centuries should not abandon them in the hour of distress. The present conditions of the lower classes cannot last. No social order can endure on such foundations."

In 1887 the pope lifted the ban on the Knights of Labor, though Mgr. Taschereau saw to it that this information was not widely known in Quebec City. (Richard Desrosiers et Denis Héroux. Le Travailleur à Québec et le syndicalisme 2nd revised and corrected ed., Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Québec, 1973. Pp. 61-69)

THE STRATEGY OF LABOR

An unusual tribute to Helbronner appeared in a front page feature on the occasion of Labor Day, 1893. Its appearance in La Presse of Sept. 2, 1893 is the more remarkable, for this newspaper was generally very reserved in personalizing its own personnel. Even Helbronner's work appeared over noms de plume of which Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit was but one.

The Labor Day article in effect is a brief history of the Montreal labor movement. It records that the officers of the year-old Ville Marie Assembly of the Knights of Labor, No. 3484, the second assembly of Knights, decided to unite all Quebec workers into one labor force. "A committee of seven, among whom was Helbronner, present editor in chief of La Presse, was named to devise a program. Helbronner was certainly one of the best informed men on the labor question in Canada; so that the services he rendered in this case were deeply appreciated by the workers."

This program, which Helbronner characterized as basically very moderate, proposed that employment of children younger than 14 be forbidden; that women and children work no more than eight hours a day; that employers of illiterate children should permit them to attend school during certain hours; that night courses and libraries be set up; that seizure of workers' wages be limited; the establishment of labor arbitration boards; the reform of apprenticeship regulations by putting enforcement in the hands of arbitrators rather than magistrates; suppression of prison labor that competes with free labor; an end to assisted immigration for industry; tightening of laws regarding hygiene; the sewage and maintenance of housing.

This program "far from limiting itself to wages and hours of work; sought to better all phases of working class life. It sought to have employers enable illiterate children to attend school; for adults it called for libraries, night courses, labor arbitration, abolition of wage garnishees." (Les Travailleurs québécois, 1851-90, Pp. 88-89)

On Nov. 23, 1885 the Assembly adopted the program and decided to publish it in the press and to address it to all labor societies in the province. On Dec. 4 the Assembly invited all such groups to send delegates to a conference on Jan. 12, 1886 to consider the program.

That conference was the virtual beginning of labor's political battles in the province. It led to the foundation within a few months of the Central Trades and Labor Council of Montreal, with the east end of the city as its base. In the course of time it was the base whence emanated political action, first on the municipal level. Later this federative principle extended on the provincial level. (Desrosiers and Héroux. P.62)

Significantly, Alphonse Téléphore Lépine who figures in this sketch, was corresponding secretary of the central council after the fall of 1886.

In recognition of his contribution to the cause of the working man the Central Council of Trades and Labor of Montreal, in due course, named Helbronner life member in 1889. Helbronner's crusading columns had served as the basis in drafting the program which mobilized the principal workers groups of the city to form this Central Council.

In 1891, during the debate on water taxes, he was the spokesman for the tenants and for the Central Committee.

In his Histoire de Montréal, Rumilly notes that Helbronner, a French Jew, had not renounced his socialist views on coming to Canada. An intelligent and clever journalist, he had become the right hand of Blumhart and succeeded him as editor in chief in 1892. He proceeded by vigorous campaigns towards precise objectives, always demanding some reform in favour of the workers.

Among the ills to which Helbronner directed his attention was the role of the judiciary in consolidating the oppressed condition of the workers. A classic case arose when an employer sought to force a worker to pay for shoes spoiled in the plant and deducted the amount from his wages. The worker chose to quit his job, on the ground that his wages were kept back. The employer had him arrested. The judge sentenced him to jail and fined him, for the worker had quit his work on insufficient ground. "That is taking the law into his own hands," was the ruling.

Helbronner reacted. "The Negroes in the south were treated no differently before the Civil War. The slave owner could not beat his slaves, but he could have the police beat them. But he could also forgive them if it pleased him, and if the slave humiliated himself and promised to behave. In Montreal today the employer may no longer punish the worker, but he can call on the police, have him condemned and have sentence suspended if the master pardons him. What is the difference between the white man in Montreal in 1880 and the black man in the south in 1860?"

It was in the presence of Helbronner that Recorder De Montigny repeated before the Commission on Labor and Capital on Feb. 18, 1888 his views, expressed earlier on several occasions, that employers have the same rights to administer reasonable correction to a child that the parents have. He believed that this opinion is based on common sense and on divine and human law. It is within the jurisdiction of the court to determine what is reasonable correction, depending on the sex and age of the child, on the authority conferred on the employer by the parents, on the gravity of the offence, etc. (La Presse, Feb. 20, 1888)

Helbronner was faced with subtle decisions, not conflicts, in his career in behalf of the working man. As a long time socialist he understood the issues in question in his own life very clearly.

His day by day concern was with the immediate and concrete living conditions of the working man. He knew the mechanics of improving these conditions, the persons and institutions and governments who could be induced to improve these conditions, the argumentations to be utilized in bringing about these improvements, the assumptions and premises of this dialogue.

He also knew the underlying laws governing society and the relations between these social and economic laws and the concrete conditions and facts about the life of the citizenry. He knew the nature of the total class struggle by which the operational laws of society might be so altered that the condition of the worker might be improved.

Knowing that the welfare of the workers can be lost in the far reaching campaign for political and social power quests for labor, he nevertheless came back to the political instrumentality of labor as a possible tool for the improvement of the workers' fate.

In July 1893 he wrote to awaken the workers' interest in city administration.

"A city inefficient and improvident is obliged to reduce its expenses and its necessary works. The results of unwise expropriations fall upon tenants and upon workers. These are the victims who must pay higher rentals and have less work from the city.

"Workers do not generally pay municipal taxes but, as Guizot put it, 'those who pay no taxes have most cause to watch and control public administration, for those who pay no taxes pay the most.'

"The principal obstacle for the workers to overcome is to ensure that city councillors are paid. How can a worker without income except his wages serve the city for two years without the least compensation?

"Until this time we can live within the law: there are among the workers men who have saved a modest ease from their labors, whose life is a certificate that many lawyers and merchants cannot offer. Why not send them to City Council? They do not want in intelligence, education or experience in affairs, and they would represent the citizens with as much dignity as the present councillors." (La Revue de Montréal, P.3)

In the summer of 1886 the new National Party, born in the passion of Riel's death, was seeking a candidate who would have the support of the labor movement. Among the candidates: Helbronner. But, as de Bonville put it, "being of French origin and of the Jewish faith, he quite justifiably feared the antisemitism of Jules Paul Trudel's La Vérité and of L'Etendard." He refused. (Pp. 196-9 La Vérité, L'Etendard and La Presse of October, 1886)

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ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOR

Sir John A. MacDonald was prompted to announce a royal commission in December 1886 charged to inquire into all questions that give birth to conflicts between labor and capital by developments in Canadian labor. He announced it more or less offhand in a soothing address to a workers' group. (Desrosiers and Héroux, Pp.65, 116) It was established by Order-In-Council on December 6, 1886, headed by Judge James Armstrong, who was succeeded by A.Y. Freed on the passing of Judge Armstrong in 1888. Its cost: \$81,700.

Sir John A. MacDonald may not have had it in mind when he announced formation of this inquiry in 1886, possibly for electoral purposes. However, in point of fact, it became one of the important investigative commissions in Canadian history, if only by the number of commissioners and its cost.

"That royal commission was the most extensive enterprise of the 19th century to ascertain the condition of the Canadian and the Quebec proletariat. It may not have been followed by immediate steps in federal legislation, but it helped attract public attention to the abuses of the capitalistic system.

"Presently historians and sociologists increasingly refer to it in their investigation of labor conditions of that century.... The very life of the period is conveyed to us throughout the oral evidence published by the commission, evidence which often touches dramatic tones when they tell of the confrontation between workers and their employers in the halls of session. (Fernand Harvey. "Une enquête ouvrière au XIX^e siècle. La Commission du travail, 1886-89" in Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française, vol.30, no. 1, June 1976, Pp. 35

The commission was remarkable, in relation to other inquiry bodies of the century for the proportion of labor men in its membership. Whereas it is estimated that some 89% of commissioners during the century were from commercial, industrial and professional society, with but 11% from the working society, in this commission half of the membership consisted of workers, even excluding Helbronner and journalist Freed.

From no very clear or strong reason of substance the membership of the committee divided into two during the session and in the course of preparing its report; if an explanation or a labelling is necessary for conceptualising the human situation, it may be ascribed to personality conflicts; the groups may very loosely be ticketted "pro-capitalist" and "anti-pro-capitalist," to accept the analysis of M. Harvey.

Helbronner was consistently with the "pro-capitalist" faction when it was headed by Judge Armstrong and later under the chairmanship of A.Y. Freed.

One consideration is of minor interest. The "anti-pro-capitalist" group included the Quebec Irishman Patrick Kerwin whose nomination was resented by French

Canadians; they had wanted one of theirs for this position. Helbronner was in fact the only French Canadian on its first list; a form of at least latent conflict could not but exist between the Irishman and the Jewish francophone.

This cleavage came to the surface during the hearings. In the writing of the report it crystallized to the point where two reports ensued: a majority report signed by the "anti-pro-capitalist" group, and a minority report submitted by the Freed-Helbronner group.

"The similarity of the recommendations is clear. The authors of the minority report envisaged a closer integration of workers into society by such varied methods of social advancement as cooperation, savings and appropriate legislation. The text of the majority, on the other hand, emphasized the defence of the professional interests of the workers and, to some extent, the conflict between workers and other classes of society." (Harvey. "La Commission du travail...." P.52)

In his thesis on the inquiry (Les Travailleurs québécois et la Commission du travail, 1886-89, Ph.D. thesis, Laval, 1976) Fernand Harvey notes that the value of the report of the 16 commission, with its oral testimony by the personages who people the society of the time, "leaps before the eyes of the sociologist and the historian. Here is living witness saved from oblivion by the magic of stenotypy; the words of workers and employers which still echo in our ears a century later. Such sources when they exist, are rare in history. For Quebec they are without any doubt the greatest surviving oral document on the conditions of the workers of that century." (Pp.2-3)

Jules Helbronner, journalist of Montreal, was appointed a member of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada, one of the initial seven commissioners named on Dec. 11, 1886, the only French Canadian commissioner.

Helbronner was recommended for the commission by the Montreal Trades and Labor Council. But political considerations may have operated in his favour. By refusing to run in the 1886 provincial elections with Mercier's party, he may have foreshadowed an eventual alliance between the Knights of Labor or the Liberals, F. Harvey suggests. (Thesis, Les Travailleurs québécois. P. 69)

"Only one man could and did watch over the specific interests of Quebec until the broadening of the Commission in 1887; that was the journalist Helbronner. He proved an ardent defender of Montreal workers, especially when the time came for the editing of the final report. But for L'Etandard and for some others he was strongly suspect of socialism."

Five additional members were named to the first eight on Nov. 22, 1887, a week after the commission began its work.

Helbronner was very active in this function and signed several appendices to the report, including Appendix C on Savings of the Working Classes and their Investments (Pp. 26-34 of the Report of the Commission. Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1889. 187 p.); Appendix I on Strikes and Arbitration (Pp. 57-60); Appendix L on Payment and Non-Payment of Wages (Pp. 63-64), and on the Sweating Process (Pp. 72-75).

From the volume on Quebec Evidence (740 p.) it is clear that he was a major and aggressive interrogator of workers, employers and officials who appeared as witnesses and helped to elicit a clear and fair picture of work and life at century's end in industrial Montreal. Much of his questioning was in French and appears in the transcript in translation.

Harvey notes that Helbronner was "incontestably one of the most interesting personalities on the Commission, by his social training and by his effective contribution to the work of the inquiry. His preoccupation with the problems of society are reflected in the work of the Commission and in several of the recommendations in the final report. Furthermore, some annexes bear his stamp. It is difficult to explain the profound reasons that led him to join the faction of commissioners named at the time pro-capitalist. It seems that he adhered to a philosophy of social reform rather than militant syndicalism, even though he was a member of the Knights of Labor." (Une enquête ouvrière, " P.43)

Generally his questioning of witnesses sought to bring to the surface the material conditions of work, whereas others were more concerned with manifestations of the labor movement, and others were concerned with individual freedoms and with private enterprise.

Helbronner showed particular interest in the welfare of the cigarworkers and prepared a general statement of their cause. His work, backed by the testimony of 35 witnesses from the industry was quite embarrassing for the so-called pro-capitalist members of the commission. (Harvey thesis, P.98)

There is some Jewish interest in the document as several of the cigar manufacturers in Montreal were members of the community. It is clear that they ranked among the more humane in the industry and tended to recognize the trade union. The initiative of S. Davis & Son, the largest manufacturers in the city, is outstanding, as is the decency of H. Jacobs, among the smaller firms.

Charles Weir,
 cigarmaker journeyman, was earning \$9-10 weekly at Jacobs' factory for an 8-hour day. He had been receiving a third of this wage at Fortier. He confirmed that it was customary to imprison apprentices in a coal hole or a dungeon in Fortier's factory for insubordination. He had himself been beaten and thus imprisoned by the foreman for talking back. Others were thus punished for loitering or for not producing enough cigars.

One factory manager spoke of this coal hole or dark chamber in which these workers would be locked up as "a room in which we locked up those found stealing. We kept them locked in there while we searched the others to see if there were any other thieves. When the search was ended we took the first ones we had caught to the police station. In some cases we forgave some of them after having kept them locked up because they seemed to have repented."

In some cases the children thus locked up were beaten. "Some parents of these apprentices had come to see me and had authorized me to treat their children in this manner. I told the foremen at different times that such and such parents had come to the factory and had authorized me to undress their children to whip them as I would with my own children. Our foremen were warned that these and these children were bad scamps, and that their parents had told me that if they broke the rules they were to be so treated."

It was also customary to fine workers arbitrarily for absenteeism, for talking at work, for wasting tobacco, for using obscene language and for other offenses.

Alphonse Lafrance and Stanislas Goyette testified that it was not unusual to end a week of long hours owing the employer money, particularly since apprentices were paid a dollar or two a week. In the same manner John Rogers also testified that they were freely beaten by the foreman or by the owners for refusing to work after the set hours. (Rapport de la commission royale d'enquête, le capital et le travail au Canada, 1 ère partie. Québec, Pp. 32-33, 42-43, 102-4, 328-29, 435-38)

Possibly only by chance, there is no record of any of these horrendous practices in the Jewish-owned cigar factories.

A.H. Davis, of the 36-year-old S. Davis & Sons, reported that no children were among the 700 employed in this plant. Wages for men averaged \$9.00 per week with year round employment. For the 300 women it was \$5.00. The demand for cheaper products forces the company to employ some apprentices. There is no corporal punishment or fining of apprentices, and they are encouraged to learn the skills rapidly so that instead of earning \$1 a week, their wages go as high as \$4.00.

Unlike other shops, the Davis Co. had no special police on the premises.

The company had some trouble with unions, for lack of a union label.

Henri Hart of Jacobs & Co. testified that they employed no apprentices, did not fine their 70 workers, of whom a third were women. These women earned from \$5.00 to \$12.00 per week. (Rapport, Pp. 150-54, 160-61)

The commission examined labor relations at the Granite Mills at St. Hyacinthe; there was a good deal of unrest in the troubled textile industry. Feodor Boas was the principal shareholder and Maurice Boas supervisor of the factory which was of considerable size. Its annual payroll came to \$60,000. Samuel Logowitz was foreman in the finishing department. (Pp. 1435-91)

B.A. Boas, A. Boas and R. Boas attended the funeral rites of Mrs. S. Davis. (Herald, Dec. 24, 1897)

Wages were as low as fifty cents, going up to a dollar, for a ten-twelve hour day. "In our factory, the only knitting mill of its kind in Canada, we work the hours and times that suit our business." The regularity of employment was at the discretion of the employer. But even more significant than the work, its life and reward at the mills, is the nature of the testimony of Maurice Boas, manager for the past two years. Scarcely deigning to discuss business matters since he "was not certain of the capacity of this court in the transaction of affairs," he did tell them that "we know our own business and we know how to run our own business the best way in our own interests and in the interests of our workers without any foreign intervention." He would scarcely discuss terms of employment, even the printed regulation of the workroom.

He admitted that wages were held back for weeks and, upon severance, were at times not paid at all. Helbrunner reminded Boas that recently a worker, Joseph Barbeau had had recourse to a justice of the peace to collect his \$19.50 in wages; the company had held it back because Barbeau also demanded the opportunity to work two weeks on notice of dismissal.

Fines were imposed arbitrarily upon workers, not on the same scale as in the cigar industry, at the whim of the foremen. Similarly, wages were changed from hourly to piece work, or were summarily reduced; workers who refused had their unpaid wages retained "for damages they caused" and because they made it necessary to train new workers. "There are no prices that cannot be reduced." Cutting rates on piecework was simply asking them to do the work differently, "more completely."

When Helbronner asked him why he does not have recourse to the provisions of the law when workers leave his service, Boas told him that "we run our affairs as suits the needs of our business." The law applies to our factory "but our regulations are also there for a reason, and we believe that they are there so that we can naturally run our business our way. We trust that they conform to the law and we think that they suffice to run our business in a satisfactory manner. We claim to be masters of our own acts, and that they are subject to examination by the law."

Lewis Cohen testified before the commission on patent rights. Current laws failed to protect him -- or other inventors. He testified that his own inventions had been openly stolen, and that other inventions failed of registry because of high costs of such registration.

In noting the fate of the commission of inquiry in Toronto, as compared to its Montreal experience, there is a suggestion in a La Presse report several years later that the person of Helbronner might have been the cause.

In an unsigned article issued on the occasion of Labor Day, 1893, La Presse noted,

"The Commission on labor, on which the Central Council of Montreal was represented by one of its members named at its request, began its work. Badly received in Ontario, the commission arrived in Montreal where the inquiry was prepared very carefully by the Central Council and the various labor associations. Thanks to this work the commission was able to do its work fully and promptly and to bring to light many of the workers' complaints."

At the public meeting sponsored by the Montreal Trades and Labor Council on May 26, 1888 Helbronner recalled that "the Commission was seriously boycotted in Toronto. Not only did the workers fail to appear as witnesses; they did not even attend the sessions. After three weeks it was decided to leave Toronto. For fear that the Ontario commissioners might be badly received by the workers of Windsor, Helbronner and Michael Walsh were sent in advance to prepare the work. In spite of our efforts, it was in Windsor that the eight months' campaign of aspersions and insults against some of our commissioners began in the press of Ontario."

False accusations were made against these members by the same anonymous scribes who also accused him of preventing the cigarmakers of Montreal from bringing their case before the commission in Montreal. (La Presse, May 27, 1888)

Among Helbronner's interventions was his comment that a number of employees of the Grand Trunk Railway who were called did not respond; probably because of intimidation by the company. He proposed inviting these workers to private hearings.

Other intimidated witnesses also made private hearings necessary, in the opinion of the Central Trades Council, and the commission agreed to hearings from which the public was excluded. (La Presse, Feb. 8 and 25, 1888)

Helbronner questioned the spokesman for the Allan Line on the circumstances of the accidental death of a longshoreman last summer. (La Presse, Feb. 10, 1888)

On several occasions the Estandard attacked Helbronner's presence on the Commission on religious grounds. On Jan. 4, 1886 "Incrédule" wrote,

"It is true that a gentleman who calls himself a Frenchman and is considered as such, although he is a Jew, has been named to the Commission." (cited in La Presse, Jan. 7, 1888)

Harvey notes that the sweating system in the garment industry was not strongly reflected in the hearings of the Commission on the Relations between Capital and Labor, 1885-89, even though this system was in use in Quebec particularly at this time. He defines the system as an exploitation that serves to deprive the worker of part of the wages due him.

At this time the industry that was thus neglected by the Commission was among the most important in terms of manpower. Thus its 11,600 workers were spoken for by nineteen witnesses. (c.f. 68 for the leather industry with the same number of workers, and 64 for the tobacco trade with 4,000 employees.) (Thesis, Pp.121-23)

The commission did hear, among others, Isaac Gold who employed nine tailors and Israel Solomon who had three on his staff. Abraham Ephraim was a worker in the garment industry. Jacob J. Rosen was a small sub-contractor with eight boys working for him.

Helbronner was not unaware of the sweating evil. He refers to that system in his annex to the report dealing with "fines imposed by employers on their workers. It is another form of the notorious sweating system current in industry," he wrote.

The sessions of the Royal Commission were -- not surprisingly -- stormy, what with the vast variety of views and concerns entertained by witnesses and by the public attending the sessions, and the opposing opinions and concerns of the commissioners themselves. It can, therefore, be readily understood that the commissioners could not arrive at a unanimous report. Helbronner signed the minority report.

The commissioners divided deeply in their views, procedures and conclusions as they listened to the witnesses and as they met to formulate their recommendations. These truly shattering differences were complicated by the constant Canadian dichotomy: labor in Ontario viewed the commission differently from their Quebec brethren. Helbronner resented the "campaign of insults and denigration" in the Ontario press.

He and the other signatories to the minority report had been violently attacked by the Ontario labor group.

The commissioners could not even agree on the format of their conclusion, leave alone on their ideas and recommendations.

Nevertheless there was no clear line of basic difference between the majority and minority reports, not even differences in emphasis.

In his attempt to find a pattern of divergence between the majority and minority reports, Harvey examines the very topics dealt with in each. He concludes:

"The minority generally is concerned with problems on the arena of society; they seek a better integration of the workers in global society by means of social measures, such as mutuality, savings and law of social reform. The majority is more concerned with the professional concerns of workers." (P. 204)

Only certain appendices to the Report, signed by Helbronner, save the entire document from a marked "poverty of thinking on the social level." (P. 408)

The Central Council of Trades and Labor convened a public meeting on May 16, 1889 to permit him to report on the work of the commission and to explain why he could not associate himself with the conclusions of the majority of the commissioners. Lépine sat on the platform to indicate support of Helbronner.

On Helbronner's death, in 1921, La Presse recalled that the 1889 report has remained a constant authority on these questions.

In 1887 he joined J.B. Monier's La Société de publication commerciale to write for Le Prix courant, a weekly review of trade, finance, insurance and industry. This periodical was founded in 1884 and continued for half a century, long after his association with the company ended. (F.W. Terril. Chronology of Montreal, 1893, P. 384)

THE LÉPINE ELECTION

Helbronner's part in the election 1893 Montreal East federal by-election was historic. Labor historian Fernand Harvey calls Lépine's election the first labor victory in Canadian federal elections in the provinces following the death of Gougeon, N.B. for Montreal East.

Alphonse Théophile Lépine ran as a candidate of the Trades and Labor Council. He was a member of the Montreal Lodge of the Order of Labor and founder of its official publication, the Trait d'union and secretary of the Central Council.

Harvey's History of Quebec relates the Trait d'union (1887-98) to the social philosophy developed in Helbronner's Report in La Presse at this time and in the Royal Commission on Capital and Labor on which Helbronner sat. Lépine's weekly had as its stated objective "the reformation of labor and capital" and "the equilibrium between public and private fortune."

He was opposed by A.-E. Poirier, a candidate supported by Liberal David and Mercier. "the hideous coalition of Red and Center (Whig and Reaction)," as Le Minerve put it when it was all over.

Parliament was due to receive the report of the Royal Commission on Capital and Labor and the social problems they report highlighted. This last support to the idea of a labor member. This constituted "special circumstances" which justified the Conservatives not putting forward a candidate to oppose Lépine but to give him their assistance.

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Despairing of defeating him in the workers' constituency, the Conservatives refrained from nominating their own candidate, especially when Lépine promised to support their stand on economic protectionism.

La Presse, under the political direction of G.-A. Nantel and edited by Helbronner, "peerless in its defense of the Little Man against the Big Men," supported Lépine. "Helbronner led the campaign like a true politician.... There is nothing as good as a true working-man, and again, The workers have enough talented men among them, They no longer need lawyers and merchants to represent them." This tactic succeeded. (Rumilly, Histoire de Montréal, vol. 3, Pp. 209, 298)

Helbronner questioned why the programme which Lépine's opponents proposed in the Commons had suddenly come to a standstill. This programme was reprinted in its columns on the eve of the elections. Reading the paper, one would believe that it was Mercier who changed colours, not La Presse. Helbronner's tactic succeeded. The English also opposed Mercier for his stand on the Riel case. The Conservative "labour candidate" Lépine won the election on Sept. 26, 1888 by a vote of 3829 to 3144. (Rumilly, Honoré Mercier et son temps, vol. 2, 1888-94. Montréal, Fides, Pp. 42-43)

Rumilly saw this victory as a result of Anglo-phone support because of Mercier's nationalistic agitation on the Riel case and on the Jesuits estate. Helbronner's support was vital.

One of the first injections of antisemitism in Quebec political campaigning occurred in this campaign, a racial or religiously bigotted slur not against the candidate Lépine but against his Jewish supporters.

L'Etandard called Lépine the candidate of socialist Jewry. Helbronner was indignant. He called it an insult not to him but to the workers. (Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, vol. 6, P. 48)

Tardivel warned, "His triumph is that of the true communism he professes." (La Vérité, Oct. 6, 1888; Harvey. "Les Chevaliers du travail, Les Etats-Unis et la société québécoise, 1882-1902," in his Aspects historique du mouvement ouvrier au Québec. Montreal, Editions du boréal express, 1973, Pp.65-66; Robert Rumilly. Histoire de la Province de Québec, vol. 6, P.49)

THE PARIS EXPOSITION

The government named Helbronner delegate to the Paris Exposition of 1889. (Henry James Morgan. Canadian Men and Women of the Times. Toronto. P.453)

This international exhibition was the occasion of important social surveys and cultural events all over the world. Although the section on social economy was added to the programme of the exposition at the last moment, two years before the event, an exhibit was nevertheless housed in but modest quarters in a corner of the Esplanade des Invalides, with little of external brilliancy but some marvellous charts and a cookery school to distract attention from the monotonous books and documents: the contents of the section were most impressive and educational. (P. VII)

Secretary of State J.A. Chapleau at Ottawa, wrote to the commissaire-général du Canada at Paris, "Mr. Helbronner had made a specialty of the studies of the relations between capital and labour, and is going to Paris to follow the work of the social economy section of the exposition. We have taken advantage of his visit to commission from him a report of the section to be submitted to the Secretary of State which we will submit later to Parliament as an annex to the report of the Labor Commission."

Fernand Harvey notes that during his European study Helbronner studied industrial practices similar to those in effect in Quebec, such as rules of work and punishments for the breaches of such regulations. He found, for instance, that old country regulations and fines were very numerous, but the "violations were more clearly specified than in Quebec." He had come up against these problems in the hearings of his Committee on Labor and Capital.

He found that in Canada the arbitrary and informal arrangements led to abuses of authority by the foremen. ("Technologie et organization du travail à la fin du 19^e siècle: le cas de Québec," paper read Sept. 30, 1977 before the Institut de l'histoire de l'Amérique française.)

Jules Helbronner submitted his Rapport sur la Section d'économie sociale de l'Exposition universelle de 1890 à Paris which was printed at the order of parliament by the Queen's Printer in 1890. (lxxxiv, 636 p.)

The volume is an important document in social history, of no little value in Canadian terms. It is a study of the documentation collected by the Exposition authorities "to show that an accord between capital and labor is neither utopic or impossible, and that the worker is more capable of creating solid institutions of insurance, cooperation and of education than is generally admitted; to bring together all the institutions created by leaders of industry on behalf of their workers, by the state or by cities, to ameliorate the physical and moral condition of citizens, to establish habits of thrift, to educate them to the advantages of mutuality, to stimulate their initiative and to facilitate their acquiring their own healthy living quarters," particularly as these have been developed in France, Belgium, Britain and Italy. Considerable and valuable materials were also received on various aspects of labor life from the United States, Japan, New South Wales, Germany, Russia, Rumania, New Zealand, Hungary, Austria, the Lowlands and Sweden.

As the Jewish reader notes the date of the survey, he cannot help but see that this is the eve, not only of the historic Jewish labor cooperative activity in Palestine, but also of the social self-help, mutual loan, sick benefit and other cooperative society activities in the Jewry in Canada, the United States and Russia.

Helbronner's report centred on these areas of social advancement thus elaborated which could be of some

interest to Canada and the subjects were arranged according to the interest they had from the Canadian point of view.

So, for example, particular emphasis was accorded to the retirement funds and to cooperative association. (P. X)

He drew attention to developments in apprentice education and recommended extending museums and vocational training for the Canadian -- and particularly Quebec -- countryside which would, among other benefits, intensify the utilization of Canadian fur and lumber resources.

Following a brief history of profit sharing, Heilbronner strongly advised Canadian industry to consider this mode of salary payment, avoid forfeiture and include the workers' right to participate in control of operations, of the examination of company accounts, "to transform a privilege into a right." He specifically commended the scheme followed by Angoulême Paper Cooperative as "the most practical and conforming most to the ideas now current in the Canadian industrial world." (P. XXX)

He noted that Canadians did not have many benefits from cooperative insurance as did Frenchmen, for example, although existing sociétés de secours mutuel were successful.

"In the light of the considerable advantages which the building societies brought to the working classes, it is astonishing that so few associations of this type exist in Canada.... Public laundries are unknown in Canada."

Fernand Harvey noted Helbronner's very active participation in the bourgeois Chambre de commerce, and remarked that what rendered it possible for a labor man to be active in the Chambre de commerce was the prevailing philosophy of the Chevaliers de travail. The ideology of the trades and labor councils would have made such collaboration impossible. (I. 67)

In 1893 the Chambre de Commerce du district de Montréal wrote of Helbronner. "There is no one who contributed more in recent years to develop interest in social studies in this country than M. Jules Helbronner, and he has been one of the most effective champions of the legitimate claims of the working class. He was the inspiration and the strategist of labor associations in their struggle against the city council of Montreal, and his word now carries authority on all municipal questions. His articles are notable for their practical sense, their lucidity and precision. We can add that he is endowed with energy and rare perseverance. Nor can one question the great dignity of his style. His sincerity is proven by defending labor or wealth without discrimination whenever either is treated unjustly." (Histoire du commerce canadien-français de Montréal, 1835-1893, un souvenir. Montreal, Sabiston Litho and Publishing Co., 1893; reissued, Montreal, Editions Elysées, 1975. P.118)

CIVIC AFFAIRS AND POLITICS

Towards the end of the century, while editor of La Presse, Helbronner sought to persuade Berthiaume to found a labor party on the political arena, to no avail.

At the beginning of the century, Helbronner, together with his associate A.-J. Rodier, worked energetically towards the founding of a political labor party, despite the reluctance of many trade syndicalists who wished to separate specific union issues from more general concerns relating to government and to the social organization of the nation.

Helbronner appealed in editorials in La Presse, which were astonishing and encouraging in their call to workers to elect men from their own ranks to the provincial legislature.

It was the first time that a Quebec newspaper called loudly for the right of the workers to be represented in the public arena. The guarantee of support by the liberal La Presse elicited much enthusiasm among the liberal labor leaders, who were not few in numbers. In 1904 the Labor Party was organized and put up two candidates in the provincial elections." (Alfred Charpentier in F. Harvey. Aspects historiques du mouvement ouvrier au Québec. P.150)

Labor strength was growing and the unions were articulating their interests: their opposition to the apprenticeship system, their demand for an 8-hour day, the hostility of the employers and the inadequate training of their own men. Labor Day observance in 1894 was an indication of their growing power and awareness.

The Liberals and the Conservatives were concerned; Israel Tarte was the motive force on the other side, especially after Rodier provoked a number of labor meetings across the province. The party plan was foiled. (Rumilly, P. 298)

At this time too, there occurred the "scandal" of Dr. P.S. Coté who gave instructions before his passing that his obsequies be of a secular nature. Mgr. Bruchési forbade the press to report it, but daring spirits joined to attend the obsequies, even though some marched on the sidewalk instead of following the cortège. Among those in attendance: Helbronner, his son Michel and his son-in-law Louvigny de Montigny. This information is recorded by A.-J. Lemieux, whose hatred of freemasonry led him to publish La Loge l'émancipation (Montreal, La Croix, 1910) where he also reproduces the Le Canada of Dec. 27, 1909 with its report of the rites. (Rumilly, vol. 15, P.122)

At the beginning of the century Helbronner was the spokesman for La Presse in controversies with Le Journal. He sought the protection of consumers' and workers' rights and welcomed Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, in spite of official warnings against the visit by Bishop Bruchési. (Pp.194-97) In spite of this august opposition twenty-five thousand Montrealers escorted Gompers from the station to Sohmer Park where A.-J. Rodier, Helbronner's labor editor, welcomed the American union leader and Helbronner praised him in the columns of La Presse. (P. 210)

The 1901 controversy with Le Journal involved the future of the port of Montreal. (Histoire de la province de Québec, by Robert Rumilly, vol. 10, Pp.49-53)

Consistent with his anticlericalism, Helbronner assisted the Manitoba movement against separate Catholic schools in 1905. (Vol. 12, Pp. 14-15) The following year he agitated for the nationalization of basic industries in the province. (Vol. 14, Pp. 112-13)

In a controversy about municipal politics Olivar Asselin attacked Helbronner and compared him with "your more illustrious compatriot Judas." For this Helbronner brought Asselin before the courts on libel charges.

In 1896 Laurier felt the need of a Montreal journal which would support him more consistently. On his initiative a group of his friends, including Horace Archambault, F.-L. Béique and C.-A. Geoffrion, purchased some of the presses of the troubled Le Monde and engaged Helbronner and Gonzalves Desaulniers (later to figure in the history of Canadian Jewry) to edit Le Soir for four months for the June elections. This was the third Liberal publication by that title. It appeared April - September, 1896. (Clouds in the Thirties, section 2)

The 1901 controversy with Le Journal involved the future of the port of Montreal. (Histoire de la province de Québec, by Robert Routhy, vol. 10, pp. 49-53)

The following year Helbronner championed the development of publicly owned hydroelectric resources, an emphasis that ran counter to the conservative agriculture-oriented intentions of such publicists as Tardivel.

Helbronner campaigned for lower prices for wood and coal for the poor, even if municipal subsidies should be needed to achieve this end. (Pp. 82-85, 172)

In the same spirit La Presse cooperated with George Albini Lacombe in the measure which eventually came to bear the name of the Lacombe Law, which protected workers against the garnisheeing of their wages. This newspaper, together with Mr. Lacombe, even encouraged a tramway strike which was looming at the time.

Rumilly also records the background of the municipal controversy which cost Helbronner his post as editor in chief. A movement to wrest municipal control from the sitting aldermen was aided by La Patrie, but was opposed by La Presse. Nevertheless, Helbronner secretly dug out information which became the basis of an accusation of illegal payment by the finance committee to the mayor to pay for his voyage to Europe. The court dismissed the municipal committee, and suddenly Montreal was without a Finance Committee in 1909. All local activities were frozen. Citizens begged the provincial government to save the city from this predicament by restoring the committee, but Henri Bourassa opposed this on principle. The condemned aldermen appealed the ruling and the situation was saved. (Vol. 14, Pp. 62-65)

The city sought to avenge itself on Helbronner by striking out at his in-law Louvigny de Montigny, editor of the Gazette municipale; only the intervention of powerful friends saved him.

La Presse owner Trefflé Berthiaume could not tolerate Helbronner playing the game of the competitor, and he was all but rudely dismissed. In 1908 he joined Olivar Asselin's Nationaliste for a time, and then the liberal La Patrie for several years.

The resignation from La Presse came very brusquely and caused considerable surprise in the profession. He implied that it came about as a result of his differences with the city's finance committee. (La Patrie, Nov. 30, 1908)

Helbronner's presence in La Patrie did not go unnoticed by the enemies of Jewry, although they were discreet indeed.

A court case centering on the right of a Christian landlord to refuse a Jewish tenant was the occasion. A Montreal priest testified that such a refusal was in accord with church teachings. La Patrie protested; this reactionary religious and nationalist discrimination was always odious.

Jules Romain, writing in Paul Tardivel's La Vérité (Feb. 26, 1910), noted the rumour that La Patrie "has a Jewish pen among its editors." The courageous priest had but repeated the proscriptions of the ancient church councils which had enacted that Jews must be isolated from Christians, and that Christians may not deal with Jews.

"In fact, Chinese are relegated to a special quarter in Montreal. It would be even more prudent and wise to confine the Jews in an area set aside for them." A study of Jewish history, wrote Jules Romain, would show that only the church had resolved the Jewish problem practically, justly and wisely. It would also show the profound folly of the moderns who emancipated the Jews in the name of false tolerance and an equally false Christian charity.

His master was Abbé Coubé, author of Ames juives, who sorely missed "the whip of Christ." How sad that it has not come down to the Catholics of today with the means to use it "against the Talmudic Jews."

How was this defender of faith and church to understand that his priestly mentor, Father Coubé - indeed, Chanoine S. Coubé -- and his pious Ames juives were strongly contrary to the teachings of the church?

Indeed, the novel was put on the Index of forbidden books by the cardinals of Rome.

As the Gazette de Liège noted, "It is an evangelical novel, a term and a category that conflict disagreeably. It is a genre where the sacred and the profane harmonize with happiness while offending the refinements of Christian taste."

The good chanoine submitted to the authorities, regretting that anything reprehensible in the eyes of the Pope may have slipped, contrary to his intentions, into his work which were intended to express the purest Catholic doctrine. (La Vérité, July 26, Aug. 9, 1913)

On his passing La Revue moderne, with which he was formally connected, 1919-21, paid tribute to Helbrunner, "the powerful and sincere journalist, the conscientious and fluent writer, but even more the man of sensibility and delicacy, the discreet and sure friend who brought into our intimacy a rare distinction, an open spirit and a sympathy attaching to all our actions, thus elevating friendship."

Then it revealed, "When I was considering a publishing project, I turned first to him calling for his long experience, his penetrating refinement, the unwavering rightness of his counsel. I then experienced the full goodness of the man. As I hesitated between my choice of projects, he laid out the Revue which I was to establish, discussing the name, the format; the platform for talent hitherto silent for lack of a hospitable medium where they can demonstrate their value. Thereafter he has studied our work, underlining its faults, applauding our success so lovingly and so justly!" (Jan. 15, 1922, P.9)

MUTUAL AID

Early in the century Helbronner became involved in a bitter controversy with former school inspector L.-G. Robillard, a conflict which assumed a Hamanic pattern. It became a struggle between two weeklies each of which at the time altered its editorial and political character to champion a social and even a religious philosophy. The two collided, involving powerful outside forces. In the battle both periodicals were destroyed.

The Sherbrooke Pionnier had a long record as a serious and successful Catholic federalist voice for the Eastern Townships, advocating tolerance, freedom, cooperation between Canadians of all faiths and origins, going back to pre-Confederation days. After the 1896 Conservative Party victory it fell on hard days. In 1901 important changes took place in the weekly.

The weekly was sold to a Montreal group in April, 1901. That year Omer Héroux was one of its contributors, not a good omen for its Jewish readers. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, nos. 2, 6-8; Clouds in the Thirties, sections 1-4)

A decade later Abbé Lionel Groulx unrepentently rejoiced as he recalled the renewal of Le Pionnier in 1901. (Une Croisade des adolescents. Quebec, Action sociale, 1912, Pp.9-12)

Even before it came into the possession of Louis-Gaspard Robillard, president of the Union franco-canadienne, in August, with J.-M.-A. Denault as director, Le Pionnier began to promote mutuality as a program for French Canadian advancement.

In 1893 Denault had been publisher of the short-lived La Croix de Montréal, a weekly dedicated to the interests of the Catholic religion. (G.A.Dumont, in Le Monde illustré, Dec. 10, 1898)

In agreement with Le Minerve that a federation of cooperative societies is desirable and that it would be best if one such solid and active society were to take the initiative, Tardivel's La Vérité pursued the proposal by suggesting on its own that the Union franco-canadienne was the appropriate institution to play this role.

La Bibliothèque canadienne française also made the same suggestion. (La Minerve, Sept. 13, 1897)

This campaign began with several general paragraphs in praise of the principle of self-help as a religious and patriotic virtue by Jerome-Adolphe Chicoyne. The Oeuvre patriotique and the pensions section of the Union franco-canadienne was already being promoted as early as February, June 9, 16 and 23, 1901

Union was established in 1894 "by Abbé Magloire Auclair of the St.-Jean-Baptiste Parish in Montreal and by a group of Christian philanthropists" and operated under the patronage of the Archbishop of Montreal, honorary chairman, and with the approbation of the archbishops and bishops of Canada and the blessing of the Apostolic Delegate in letters dated Jan. 17-21, 1901. (Le Pionnier, Dec. 22, 1901 and Feb. 26, 1902; Les Débats, Dec. 29, 1901)

Robillard, editor of the Pionnier, had been named president and manager of the Union on July 6, 1899, and had increased membership from 3000 to 15,000 by 1901 by means of a vigorous and possibly questionable sales campaign.

The relations between the Union and Le Pionnier became so close that they became virtually identical. J.-M. Amedée Denault, secretary-treasurer of the Union, was also secretary of the editorial department of the paper, and the paper was sent free to members of the Union. In August, L.-G. Robillard, president of the Union, became editor-proprietor of Le Pionnier.

The work of Le Pionnier in Montreal was not universally hailed, but Le Monde illustré and the Worcester, Mass., Opinion publique were generous in their comments on the occasion of the Bourassa appearance.

Without indicating a link with Le Monde illustré, which was later revealed, this illustrated weekly published a double-page spread of the portraits of the personnel of Le Pionnier. (Le Monde illustré, Oct. 26 and Nov. 23, 1901)

The pensions project which Robillard came to control was an element in a very important Quebec movement which students of Jewish history will be the first to appreciate. It paralleled the mutual aid, sick benefit and free loan societies which marked the Jewish communities of all lands of immigration, unregarded seeds of Jewish nationalism, just as the various mutual societies of French Canada fed nascent Quebec nationalism and even separatism.

The accountants later criticized the Union for "marching under the banner of Faith and Fatherland and seeing itself as if by magic the head of a phalanx of some 16,000 followers, cradled in a dream of a glorious future." But it was a meaningful phenomenon in the annals of Canadian, and other groups. (Le Pionnier, March 30, 1902)

Not for the first time did the church approve projects intended to assure the welfare, dignity and independence of its flock.

Even after the bankruptcy of Robillard's pension plan, the principle of mutuality in such assurance was maintained, if the plans were based on sound actuarial and administrative foundations. The Société St.-Jean Baptiste sponsored a public lecture on this theme by Prof. Stanislas Côté, lecturer in commerce in the Monument National. (La Presse, Feb. 24, 1902)

The editors of La Presse and A.-Chicoyne, owner of Le Pionnier who had leased the newspaper, also regretted that the developments in the case of the Union franco-canadienne had injured a good cause. (La Presse, Feb. 21, 22 and 24, 1902)

Seen in that context it is not surprising to see priests and others prominent in the cultural life of the province at stock-holders meetings. Among its directors were Me. Adjutor Rivard of Quebec, Abbé P.-V. Jutras of Tingwick. J.-M.-A. Denault, publisher was secretary-treasurer.

This confusion was extensive. Indeed Robillard was able to cite one of his enthusiastic annuity holders, "I know of only two truly durable things: the Catholic religion and the Pensions Section of the Union franco-canadienne." (Le Pionnier, Nov. 3, 1901; Les Débats, Feb. 9, 1902)

In point of precise fact, the men of the church had been careful to approve the Union franco-canadienne but not its Section des rentes viagères, its pension organization; indeed this approbation had come before there was any pension plan attached to the Union. (Les Débats, Dec. 29, 1901; Feb. 2, 1902)

In St. Benoît, as nearly everywhere else, the Union franco-canadienne had had a moderate membership over the years. But about the turn of the century a strenuous campaign by its pension plan attracted twice the number of members for the section that the parent union enjoyed. As elsewhere, the appeal was based on the approval of the high clergy and of the local curé and on its emphasis of Franch Canadian patriotism. (La Presse, Feb. 25, 1902)

When it was all over, and the pensions plan was visibly bankrupt, Curé Ferdinand Corbeil of St. Benoît denied his active participation in recruiting for the Union franco-canadienne. In his own words, "It is exaggerating to say that he had spoken strongly for the pension plan or had he recommended from the pulpit the excellence of the principles of mutuality at the base of the pension plan."

In his own words, he had only acted as follows,

"An agent whom I had not known came to see me on a Saturday or Sunday morning; I do not remember which. He asked me to announce that he was staying at such and such an address and was ready to give any desired information.

"I did not refuse him. He gave me some literature, and I announced, in effect, that I had not studied the advantages of this insurance plan, but that if anyone wanted information, the agent was prepared to give all the facts and, after receiving the information, you will make your own judgments.

"Other parish priests have spoken in the same vein." (La Presse, March 6, 1902)

Chanoine Télésphore Laflèche, bearer of a famed name in the Trois Rivières diocese, had described the Union as "eminently Catholic, blessed by the Pope and the bishops. They call firmly on their followers to join it." (La Presse, Feb. 20, 1902)

When Robillard was criticized by Les Débats, Chanoine Laflèche defended the Union against the Jews and other enemies of religion who joined to destroy this Catholic and French Canadian cause. (La Presse, Feb. 20, 1902)

Amedée Dénault used the columns of Le Pionnier where he was directeur de la rédaction to campaign against mutual benefit societies which were not French Canadian -- "so called neutral, or of language and inspiration alien to our own....There is a danger for us in this alienation of social allegiance, sanctioned by serious pecuniary concerns, all in favour of indifferent strangers, possibly and even probably enemies." He even opposed Catholic mutual societies affiliated with Irlando-Yankees centered in Toronto, Brantford or Chicago. (Aug. 18, 1901)

It is interesting to note that journalist W.L. Mackenzie King notes that in his series on foreigners in Toronto in the Mail and Empire. (Oct. 2, 1897) French Canadians are among these foreigners.

"A good many of the French are members of secret societies and are especially strong in the Foresters, having two loges (sic) of their own, Sacred Heart Lodge 201 and St. Joseph's Lodge."

Robillard himself on occasion distinguished between approbation for a moral and national social objective and approval or responsibility for financial transactions. The hierarchy moved to clarify this line of discrimination but three weeks after issued the letters of approval.

It was a generalized movement, not merely a case of one organization, that of the Union franco-canadienne and its Section des rentes viagères pension program.

Robillard had had occasion to sue Philomin Bonhomme of the Alliance nationale for libel. It was found guilty of maligning the Union franco-canadienne and forced to pay damages to both the Union and its president.

Robillard even had praise for the parallel Alliance nationale.

The fiscal legitimacy of these mutualities was by no means established. The political and even constitutional implications emerge more slowly.

The fact that Robillard's project ended so ignominiously in the mire, also will not surprise the reader of Jewish history who is familiar with the later history of the Jewish loan syndicates after the 1920's.

Practically by definition the actuarial practices of these socially-motivated projects in finance could not be as solid as those of classical banks and insurance companies; quite aside from personnel practices. They were natural cynosure for wicked racketeers eager to utilize the enthusiasm of the folk and of their leaders,

including nationalist churchmen. Certainly they would not hesitate to invoke antisemitism to protect their projects, neither in Quebec nor in France.

Readers of Canadian Jewish history, familiar with the wide-flung interests of the landsmanschaften, which included free loan, sickness benefit and visiting, cemetery plots and funeral arrangements and synagogues, will not be surprised to note that Robillard's Union had a dowry fund and a ladies' auxiliary. (Le Pionnier, July 7, 1901)

In Hamilton the Jewish National Workers Alliance also ran into trouble in 1911 for operating an insurance business without a charter. Their books were seized by the court but they escaped conviction. (S. Belkin. The Poale Zion Movement in Canada. Yiddish, 1955. Pp. 78-79)

A mutual pensions fund, possibly modelled on the unstable principles of the Union franco-canadienne, with even more generous promises, was operating quietly among the French Canadians in New England. (Fall River, Mass., L'Indépendant, cited in Les Débats, Feb. 23, 1902)

These were efforts to procure the benefits of financing for a population which did not have normal access to banks. It was group acting on the as-if principle, as if it was a nation, utilizing group loyalties and patriotism both to achieve economic objectives and to stimulate group loyalties further by organization on various planes of living.

This activity was not confined to racketeers. Such bodies as the St.-Jean Baptiste Society sponsored their own institutions. The caisses populaires are examples of such programs, created and developed in this social atmosphere and impelled by this motivation.

It was expected, to cite the auditors, that "any organization for the public good that puts itself under the auspices of the church and which claims an important place among the patriotic causes must conduct its affairs as Christians and as patriots. Otherwise, the moneys it receives is accepted under false pretences and inevitably brings misfortune on its recipients."

The conspiracy which later developed in time began early, or else it began in good faith. For as far back as Sept. 1897 the Pionnier of Sherbrooke and the Montreal La Minerve called for measures by the government to protect the interests of the Catholic and French Canadian mutual benefit groups, and to ensure the people's savings from shameless exploiters. The government should extend its tutelage to such institutions of good faith, and keep them out of the hands of those who would rob the people by a mutuality apparatus that would skin the suckers (the term the Minerve used, shameless, éhonté, was the very word La Presse came to apply to the friends of the 1897 newspapers). In particular the newspapers called for a statistical bureau and an inspector of mutuality groups. This would ensure the success of serious mutuality, the depository of thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars of the people's savings. It would drive out the small racketeering, so-called mutual groups set up without serious plans to enrich some tricksters without conscience who feed on the good faith of the people and compete with solid mutual institutions.

The Quebec Congress of Catholic Mutuality supported this demand, and La Presse too wrote that unless justice removes its blindfold and looks into the accounts of such societies, the movement for mutuality which flourishes all over the world for the benefit of the small man will be killed in Quebec, as were the cooperative building societies here twenty years ago.

La Patrie also called on the legislators to act against the cynical, daring racketeers whose disloyal competition is destructive of confidence in the solid Catholic and French Canadian cooperatives.

There are documents to prove the dishonesty of these irresponsible quacks, but there are also compromising documents which cast a shadow on legitimate mutuality groups -- documents which can deceive those incapable of distinguishing the valid from the invalid.

THE DEBATE WITH LES DEBATS

The 1897 newspaper detailed a case -- of the recent past, not as prophecy! -- of a Montreal cooperative society whose secretary fled to New York with the mutual-ity's moneys in his pockets; the officers were not in control of the institution; they had overspent from savings for expenses; had not attended meetings and knew nothing of the manipulations. Yet it enjoyed the membership of priests, professional men. (La Minerve, Sept. 20, 1897)

conflicting. In particular, their original become first address... The debate nature of the conflict can be stated... and could have been stated in the first formulation... position: it was Quebec heritage vs the Jew in conflict... about the course of action followed by... whether... was founded in 1897 by... of the cooperative family into which the daughter... The paper was sold, but as... remained editor for a time. When he learned that... connected with L.-J. Tarte he resigned... It was purchased by Ed. Charlier on May 1st 1901... He continued to edit it throughout his story career... it was closed by the Alphonse Brochu... March 1907... in its controversy with Les Debats, the Pioneer... characterized it as "a small local sheet of Jewish inspiration" and "the organ of Jewry."... would sooner be the editor of the paper of a mutual... society than help among the Jews. I would rather encourage workers to save their pennies rather than have them throw them into the lottery etc. Jan. 19, 1902... Early in 1901 the Debate began giving its attention to the Old Age Pension Plan of the Union Franco-Canadienne. It began by reprinting fully the promotion literature issued by the society and the defense it was making for the criticism already being levied against it. (Feb. 10 and 17, 1901)

THE DEBATE WITH LES DEBATS

The polemic between Helbronner and L.-G. Robillard, editor-proprietor of Le Pionnier, is of considerable interest in the annals of Quebec journalism for a variety of reasons.

It engaged two very capable journalists, especially if we abstract a moral judgment on motives and character. From the simple point of view of press, both antagonists were capable writers from whose articles there emerge very clear personal lineaments.

In particular, their origins become clear and conflicting.

The harsh nature of the conflict can be stated, and could have been stated in the first formulation of positions; it was Quebec heritage vs the Jew, in conflict about the course of action followed by Robillard.

Les Débats was founded in 1899 by Louvigny de Montigny of the conservative family into which the daughter of Helbronner married. The paper was sold, but de Montigny remained editor for a time. When he learned that it was connected with L.-J. Tarte he resigned.

It was purchased by Ed. Charlier on May 12, 1901. He continued to edit it throughout its stormy career, until it was closed by the Archbishop Bruchési. (Les Débats, March 22, 1903)

In its controversy with Les Débats, the Pionnier characterized it as "a small local sheet of Jewish inspiration" and "The organ of Jewry." Robillard noted, "As for me, I would sooner be the editor of the paper of a mutual aid society than belch among the Jews; I would rather encourage workers to save their pennies rather than have them throw them into the lottery pit." (Jan. 19, 1902)

Early in 1901 the Débats began giving its attention to the Old Age Pension Plan of the Union franco-canadienne. It began by reprinting fully the promotion literature issued by the society, and the defense it was making for the criticism already being levied against it. (Feb. 10 and 17, 1901)

It informed its readers that the pension plan made a considerable deposit with the province, an unprecedented act not at all required by the law. (March 24, 1901) But on June 23, Jules Helbronner under a scarcely concealed nom de plume launched an attack that was to prove fatal.

"Julien Verronneau" wrote, "Let us Drive the Money Changers from the Temple" in Les Débats. After describing in the most reverent terms the deserved respect which French Canadians have for their clergy for the historic services they have rendered to the citizenry and to the Quebec society, for their learning and for their devotion, he continues,

"But some have attempted to cash in on this authority and this influence which are the priests. By roundabout ways they have obtained the patronage of archbishops and of bishops for financial operations and for life insurance companies. In baptising their enterprise with Catholic names they covered their suspect merchandise with respected flags. Parasites living off the man with small savings have attached the names of our Canadian bishop to their flashy advertisements, reckless of compromising the high dignitaries of our Catholic Church. They have assembled the benedictions and the good wishes sent by the secretaries of archbishoprics to the directors of these very human and fragile enterprises into pamphlets which **they distributed** to the Catholics of this province. These promoters of shady businesses have abused the good faith of our clergy to implicate it in their projects which have no solid or stable foundation."

The Semaine religieuse of Feb. 9 had formally warned that "to seek out such approbations, to imply that bishops are in the slightest degree responsible for the financial operations of this or that company is an abuse of confidence, and to distort the meaning of the episcopal word.

"Nevertheless, one of the companies continues to flood the countryside with prospectuses that imply the patronage of bishops."

Helbronner's article, as well as another "Le bon gros chien et le sale petit roquet", provoked Robillard so that he instituted civil and criminal proceedings against Helbronner and the publisher Ed. Charlier on charges of libel. (Les Débats, Aug. 4, 1901, and Feb. 23, 1902; Le Pionnier, Dec. 26, 1901)

Les Débats showed a sales campaign was being conducted in French Canada, extending to Manitoba, in which fraudulent promises were made to sell annuities; this with the aid of Catholic clergymen. He called on the authorities -- not least at Ottawa -- to act in the public interest. (Nov. 3, 1901)

By offering priests \$1 for each application they helped secure, he had found many victims -- until Helbronner turned his analytical gifts upon the Union's Section des Rentes Viagères. (Jewish Times, Jan. 3, 31 and Feb. 28, 1902, quoted in B. Figler. Sam Jacobs, Member of Parliament, 1871-1938. Montreal, 1970. Pp.6-11)

Anyone who has examined Helbronner's Report to the government on the Paris Exposition of 1899 will recognize at once the disparity in sheer actuarial knowledge between the amateur and probably dishonest Robillard and the scholarly and thorough Helbronner. Nor would one expect the informed Jewish journalist to be silent in the face of so bold an imposition upon public trust which was bound to injure a large number of credulous working people.

Aside from the matter of clerical involvement, the issue in the intense debate seems to have been a technical actuarial question. Apparently it was essentially whether an insurance scheme can count on lapsed policies, with payments thus lost to these policyholders, remaining to benefit the remaining members; and also whether it is proper to pay out, or to be prepared to pay out, to aging policyholders the premiums received from more recently enlisted members in the expectation that in their turn they will receive their pension from members who will enroll in due time -- all this on a projected plan of geometric growth.

Helbronner's proficiency in actuarial questions has been demonstrated in his report on Savings of the Working Classes which constituted Appendix C of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations between Capital and Labor. (Pp. 20-31)

In this document he criticized very incisively the accident insurance schemes of the Allan Line and the Grand Trunk Railway as well as current private insurance policies.

After a very careful study of Canadian insurance and annuity practices, he found a great need for government intervention and participation in these "advanced forms of savings."

Taking the 38-year-old French pattern as a model, he recommended that the state provide old age annuities, absorbing the expenses of management. To this end he proposed very detailed tables, regulations and schemes for the assurance of large numbers of workers at a reasonable cost. He foresaw an important auxiliary role for mutual benefit societies operating under strict control by the government.

Only an inquiry into the history of Canadian thinking on the various actuarial concepts and practices in Canada will justify a conclusion on Helbronner's contribution with this document, but it is clear that he has there affirmed a number of valuable social ideas regarding worker security, geriatric and family problems, the rights of wives, the morals of frugality, employer and state responsibility for the resolution of these matters which a hundred years later engage society so much more deeply. Throughout his calculations and fiscal analyses there glows a moral fire of altruism which lights up his sentences:

"Unfortunately for the workmen, they meet on the road which they traverse twice a day more taverns than savings banks, and it is easier for them to spend five cents for a glass of beer or of ginger ale than to walk a mile to find a savings bank."

He had studied the Canadian statistics and concluded that a governmental life insurance scheme for work-accidents was feasible. This report recommended a state pensions system based on voluntary contributions by workers and employers, a plan inspired by the French Caisse nationale des retraites pour la vieillesse.

Robillard's supporters should have been aware of Helbronner's friendly competence, for he had written in La Presse (Jan. 9, 1893) that "we have in Montreal important mutual aid and insurance associations perfectly sound which offer absolute security to their members; but extensive as they may be they are far from playing the important roles they would have if the workers would think of the future and welfare of their families."

Now he accused Robillard of offering annuities at a rate which the Union could never redeem. "A rare financial journalist," the Jewish Times called him.

The Union claimed that it was not the first pension plan based on such actuarial principles. Others, too, in Canada as in France, were calculating their premiums and payments on the same basis. He prophesied that the respected Alliance nationale would be Helbronner's next victim. At the moment he is hesitating because a noted judge was at its head.

"These legal actions will show the false means, the hollowness and the nature of Helbronner's efforts Judaically to destroy a Catholic institution, to compromise French Canadian interests and to sully honorable reputations. They will establish that in this country, where so many Jews have sneaked in, one of them cannot occupy himself with such a task even to assuage his semitic hatred of the goy." (Le Pionnier, Feb. 9, 1902)

In the very midst of the trial Henri Bourassa accepted the invitation of Robillard to speak at the 35th anniversary of Le Pionnier on Oct. 20, 1901 at the Monument National. He had just returned from a three-months visit to England and his topic was Great Britain and Canada (Sept. 29; Oct. 27 and Nov. 3, 1901)

After the wrongdoings were publicly exposed, Benjamin Fortier was able to chide Bourassa,

"There are people with whom one does not ally, even in a good cause. In sitting next to Robillard on the stage of the Monument national Mr. Bourassa has shown a lack of tact and experience. He lent his name to people not worthy of our confidence, and he has compromised his position as leader of his party.

"A man with legitimate ambitions to lead a great country on the road to freedom and independence does not keep such company. Mr. Bourassa will have to do much to make up for this error if he proposes to retain the sympathies of our young, the hope of the nation." (Les Débats, Feb. 23, 1902)

Early in the trial G.-A. Nantel, counsel for Robillard, attempted to introduce the Jewish element: he sought to identify Helbronner as the official representative ("le représentant attitré") of the school of the French Jews (?) in Montreal. Magistrate Lafontaine intervened by declaring that this had no bearing on the case. (Le Journal, quoted in Le Pionnier, Sept. 15, 1901)

Later Les Débats revealed that it was aware that Robillard was not the author of all the anti-Jewish articles in Le Pionnier which he inspired and for which he was responsible.

"The flunkies of this robber of the people's savings have no excuse and have to bear the burden of their error. We have known for some time who wrote the ignominious articles signed Jean Canada, Un Canayen, Un Vieux français, Cartouche, etc. We know who held the pen which edited the articles on Jewry signed boldly by Robillard." (Feb. 23, 1902)

It is strange that a journal which had not paid any particular attention to the existence of Jews in history or to the Jewish presence in Canada suddenly found place in its columns, otherwise unchanged in content, for the Jewish fact.

However, Robillard did not confine himself to the defence of these principles for long.

Following a pattern long familiar to readers of history, Robillard sought refuge from justice by attacking Jews in the name of church and nation. Robillard sought to divert his readers and trusting investors by invective against the Jews, to obscure his dishonesty in the murky depths of race hatred. He assumed the role of an aggressive defender of the Church and soon came to be speaking as a habitual Jew-baiter, repeating the very words of Tardivel and of other importers of the French ideology. But in fact, Robillard in the past seems to have been nothing of the type, nor even to have been interested in Jews -- until the moment when antisemitism became useful.

In this sense he was like Adrien Arcand three decades later. His earlier publications were as free of Jew-baiting as the first six months of the Goglu. With Arcand the occasion was the school question. With Robillard it was Helbronner and his threat to Robillard's insurance racket.

Fortunately again as in the case of Arcand, the cosmopolites threatened Robillard's life. But a faithful reader heard of the plot in a fashionable hotel. The next victim was to be Recorder Testard de Montigny, contributor to Le Pionnier and father-in-law to Helbronner's daughter. (Le Pionnier, Sept. 22, 1901)

Edouard Drumont, antisemitic agitator, "valiant deputy from Alsace," director of La Libre parole, expressed his confidence that Le Pionnier will not belie his name. (June 23, 1901)

of himself... of himself...

...of himself... of himself... of himself...

...of himself... of himself... of himself...

...of himself... of himself... of himself...

...of himself... of himself... of himself...

ANTI-COSMOPOLITES

As in so many situations in a century of history, Robillard at first chose not to accept the label of anti-semitic, as Tardivel, Groulx and Sadat did not, and as Adrien Arcand and Hitler and Edouard Drumont did.

Subterfuges and semantic devices are necessary in such situations. Tardivel directed his at the Kabbalistic and Talmudic Jew (not at the Bible Jew); Mgr. Paquet and Chanoine Groulx fell back upon "legitimate defence"; rejectionist Arabs discovered that Zionism is racism; La Vérité came close to exactitude, "We have no hate for the Jews; it is Jewry that we fight," (Nov. 15, 1913); an Egyptian journalist put it in the purest clarity, "We are not against Semites; we are against you."

Remarkably, Robillard anticipated the grand master of European antisemitism, Joseph Stalin by half a century.

The magic word he chose, cosmopolitan; the image that would later arouse murderous hate among "know nothing" peasants in the Ukraine, in Poland and in Quebec against the city man from a foreign land.

He wasn't quite original.

Four years earlier La Patrie had also maligned Helbronner not by referring to him by name but describing him as a Frenchman member of La Presse staff. ("Le Procès Grenier", Oct. 14, 1897).

The Liberal Party, it had written, "does not need the mob to gain power or to govern, and they will not be intimidated by the attacks of the cosmopolites who fill the offices and the editorial positions of La Presse." (cited in Le Pionnier, Aug. 18, 1901)

Helbronner instituted proceedings against the newspaper and La Patrie published a retraction. (Le Pionnier: Aug. 18, Sept. 15 and 29, 1901.)

A series of articles against cosmopolites began to appear, all antagonistic to an enemy who does not emerge clearly, but who includes strangers, Frenchmen, journalists; Helbronner fits some but not all the subjects of the attack.

In all innocence this journalistic and organizing manipulator began a long series, signed by Un Canayen, on Cosmopolitanism describing the damage done to Canadian writers by "the army of exotic persons who seize all that is worthwhile in literature and journalism, and deprive the indigenous writers of the means of producing work which might be useful to their fellow-citizens." These newcomers are even more arrogant than the English. The cosmopolites will use the French Canadian to climb to a pinnacle, and then will readily rob him of his bread.

This can easily be confirmed by any of those who have sheltered and welcomed these adventurers from overseas.

The work of the natives may lack polish and literary finish and it is considered worthless by the cosmopolitan brethren. These local writers may be idiots, crétins and ignorant, but no one can deny their quality of heart, their hospitality, their generosity and their Christian charity. "Our people are of relatively good morals and our people have not yet been corrupted by contact with the cosmopolites", but this will change and "will end, as in most such cases, with scandals in which the reputations of our daughters will be gravely compromised, with histories which were quite foreign to us before the coming of these gentlemen who know only limitless pleasure."

Canayen challenged the cosmopolites to produce their own marriage certificates sworn to by parish priests. (Sept. 15, 1901)

The attack on Frenchmen in Montreal, (Sept. 22, 1901), which described some of them (nameless) as being ready to assassinate people for twenty-nine pieces of gold, angered La Presse, particularly as it came but a week after the assassination of President McKinley in Chicago on Sept. 3 by one Leon Czoglosz.

La Presse protested on behalf of French Canadian journalism which was dragged in the mud in being used as a vehicle for such attacks. "Such writings threaten public peace, and promote hatred among the citizenry. They are particularly dangerous and damnable on the morrow of the abominable crime which has struck the entire world. Justice cannot remain indifferent to such aggression!" (Sept. 23, 1901)

The charges and the very vocabulary of these divisive "accusations" are very carefully chosen to serve against any Frenchman in sight and, mutatis mutandis, against the Jews. They copy the wording of Tardivel Sr. and anticipate Tardivel Jr.; the Association canadienne de la jeunesse catholique and Action sociale:

"These cosmopolites are neither French, nor English, nor Belgian, nor German. They are the product of the sewers that ancient Europe has thrown far from its shores, and that we should treat with the same disdain."

Helbronner was specifically named the emissary of cosmopolitanism. His pretended attachment to France was only a cover for men of turpitude, for parasites, subverters of public order, army deserters, crooks. Armed

with parchments and often with escutcheons of good families they have ruined, insinuating with their fine French language, they reach our hearts with their appeal to patriotism, morality, idealist philosophy.

In journalism they are to be recognized by their punctillious erudition, alert and facile pen always for sale, their calumny, their flattery of religion, their contempt for anything Canadian, their readiness to crush young local talent.

Helbronner has become their champion with truly Judaic obstinacy. (Le Pionnier, Sept. 29, 1901)

The ninth in the series on cosmopolitanism was more sinister. Going beyond "cases" of fraudulent bankers and ambitious seekers of rich widows, the contribution of Nov. 3, 1901 spoke of these faceless villains as child murderers. Though there was no mention of Jews in this, the cosmopolites are no longer Frenchmen but the scum of various European lands working against the Christian spirit in Canada. "The European governments are aware of the dangers that will befall them if they harbour them in their capital cities. They have taken the necessary steps to protect their decent citizens against the coming of this scum of all countries."

Robillard was using the language of Goldwin Smith and was anticipating such disseminators of the awesome libel of ritual murder as Tardivel Jr. and of Abbé Huot.

Much of his xenophobic agitation was directed at Frenchmen in Quebec, very cleverly attacking the person of Helbronner as a man of French origin; but he was simultaneously feeding on the complex hostility of French Canadians towards all strangers and most particularly of those who came from a country which was the seat of new ideas threatening some of the bases of Quebec living.

Later, when it was all over, and Le Pionnier was suicidally destroyed in the process, Les Débats remembered,

"Among the unfortunate that worked for this scoundrel Robillard there were unfortunately several Frenchmen who did not blush to slander the French colony here, to attack some of their compatriots whose life of work and honour might have served as models for them.

"If they were hungry, they could have swept streets, unloaded ships, cleared away the snows or done a hundred honest tasks rather than join a Robillard to sully other Frenchmen." (Feb. 23, 1902)

An innocent bystander Firmin Picard, editor of the Fraserville St. Laurent, who felt injured by the buckshot attack on journalists from France, appealed to Robillard and was graciously granted a certificate of exemption, was declared an honorary Canadian and was certified a gentleman by Robillard after he agreed to condemn Helbronner. Jewish humorous folklore knows of the girl with a certificate from a rabbi that she is an innocent virgin.

Following the article on "Frenchmen and Canadians" in the Pionnier of August 18 Helbronner accused Robillard of criminal libel. (Pionnier, Sept. 8, 1901)

ACTUARIAN DISPUTE

Helbronner kept on insisting that the promises of the Union's Section des rentes viagères were not soundly based. As he wrote in the Débats on Dec. 8 and 22, 1901,

"For some weeks a number of our readers have been asking us for information on the value of the Old Age Pensions Section of the Union franco-canadienne. We have hesitated somewhat, but in the face of their insistence we could no longer delay our reply, or rather our study.

An innocent bystander... of the... who felt injured by the... attacked on... appealed to... and was... granted a... of... was declared an... and was... by... also he agreed to... "Jewish... knows of... from a... that she is an... innocent victim... following the... and... in the... accused... of criminal... (Pionnier, Sept. 8, 1901)

"We trust that the Pensions Section will soon show the public its calculations and those of the clever financiers on whom its system and security are based -- all this in the interests of its already excellent enrollment campaign.

"The publication of these reports are the more desirable since quite distinguished mathematicians state that the founders of the Pensions Section have erred in their figures and could not possibly promise the expenditure of an annual pension of \$200 without committing grave errors.

"This error seems all the more real since an extended study of considerable documentation in my hands indicates that it is impossible to reach any conclusion that is not distant from that indicated by the Union."

Robillard assured his readers that his calculations "have been approved even flatteringly by competent authorities, among them laymen, who are specialists in this field." He promised to publish this in an early issue of L'Economiste, a promise he was more than slow to keep. (Les Débats, Dec. 15, 1901)

Helbronner kept up the pressure. Disregarding the diversionary antisemitic campaign filling the pages of Le Pionnier, he repeatedly asked for the names of these authorities and their figures.

"The newspaper of the Pension Section suffers from a mutism which is difficult to explain.

"The founders of the Section have solved a social problem which the greatest statesmen, the most illustrious financiers have consecrated their lives to solve. Bismarck sought a solution in his state socialism which has frightened economists. Chamberlain made his pension plan for workers his party platform. France, Belgium and Italy have been studying legislative measures to this end for ten years without advancing one step.

"The statesmen and legislators of these countries need only come to Canada and study the Old Age Pension Plan to find a shelter for their aged workers, to provide dowries for the newly married, and to turn all unfortunates into landed gentry. For if the system of the Pension Plan is valid, the state need only impose a tax of a penny a day, and all who survive for twenty years will receive a capital grant of \$93 and an annual pension of at least \$200. Married couples will receive \$186 and an annual pension of \$400.

"It is phenomenal, simply phenomenal, if true."
(Les Débats, Jan. 5, 1902)

Failing receipt of information publicly promised by the Union, Helbronner published his own analysis of the scheme in an article in Les Débats "Respectfully Dedicated to the Religious and Civil Authorities" showing at great length that at best, the annual pension could possibly reach, not \$200 but 38 cents; if there were no administrative expenses! (Jan. 12, 1902)

Robillard came up with his expert, Napoléon de Guise, one of the official representatives of the Union. He gave the Union some support; but this did not reach anywhere the \$200 figure. It became instead "a fine income....which will benefit those who risked a penny a day for twenty years in a large measure."

Even this moderate analysis was subjected to Helbronner's demolishing examination. (Les Débats, Jan. 19 and 26, 1902) De Guise claimed that the principles of his calculations were those of L'Avenir of Paris, and were based on a geometric growth in membership.

Helbronner pointed out a projected membership in France in 1929 of 262,000,000. The Canadian plan envisaged 10,220,000 members in 1920, though de Guise foresaw only 4,600,000 members!

The analyst from Les Débats showed that the insurance and savings principle underlying the Avenir differ radically from those of the Union's pension scheme. (Feb. 9, 1902)

La Presse agreed with Les Débats that the figures of M. de Guise have no value since they are unintelligible. (cited in Les Débats, Jan. 26, 1902)

Curiously, in Paris as in Montreal, the Jew-baiters nailed their flags to the masts of questionable savings and annuity institutions. In the French case it was L'Avenir; in Quebec it was Robillard's Union franco-canadienne.

Le Pionnier was delighted to learn at this time that in Paris Comité national anti-juif was formed by Edouard Drumont, Léon Daudet and others. "Will the nationalists of New France not find it necessary to form their National anti-Jewish committee soon, as did the nationalists of Old France?" (Nov. 10 and 17, 1901)

Le Pionnier promised that French Canada would follow the Paris pattern of the Comité national anti-juif. The call,

"If you wish to save your country begin by taking it back from the Jews, begin by freeing it from the domination of those who, though they may not be personally responsible, have not the ideas, the traditions, the point of view, the form of spirit, or the national instinct of the Frenchmen of France. Begin by removing the high direction of your affairs from those who, perhaps, not consciously and without preconceived evil designs, are always governing against the true interests of France." (Nov. 10, 1901)

Robillard formally closed his series on cosmopolitanism on Dec. 8, 1901, ostensibly when he learned by chance that some Frenchmen felt injured by the series, contrary to his intentions.

"JEWRY, THAT IS THE ENEMY" -- AND OTHER FRAUDS

With the same issue he began an antisemitic series, "Jewry, that is the Enemy."

We need to note the date; December 1901, before Action sociale, before the Association canadienne de la jeunesse catholique, before Tardivel Jr., before Mgr. Paquet, before Abbé Huot, before the Semaine religieuse de Québec, before the anti-Jewish Henri Bourassa and André Laurendeau and Adrien Arcand. His only Canadian predecessor and contemporary, Ontario's Goldwin Smith.

He altered his campaign and instead of defending his pension plan on actuarial grounds, instead of arguing that the attacks on him and on the venture that he was leading derived from personal reasons, instead of propagating antisemitism in the interest of the general public good -- Robillard directed his defense of his pension plan into an antisemitic direction. Antisemitism was the reply to his critics; it was the response to "the liars, calumniators and other detractors" of his Union franco-canadienne.

The key is that cosmopolites and Jewry attack mutual institutions because they see the money of the Goy go to pockets other than their own. Thence their rage. Jewry is jealous of the success of the Canadian Union. In France Jewry has similarly attacked the Prévoyants de l'Avenir, associated with Drumont and his Libre parole. (Le Pionnier, Dec. 22, 1901)

"Jewry, that is the Enemy."

A series under that title appeared over a nom de plume, and Robillard denied in court that he had written them. (Les Débats, Feb. 9 and 23, 1902) The editors of Les Débats agreed by implication that they were indeed not by Robillard.

Robillard explained that the legal case in which he was involved stemmed basically from the nature of Judaism, the enemy.

Always protesting that he had no intention of inciting race war he said it was simply a case of preventing other, most terrible consequences for our young country.

"By Judaism we understand the totality of all that tends to seize our trade, our development and our money, leaving us the freedom of carriers of water and of hewers of wood. Jewry is the name given in the old world to this exotic rabble, this flight of unhealthy locusts, swift as misfortune over a prosperous country, who shear it clean as an egg.

"It is an unassimilable element, never absorbed; on the contrary, it absorbs all it touches, even as it remains unnoticed, slowly but fatally. It is a social ill which is sometimes -- not to say always -- mortal for the body it ulcerates and gnaws until it disappears completely, skin, flesh, nerves and bones.

"Judaism is the enemy of every nation that welcomes it, particularly of young countries that need manpower, and find instead these strange workers who seldom work. Jewry is in fact the totality of these parasites who touch no tool and are satisfied to exploit those who work. Past master in barter, in shady business, they do not hesitate to enter legitimate trade, wholesale, banking. They disdain work, leaving that burden to the mob, to the despised goyim to all who do not understand that 'business is money' and we might add, 'the labor of others.'

"Everywhere, in the New World as well as in the Old World, in Spain, Germany, Austria, Russia, France, Algiers and in the U.S., Jewry has applied its deleterious practices, always draining the economic resources of its adopted lands.

"If ancient, established civilizations have found it necessary to take even draconian measures, what terrible dangers threaten new growing countries?"

"Besides Jews, the cosmopolites par excellence, this Jewry includes Arabs, Syrians, all types of Orientals, lamentable and corrosive flotsam.

"In Algiers Jewry has devoured its competing cosmopolites, the Maltese, the Levantines, etc. It reigns despotically, with an arrogance characteristic of races previously oppressed. It has become a peril for the native races, the Arabs, as well as for the French: a peril so serious as to call for the most immediate and radical solutions.

"In Canada which interests us, the children of the soil, most, Jewry is being implanted in all its forms, most of them most repugnant. It has already monopolized all trade which does not demand unpleasant work.

"My dear Canadian compatriots, if you want this country made fertile by the blood of your ancestors to remain your own, believe me you have not a minute to lose. You must preserve your welcome only for healthy immigration, even while we recognize the obligation of human solidarity and even as we recognize our duty towards the good foreign elements whom we call to contribute to our task. We must not forget to oppose dangerous and unhealthy elements from establishing themselves on our soil and depriving you and your children of your patrimony. We shall not rest before this plague of cosmopolitanism, and in particular of Jewry shall be cauterized."

A week later, on Dec. 15, 1901, he promised a thorough study of Jewish history and literature which "would keep away the terrible Moor who threatens our beloved country."

The third of his concoctions is a version of the story of Jews in France, in terms of usury, expulsion and Jewish acquisition of a third of the total fortune of the country. (Dec. 29, 1901)

Robillard's installment of Jan. 5, 1912 in his series of "Jewry, That is the Enemy" is remarkable in that he followed the early French precursors of the Protocols. His discovery of the week, a chief rabbi Sir John Readclif who issued all the orders to Jewry to destroy Christian civilization.

On Jan. 12, 1901 his attack on the Jews, the fifth in his series, centred on the Talmud, a very difficult work which antisemites had been attacking for centuries.

The sixth in his series "Jewry, That is the Enemy", an unspeakably violent attack on Helbronner's person, was presented to the reader as "particularly important since some daily newspapers, acting under a pernicious influence which we shall unmask at the proper time, have not failed to copy the unhealthy and unjust lucubrations of a small weekly which is warring on Le Pionnier."

This article clearly reveals whence came the blows aimed at Le Pionnier and at the Union franco-canadienne and with what animus they are directed.

For the segment of Feb. 9, 1902 Robillard showed himself an expert on the Zohar and the Talmud, though he admitted modestly that his conclusions are not his own but those of Abbé Rohling and de Lamarque. Robillard probably did not really know how discredited and ludicrous these sources were.

Robillard sensed that he was striking evocative notes. There were Québécois, and other Canadians, who were pleased to have their own anti-Jewish sentiments thus expressed.

Raoul Renault cried "Bravo" as he recalled that he attempted to sound the same alarm years earlier in Semaine politique and in La Croix de Montréal against cosmopolitan Jewry and the principal Jews and Judaisers of Europe, their gigantic thieveries, their scandalous fortunes amassed with impunity by fraud, usury, blackmail and rotten operations. The public ought to be informed about their threats to the major governments of Europe and against Catholics in general.

"Regular exposés such as Robillard's can arouse the people here to combat and erase the development of the Jewish race in our beautiful country which has hitherto resisted the defilement which the old lands regularly cast upon us."

In this war the journalist offers to enlist. "Thanks to the progress of the antisemitic science, I shall fire murderous shots from the impregnable bastion of Le Pionnier against Jewish and Judaising debauchery." (Dec. 15, 1901)

Remarkably, at least in retrospect, these articles elicited congratulations from Léon Trepanier, president of the Société St.-Jean Baptiste, who in time became a devoted friend of the Jewish community.

These congratulations came at the conclusion of his article, "In the Pawnshop" which he contributed to Le Pionnier (Jan. 12, 1902),

He spent several hours in Craig St. pawnshops, noting in particular the remarkable variety and disarray of the objects on display. The shelf of poignards reminded him that a thief selling magnificent watches to the Jew can choose between the revolvers and daggers to protect him against the malevolent policeman. Shoes, metalwork, musical instruments; the whole speaks loudly of the Jewish Shylock.

"A fine disorder is the result of Jewish art. The arrangement of these objects often offers strange and sad anomalies. So I notice in the shop of a Mr. Lazarus a statuette of St. Joseph flanked by a voluptuous Venus wearing a pearl chaplet. In another store a medal from a congregation at St. Sauveur of Quebec near a triangular inscription from the masonic fraternity, and another medal from the St. Pierre temperance society. Is it not painful for a good and loyal Canadian to see the sacred signs of religion and of fatherland so profaned? Is it possible that, for a miserable coin, one would bring the symbols of honesty and of courage to a Jew? Having fought in the Crimea, having faced the enemy at the gates of Paris, in Egypt -- are these not proofs of honour and of loyalty? I know such veterans who would sooner lose a fortune than throw away these marks of bravery and of patriotism that shine on their chest. Why display our name on a medal of honour in the window of a vile second hand dealer? I would, if space permitted, say much of these fathers and mothers who do not blush to pawn their marriage rings on the pretext that they need the money."

He concluded with support for Robillard's swindle-scheme, l'Union franco-canadienne. In the meantime Trepanier recorded his approval of Robillard's long series of intellectual sewage, "La Juiverie, voilà l'ennemi."

Trepanier wrote in the same vein on "L'Immigration juive" in Action sociale. (May 1, 1908)

Years later Trepanier changed his views as he became the friend of H.M. Caiserman and Louis Rosenberg and a frequent visitor to the Jewish Public Library.

At the same time, equally surprisingly, Le Monde illustré also found it appropriate to devote two of its large pages to a montage of photographs of the quite large team of Le Pionnier contributors and editors.

Those who follow the spreading of the dangerous antisemitic toxin will be alarmed to see how readily it reaches from the rabid propagandists to the respectable, moderate, objective society represented by Le Monde illustré.

It is very ominous that the Pionnier was followed in its xenophobic program by a weekly that should have been the last to go along that path. Le Monde illustré was a pioneer in Quebec periodicals featuring pictorial representatives of a general educational and entertaining character. It was distinctly not a journal of opinion.

Yet in the fall of 1901 it commenced a series of articles signed Jean Canada repeating the anti-cosmopolitan hate articles then running in Le Pionnier.

Le Monde illustré, with Amédée Denault (nom de plume, Jules St.-Elme) as director, began a series by Jean Canada on Dec. 14, 1901 on the theme "Canada for Canadians." The first article sounded the alarm for "one gentleman was appropriating the cake you had kneaded, shaped and are about to bake; he will swallow it gluttonously. We must

give a hard kick in his behind to this thriving man who would consume what is yours before your very eyes; this hideous parasite, this unscrupulous cosmopolite, who cannot or will not work, and who prefers to grab the profit of our industry." (P. 522)

The following week, on Dec. 21, the readers were treated to a long elaboration of a bad cosmopolite. "Whatever their position on the social scale, they are all dangerous -- whether as shameless, repugnant, starveling peddlers who sell fragments of the true Cross (a priest in one of our Canadian parishes has told of two Jewish peddlers who made \$300 in a week in this trade; we can see how the thirty pieces of silver has grown over the years), selling from his own store tools stolen from a poor worker, and later, become a big businessman, paying the mother of a family 90 cents for making a dozen pairs of pants." (P.538)

By the third instalment the antisemitism becomes more open. "The little dirty Kike" had become a prominent Israelite, ascending the ladder of Jacob. To prevent Jews from pursuing their nefarious action, Jean Canada recommends legislation to hamper them in all areas of society and a complete boycott of any trade with them. (Jan. 4, 1902, Pp. 602-3)

The instalment of Jan. 18 came closer to his aim. Addressing himself to the subject of aliens who operate not on the pawnbroker arena but among "the literary tramps," Jean Canada said, "they had recently ganged up on the Union franco-canadienne and its pensions plan, whose success apparently annoys the eunuchs. They accuse this society, founded by a priest, of enjoying the encouragement of our priests, our economists, our French Canadian pioneers.

"Our bishops, whose advice everybody is proud to follow, accord their precious sympathy to a cause which only preaches frugality and savings.

"Our most responsible Canadian newspapers, give a best informed on economic and commercial matters, approve who this ends and its methods. this who cannot of will not work, and who projects to give the

"The guardians, set up by the government of the province to scrutinize the proper conduct of mutual aid societies, officially affirm the proper functioning of the administration. were created to a long elaboration of they are

"Only the cosmopolites oppose this. But it is enough. all peddlers who sell themselves of the time close to peddlers one of our Canadian peddlers

"These are the people who on every occasion insinuate, slander, calumniate, endlessly harrass, like this odious flies, anything that removes the poor man's coin from later, become a big one family 30 coins for making a dollar family

"Because, they will tell you, only we the cosmopolitans, who have just come here and will leave tomorrow, have the intelligence, the perspicacity to reveal the more truely horrible intentions of the organizers of these late institutions. from pushing their hands into our pockets

"It would be useless in this state of affairs, and in the mental state that is implied, to dwell on this if 1900 it were not an indication of the sectarian hate which animates the clan against everything which is ours only, Addressing himself to the subjects of the literary temple, not on the parchment skins but showing the literary temple, the balance

"It is time, you can be sure, to take all measures that circumstances call for to resist the invading flood of Jews and cosmopolites which will drown us all if we do not found oppose them with our own dam, Canada for the Canadians. found

"Just as any man worthy of his name will not suffer a stranger to interfere in his family affairs under any pretext, so he cannot tolerate this intruder to install himself as censor in what does not concern him. Let us kick out this Egyptian plague, and no longer tolerate the peddlers, the second-hand dealers, the exploiters of the poor and even less those who pose as the educators of the people and moralists for the masses. Let us pull their teeth before they bite us." gress, our economic, our French Canadian pioneers

This issue of Le Monde illustré carried one of the few antisemitic cartoons that appeared in Quebec before Arcand, three decades later. (P.645)

Jean Canada was encouraged (Jan. 25, 1902, P.650) by the supportive mail he said he received mainly from the countryside in his struggle against "travelling cosmopolitanism, the peddlers, and in favour of French Canadian trade. These letters came from compatriots who have long witnessed this Jewish plague but had not yet acted to prevent it. Some are priests aware of the justice of our analysis who give us further facts to corroborate our earlier information; country merchants who applaud our crusade against the dangerous infidels.

"Under no condition should we soften before their made-to-order jeremiads; they are past masters in this deceiving art. By persisting you will touch them in the only sensitive spot, their pocket book."

By Feb. 1, 1902 Jean Canada was touting the series "Jewry, that is the Enemy" in Le Pionnier. He was surprised that the lowly pickers of rags and cigar butts had found respectable coreligionists to act for them before the courts. A week ago the director of Le Pionnier had been arrested for prejudice caused to their respectable commerce.

Jean Canada had it that behind the court action against Robillard was the Jewish attempt to destroy the great Quebec hope, the Union franco-canadienne, the very fact of the accumulated savings of the workers. This fund of such capital, saved penny by penny and placed at compound interest for twenty years, could produce millions. These millions will not leave the banks where they are deposited and will in turn produce great revenue, will constitute a powerful lever of liberation for the humble and the helpless. This is what will clash with our Jewish financial institutions which are based on the oppression of the little man; on their monopoly of his meagre savings. (P.666)

But several days before Robillard's discomfiture and flight Jean Canada was anticipating the victory of the antisemites before the court. The literate cosmopolitans being condemned, he promised, he would direct his attacks on the established and literate Jews of the community. (Le Monde illustré, Feb. 8, 1902, P.682)

In the meantime he referred at length to Drumont's classic reference to Canada, in the final chapter of La Dernière bataille.

In this one of his nightmares the French anti-semite had envisioned the corruption by Jews of pristine Canada which had become the refuge of Frenchmen fleeing the Jews of France. This anti-Jewish book had been highly recommended in Canada by the Semaine religieuse de Québec a decade earlier for its devotion, verve and talent of observation. "He is rendering real service and will properly be considered as one of the pioneers of social reform. He has laid bare the plague of the Jewish evil, and has displayed it orbi et urbi. We call on our readers to peruse it." (Clouds in the Thirties, section 3, P.75)

Even as these diatribes against the Jews were appearing Helbronner kept on with his clarifications about the Union franco-canadienne. On Dec. 15, 1901 he dealt with the matter of clerical approbation of the Union and its pension scheme. This was a complex and vague subject.

We have seen that the churchmen readily blessed any movement tending to strengthen the general populace, and the principle of mutual assistance was deserving of moral support. Clearly, also, such approbation was general in character and at no time implied approval of specific financial arrangements and dealings.

It might be said that the 1898 approval of the men of the hierarchy applied to the Union, and not necessarily to its pensions plan.

The churchmen had themselves become troubled by the situation, quite apart, and some time before, Helbronner's revelation. On February 9, 1901 the Semaine religieuse de Montréal, the episcopate, had been asked about the Union's pension plan. Its reply: "It is not for bishops to pronounce on institutions as business organizations. Even when they honour them with their patronage, when they approve and recommend them, they do not thereby become the guardians of the moneys these institutions administer nor of the security of the operations they manage. The purely administrative and material side is left to the judgment of each interested party and is subject to the control of the directors and the advisers appointed by the institution. It is not proper to hold the bishops responsible for evils that may arise.

To use such approbations in order to imply that the bishops are to the slightest degree responsible for the financial actions of any such society is an abuse of confidence, it is to distort the sense and meaning of the episcopal word. (Les Débats, Dec. 29, 1901)

The Union did not pretend to more. It stated formally, "The episcopate could not and would not take the least responsibility for the material administration like ours, since it is well known that our Ordinary is opposed to any of his priests becoming active in the administrative committee of any social welfare organization." (Les Débats, Dec. 15, 1901)

Robillard did not pretend to more, formally. The question was: did he imply that the churchmen approved his specific plan and his transactions? There was more than slight reason to believe that he did and that he mobilized parish priests to advance his sales program. Certainly his promotion material for his pensions plan emphasized the formal support given by the churchmen.

On Dec. 15 and 22, 1901 Helbronner turned on this aspect of the discussion in Les Débats, citing one of the policyholders of the Union, "Your statistics cannot be correct; the Pensions Section is solid, for it has been approved by the clergy." His response was to quote in extenso the February, 1900 statement in the Semaine religieuse.

"The Pensions Section of the Union have the imperious duty not to compromise the high personages of the archbishops and bishops of French Canada whose moral approval is the reason for its marvellous recruiting record, even though this approval never extended to the Pensions Plan."

But as La Presse pointed out the substantial question was the actuarial one. Was the Union promising an annual pension of \$200? Would the Union be able to meet this obligation?

Robillard issued lengthy statements more carefully worded, citing its by-law in which these promises were vaguer.

La Presse reprinted these disavowals (Jan. 25 and Feb. 4, 1901), but it insisted that the prospectus of the Union quoted in his own defence "contains more than a promise. It includes an actual affirmation, for it says that, according to the calculations of the Pensions Section and 'capable financiers', the pension should reach an average of \$200 per annum.

"And it is not with by-laws that one sells pension plans but with prospectuses and with the propaganda carried out by agents based on such prospectuses.

"What are these calculations and who are these capable financiers who have confirmed them -- these are the only questions that concern the public who are being solicited to invest their monies.

"As for the calculations of M. de Guise they have no value, for they are incomprehensible."

J.-B. Desbois, one of the founders of the Union's pension plan, came to the defence of the Union and its actuarial authority, Napoléon De Guise, began his defence by half-revealing the identity of Julien Verronneau.

"The person hiding behind the pseudonym of Verronneau is now known to everybody; it is the 'secret of polichinelle' told on every street corner.

"It was revealed not long ago under oath in a court of justice in this country that this person is Jewish by religion.

"It is also known that the Sunday sheet, which is seldom mentioned by name out of respect to the readers, attacks our national institutions, that it seeks by every possible untoward means to stain the reputation of our magistrates and our clergy -- so that it is often forced to retract its own words." (Le Pionnier, Jan. 28, 1902)

Verronneau raised the matter of the improper loan to Denault in the Débats of Jan. 26, 1902 and again, under his own name in La Presse of Feb. 8.

When the bubble burst the accountants of the Union, Kent and Couture reported that the principle underlying the payments and the promises of the organization were based on "shifting grounds," dangerous for an association based on public confidence, a confidence that can disappear momentarily on the least alarm.

Its system was based on the assumption that for every member who continued his contributions for twenty years, 200 would discontinue their payments after a longer or shorter period; and that the payments made by these dropouts would suffice to give the surviving members annual pensions of at least \$200.

The administration was scandalous. Its vast quarters, luxuriously furnished to rival the most solid bank in the province. A newspaper to publish its declarations has been a fiscal abyss. Its investments included loans to its own organization committee, and its administrative expenses have been excessive. Robillard had been manager and president, had performed the functions of the directors and of the secretary-treasurer. Robillard, Denault and one director constituted the quorum of a directors' meeting. Some of the directors quietly resigned in protest. Accounting records were practically nonexistent, making it impossible for the comptables, and even for government later, to report. The secretary-treasurer was given a loan on the security of property in Valleyfield to the full value of the property.

Detailed reports had been submitted to J.-A. Mercier, provincial inspector of mutual aid societies, who had only flattering and encouraging comments to make. (Le Pionnier, March 30, 1902)

During its first year of operations it secured some 11,000 members, 8,000 of whom paid the annual fee of \$3.00

In May, 1901 the government inspector Mercier assured his provincial secretary that the Union pension scheme was based on sound insurance principles: I cannot see it fail to prosper if they continue their current rate of enrollment or even if they only maintain their present membership or part of this membership. (La Presse, Feb. 21, 1902)

Robillard wrote in his Le Pionnier of Feb. 9, raising the religious issue. Helbronner, "the enemy man" as the directors called him, was editor in chief of La Presse where "he makes rain and he makes fine weather;" he tricks the compatriots and the coreligionists of Berthiaume, proprietor, and continues a program of devastation which is anti-Canadian and anti-Catholic. La Presse and its editor in chief, the Jew Jules Helbronner, are prejudiced against us.

"How long will the French Canadians of the Province of Quebec let themselves be led by a man of another nationality, who shares none of our aspirations? How long will we be duped by this Jules Helbronner who seeks to kill a Catholic and national institution under the false pretext of serving the public interest?"

"We ask, by virtue of what principle has this Jules Helbronner made himself the mandated spokesman of all French Canadians of the Province of Quebec, of my compatriots who are not his?"

Robillard said that after the hiatus on Le Soir, Helbronner returned to La Presse "as opinionated as when he left it, more influential than ever, editor in chief with exclusive control of social, economic and political questions, as the present censor-director, C.-R. Dansereau admits. Can you easily see the economic and social interests of French and Catholic Canada, in the most widely circulated organ of our nationality, in the hands of a Jew? This anomaly has occurred in La Presse, thanks to the ability of Helbronner, and on behalf of his ideas.

"In this condition our thoughts sadly turn to the instructions given by the French Jew Cremieux, president of the Alliance israelite universelle and formerly minister of France, to his fellow Jews: to consider gold as nothing, honours as nothing, but the press as everything; thus making it clear to them that by controlling the press they will secure the rest easily.

"Helbronner has sworn to destroy Le Pionnier and the Union franco-canadienne, to crush, under their ruins, a Catholic French Canadian who made himself the vigorous and invulnerable champion of his nationality, his faith and his compatriots: myself. He makes little secret of this his ferocious dream, that his friends are talking about it freely.

"His persecution of myself, of the Union franco-canadienne and of Le Pionnier have no other reason than race hatred and personal dislike. If it were not so, would he reserve all his Judaic lightning bolts only for the Union franco-canadienne when he well knows that another mutual association applies and develops an identical pension system; I refer to the Caisse nationale d'économie de Montréal.

"No, the Judaic campaign by Helbronner is tainted with prejudice and malice. It is the vengeance of a Jew against Christians. He must have their heads."

Robillard concluded with a reference to the municipal elections of Feb. 1, 1902.

"The voters in one of the most enlightened wards of Montreal have rejected a candidate for aldermanic position simply because he was suspected of being Jewish." He was speaking of notary Joseph Levy candidate in East Ward no. 2 against incumbent J. Lamarche. Levy, who was not Jewish, secured 258 votes. It was not enough by four votes; his antagonist received 262 votes. (Le Pionnier, Feb. 2, 1902)

"I ask whether Catholic French Canadians of Montreal, of the Province of Quebec and of all French America will long have the authentic Israelite who pontificates in La Presse and Les Débats deceive them." (Le Pionnier, Feb. 9, 1902)

Helbronner replied the next day on the columns of La Presse (Feb. 10, 1902) over his signature,

"I had never sworn to destroy Le Pionnier or the Union franco-canadienne.

"Robillard's vigour in defending his nationality, his faith and compatriots -- which have never been attacked -- is the result of the benefits which he draws from the Union and of his share of the dollars paid by its members as cost of administration.

"He is in the mutuality business as others are in the wood, metal business or in trade. He lives from the organization. This is not sufficient for him to pose as a defender of his faith, his country or his fellow-citizens.

"I have a right to speak of mutuality and to express ideas quite contrary to his own. I have served on the boards of savings societies. I am serving as president and as treasurer, respectively, of two such societies at this time. I serve without remuneration as do the officers of truly mutual societies. We deserve no

credit for this; we are simply doing our duty to our own people, and pay with a little work for the honour which our fellow-members render us in placing us for a time at their head. That is the only mutuality I have ever understood or practiced.

"So I have always and shall ever oppose all so-called mutual groups whose founders and officers receive salaries all the fatter for speaking so loudly of religion and nationality.

"In the present debate there is no question of faith or patriotism; simply a question of the calculations at the base of Mr. Robillard's promises.

"Where are catholicism, the Canadian nationality or French Canadians attacked by the simple asking for figures? Or by stating that the Denault mortgage is illegal and dangerous?

"The only element in danger is the service of Mr. Robillard. I am doing my duties to La Presse, to inform the public on questions of interest.

"Finally I have the satisfaction of acknowledging, however feebly, part of the gratitude I owe to the land of my adoption."

The editors of Le Pionnier must have had adequate reason to publish a very strong article by Patriote on Feb. 2, 1902, sharply disagreeing with the campaign of hatred in its columns. The editors pretended to respect France, yet they criticized the Old Régime and the present government, and found fault with Frenchmen in Canada.

The newspaper preached patriotism, but it attacked English speaking Canadians, "condemn their fanaticism, their spirit of domination, imperialism. What does a Canadian need to do to be a patriot?

"And what is the objective? To be only a French Canadian, to become a group apart and work for the independence of the province of Quebec? To form a purely French Canadian state?

"Whatever the case may be, everybody is as uncomfortable as I am with the ardour, the violence, the sharpness in the writing of the young patriots."

STANISLAS BOBILLIARD

As the Jewish community noted at the time, "With its hysterical virulence, vulgarity and lack of decency and common sense he might easily have become a Canadian Drumont. These were, in fact, actual reproductions of Drumont's essay attacks on the Jews in Abbildard's publications." (Jewish Times)

The community recognized that Canadian law and Canadian courts are a legitimate instrument for the protection of the country's Jewish residents.

Following the publication of these articles against the Jews, unrepentant Abbildard was arrested on a bench warrant from the Court of the King's Bench on Jan. 26, 1902 on the complaint of law student Abraham H. Vineberg on a charge of criminal and malicious libel arising from these articles. He was allowed \$500 on bail.

Years later we find A.H. Vineberg's professional card in the early issues of the Jewish Daily Eagle, Oct. 2, 1900 where he described himself as "advocate, barrister and solicitor, of 151 St. James St. W. Speaks Yiddish."

Vineberg's complaint was heard by Judge Choquet. Mr. Beauchamp pleaded that Abbildard had only reprinted the views of Radcliffe without comment, and that these dealt with nations in general, not only Jewish. Furthermore, the purport of the article in question was historical and factual.

The prosecution asserted that Abbildard's article exposed Jews to ridicule and tended to incite violence against them. (La Presse, Feb. 7, 1902)

credit for this, as we are doing our duty to our
country and we know that a little work for the honor
of the country is in itself a reward. We are doing
a little of our duty and we are doing it with
a little of our money.

It is a very small thing, but it is a thing
which has a great value. It is a thing which
shows that we are doing our duty and we are
doing it with a little of our money.

In the present state of affairs there is no question
of doing anything else. We are doing our duty
and we are doing it with a little of our money.

There are many things which we can do. We can
do many things which will help us to do our
duty and we are doing it with a little of our
money.

The only thing which we can do is to do our
duty and we are doing it with a little of our
money.

Finally, I have the pleasure of acknowledging
the receipt of your letter and I am sure that
it will be of great value to me.

The report of the committee is very interesting
and it shows that we are doing our duty and
we are doing it with a little of our money.

It is a very interesting report and it shows
that we are doing our duty and we are doing
it with a little of our money.

and what is the result? It is only a French
Canadian, to become a good citizen and to
be a part of the country and to be a part
of the French Canadian state.

Whatever the case may be, everybody is as
sensible as I am with the violence,
the sharpness of the young patriots."

THE BUBBLE BURSTS

As the Jewish community noted at the time, "With its hysterical virulence, vulgarity and lack of decency and common sense he might easily have become a Canadian Drumont. There were, in fact, actual reproductions of Drumont's crazy attacks on the Jews in Robillard's publications." (Jewish Times)

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The prosecution asserted that Robillard's article exposed Jews to ridicule and tended to incite violence against them. (La Presse, Feb. 7, 1902)

As Robillard saw it, "It is the Jewish conspiracy in action, the war between kikes and Christians, the conflict between the Gospels and the Talmud taking place in our midst." (Le Pionnier, Feb. 2, 1902)

When the libel case initiated by "this young Jew upset by this prose" came before the court "Robillard did not even display the courage of his opinion. Instead of saying bravely, 'I have edited or inspired these attacks and I am proud of it,' Robillard defended himself through his lawyer. He claimed that by Jewry he meant only usurers and those who imitate them." (Les Débats, Feb. 9, 1902)

S.W. Jacobs, M.P., later recalled that Robillard had pleaded that he had criticized no individual person, and that therefore no individual had a case against him. But Judge Choquette decided that any member of the maligned group could prosecute, because each of them had been placed in a position of hatred and contempt. The judgment is of interest because of the Ortenberg case which appeared in the Quebec courts a decade later. ("How the Jewish Times was Started," in Jewish Times. Dec. 13, 1912)

The Robillard front was beginning to crumble. He was forced to withdraw some of his more daring promises, such as the \$200 pension.

"This is in effect a recognition of the principles which led the critics of the pension scheme to protest against the flood of promises and the meaningless calculations given such wide currency," Helbronner wrote in the Débats on Feb. 9, "But it is also an admission that these critics are entitled to official clarification of other questions of general interest that they have raised.

"It is a recognition that the members are entitled to reimbursement now of the amounts they have been misled into paying by virtue of the prospectuses and the recruiters of the Pensions Section.

"It is recognition of their right to reimbursement because they have been misled in regard to the legal situation of the Section which has no civil existence as a separate entity; they have been deceived in regard to episcopal authorities who have absolutely nothing to do with this exploitation; they have been deceived by references to so-called lay experts and their part in this exploitation; they have been deceived by alleged similarities of the Union pension plan with the French Société des Prévoyants de l'avenir, similarities which do not exist; they have been deceived by alleged similarities of the plan with regular insurance companies; they have been deceived by the moralizing character of the Union, claiming to be a plan of lifetime benefits whereas it is more nearly a death premium; they have been deceived in regard to the propriety of the investments made by its administrators.

"All this becomes the responsibility of the laymen who have contributed, perhaps unwittingly, but fatally to bringing people's savings to a proposal reminiscent of the incredible offer of 520% made to American suckers by the famous little Mr. Miller of Brooklyn."

By now the conspiracy was coming to an end. Robillard's case against Charlier and Helbronner arising from the June 23, 1901 article in Les Débats was to come up before Judge Ulrich Lafontaine.

Indeed the Pionnier "reported" "A sensational arrest. M. Jules Helbronner, editor in chief of La Presse and collaborator with Les Débats, and Edouard Charlier, publisher of Les Débats, arrested on charges of libel. M. Robillard had complained of the article in the Débats, issued

But in fact, as Helbronner stated in La Presse, there had been no arrest, no release and no bail. Simply an officer of the court had left for me a summons calling me to appear in police court on Jan. 29, since a complaint had been lodged before Justice of the Peace Ulrich Lafontaine that Helbronner had illegally and maliciously published a libel against Robillard in Les Débats, of June 23, 1901." (La Presse, Jan. 27, 1902) over the signature of Jules Helbronner. Posters to this effect had been posted all over the city.

The case ended on Feb. 11, 1902. La Presse headlined the story on the front page: "A Complete Fiasco," as Judge Choquet dismissed the complaint against Helbronner.

"Helbronner produced evidence that he was not the author of the article, 'Drive the Money Changers from the Temple' signed Julien Verronneau. The Judge ordered the president of the Union franco-canadienne to produce the books, accounts and documents to establish the regularity and the legality of the constitution of the society and of its administrative actions."

The judge heard only two witnesses from the prosecution when he dismissed the case against Helbronner without calling even one for the defence, saying there was not even a shadow of a case.

It was Me. Gonzalve Desaulniers (years later we were to hear from him from the bench in a case against Adrien Arcand) who called for the production of all the accounts of the Union franco-canadienne. The judge agreed in the name of public interest even as he postponed hearings for several days. (La Presse, Feb. 12 and Les Débats, Feb. 16, 1902)

Upon the word of Charlier that Helbronner had no part in the offending article, the judge dismissed the charges against the La Presse editor.

Helbronner clarified in the same issue of La Presse that the nom de plume was used by Charlier freely as a matter of convenience; that Helbronner had indeed published a number of contributions over that name, but not all appearing thus were his; he volunteered to identify the article he had written anonymously in exchange for the identity of the writer in Le Pionnier who had authored the series on cosmopolites over the signature of Un Canayen; he had, indeed, conducted the campaign against the Union Pension Plan, this as a service to the legitimate, excellent, honourable savings societies which function in the province.

When asked why he conducted this campaign in Les Débats instead of La Presse, he said, "Fair play, as the English have it. Le Pionnier is a weekly, appearing Sunday. It would have been unjust and disloyal to have it fight a daily newspaper, especially La Presse. It was only when the officers of the pension plan refused to bring forth the figures, and after I had produced mine in Les Débats, and the question had become of public interest, that La Presse began to take part in the discussion.

As Helbronner saw it, the case had wide ramifications. Even while prosecuting Helbronner for allegedly writing the article which appeared on June 23, he was also prosecuting another journalist on the same accusation.

"Robillard had the simple need for a diversion, a pressure on public opinion to dissipate the impression that my figures had made. He needed a chance to raise racial and religious prejudice against me and against the position I hold in La Presse. He used my arrest to write columns of infamy against me and to put me in an odious position before all comers.

"I owe it to myself and to my own to bring this literature and these placards before the courts. But I will wait until the present cases have run their course. When the president of the Union franco-canadienne will have stood trial, at the next assizes, in March, I will demand an accounting from him for my arrest and for his prose.

"In regard to this prose, we journalists can rejoice that this man is not one of our own."

Mgr. Bruchési formally withdrew his moral patronage from the Union and demanded the removal of the names of bishops from all prospectuses and advertisements. (Les Débats, Feb. 16, 1902)

In the meanwhile Robillard fled Montreal on Feb. 12. (La Presse, Feb. 18, 1902)

Robillard's assets were seized on a petition by the solicitor for the paper company. These included his possessions at his home, at Le Pionnier and at Le Monde illustré. The powers of the trustee were delegated to the accountants. (La Presse, Feb. 21, 1902)

The Pionnier reported on the 16th that Robillard "was suffering from nervous prostration due to the stress to which he had been exposed for some time. On medical advice he is to have absolute rest for a prolonged period. He may stay with members of the family in the U.S., in a more moderate climate and under the care of a specialist." (cited in La Presse, Feb. 17, 1902)

Soon the accountants sent in to examine the situation found that no proper records had been kept; that no bonds had been posted by those entrusted with the moneys. (Les Débats, March 30, 1902)

The accountants engaged by the remaining directors to examine the records did not find outright theft or embezzlement, "but the money has disappeared; administration gone to the devil of this powerful organization, which is the cause of all the evil. At the present moment \$70,000 is due from the members. If the members paid even half of these dues the society would still be in good shape. But since they are not paying, the liabilities are greater than the assets." (La Presse, March 20, 1902)

The directors of the Union formally dissociated themselves from Robillard's campaign against Jewry, cosmopolitanism, and the person of Jules Helbronner. By resolution of Feb. 17, 1902 they sought to draw a line between the Union and Le Pionnier which had come under Robillard's influence. (La Presse, Feb. 19, 1902)

An indignant Sherbrooke citizen said ironically, "Robillard was more Jewish than the Jews whom he persecuted so intensely." (La Presse, Feb. 25, 1902)

Robillard's case against Charlier ended formally when the plaintiff failed to appear on Feb. 21 before Judge Choquet to face Charlier and his attorney Me. Gonzalves Deslauriers. Charlier was, of course, immediately freed.

Judge Choquet discontinued the examination of the Union's ledgers in view of the government having announced its own investigation of the affair. (La Presse, Feb. 21, 1902)

Robillard fled. As Les Débats wrote on Feb. 23, "It is the first time an accuser flees the accused.... The man who had attacked foreigners and cosmopolites fled his own country and has become an alien and a cosmopolite in the United States."

"Like his Parisian prototype, Robillard would be beneath the notice of respectable journalism, were it not that his cheap little paper circulates among a class of French Canadians whose sources of information are limited, and who are liable to be misled by such writings as his into forming false notions and incited to breaches of the law. This gives him a power for evil which should not be permitted in a mixed community. He should be made to understand that his articles are an open, flagrant violation of the law, and that statutory provision is made for the punishment of just such offences against public order. They are more criminal than the offence for which he is now under arrest and much more deserving of punishment, because they incite the rabble to violence and bring inoffensive citizens into contempt, injure them in public estimation and stir up evil passions in the community." (Jewish Times, Jan. 3, 1902)

After the Kent and Turcotte report was issued (La Presse, March 24, 1902) this newspaper spoke of it as "crushing for the Union franco-canadienne and its administrators. It surpasses anything that could have been imagined, even what the clowning of the proceedings of this fantastic mutualist group might have led us to expect.

"And this enormous con game, this shameless swindle has been daringly presented as an eminently religious and patriotic cause!

"The accounting has dealt only on the condition of the balance. There isn't any.

"The assets consist of \$5,431 (including the Denault mortgage of \$2,000). The liabilities of \$4,741; the balance of \$690.

"That is the maximum that might remain of the \$53,944 torn from the hands of workers by religious and patriotic humbug. Now we know the extent of the disaster. It is complete.

"Now it remains to establish the responsibilities of those who caused it. Only an inquiry will establish the measure of their guilt. This inquiry is necessary for the protection of honest mutual societies. It is urgent.

"Le Journal this morning published a long explanation of Mr. Kent's report, signed by the Directors of the Union franco-canadienne.

"Why this anonymous and collective signature instead of their names? Who are now the directors of the Union franco-canadienne? Who are these directors who are attacking everybody: the ministers at Quebec, the inspectors of the mutual societies, the auditors, the press and that man, the enemy who prevented Mr. Robillard and his allies further to skim off the savings of the people?

"We need an inquiry to explain how, as Mr. Kent states, three men -- the president, the secretary-treasurer and an unknown person -- were able to spend legally, as the note of the directors tells us, \$50,000 of the funds of the society." (La Presse, March 25, 1902)

Some 20,000 confused, fleeced victims remained behind, and there were red faces among the distinguished in the province.

Among the lesser of these was the curé of Ste. Anne de la Parade. He had just denounced "the Jews and other enemies of the church" for acting against Robillard. As the Jewish Times wrote (Feb. 28),

"He could hardly have known that those who had taken action against a disturber of the public peace were not enemies of the church, and that his alleged religion had nothing to do with the matter. He was proceeded against as a slanderer and criminal libeller and, being also a swindler and a thief, he absconded in terror of the laws he had violated and the principles he had outraged. Canon Laflèche is now a wiser and, no doubt, a sadder man, for he will find some difficulty in consoling his parishoners for the money they have lost by confiding in his endorsation of Robillard." (Also, "M. Le chanoine Téléspore Laflèche, curé de Ste. Anne de la Parade" in Les Débats, Feb. 23, 1902)

His bail was declared forfeit on March 4. (La Presse, March 5, 1902)

On Feb. 16, 1902 Le Pionnier announced that "Judgment on the nature of the campaign that Le Pionnier had launched under the title 'Jewry, that is the Enemy!' having been postponed to the assizes, we consider it necessary to interrupt this series of articles out of respect to the courts."

The same day the paper and Amédée Denault published their apology for polemical articles "which, to our great regret, rendered discussion too acrimonious and personal. God forefend any thought of continuing or renewing it."

The paper sought to dissociate from the Union franco-canadienne.

"In Le Pionnier we do become ardent, and one or another of our collaborators may be led at times to extreme limits of permitted expression; may indeed exceed such limits some time. This becomes inappropriate license.

"But there is a point where the newspaper neither can nor wishes to assume responsibility for excesses thus committed. That is the case where social respect and Christian charity are denied to any person.

"On this point we consider it a duty to admit that the limits of sane and legitimate criticism may have been passed in several articles where the person of Jules Helbronner, editor in chief of La Presse have been affected.

"In all loyalty we hasten to dissociate ourselves Le Pionnier from moral responsibility for these excesses and to offer the appropriate apologies."

The directors of the Union franco-canadienne met on the 18th of March and formally severed and denied their relationship with Robillard and with Le Pionnier. They repudiated the campaigns in their weekly against cosmopolitanism and against Jewry and against the person of Helbronner. (La Presse, Feb. 19, 1902.)

In an editorial on the Feast of Esther, the Canadian Jewish Times likened Haman to the popular anti-semitic erstwhile editor, who only recently had been honoured at "a grand banquet at which many men of light and leaders of his compatriots praised and lauded him for his public spirit and philanthropy." The Jewish weekly concluded, "Mr. Helbronner was the Mordecai who refused to do him honor. Now Robillard is a fugitive from justice; his journal, the Pioneer, is dead, and all his former friends have abandoned him."

After the issue of Feb. 16 the name of Robillard as editor-proprietor was dropped from the masthead. Only the name of Amédée Denault as director remained.

The cleaning up after the hasty departure of Robillard was no simple matter. For one thing he had not been the only miscreant. As Ed. Charlier wrote,

"In spite of his campaign of hatred and low calumny which Denault had been conducting against us in his Le Pionnier and his Monde illustré, we have not written one line against this sad man who gravitated in the orbit of his patron Robillard, who has cast bile on everyone, including his own master.

"Denault is much guiltier than his patron. He is educated, is intelligent and experienced in journalism, terms we cannot apply to Robillard. He has slithered his way into clerical circles to exploit them. With his hypocritical and ingratiating manner, with his pleasant but false mien he sought out the infamous letters of approval from the bishops. He has made the bishops pay dearly for some services he may have rendered them in the past.

"He approved, encouraged and conducted this gross, inhuman campaign against the foreigners who live in Montreal." (Feb. 23, 1902 of Les Débats)

Another guilty party needed mention. Jews will understand.

"The time has come to ask about the role of our Montreal Canadian press while Robillard's Pionnier rudely attacked members of the French colony in our city.

"Not a single sheet -- neither La Presse, nor La Patrie nor the Journal, raised their voice to silence this sad person who poured insult every week against Frenchmen. We waited in vain for a word, a single word, to stop this miserable man from his campaign of lies and hatred.

"The constant labor of our honest French merchants, the dignified presence of the representative of France, the thinking of some of our clergy which derives from France -- none of these encouraged our distinguished colleagues from stopping the barking of this man whose proper place is now set in a prison.

"It is time for our Canadian journalism to appreciate its own dignity if it wants to avoid the severe judgment of impartial, unforgetting history.

"Nor has a word come from the mouth of our national clergy. The intervention of one of our priests could have ended this flow of insults. From this nothing has yet come." (ibid.)

Following this fiasco the provincial legislature named a parliamentary committee to recommend changes in the law on mutual savings organizations. (La Presse, March 12, 1902)

Years later Shulamis Yelin recalled "The Haman of Canada" in the New York Pioneer Woman. (Feb. 1972)

Epilogues are sad.

After Robillard's failure the paper was sold to a group which included Bourassa. A few months later it was taken over by J.-A. Chicoigne. (Beaulieu and Hamel. La Presse québécoise, 1870-79)

Henri Bourassa lent his name (and money?) to the reorganization of Le Pionnier, now sold to the Société Cooperative du Pionnier. Then the weekly died suddenly on May 11, 1902 without any explanation on its own part.

Years later Robert Rumilly was still sympathetic to Robillard. He regrets that "the young have been deprived of their newspapers. The Société mutuelle which had maintained Le Pionnier -- L'Union franco-canadienne -- had involved its followers in bad business. Helbronner, vengeful champion of the small savings depositors, fought the founders of the Société who were inexperienced and imprudent rather than culpable. There was a trial: The mutual society and Le Pionnier disappeared." (vol.10, Pp. 113-14)

A similar case occurred in 1907 in the Saguenay where Le Travailleur attacked Jews, and in particular a Jewish resident of Montreal by name. An action against the proprietor was entered in the District Superior Court by S.W. Jacobs. But when the day of trial came the defendant settled by agreeing to pay the not inconsiderable costs already incurred and to publish a retraction and an apology. He said that the views expressed had been contrary to his own and that his employee-editor had acted unworthily. (Jewish Times, Feb. 7, 1908)

Equally sad was the fate of Les Débats.

It had always had difficulties with the archbishop. When the Robillard case ended, the publisher openly, almost abjectly, sued for peace with its powerful prelate.

In a most respectful editorial it cited the service it had given to the church by warning and by extricating it from its involvement in Robillard's conspiracy. It cited its desire to publish in consonance with the interests of the church. (Feb. 23, 1902)

But to no avail. Within a few months it fell under the disapproval of the archbishop.

Minor issues arose. Les Débats, ever a friend of the French government, in April 1902 took a positive stand on a Law on Associations, at least as regards laymen's organizations, passed by the Paris government July, 1901. Many French bishops did not take exception to this legislation, but the Montreal bishop did, as had the sovereign pontiff who had branded the French law as inspired by freemasonry and as hostile to the church and to its institutions. (Semaine religieuse de Montréal, reprinted in Les Débats, Apr. 27, 1902)

Tardivel's Vérité supported the archbishop. It so happened that this coincided with a reorganization within La Presse whereby "in the absence of owner Berthiaume, director Dansereau and editor in chief Helbronner, Mr. G.-A. Nantel, former minister in the provincial government, was put in charge of the paper for a time. Nantel had differed with Les Débats on civic politics, and now he also sided with the bishop in opposing the position of Les Débats, even while Helbronner was writing in the pages of Les Débats. Its director Charlier, wrote to the bishop seeking to extricate himself from an unwanted and perilous controversy. (Les Débats, Apr. 27, 1902)

This episode revealed an important crisis in Helbronner's professional career.

Nantel's temporary position in La Presse was harmful not only for Les Débats also especially for Helbronner. "Verronneau" attacked his colleague in the columns of Les Débats. He pointed out that reactionary Nantel had criticized France and its government harshly and unfairly at the very moment that the owner of La Presse was being so warmly received there. (July 6, 1902)

However, there was no escape for Les Débats.

A remarkable meeting took place in Feb., 1903 when the archbishop and editor Charlier very frankly surveyed a whole series of public issues on which the Débats stand disturbed the churchman: the Manitoba schools, the Montreal municipal library, the city hospital, public schooling, Laval University, the Law on Associations in France, Zola, Renan, Veuillot, the Montreal stage, etc.

His Excellency energetically reaffirmed his rights as prelate to draw the attention of journalists when they stray, to wander into religious topics or affect respect for religion or the clergy.

Charlier defended the freedom of a truly independent journalist to discuss and to evaluate political, literary, artistic and scientific matters.

In the meantime Charlier became involved in another insurance war. He attacked the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. somewhat in the style of Helbronner's war on Robillard's Union franco-canadienne. His colleague, the Jewish journalist seems not to have been involved in this larger campaign.

Remarkably, the same editor, who had just destroyed the antisemitic Le Pionnier, had recourse to antisemitism himself in warring against Metropolitan. He called it, "this nest of Jews who insure little on the Jewish weekly payment system by Jewish means and tactics, these miserable people who do more harm than usurers, who will eventually be disgraced by the good and honest people of the province of Quebec." (Les Débats, Feb. 15, 1903)

In this campaign, too, the church seems to have been involved, for Claxton, lawyer for the insurance company told Judge Choquet under oath that Mgr. Bruchési had told him that Les Débats would be condemned from the pulpit.

"We need no proof beyond the letter from the Eveché of Valleyfield distributed across the province, with the episcopal seal on its circulars, because a Catholic college at Valleyfield had signed a contract with this company of Jews which is called Metropolitan of New York.

"If we come to place Catholics in opposition to Jews, it will not be from narrowness of spirit or to oppose two religions. We are too broad minded to join the camp of the antisemites. If we are Catholic we respect all religions which are based on morality. But here we are forced to denounce Jewish methods and we do so without hesitation." (Les Débats, March 1, 1903)

Les Débats referred to Stansfield, representative of the Metropolitan in Quebec, "as descended in direct line from Levy, Zabulon, Abraham and Jacob, and the company is a kike company." (March 29, 1903)

In the course of the complex legal proceedings that arose from the attacks by the crusading weekly on the insurance Goliath, an article which incidentally offended the archbishop became involved. During the hearings, quite unexpectedly, Arthur Beauchesne, editor of Le Journal, volunteered to testify that he was the author of this article. He was fired within hours.

Despite all its militant vigor, Les Débats was near its end.

On Oct. 3, 1903 notice of an episcopal interdiction appeared in La Patrie. The next day the weekly published defiantly: there are higher instances of appeal from the rule of the archbishop of Montreal; there is even the Holy See. The friends of the banned paper would meet to

and unfairly at the very moment that the owner of La Presse was being so warmly received there. (July 6, 1902)

reorganize a new publication. Its program would be respectful to the ordinary, "for he is the master of men and things in Montreal, as he already directs La Patrie and La Presse, it is only just that he also have direction of the journal which will replace Les Débats."

That was the last of Les Débats.

Its old time associate, Louvigny de Montigny sought to restore a Débats in the old form he had designed. He established Les Nouveaux Débats, but this too failed soon.

Helbronner's life was never quiet for long.

Early in 1906 he was the subject of a personal attack by Olivar Asselin of a virulence rare even in the violent journalism of the period.

Half of the front page of Le Nationaliste of Jan. 21, 1906 was filled with one article entitled simply "To Mr. Jules Helbronner" occasioned by his role on the citizens' committee on which he sat together with Asselin. This committee had been meeting to prepare a programme of civic reform, particularly in regard to the current negotiations between Concordia and the Montreal Light Heat and Power.

As Asselin told it (Jan. 14 and 21) Helbronner betrayed the decisions of the citizens' committee and displayed the morals of a venal liar, the companion of the crooks who are always in control of City Hall, a prostitute occupying a seat of dishonour, giving to the younger men about him an example of mercenary motivation.

La Presse, of which Helbronner is one of its finest ornaments, has become an instrument of fraud and of blackmail in the hands of a few anglophone con men.

Asselin accused his colleague of underhand negotiations with some councillors in the interests of the Terminal, discussions which, he said, were contrary to the position of the citizens' committee.

Asselin could not resist bringing in the anti-semitic element and wrote that his tactics displayed "the practical philosophy which is the mark of your race," that Helbronner was engaged in "betit gommerce," the standard misspelling which represented the alleged Jewish immigrant dialect. It was an old convention in English and in French literature; but it is difficult to know how it applied to the cultivated native of France, journalist, labor leader, public servant.

Asselin had hesitated to attack Helbronner, but "remembering the false voice, the yellow smile, this squinting look in your face when -- living image of betrayal -- you moved nervously under the sly gaze of some honest men, I felt that possibly a certain Jew you know would not have delivered his best friend if there had been someone to unmask him in time.

"The day I will enjoy your high regard I will conclude that I have committed some infamous deed; I would hang myself, following the example of the most illustrious of your compatriots, Judas.

"Whether through atavism or training, we do not share moral principles."

Asselin may or may not have read an 1897 speech by Max Nordau, but the wording is remarkably similar.

Nordau told the first Zionist Congress at Basle,

"The western Jew saw the emancipation as a veritable liberation, and hastened to draw all its conclusions. But the peoples are telling him not to be so rational in his naiveté.

"In its generosity law and society establish equal rights, but the peoples transform it into a joke. The Jew innocently says, 'I am a man, and nothing human is alien to me.' and he hears a reply, 'Slowly. Apply your humanity carefully. You really lack dignity, responsibility, morality, love of homeland and idealism, and we must put you beyond all the laws where these qualities are essential.'"

One wishes to believe that by March 25 Asselin had reread his own article and on his own initiative desired to withdraw some of its general implications. For on that day he wrote on "The Jews in Canada."

"To compare a traitor to Judas in the heat of argument may appear rather serious if the adversary happens to be a Jew, but bears no taint of antisemitism if the traitor is a Christian.

"Nor is it forbidden for a Canadian to regret that his country is daily losing its national character, for Jews are no worse than most other classes of immigrants; but from the Canadian point of view they are no better.

"Where injustice seems to begin is when the sons of Israel are criticized for not adopting the manners and customs of our land quickly enough, or not at all. Most of them learn English which is one of our official languages. Some of them learn French. They keep their religion.

"Can we blame them for this, while we constantly advise our Canadians in the United States to keep their language and their faith in the midst of an Anglo-Saxon world?"

"No. Individuals apart, like the Doukhobors or the poor people in the large English cities, the Jews are not desirable immigrants. They do not, cannot share our ideals. But once here let us not deny them the rights which we claim for our own, and the exercise of which will, by and large, harm no one. Let them, if they wish, remain in the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Of course, the Asselin article resulted in an action for criminal libel. He appeared before Police Magistrate Choquet on Jan. 22, 1906. After he pleaded not guilty he was released on bail of \$500 until preliminary hearings set for Jan. 30. (La Presse, Jan. 30 and 31 and Feb. 5, 1906)

Helbronner was represented first by Paul-G. Martineau and then by Avila Wilson.

The case dragged on and dribbled. It reached the assizes on March 20, and was then postponed for reason of illness of Helbronner, while Asselin fumed at being deprived of a platform to prove his case. (Le Nationaliste, March 25, 1906)

The fury signified little. By Nov. 1908 Le Nationaliste was interviewing Helbronner most amicably on civic affairs, and within months it engaged the Jewish journalist as its writer.

To complete the record; during the decades ahead Asselin championed Canadian Jews against antisemitic attacks. (Le Patriote, June 21, 1934)

HELBRONNER'S LAST YEARS

After a number of years of service with La Patrie Helbronner retired to Ottawa to live with his daughter, Mrs. Louvigny de Montigny, daughter-in-law of the leading Ultramontanist, Benjamin Archange Testard de Montigny, dean of the Youvau. (De Bonville, P. 16)

There is social significance in the Helbronner-de Montigny alliance. The elder Benjamin Testard de Montigny was the first Canadian pontifical lawyer in 1861, an "ultramontanist pure laine" and as conservative as Quebec made them. As judge in the Recorder's Court, 1881-99, he had arbitrated a number of cases between workers and their employers and had consecrated the principle that the master had the right to inflict physical punishment on his young workers "provided that the correction is reasonable."

Asked to define reasonable correction, he said that "in considering each case we need to remember the powers which the parents confided to the master in placing their children with him as apprentices... The children have generally been placed in the care of the master for him to care for them, to act as the father of the family towards them... I consider, especially when the father confided his child to an employer, that the right of correction goes as far as the father's."

Recorder de Montigny stated that this was the interpretation he gave to the law, because he "considered it in conformity with positive divine law and with the civil law. I have not felt called upon to cite the law in support of these rulings."

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When faced by the Commission with the case of an 18-year-old girl who was thrown to the ground and beaten with a board, he refused to comment without hearing the other side. "It all depends on the circumstances, on how she was beaten, on how she was thrown to the ground, and on how she was treated generally."

He admitted that it was generally a dangerous system to permit some persons to correct their employees, when we consider how different people vary in character, "just as all rights are subject to abuse. Myself, as father of a family, correct my children, and when I take them to school, I authorize their teachers to correct them. I have twelve children some of whom need no correction; and I have some children who would become impossible if they were not corrected. Such correction includes confining a child in a cell. Indeed it is a more reasonable correction than striking him. There is no law in the province," he said, "which limits physical punishment of women."

There was indeed a dialogue between Recorder de Montigny and Commissioner Helbronner about a judgment the recorder had handed down in the presence of journalist Helbronner. Four or five young girls had quit their jobs in the Hochelaga cotton mill without due notice, and the employer held back their wages. Recorder de Montigny held for the employer according to the law, but he then pleaded with the company to give the girls their money because they had acted without mature understanding and without ill will. (Rapport, Pp. 435-38)

De Montigny reaffirmed the right of an employer to engage a special constable to maintain order in his plant and to ensure that employers' orders are carried out. A man whose ideas were at the antipodes of Helbronner's strong opinions: "We can guess at the joyous family dinners," de Bonville writes.

Helbronner served as commercial representative of France in Canada. He was founder and honorary president of the Union nationale française and the Canadian spokesman of the Société des auteurs français.

Ever since his connections with the Moniteur du commerce twenty years earlier he championed closer business relations with France, and he made the Moniteur a mine of information on tariffs, etc. These efforts were clearly a basis for a commercial treaty between the two countries.

On July 14, 1906, the government of France honoured him by naming him chevalier of the Légion d'honneur as the champion of a commercial rapprochement between that country and Canada.

"For years and years," wrote La Presse, "he has given his talent, his inexhaustible diligence and the force of his work to awaken dormant good will. The two nations come to understand each other and reach out to each other. France is the first to recognize services rendered it by conferring upon its champion the highest honour at its disposal." (Jan. 25 and July 6, 1906)

He continued in press work to the end, for a time with the French service of the Hansard as well as with the King's Printer as editor of the Gazette de Canada until his passing on November 25, 1921.

His son Michel had studied architecture in London and pursued training in sculpture under Philippe Hébert and painting under Edmond Dyonnet. He was director of the architecture firm of Pringle and Son and president of the Société française de secours mutuel. His literary and poetic work won him prizes and medals in France and in Canada. During the first World War he served with both the French and British armies, had been wounded and was honoured by the military of both nations. He died January 23, 1934 at the age of 60. (Gazette, Jan. 24, 1939)

Social note: Among those present at the City Hall reception for Louvigny de Montigny on his forthcoming marriage: Michel Helbronner. (Le Nationaliste, May 22, 1904)

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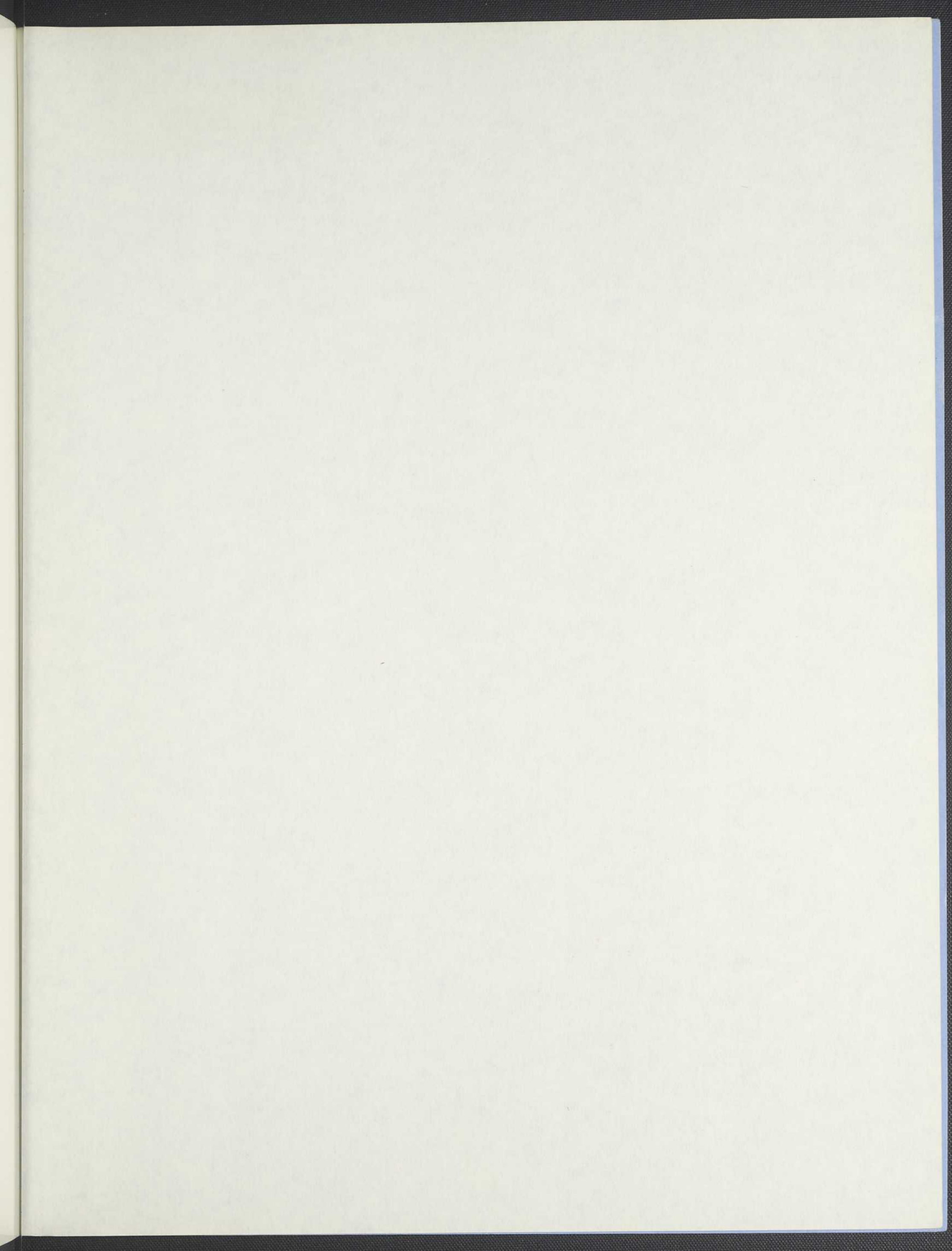
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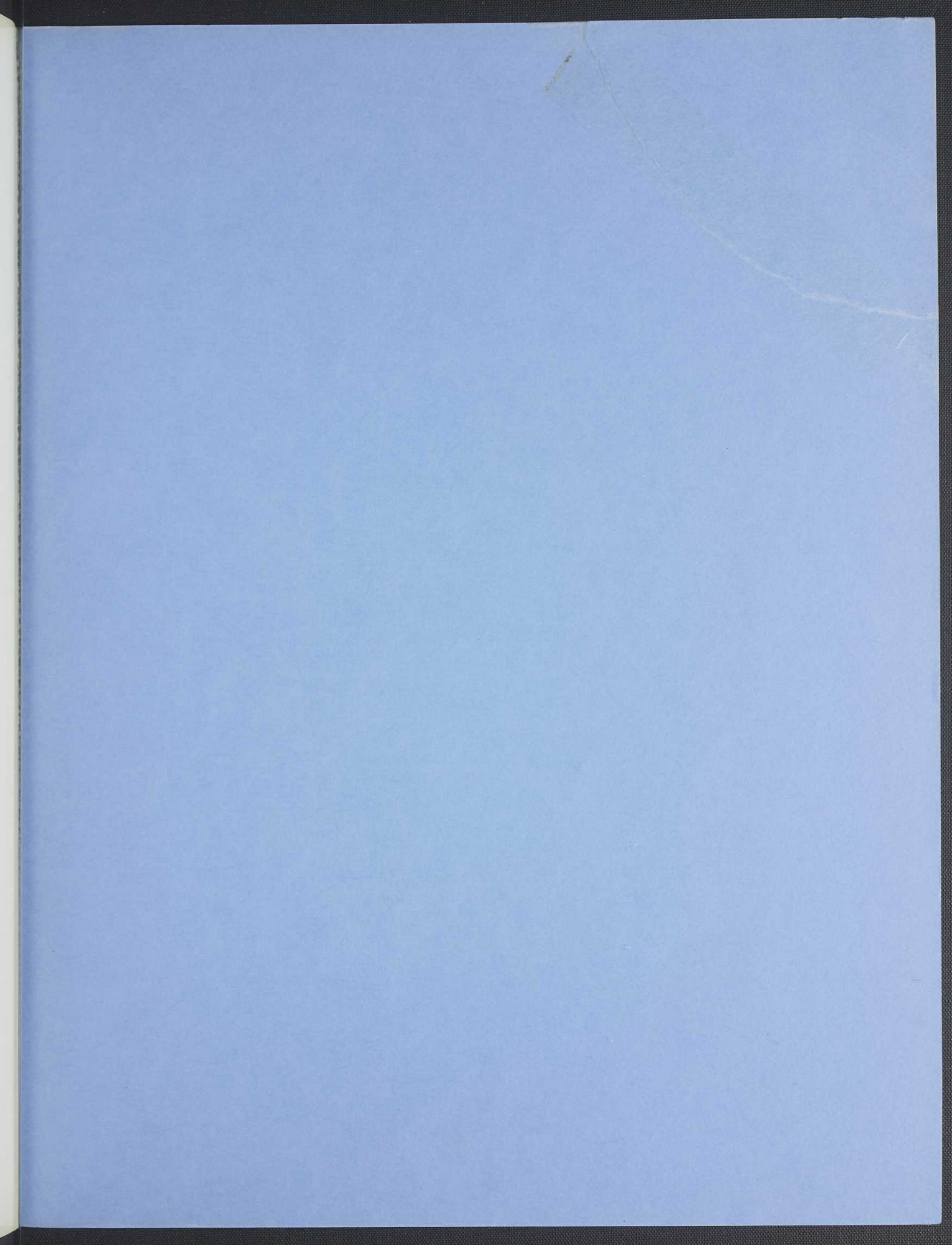
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