

# the Henry George News

PUBLISHED BY HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE • SEPTEMBER, 1970

## Alberta—Young and Growing

by FRED C. COLBORNE

THE Province of Alberta is often compared to the great State of Texas and is called the Texas of Canada. There are several reasons for this. It is about the size (10,000 square miles larger), the economy is similar, and agriculture is the basic industry.

Alberta has a strong farm economy and a vigorous cattle industry. Superimposed on this is a major oil and gas development, making it similar to the economy of Texas. Our people are basically the pioneer and frontier type of rugged individualists such as Texans are noted for being. We are also noted for having the same quality of modesty. As a matter of fact the only significant difference between Alberta and Texas is that we are friendlier with the United States than they are.

I do want to say that in Alberta we are proud of our province and of its growth and development and prosperity. We have the two fastest growing cities in Canada—Calgary and Edmonton. In spite of being a young province with only one and a half million people, and in spite of only being in the infancy of our development, our per capita income is already among the highest in Canada.

Our unemployment is the lowest in Canada, even in the present difficult times of restraint in the national economy. We spend more money on educa-

tion than any other province, either on a per capita or per student basis. We have a billion dollar budget this year for a province of one and a half million people; the largest expenditure of any province on capital improvements, highways, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and homes for the aged; and necessary social services. Yet coupled with this we have the lowest provincial tax structure in Canada, and no sales tax.

We have no direct debt and we have about 500 million in reserves which we can use for pump-priming or to offset unpredictable drops in revenues.

These statistics are an indication of the well-being of our people, but they are not the important factor in measuring Alberta. The most significant fact of all is that all these statistics are the product of a vigorous system of free and responsible private enterprise—a system made possible because our people, by-and-large, believe in, support and practice responsible private enterprise. We have had the same private enterprise government for 35 years.

**The Hon. Fred C. Colborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs (Edmonton), was a guest at the conference of the HGS in Calgary. These comments were included in an address which portrayed Alberta as a place where Henry George might have felt very much at home.**