



(Photo by Jim Burton)

# Peace Pilgrim's Progress

(Written after my 1000 mile pilgrimage through Canada)

## **DEAR FRIENDS OF PEACE:**

Every time I greet you I feel like thanking many of you for many things, and I want to say a special thank you to Canada for wonderful hospitality. When I finished my 1,000 mile Canadian pilgrimage at Toronto, a group of people, carrying and wearing meaningful signs, walked the last few miles with me. Although they were photographed by television cameras and newspaper photographers, I do not have a picture of them. However, here is a picture of a few of the Peace Walkers who greeted me as I crossed the Ambassador Bridge from Canada to Detroit. At the end of the walk we gathered in a circle for a very fine period of sharing. A Peace Walk without signs can also be very meaningful — singing peace words to familiar tunes along the way and gathering for sharing at the end.

## **VISIT MY NEIGHBOR**

In the summer of 1957 I visited my neighbor, Canada, and walked a 1,000 mile pilgrimage there — 100 miles in each of the ten Canadian Provinces. The beautiful Canadian scenery and the friendly Canadian people made my trip through Canada a most memorable experience. Canada's ten provinces occupy a land-mass about as large as the United States, but only about one tenth as many people live there. Beginning on the west coast, I walked in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba. Then I journeyed across Central Canada and walked in the easternmost provinces — Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick. Next I walked in Canada's largest province, Quebec, and I ended my Canadian pilgrimage in Ontario, where Canada's national capital, Ottawa, is located. I walked into each provincial capital and visited the largest cities in every province. I spoke to many people along the highways, to public meetings in the cities, through the medium of newspapers, radio, television — and my peace message was well received. The Canadians are in a relatively good position as to world peace. They are not manufacturing and testing nuclear bombs, and they have no peacetime draft. During World War II they drafted for domestic duty only, which draft they discontinued as soon as the war was over. They have not gotten as far past the pioneering stage as we have. They are still in the process of acquiring a culture, and, as one of their songs so aptly puts it, they are busy explaining to the Americans that they are not British and to the British that they are not Americans. Things have not yet solidified in Canada — it is a country still very much in the process of evolution - and that makes it an interesting country.

## **COLORFUL CANADA**

Canada is colorful in so many ways. No one who travels in the eastern provinces can fail to notice the colorful houses. It is not unusual to see a yellow and orange house with a blue roof, or a house whose front is painted green and white and whose sides are painted bright red. The abundant wild berries in the eastern provinces are not only colorful but flavorful. The Canadian scenery is most colorful the towering mountains and the wonderful rocky seacoast in the west, the sunsets on the prairie, the lakes and hills as one journeys toward the east, the hilly eastern seacoast and the blue, blue sea. Colorful also is the abundant and varied wild, life of Canada, for there are still vast stretches of wilderness where wild things can hide. And, speaking of colorful as I crossed the prairie the most perfect double rainbow I have ever seen arched my way. It was so close its colors were reflected on nearby trees — it was so

breathtakingly beautiful it was unforgettable.

## **CANADA'S NEWEST PROVINCE**

I sat on a wooden bench in a little station lighted by a kerosene lantern. Waiting for a two hour late narrow gauge train. It seemed as though the pages of history had been turned back 100 years! But I talked with the people who waited with me, and I realized they had more emotional stability and peace-of-mind than those who wait for fast, stream-lined trains that arrive exactly on time. All day long — in the process of getting to my walking point in Newfoundland — I had been hitch-hiking over a narrow, winding, dusty dirt highway, full of holes and protruding rocks. At one place a ferry which looked like a crude raft somehow carried us across a swift river. Then there was no more road and I waited for the train. But along that dusty, bumpy highway every Newfoundland car I signalled stopped. When I saw a crew of men working on a building project I knew without being told that the neighbors were lending a hand. In the “outports” I passed through it was not the custom to lock doors or even to knock before entering a neighbor’s home. Yes, Newfoundland makes up in spiritual values for its lack of material advancement. However, Newfoundland is growing rapidly. Probably in a few years the road will be finished and paved. And along that newly-paved road will every car still stop to give a traveler a friendly lift? Must we sacrifice real values for material gains, or could we have both? Perhaps the reason material prosperity hurts us spiritually is because others in the world are still cold and hungry. Perhaps if it were for all we could have both.

## **THE LANGUAGE BARRIER**

I first ran into the language barrier in Spanish-speaking Mexico, where I could speak to people only through my translated message and my smile. Then in the Province of Quebec in Canada I ran into it again. Canada is a bilingual country. The schools in Quebec are conducted in French, and many of the people in Quebec cannot speak English. I had a translated message, and I was offered food and shelter through sign language, but there the communication just about ended. It made me realize anew the great need for a world language. I think a committee of experts appointed by the United Nations should decide as quickly as possible what language would be best. Once a world language is decided upon it can be taught in all the schools along with the national language, so that very soon every literate person in the world can talk to every other literate person in the world. I think this would be the biggest single step we could take toward world understanding. When we can talk together we will realize that our likenesses are so much greater than our differences, however great our differences may seem.

## **IS DEDICATION DEAD AS DINOSAUR**

This happened in Canada, but the man turned out to be a tourist from the United States. He looked at me, not unkindly, but with extreme surprise and curiosity, as though he had just glimpsed a live dinosaur. “In this day and age,” he exclaimed, “with all the wonderful opportunities the world has to offer, what under the sun made you get out and walk a pilgrimage for peace?” “In this day and age,” I answered, “when humanity totters on the brink of a nuclear war of annihilation and even the testing of the nuclear bombs may destroy us, it is not surprising that one life is dedicated to the cause of peace it is surprising that many lives are not similarly dedicated.”

## **A SAD STORY**

When I visited the Premier of Saskatchewan he told me this sad story.

He mentioned in one of his speeches that Saskatchewan’s surplus grain could feed the famine victims in Pakistan. The next day people were calling to offer their surplus grain — transportation to the west coast was provided — boats were provided. But the surplus grain never reached the starving people in Pakistan — a federal law prevented it! This is not meant as a criticism of Canada. It is a comment on the difficulty we are all having in distributing the world’s products to the world’s people.

## **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT**

The pastor of a large United Church in a large Canadian city — who had recently returned from a visit to India — told me that the Buddhists are sending out 2,000 missionaries to convert the Christians to the way of non—violence.

Loving best wishes,

PEACE PILGRIM, Cologne, N. J.