

FIVE: THE WHIRLWIND CAMPAIGN IN MARIPOSA

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

“THE DAY FOR THAT KIND OF RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY IS PAST”: FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN CANADA

The Whirlwind Campaign is meant to benefit the Anglican Church. However, members of the Presbyterian Church are welcomed into the campaign. As it says, “Anyway it would have been poor business to keep a man out of the lunches merely on account of his religion. I trust that the day for that kind of religious bigotry is past.” (90).

This belief in *Sunshine Sketches*—that people are entitled to their own views and should not be discriminated against because of them—is consistent with Leacock’s views on freedom of association. In *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice*, Leacock’s 1920 book on regulating and redistributing wealth to ensure fairness for workers and the poor, Leacock discusses people’s rights to believe what they wish:

A man has just as much right to declare himself a socialist as he has to call himself a Seventh Day Adventist or a Prohibitionist, or a Perpetual Motionist. It is, or should be, open to him to convert others to his way of thinking. It is only time to restrain him when he proposes to convert others by means of a shotgun or by dynamite, and by forcible interference with their own rights.¹²

Leacock’s view is largely consistent with the rights now enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The *Charter* guarantees Canadians the following fundamental freedoms:

- freedom of conscience and religion
- freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication
- freedom of peaceful assembly
- freedom of association

These freedoms mean that Canadians are free to believe things, free to organise groups, and free to try to change people’s minds. However, the *Charter* says that “reasonable limits” can be placed on these freedoms. Freedoms may be limited if to do so is demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. This is why, for example, hate speech is not allowed in Canada.

1. Why are these freedoms vital for a functioning society?
2. What kind of limits to these freedoms do you believe are justified in a free and democratic society?
3. Are there ever circumstances where violence is justified as a means to bring about change?

¹² Leacock, Stephen. “The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice.” In *The Social Criticism of Stephen Leacock*, edited by Alan Bowker, U of Toronto P, 1973, p. 118.