

The Charlottetown Guardian

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"Government By Caucus"

Our local contemporary says that The Guardian "denounces the caucus system whereby certain measures are discussed before being submitted to the Legislature. The caucus, however, has been in effect in Prince Edward Island ever since we had a Legislature."

It is not, of course, the caucus system, but the abuse of the caucus system, that The Guardian has been denouncing. This abuse is made possible by one thing: the absence of an Opposition in the House.

What is the use of "submitting" matters to a Legislature, all of whose members have previously met behind closed doors, debated the question from its political and other angles, and formed their attitude accordingly? The only talking they do, or have to do, on the floor of the House is for political effect. The real legislative discussions are those which go on behind closed doors. Even the questions on the Order Paper, under the present administration, have become a farce. How many questions were asked last year with regard to the Government's prohibition administration? The amount of beer sold under its brewery stallion policy, for example? Or the expropriation procedure under the National Park Act to which Mr. W. F. Alan Stewart says he "strongly objected" in caucus and was put, for his pains, in the chair and thus provided with an alibi for keeping silent on the second reading of the Act in the House?

As the Toronto Globe (Liberal) pointed out two years ago: "While there may not appear to be any great difference between no Opposition and an Opposition of one or two, it is not the question of numbers that really matters. One of the greatest arguments of defenders of the democratic system has been the contention that the minority as well as the majority has a voice in Parliament. The Opposition is the official voice of that minority, and the interests of all are thereby assured the greatest possible protection. . . . The value of an Opposition under the democratic system has not been in opposing legislation, but in bringing out in debate any actions of the Government that otherwise might be concealed, and to give support to 'moderates' in the Government in securing modification of any radical legislation."

The Globe added further that in view of the anomalous situation in Prince Edward Island, where an Opposition representing 42 per cent of the votes had no voice in parliament, where the Liberals "were in no wise entitled to the absolute rule they obtained", it became the duty of the Government leader, "if for no other reason than the future of his party and the democratic system, to see that every action of his Government is taken in full view of the electorate, and that every piece of legislation is clearly and reasonably in the interests of the people as a whole."

What Has Happened?

What has happened is that instead of heeding this solemn warning from the leading Liberal newspaper in Canada, the Campbell Government pursued a directly opposite course, aided and abetted by its party supporters. All that now remains of democracy in the Legislature is the mere machinery for passing government measures which have been thrashed out in the Star Chamber of the Caucus.

Recently the Winnipeg Free Press (Liberal) carried a leading editorial headed "Government by Caucus." Its reference was to the abuse of the caucus system by our thirty Liberal stalwarts in this Province; and it was by no means a flattering reference!

An amusing example of the extent to which this malpractice occurs was given by one Liberal member from Kings County. He was introducing a resolution to be submitted to the federal authorities and he began in a way that promised to furnish some interesting inside information. Warning coughs from the government benches attracted his attention, and he checked himself hastily, adding, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker; I thought we were in caucus!"

On another occasion a Liberal member announced, with regard to a Government measure, that he "would have to oppose it." He gave no explanation; and when the vote was taken, on a following day, he was conveniently absent. Could this possibly have happened if the whole thing had not been rehearsed, in caucus, in advance?

Last session an amendment to the Road Act was put through to protect the Public Works Minister and his officials from personal liability in law-suits for any damage occasioned in the performance of their duties. This measure created a great deal of public curiosity, which had to go unsatisfied. It passed the House unanimously—after the caucus confab—without question, comment, or explanation; a perfect partisan performance. "No hits, no runs, no errors."

Now we have Mr. W. F. Alan Stewart's revelation of the method employed to "gag" a dissenting member by putting him in the chair when the bill he opposed in caucus comes up for second reading in the House!

We can cite many other instances, for our contemporary's benefit, if it requires further enlightenment as to the difference between use and abuse of the caucus system.

Safeguarding World Peace

European tension has been considerably relieved by the at least partial success of the Non-Intervention Committee which agreed Wednesday, under the chairmanship of the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, to begin withdrawal of foreign troops in Spain, with a view to their complete evacuation. This is the goal at

which British policy has been consistently directed.

Deploring the breakdown of non-intervention in the face of existing commitments, Mr. Eden reaffirms Britain's attachment to the principle of non-intervention as the best course. He makes a "clear distinction", however, "between non-intervention and indifference," thus underlining British interests: Britain is primarily concerned in Spain to preserve that country's territorial integrity and to prevent the spread of the conflict. Britain "will continue watchful" that its "line of communications with the Near East and Indian is not endangered." There is to be no acceptance of continued Italian occupation in the Balearic Islands. In this British interests are identical with those of France. To this vital matter Ambassador Grandi makes no reference in his initial statement to the London committee. Instead, reiterating the contention that Italy, Germany and Portugal a year ago "tried uselessly within the committee to secure" the withdrawal of "volunteers", he protests that the responsibility for the failure of that initiative with all "the present and future consequences cannot in any way be attributed to the Fascist Government." Then, as if making a major concession, the Italian representative agrees to the withdrawal of Italian "volunteers", man for man, with the withdrawal of Loyalist "volunteers," in the International Brigade. But since it is generally agreed that there are at least six times as many Italian troops under Franco as foreign forces fighting for the Valencia government, Mussolini's proposal would, if carried out, permit the retention of several tens of thousands of Italians in Rebel territory. Despite its manifest inequality the Italian proffer was welcomed by most of the members of the Non-Intervention Committee as an entering wedge which might be useful in breaking a prolonged deadlock. But the Russian representative, after reciting Italy's official manifestations of pride in the achievements of its forces in Spain, bluntly puts in words what must have been in the minds of many of his colleagues: "The acts of the Italian Government flatly contradict its peace professions expressed at this table. Therefore I can only believe these assurances if and when I see the acts to support them."

A similar skepticism about the value of Italian professions had been evident in the British Foreign Minister's address. Looking beyond the immediate issues involved in the Spanish conflict Mr. Eden warned that there will be "nemesis" for those nations which continue to act on the assumption that "a variety of international anxieties will prevent effective resistance to unlawful courses." Evidently Britain does not intend indefinitely to accept rebuffs, not even from Mussolini.

Editorial Notes

Sara Bernhart born this date, 1845.

To make a pound of butter, 10.5 quarts of milk are required, says the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Alberta Legislature passed a resolution asking the Government not to submit a brief to the Rowell Royal Commission, the Commission will hold a sitting in Edmonton late in January.

The Frontenac-Addington seat vacated by Mr. Colin A. Campbell in order to enter the Hepburn Cabinet is to be contested by the Conservatives. A convention to choose a candidate will be held on 27th inst. The candidate at the general election was Mr. J. A. Pringle of Arden who was defeated by Mr. Campbell by 429 votes.

Great Britain, backed by the sympathetic support of the U.S.A. from outside, has brought Italy and Germany to heel for the present. But the fight is not yet over. Meantime Spain's civil war drags on waiting for "belligerency" recognition, meaning the right to call for and recognize allies and enemies on either side, taking the conflict out of the civil war category.

The Government did the right and popular thing in promoting Dr. Steel to fill the vacancy caused in the Principalship of P.W.C. by the lamented death of Dr. Robertson, and in the appointment of Prof. Blanchard as Vice-Principal. Both are outstanding members of the faculty, both have had distinguished careers as educationists, and both are popular with the student body. May their rule be as long and efficient as that of their immediate predecessors.

Weather scouts in Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia agreed on their "goose quill" forecasts recently that both districts were going to have a cold winter. Groundhogs are burrowing deep and that means lots of cold weather, reported Mr. W. L. Briggs in West Virginia. In Pennsylvania the wild fowl started south a good many days ahead of schedule and the hair on animals is longer and thicker than last year.

Many people interested in the youth unemployment question and the suggestions made for solving it have been wondering what plans were drafted by the Provincial Government and approved by the Minister of Labour at Ottawa. Neither the Premier nor his deputy, the President of the Council, has so far deigned to take the public into his confidence. It has been left to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture in an address to the Fishermen's Union to let some light in on the subject. According to Deputy Minister Shaw, the Government policy is to hold special classes for young fishermen at Summerside, Souris and at St. Dunstan's University. Federal fisheries officials will assist at the courses which are to be kept as practical as possible, and which are intended for needy young men whose board, lodging and traveling expenses will be taken care of by a special grant. It is also the intention to select students from the Province and send them to Antigonish where leadership courses are being prepared. How much is allotted to us as our share for this work has not been divulged.

NOTES BY THE WAY

Mr. Aberhart's two years of office are a re-education of the public mind that must be experienced in introducing an economic panacea by constitutional means into a capitalist community, more especially where that community is merely a frontier province in a nation. What will happen next it is impossible to say. In an earnest endeavour to heal the sores of a debt-ridden farming community, Mr. Aberhart has had his two fingers into economic orthodoxy. Will he now remain defiant and compel the federal government to "conspire" with the banks to thwart his aims? Or will he confess himself beaten and say, in words used by his provincial treasurer: "The jig is up. We have not been able to do anything?" — Manchester Guardian.

To point out that the first requisite of a soldier, courage is inherent, and can not be taught in schools, was not in any way meant to reflect on Italian courage, which the Great War showed had not changed since Roman days. But the point of the comment was to stress the utter futility of preparing children to be soldiers, when our British example has always proved adequate to meet the challenge when, not before, it arises. We all want to live in peace—not in preparation for future wars with anybody.—Exe.

An interesting section of the Punjab Police report for 1936, just issued, deals with kidnapping, a crime extremely prevalent in the province for many years, and the stringent measures lately taken to deal with it. Ruthless war has been declared and important arrests made. As many as 154 children have been recovered and restored to their homes. In doing this the police acknowledge the invaluable help given by the wireless authorities in broadcasting descriptions of children.—Calcutta Statesman.

Another British embassy car was machine-gunned by Japanese, but, according to the Japanese logic, this was really a means to an end to show affection for Great Britain—if the invasions of China is conducted to bring peace and friendship ultimately to China, as a Jap statesman tells.—Hamilton Spectator.

An Armenian who applied for a passport visa and failed to receive the letter granting it murdered the United States consul-general in Beirut. The Armenian who had changed his address said he felt insulted and apparently thinks that quite sufficient. The Warmer atmosphere of the place must have misled him into thinking that the pagan gods and heroes beloved of Hitler would rally round and applaud a German act.—Exe.

There is a profound truth hidden in Lord Nuffield's statement. "The idea that it is easy to give money away always was the biggest fallacy in the world," said the motorcar manufacturer. "It has caused me 500 percent more trouble, since I started, than my business." It may seem easy to give away \$50,000, 100,000 or eighteen months, but just try—and make careful note of the obstacles raised.—Telegraph Journal.

Germany has concluded a non-aggression treaty with Belgium and has issued a note saying, among other things, that Germany will protect Belgium if attacked or invaded. Oh, granddama, what sharp teeth you have!—Exe.

Nowhere is there any great upsurge of public demand to restrict or reduce services which municipal governments perform. Virtually every municipal body is constantly facing demands for increased services, but there seems never to go with that demand any realization that the cost of such expansion must be met. Frequently, too, original appropriations for new services may be small but entail commitments for larger expenditures in the future. If tax limits are to be imposed, it seems only equitable that there should be a limit, too, on the number, kind and quality of services a municipality is to furnish.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Surely the time has arrived to stop this "Pardon Me" policy which has apparently become the accepted foreign policy of Britain, and for that matter, certain other nations which seem to have forgotten that there is a disposition amongst some peoples to misinterpret kindness for cowardice. "Pardon Me" and "Pardon You" and "Pardon Everything" can mean nothing short of shallow insincerity when it comes to the very serious business of dealing with a nation which recognizes only the value of might and the cost of such nothing of the virtue or right. The more Britain gives in to Japan, the more will Japan violate those internationally recognized rights of nationals of noncombattant countries. It is no use waiting until after the event. Prevention is better than cure.—Hong Kong News.

Has pipe-smoking declined? Judging by the census of Production both for the States and Great Britain, it would appear that the pipe is less popular than it had been in the past generation, but the consumption of tobacco is, notwithstanding, higher today than at any former period. Consumption has been largely diverted into cigarette smoking, which within recent years has developed at a surprising rate. A woman who smoked the pipe was regarded as an oddity, but now-a-days cigarette-smoking is almost as common among women as it is among men.—(Irish Independent.)

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open for the discussion of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinions of correspondents.

DEATHBED CONTRIBUTION

Sir,—Why Mr. W. F. Allan Stewart's belated right about face on the iniquitous park bill? Why did he not show his colors early in the game when it might have shown sincerity, and been of some use? He voted for the measure, did not protest before the House, and now when he finds himself in the boiling cauldron of his constituents he is at the penitent form with that child excuse I didn't mean it! The voice of public indignation is striking hard, and not that he loves Campbell less, but that he loves his now forfeited seat more. That is why he now turns tail for the moment on his leader and party, and on his own past conduct. We must at least give him credit for discerning the handwriting on the wall and taking seriously into consideration the fact that the electors are done with the tribe of political jelly-fish coterie of public men. I am, Sir, etc. FRED F. MAY, Major, V.D.

WESTERN POULTRY

Sir,—Yesterday's Guardian advises us of the fact that two cars of Western dressed poultry will be brought to P. E. Island at a landed price of 11 cents per pound. I am paying 9 and 11 cents, live weight, for old hens just as they are picked off the run. How can I continue to do so? 11 cents dressed means some unfortunate farmer had to sell at 5 cents per pound live weight. While low grade poultry should not affect the price of the good stock, nevertheless it has been my experience that it does. I think the importation of poultry into P. E. Island, the province, which I honestly think produces the finest flavored poultry of any Province in Canada or any State in the U. S. A., is positively disastrous. I call on all farmers and poultrymen to oppose this move. I have represented your wholesalers, co-operative live stock branch, and my own interest here, in Boston, in Montreal, at different times during the past 20 years. I feel that I know what I am talking about. I am, Sir, etc. S. R. PENDELTON, Kensington, P. E. I.

AN APPRECIATION OF P. E. I.

Sir,—Would you kindly allow me space in your paper to express my appreciation of P. E. Island's hospitality. Having visited the Island for the first time this summer I may say I was very much impressed by the kindness and hospitality of your people. As first impressions are lasting, the scenic beauty of the Island stands out in all its charms to a newcomer.

Crossing by ferry from Charlottetown to Rocky Point on a never to be forgotten morning early in August, the brilliant sunshine, wonderful green of the countryside, which seemed to roll down to the very edge of the sea, the red rocks and sand contrasting with the blue of the water and sky, and last but not least, the gracious welcome to the clean and comfortable farm home where we were to spend our holiday.

What a thrill to realize we had really arrived in the "Garden of the Gulf" and how lavishly nature has distributed her favors in this part of the world. How we enjoyed the calm beauty of the surrounding country. We, living farther west, have often heard of the down-east hospitality. What a pleasure to experience it all and what pleasant memories we cherish of your generous, kind-hearted people. I would like especially to express our appreciation of Mrs. Wain's kindness, with whom we stayed at Rocky Point; of her delicious meals, well prepared and so generously and cheerfully served. We enjoyed every minute of our stay, and hope again to spend a summer holiday enjoying the health-giving breezes of this part of P. E. I. I am, Sir, etc. SUMMER VISITOR.

STRATEGIC LEGISLATION

Sir,—The adage that everything is fair in love or war has always seemed to me a joke rather than a practical truth. History gives many examples of stratagem both fair and foul, in both love and war. But neither the pages of history nor romance can give stronger evidence against this ancient belief than what is being done in the present day. Even the iniquitous love stratagem of King David is being exceeded every day. Love, so called, is a great field in which to practise the basest deception.

In war there is stratagem, honorable and without blemish, and there is stratagem unequalled in fiendishness, by the deeds of barbarism. The stratagem of Wellington at Torres Vedras, Nelson at Trafalgar, and Wolfe at Quebec was glorious and without stain, but what charity can we have for those that maim and destroy the innocent and the helpless? But if there is any place where deceit and artifice should be tabooed, it is where the laws for the people are made! There, most assuredly, everything should be open and above board. The trick of telling legislators that a project would cost a mere trifle, in order to get them to vote for it, deserves public condemnation! Quieting an objecting member by promise of a lucrative office, is

contemplible strategy!

Putting an objector in the chair where he cannot vote, is strategy, but strategy that will not be condoned by free and intelligent electors.

I am, Sir, etc. ELECTOR.

PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

Sir,—Attached you will find the copy of an open letter which the writer had sent to the Provincial Premier on the 6th inst., the reply thereto being to hand on today's date and attached herewith. These letters are self-explanatory and it is hoped that some definite forward action will shortly be taken, as the Premier has intimated.

I am, Sir, etc. FRED F. MAY, Major, V.D.

To Hon. Thane A. Campbell, K.C. Premier of Prince Edward Island

Dear Sir,—The present writer trusts that you will receive this open letter in as non-controversial and public-spirited manner as possible.

A few days ago the writer and his wife had the opportunity and the privilege of visiting and inspecting the very fine Museum at Chatham, N.B. This museum had been begun and maintained for many years by Colonel J. D. B. McKenzie and a few of his friends. So far they have received no help, financial or otherwise, from their own provincial government in their efforts. They have collected, alone, a large number of most interesting objects, such as fossils, fishes, native animals, shells, and many other things too numerous to mention here. The writer and his wife had intended to make only a short stay. But that intended stay of half an hour was, to their own surprise, lengthened out to more than two hours, owing not only to the intensely interesting Museum, but also to the courtesy and fine descriptions given them by their guide.

In the summer of 1936 another visit had been made by the writer to the Museum situated on Green Hill, Pictou County, N.S., where another very interesting and valuable collection is placed, containing many objects of provincial and national interest, collected, so the writer understands, by public-spirited effort on the part of a few individuals.

The object of this open letter to you, Sir, is to submit respectfully the suggestion that the Provincial Government, of which you are the Leader, should endorse and strongly encourage the beginning of such a Museum in our Province of Prince Edward Island. The present writer doubts not that there are many public-spirited citizens who would be glad to give or to loan many objects of provincial or national interest now in their possession, provided that the donors were assured that such objects were reasonably safe in a burglar-proof and fire-proof building, under Government control. You may say, Sir, that your Government has no money at this time for such matters as above stated. May I respectfully say, Sir, that such a remark, if made, is completely beside the point. For the consideration of first and basic importance is surely that of Safety and Proper Supervision. Financial matters will follow in their natural and logical order. It has long been the firm opinion of not only the present writer but of many of our citizens as well, that objects of national and of personal interest, as briefly described above, should be gathered together for the benefit of future citizens, ere these objects be lost, destroyed or otherwise neglected.

Therefore, Sir, in conclusion, may the above matter of a Provincial Museum for the preservation of such objects as have been very briefly glanced at above, have something definitely more than "your very careful and favourable consideration."

Very truly yours, (Sgd.) FRED F. MAY, Major

October 18th, 1937 Major Fred F. May, St. Eleanors, P.E.I.

Dear Sir:—I have received your letter of October 6th, recommending consideration of the establishment of a Provincial Museum for the preservation of objects of Provincial



RELUCTANCE

Out through the fields and the woods I and over the walls I have wended, I have climbed the hills of view And looked at the world, and descended;

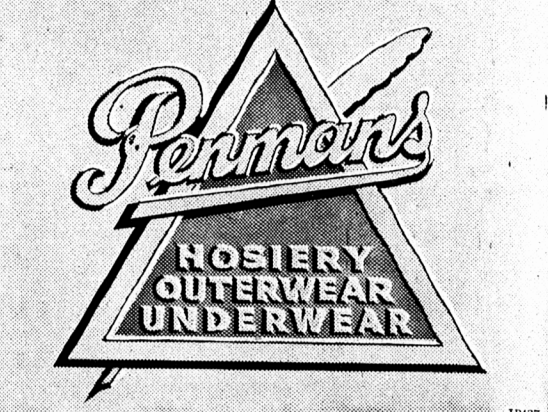
I have come by the highway home, And lo, it is ended. The leaves are all dead on the ground, Save those that the oak is keeping To ravel them one by one And let them go scraping and creeping

Out over the crusted snow, When others are sleeping. And the dead leaves lie huddled and still, No longer blown hither and thither; The last lone aster is gone; The flossers of the witch-hazel wither;

The heart is still aching to seek, But the feet question "Whither?" Ah, when to the heart of man Was it ever less than a treason To go with the drift of things To yield with a grace to reason, And bow and accept the end—'Tis 've or a season? —Robert Frost.



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