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"The Strongest Memory is Weaker than the Weakest Ink."

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1942.

The Hong Kong Inquiry

Colonel Ralston's report on the Canadian expedition to Hong Kong is being analyzed by military writers, with results which leave a wide margin for speculation. Here are some of the points which will doubtless be investigated by the House of Commons Committee:

Although the Government had offered to despatch two battalions to Hong Kong on Sept. 29, it was not until Oct. 9 that the military authorities were authorized to proceed with their arrangements. The sailing date was fixed for Oct. 27, which left only two weeks in which to complete the plans, although if the size and composition of the force had been roughly determined by Sept. 29, it is to be supposed that some thought had been given before Oct. 9 to the problem of bringing the regiments up to strength and providing them with trained reinforcements. Yet, with about 100,000 men in Canada enlisted for overseas service, it was apparently not possible to find sufficient men with the required amount of training.

More serious is the revelation that the men had to fight without their mechanized equipment. In this regard Colonel Ralston said: "There was some temporary doubt as to whether complete mechanical transport should be taken. As a result of a war office message received Oct. 11, it was decided that this would be done."

Why, it is being asked, did such a doubt arise? Is there still any idea that men can fight this war without mechanized equipment? Or did the Department of Defence believe the men would not have to fight at Hong Kong? Or was there a belief that the material was already there, waiting for the men? In any case, what happened was that the troopship sailed on Oct. 27 with empty space in its hold which might have held 20 vehicles out of the total 212 which was the proper complement of the force; that 14 of these could have been put on board had they arrived in Vancouver on time; but they did not arrive on time, and the ship sailed with its holds partially empty. The day after the sailing a slow freighter arrived in Vancouver and in six days it set out for Hong Kong, with the equipment; but it was a slow craft and got no further than Manila.

It is not suggested that the defense of Hong Kong could have been maintained indefinitely, even had the Government's plans been 100 per cent efficient. But our men would have been better off, and the defense been longer and stronger, had not "somebody blundered." Indeed, there seems to have been a series of unfortunate blunders, which, apart from all other considerations, is certainly not helpful to recruiting. The purpose of the parliamentary inquiry is to insure that such mistakes will not happen again. The Government should do all in its power to expedite the investigation and should welcome constructive criticism, without resorting to subterfuge or to its heavy parliamentary majority to whitewash the facts and circumstances.

Dairy Planning Needed

The seeming inability of the Department of Agriculture to arrive at any definite goal or plan for the great dairying industry during the coming year is hard to understand. To say that conditions within that branch of agriculture at present are chaotic, says an exchange, is no exaggeration. Dairy farmers are at sea in an ocean of rumors and contradictory opinions, are being sharply divided into groups instead of working for a common purpose.

Dairy farmers have been told repeatedly Britain needs cheese and condensed milk. Yet at this late date in a new year they have not been told how much of these products Britain wants from Canada in 1942 nor the price.

As far as can be learned the British Food Ministry has made no agreement with Canada regarding 1942 quotas of dairy products. Last year the agreement was announced much earlier. In the United States they apparently have some understanding, or at least are prepared to ship large quantities of cheese and condensed milk in order to keep their dairy farmers producing at top levels and at remunerative prices. In the case of cheese alone they have asked for a one-third increase and have stated their intention of shipping 250 million pounds to Britain —more than double last year's effort, more than double the current Canadian quota.

There is just a suggestion here that more aggressive agricultural leadership in the United States has had the effect of overshadowing the contribution Canadian dairy farmers might make to the Empire's breadbasket.

Dairy farmers have repeatedly stated their desire to contribute to the war effort to the limit of their ability. They have labor, feed, and equipment shortages as vital problems to contend with. There is a price structure ranging all the way from $1.30 to better than $2.50 a hundredweight of milk within the industry. They are being asked to produce to the limit, but without something more positive, and a more equitable price structure, it is going to be hard to work up any enthusiasm.

A Poet's Thanks

John Masefield, poet laureate of England, has published a new poem which is likely to find a more than usually wide circle of appreciative readers. It is entitled "Shopping in Oxford," and it is an outpouring of praise for all who have served the poet in shops, book stores, bakeries, antiques and clothiers: "those who, whether well or ill, or hot or freezing, seek out the buyer's pleasure and are pleasing." This is perhaps the first tribute of its kind in English verse, and it is a masterpiece of felicitous phrasing. No shopper can have been happier than he who made these purchases:

Each one was rendered friendly, with a smile,
A charming word or jest that gave a grace
Of silver to the penny's common-place,
So that a spirit companied the thing
Borne in the paper package tied with string.
So that it seemed a thing not bought and sold
But given, out of friendship and worth gold.

Haven't we all experienced something of this grateful glow from little courtesies received across the counter? The poem ends:

The common thing, if blessed by head and heart,
Becomes uncommon as a work of art,
So these who sell to those who only buy
Have made their sellings bright in memory,
Thanks can not pay what kindness freely gives,
But the glad kindness runs the world and lives,
I live the gladder for the daily thought
They gave me golden what my coppers bought.

It is worth reading these lines over several times, and even memorizing them. They are a very worthwhile contribution to the amenities of life.

— EDITORIAL NOTES —

Next month we'll all be entitled to rise an hour earlier than heretofore.

* * * *

The world is aflame, and Prime Minister Mackenzie King merely piddles on the conflagration.

* * * *

Those who like to hear themselves talk use the radio; those who like to have things done, use the newspapers.

* * * *

Donald Gordon must have fallen from grace when he utilized the Sabbath for propaganda on sugar rationing. Besides he left a bitter taste in not a few God-fearing housewives' mouths.

* * * *

Apparently the people generally are taking kindly to the suggestion that Prime Minister Mackenzie King should be forgiven his previous trespasses, and get a new lease of political life as a conscriptionist by any other name.

* * * *

Orders-in-Council approved between September 1, 1939, and January 16, 1942, totalled 20,128, Mr. Douglas Ross (Toronto, St. Paul's) was informed in a return tabled in the House of Commons. Orders passed while Parliament was actually in session during this period numbered 5,-0;8.

* * * *

Some of the things we expect to be accomplished in the current year: the ordering of a new Car Ferry steamer for Borden route, the provision of an additional Ferry steamer at Wood Islands; the completion of our City Wharf accomodation; and the hard surfacing of the road to Wood Islands.

* * * *

Now that the Prime Minister admits that his policy is the same as that officially expressed by the Leader of the House of Commons, all that remains for the plebiscited to do is to make their mark in the right place on the dotted line. It is reminiscent of Hitler's election dodge—one name on the ballot, vote for or against.

* * * *

Edinburgh in its Navy Week raised $50.000,-000 to replace the ill-fatal H. M. S. Prince of Wales and an additional $25,000, as well. London has pledged itself to raise in its Navy Week in March sufficient to build a whole fleet, the borough of Westminister itself undertaking to contribute the cost of an air-craft carrier, $25,-000,000.

* * * *

Sir Thomas Bodley, diplomat and scholar, died this date 1613; made one of the finest libraries of classics in England, after that of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, whose collection was destroyed by the Reform Commissioners of Edward VI; he presented his library to the University, and it now consists of over a million volumes and 40,000 MSS: it is entitled by law to a copy of every book published in the United Kingdom; known as the Bodleian Library Oxford.

* * * *

Do you recall the shiploads of scrap iron we used to ship to U. S. A. apparently en route to Japan, even long after war broke out? Well Iron Age, New York, gives the sequel. Japan's supply of iron and steel scrap is sufficient to permit high armament production by that country for many months to come. The trade magazine estimated Japan's scrap pile at the start of 1942 at about 10,000,000 tons. Now in this Province we have no one officially gathering scrap because, presumably, it has already all been shipped to Japan and not enough left to pay the expense of the freight to "somewhere in Canada," where it could be used.

* * * *

Mr. Percy Black (Con., Cumberland) was informed in the House of Commons that from parliamentary adjournment last June until last November 14 there were five appointments, other than clerical and stenographic to the staff of the Bureau of Public Information. The appointees, duties and salaries: Mr. R. A. Farquharson, former parliamentary correspondent of the Toronto Globe and Mail, Editor-in-Chief of the news and feature branch at $5,200 a year; Mrs. M. Luxton of Montreal and Ottawa, Editor, technical source material consumer branch, $1,560 a year; A S. Grigsby, Vancouver, assistant to art and printing supervisor, $2,820; Donatien Fremont, Ottawa, French pamphlet Editor and writer, $3,120; and Miss M. Ferguson, Winnipeg and Calgary, Editor, Consumer bulletin, and Women's Feature Editor, $2,100.

NOTES BY THE WAY

The German nation has established all the necessary precedents for a horrible future for the German people. The future is long and foggy, but the Russians seem sure to be the jailers of the Germans and the arbiters of their fate when this war is done, and they are not as fastidious or moralistic as the civilized free races whose restraints the Fuehrer mistook for weakness. — Westbrook Pegler, U.S. Columnist.

Sir:—Less than a hundred years ago all workers on the land were expected to stand aside and pull their forelocks when any of "the gentry" passed, and their wives and daughters had to make bob curtsies. Woe to the "bumpkin" or "yokel" who failed "to show proper respect to his superiors." He was "taught to know his place." This kotowing to "his betters" has now ceased. Only if the ploughman joins the Army has he to salute. Our fields are none the worse tilled because pulling the forelock has ceased. Will the ploughman fight less well if not forced to be continually saluting? — Letter to Manchester Guardian.

When women as well as men were required to register for the purpose of receiving identity cards a large proportion of the ladies very naughtily gave their wrong ages. Quite a common practice seems to have been to knocked off about ten years from the actual birth certificate truth. A much smaller number of men are in the same boat, but whereas men usually practised this deceit for business purposes, and because they had an eye to the too-old- atforty fetish, the women's motive was often sheer vanity. But their fibs have found them out. A woman of 42 who entered her age as 32, now finds herself suddenly called up for war purposes with her "group." What is she to do about it? Stick to her guns, and be called up, or confess in a false entry and possibly be prosecuted? Perhaps, in view of the large number of fair defaulters, 'fessing up may be the best way. There are so many delinquents that it would be hardly possible to take proceedings against them all. — Ottawa Journal.

"It was brought to my mind very forcibly a few days ago", a friend of curs writes, "that I might finish the war in a collarless condition. My collar stud suddenly ceased to function while I was in town. Have you tried to buy a front collar stud lately? An hour's search did bring me to a shop where I was able to get one or two, but what am I to do when these are gone? The stud was always the most elusive part of a man's apparel. "You may certainly have to do without stiff collars", another reader tells us. "The shortage of starch may affect the laundries sooner or later." We could, in fact, do very well without collars, which are merely (but not very) decorative. Besides that we shall all have to grow beards before long, owing to shortage of razor blades and other shaving equipment. Behind a beard one could go collarless without causing remark. And there are no coupons needed for whiskers. "Growing a beard and save money on shaving collars, and ties." We offer that as a suggestion for the next member of the Government who prances up to the microphone to bid us "go all out" or words to that effect. — Sheffield Telegraph.

British troops here are still talking about the things they saw at the surrender of Bardia. One of the things that stick in their minds is the refusal of Major-General Pierre de Villiers to accept any sort of compromise prior to the complete surrender of the Axis garrison. The Germans and Italians had sent envoys under the white flag, but General de Villiers demanded the commanding officer, so Major-General Schmidt drove up to the British lines in a battered German car with bullet holes through the windshield. He got out and walked toward de Villiers, and then stopped expectantly, apparently thinking that de Villiers would come to meet him. We Villiers pretended not to notice, and made the German go all the way. This was the spirit of the negotiations which followed, de Villiers accepting nothing but complete surrender, and in fact, demanding and getting the arms of the German and Italian officers on the spot. The alternative was immediate attack by 100 British tanks massed inside the broken perimeter of the Bardia defences. The first men into Bardia advanced amid smoke and burning gasoline, for the Germans fired everything inflammable. Driving along the road toward the town, one group of officers, revolver in hand, herding 200 captured Germans before him—the happiest man in Libya they thought. — From a Special Cable to the New York Times from Cario.

Men in the forces have been telling John Hilton of the misunderstandings that arise through differences of accent or dialect or brogue. But Professor Hilton knows all about that difficulty, for his own Lancashire accent has more than once led to confusion. "Some time ago," he said, "I went into a big ironmonger's shop in South London. I wanted some clout nails—you know, those short stumpy nails with flat heads for nailing felt down. Every ironmonger keeps clout nails. 'I said, 'a pound of inch clout nails, please.' He said, 'Of what?' I said, 'clout nails.' Never heard of 'em, he said. 'Oh, come,' I said, 'clout nails. Just ordinary clout nails'. He fetched another fellow. He'd never heard of clout nails either. I couldn't believe it so I got out pencil and paper and drew one. 'Ow,' they said, 'you mean cleht niles? Why didn't you sye sow?'" —London Listener.

The A. T. S. is to have its own police force. Women and girls are being asked to volunteer at A.T.S. stations in all parts of the country for a course of police training as prospective "red-caps" Their job will be the same as the ordinary military policemen, but will be confined to dealing with Service women. Volunteers must be over 25, and toughness and brains are the main qualifications. The new recruits will start as lance-corporals with one stripe. A girl who volunteered for the work said: "Volunteers were interviewed by a board of three men and three women officers. Among the questions I was asked were: "Had I any knowledge of jujitsu? "Would I mind taking part in a rough and tumble?' "Had I ever had authority over other people?' The volunteers will undergo a strict course of training at a secret depot before taking up their duties. — London Daily Telegraph.

WORDS OF CHALLENGE

A Thought A Day For A People At War

"The forces which have plunged the world into war, however strong, cannot prevail against the indomitable strength of free peoples fighting in a just cause." — F. D. Roosevelt in a cable to H. M. the King, December 12, 1941.

Dehydrated Vegetables

(Halifax Chronicle)

Allocation of the sum of four thousands dollars to the Federal Department of Agriculture for the preparation of dehydrated vegetables is news that will arouse much interest in Nova Scotia. The funds provided are to be expended in the establishment of dehydrating plants in the Maritime provinces, Ontario and British Columbia.

Existing facilities, it is said, are sufficient to produce but one hundred and thirty-seven tons of dried vegetables, while the British War Office alone is seeking to place orders for one thousand tons. In the case of dehydrated apples great success has already been achieved, and very considerable quantities have been shipped to Britain in a minimum of shipping space.

Dehydrated vegetables, because of their high nutritive value, are in great demand not only for the armed forces, but for the feeding of the civilian population as well. In Britain, where growing space is limited and where the man-power question is of supreme urgency, every opportunity to secure foodstuffs from abroad is eagerly welcomed. The establishment of dehydrating plants in this country may provide a partial solution to this difficult problem, and at the same time enable our own farmers to find a sure market for a very considerable portion of their vegetable crop.

Nova Scotia, both for geographic and climatic reasons, should prove the logical place for the location of one or more of the Government's proposed vegetable dehydrating plants. There are large farming areas in this province producing great quantities of high grade vegetables, and in most cases these agricultural areas are located near rail or steamer shipping points.

Moreover, the production of dehydrated vegetables is by no means unknown in Nova Scotia. Attempts to develop the industry in this province have been made more than once, and the products which were put out were received with high approval. But for business difficulties of one sort and another, the dehydrating of vegetables would have long since become an established industry in Nova Scotia.

With an assured market, the land and the experienced growers, the plants which are now to be set up under Government auspices should prove not only a valuable contribution to the war effort, but a definite asset to the agricultural interests of this province.

A Waste Of Time And Money

(Telegraph-Journal)

In discussions of the matter of a plebiscite on universal selective service, or whatever name one chooses to give the total mobilization of manpower for all war purposes, rarely is the question asked that lies at the root of the matter. It may be put: "Is this properly a matter to be referred to the people?"

When this question is answered in the affirmative, it is usually on the grounds that the prime minister, some time ago announced that conscription would never be introduced by the existing government. It is not easy to follow this reasoning; surely there is nobody unable to see that an assurance given in perfectly good faith may be rendered null by a complete change in the situation since it was given. On the other hand, surely we are not so blind as to fail to perceive that this is not, in any case, a question which the people generally should be asked to decide.

Parliamentary democracy enables the people to choose who shall represent them. They elect their representatives to sit in Parliament. Parliament not the people, is master of the government. If Parliament says there shall be selective service, that ends it. As Premier Bracken of Manitoba put it, a plebiscite is only a move to "relieve our elected representatives from a responsibility that goes with responsible government."

The supporter of true parliamentary government is opposed to plebiscite at any time. Parliamentary supporters seldom attempt to refer anything to the people except for the purpose of ascertaining what are the innermost and unexpressed wishes of the people in a general way. A plebiscite on a specific subject like selective service stultifies parliamentary government. In a case like this, it should not matter what is wished; it is what is needed.

The people, as a whole, cannot possibly say what is needed in this case. They have none of the information on which to base a decision and in war this information cannot be given to them. Military needs cannot be left to popular sentiment, least of all when it is impossible to divulge the most important details. Nor in total war can selective service for industry or conscription of wealth be left to the people. Such decisions are for the government, but the people are safeguarded because the government has to satisfy the elected parliament. If the people want to exert direct influence, the thing for them to do is individually to write or telegraph their members of Parliament, particularly insisting upon a prompt decision, a total manpower policy and action. If the present critical situation calls for more men to be enlisted and trained more promptly than the existing voluntary system provides—and apparently the government takes this view — then why delay two months or more in moving to fill the need; incidentally wasting two millions of the people's money so badly needed for defence expenditures.

Where Meighen Stands

(Sydney Post-Record)

A C.C.F. member of Parliament, speaking from the Cape Breton radio station offered two criticisms with respect to the alleged position of Rt. Hon Arthur Meighen, Conservative leader, on the question of national financing for war purposes. One was that Mr. Meighen had opposed the system of taxing excess profits and that, in so doing, he was against the conscripting of national wealth as well as the man-power of Canada for the prosecution of the war. The other was that he had declared that the elimination of profits from business would tend to destroy a most important incentive to production.

It is interesting to note that the Conservative Leader has dealt with both these points in his second broadcast by radio to the electors of South York. Mr. Meighen denies categorically that he ever opposed the excess profits tax. He states, however, that he urged and still urges that the minimum base on which the law operates should be reached, not by taking average profits for the four years preceding the war, but by fixing that base at a low percentage, no matter what may have been the earnings preceding the war.

This makes common sense, which it must be said the Government's excess taxtation system does not. Under the method now followed by the Government, those business concerns that made the most money before the war are allowed the largest share of excess profits since the war. That is, the fattest sows get most of the new grease. On the other hand, as Mr. Meighen pointed out in his Toronto address last week, this method bears heavily on young or unfortunate companies which were economizing and had little or no profits prior to the war. In point of fact the Government is following an arbitrary rule-of-thumb method of getting of excess profits, and the result reacts to the prejudice of a wide range of Canadian business concerns. What is perhaps even worse, from the national stand-point, it discourages such concerns from speeding up production.

Mr. Meighen reaffirms emphatically his belief in the profit incentive, as an essential feature of the individualist system which is in effect in practically the entire civilized world. It is doubtful that 2 per cent of rightly-balanced, reasonably-informed Canadians differ from the Conservative in this regard. Certainly the King Government does not differ from it. On this point Mr. Meighen has said: "The Government believes, as I believe, that it is in the interests of the state to leave an incentive for efficiency, an incentive for profits however small, not because profits are sacred, but because to do so produces more goods and more revenue and therefore is better for the state. The British Government follows the 'same recourse'"

On the other hand the Conservative Leader is as strong an advocate of the conscription of profits, income and property as of manpower in order to win the war. "Our taxiation," he says, "must be levied on those able to pay, and on an accelerated scale." Nothing could be more explicit than his statement regarding the taxation of wealth. "No rights of property, or income," he asserts, "can be allowed to stand in the way of sacrifices or anything else to win the war.

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ST. ELEANOR'S RED CROSS BRANCH A. ANNUAL MEETING

St. Eleanor's Red Cross Branch A. met for its annual meeting at the home of Mrs. F.F. May. This Society has a membership of thirty-five but several have been changing residence and some have gone to other communities.

Twelve regular meetings were held as well as several sewing and quilting meetings.

Collections from the business meetings amounted to $32.49. Much work was accomplished by both sewing and wool committees. Special mention was made of the beautiful work done by one of the members, Mrs. Abel Clarke.

Following is the report of the financial statement by the secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Roy Tanton. Collections, $32.49; donations, $17.40; entertainments, $90.63; Ice Cream Social, $12.40; balance from 1940, $13.73. Total $166.65. Expenses: yarn, $82.18; Queen's Fund, $10.14; bill folds, $10.00; sewing, $8.87; Red Cross, $20.00; treats for soldiers, $6.40; postage on overseas parcels, $5.08; postage on overseas parcels, $4.80. Red Cross dishes, $4.75; soldiers' cards, $2.24; miscellaneous, 30 cents; Hall expenses, $2.94; Total, $117.70. Balance on hand $8.95.

Following is the report by Mrs. P.D. Crosby, convenor of the wool committee: 103 pairs sox, 7 pairs fine knitted long stockings, 16 scarves, 28 pairs mitts, 2 aero caps, 18 sweaters, 9 pairs ankle sox, 2 helmets, 2 four-piece children's sets, 2 pairs boys' long stockings.

Following is the report by Mrs. Loman Adams, convenor of sewing committee: 20 pairs pyjamas, 5 bed jackets, 35 diapers, 4 baby dresses. The following articles were donated: 1 baby bonnet, 1 pair bootees, 1 baby spread, 2 baby dresses, 2 quilts. The material for one quilt was donated by Mrs. Roy Tanton and the quilting was done by members of the Red Cross.

SWEDEN FOR FREEDOM

STOCKHOLM — (CP) — Reviewing Sweden's position in the war, the newspaper Dagens Nyheter declared "The holy fire of freedom burns stronger in Scandinavian minds than ever before."

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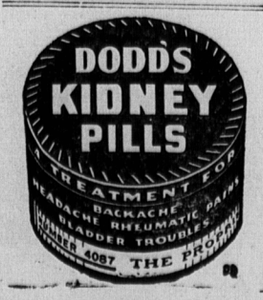
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