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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1942

Party Politics Again

The sincerity of the C.C.F. Party in Manitoba may fairly be judged by the action of its leader, Hon. S. J. Farmer, who has resigned as Minister of Labour in the Bracken Government. His resignation carries with it the withdrawal of all the C.C.F. members from participation in the coalition administration formed by Mr. Bracken as a war measure two years ago. The reason given for this action is not any difference of opinion on vital issues, but simply Premier Bracken's "apparent willingness" to accept leadership of the National Conservative Party, "making it impossible for us to continue the support we have given you in the past, whether or not you accept such leadership."

Mr. Bracken has already made it clear that he would accept the Conservative leadership only on condition that its policies had his indorsation. He is known to be progressive in his views, and to be wholeheartedly in favor of mobilizing all the resources of the nation behind our war effort. Mobilization for total war is the very first plank in the C. C. F. platform. Why then should they not welcome this opportunity of joining forces with the Conservatives under Mr. Bracken? If they could pull with him in a provincial coalition cabinet, why not in the federal field where their professed zeal for an all-out war effort would have greater scope? Alas, it would seem that for all their protestations it is personal and party ambition, not national interests, that governs C.C.F. policies, —at least in Manitoba.

A Story For Old And Young

Christopher Morley's latest novel, "Thorofare" (meaning Main Street) has the significant dedication "For Uncles and Aunts", but it will appeal to parents and children as well. It is not a short story by any means. The author admits he produced it leisurely, and the quotations with which he prefaces it indicate the frame of mind in which it was written, viz.:

From G. K. Chesterton: "The past is always present yet it is not what was, but whatever seems to have been."

And again, from Prospero in *The Tempest*:

"You do yet taste
Some subtleties o' the isle."

It is the tale of an English boy's pilgrimage from his childhood England and his acclimatation as a well-developed American. It is brimful of literary allusions, quotations and atmosphere, just such a book as a connoisseur would con, linger over, and enjoy to the full, the author having a thorough understanding of books and boys as well. A quotation will illustrate. The village referred to is the one in which Edward FitzGerald of "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" fame was born, Woodbridge, Suffolk, his home being named Bredfield House. It had two book stores, one dealing in classics and second-hand volumes, the other in modern fiction.

"...The Bredfield (classic store) shelves had harboured editions more famous still. Edward FitzGerald, one of Wilford's oddities, once said, 'Bredfield is a rock of ages to rely on,' and old John Bredfield (Harry's father) retorted that some of the books certainly had great staying power. A few, a very few customers on the Thorofare had seen FitzGerald's Rubaiyat in print as soon as anyone in the world. Truly, said Uncle Dan, that was an exotic Persian rose to bloom in a dim provincial bookshop. But Wolsey (the modern store) was the perfume of new magazines and the wonderful obituary sweetness of The Times front page (arriving by the mail train about noon). Wolsey was the honeyed redolence of Mudie and W. H. Smith (the only book jobber who ever got to be Secretary of Both Navy and Army, and cartooned in music by Gilbert and Sullivan.) Wolsey's was the circulating library and the bookseller (Marie Corelli and Rider Haggard) and Lady Collanmore's dog cart waiting at the door with a groom while she explored the "The Tatler" to see if her shooting party had been pictured.

"Geoffrey (the hero of the novel) indulged nose and eyes along the forward counters (no saleslady as lovely as Miss Debbidge) and Uncle Dan disappeared among the shelves at the back. By the time he reappeared with a package Geoffrey had found one of these little pink covered 'Books for the Bairns' which cost a penny. He was absorbed in some lively pictures of Brer Rabbit and The Tar Baby when Uncle took him in hand.

"'I want a book,' said Geoffrey.

"'I've got a book for you,' said Uncle Dan. 'You can have it after tea.' Then he saw what Geof was examining. 'I'm damned,' he said to himself."

That was in England. In America, one day Aunt Bee suggested to Squire Chesapeake that she was anxious to know what to do with Geof while his Uncle Dan revisited England. This was his response:

"Your perplexities about Jeff is mighty slim compared to Teackle. At least yo' young scalawag is good at his studies. I have been figurin' out, could I suggest to Dan to give Teackle some tutoring? He'll get left at school if he don't mend his paces. I recall how my old Tullius Teackle talked about hiring a scholar to give me a little doctrinairin' about that age. Tullius Teackle said the best kind of American is one that's been tutored by an Englishman and vicey-versa. He even had a young Englishman picked out for me but the feller had to go back home and I missed all that good learnin'. Matter an' fact it was a feller named C-L-O-U-G-H. Randy and I called it Clow but Tullius Teackle put us right. He said:' Boys will not bluff
When tutored by Clough.'
This Arthur Clough had a feelin' for the States; he was raised with gentry down in Cha'ston. He was teachin' boys up in Mass-chusetts but Tullius Teackle figured he'd likely be relieved to come South. Of co'se he's forgotten now, but they tell me he got to be considerable of a poet. I always been too busy to read after him'."
A delightful book to browse over. Published by George J. McLeod, Toronto, $3.00.

An Apt Illustration

The doctrinal social reformer, says the Globe and Mail, is a man who believes he has a solution for the most vexing problems of society and is determined to apply it. What is so objectionable about him is that he will not recognize that there may be other solutions, or a whole combination of methods, by which these problems can be solved by men of good will without shattering the existing fabric or arresting the continuing process of social life. Like the old Greek robber, Procrustes, the doctrinaire social reformer has a bed of standard size. And those who fall into his grasp, if they be too long for the bed, have their legs chopped off to the right length, and if they be too short are put on a rack and stretched.

So much can be done to improve the lot of our fellow citizens in this Dominion. But let us not approach the problem from Procrustes' point of view. Accepting facts as they are, let us build the bed to fit the dimensions of the citizen instead of trying to change the citizen to fit the bed. For one thing, it is easier, and for another thing, it is more comfortable for the citizen.

—EDITORIAL NOTES—

Because conscription for overseas is on the Statute Book in name only, it is announced that married men, or 18 year olds, will be called up for service. The pity of it, the necessity for it.

* * * *

This, too, in the time of war. Long Island University has inaugurated compulsory intramural competition in basketball, handball, indoor baseball and horseshoe pitching to keep the students physically fit.

* * * *

His Majetsy King George VI acceded to the throne this date, 1936; his royal brother, Edward VIII, abdicated on that date with a view to marrying Mrs. Wallis Warfield, whom he described in his abdication message as "the woman I love"; in the choice between love and duty he chose the former; was created Duke of Windsor, and is now Governor and Commander-in-chief of the Bahama Islands, B.W.I.: George VI was crowned with Queen Elizabeth at Westminster on May 12, 1937.

* * * *

Whether in harness or out of it the Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen will always be a leader. In our present undemocratic days it is not always the real leaders who are publicly assigned these positions; plots and counter-plots are started to further particular interests, with the result that as an outcome, a compromise leader is sometimes elected, one who does not shepherd but follows the sheep. Mr. Bracken recognizes this, hence his determination to impose his terms before allowing his name to go to the ballot.

* * * *

Being tried and convicted of fighting the enemy is something new and unique in military annals. Four Australian soldiers in New Guinea have been court-martialled on a charge of firing at the King's enemies without permission. When their battalion went into action, the men, all cooks, were left behind in Port Moresby. Without leave, they joined the troops and fought the Japanese. The courtmartial's verdict: "Guilty". Sentence: "Don't do it again."

* * * *

It is true we are prospering mightily, all the same if our farmers conserve the fodder and feed grain grown this year it is possible to enter upon a two-year program of production of meats "which in from six months to 12 months' time, depending upon the product concerned," says the Federal Minister of Agriculture, "will result in our being able to supply our own people with reasonable supplies of dairy products and meats of all kinds and at the same time supply Britain with the expected amounts of cheese and bacon and the United States with her supplies of beef cattle."

* * * *

An independent checkup by Saint John Telegraph Journal of the approximate number of bags of Christmas mail and parcels damaged in the fire on board a ship in Saint John harbor last week indicated that two or three hundred bags had suffered, but half or more of these could be salvaged, it was thought. Another Canadian Press despatch from Ottawa stated that Ottawa postal officials estimated 1,631 bags had been damaged, and these "mostly by water." In an Ottawa despatch Sunday, The Canadian Press interpreted a department statement as meaning the entire cargo of 7,041 bags had suffered damage. The mail was en route to Canadian service men overseas. Post office officials again took occasion to warn Canadians against sending inflammable materials through the mails.

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History is being made at such a speed these days that one hardly realizes that it was but yesterday Jules Jeanneney and Edouard Herriott, presidents of the French Senate and Chamber warned Petain and Laval in an extraordinary document against drawing France into the war on the side of the Axis. The soul and honour of France they declared would not tolerate the final shameless betrayal of the country; and the warning has been followed by the suicide of the French fleet, a fulfilment of the threat "of the Presidents that if Petain even moved further" toward Hitler he would be moving as a dictator, forfeiting the last respect of the real France, the France that has blossomed in Africa, and that will live after the present crew of wreckers and betrayers have been swept away. Daily the prophecy is being fulfilled.

NOTES BY THE WAY

Dad gets more pleasure out of a made-over dress than mother —Kitchener Record.

With the turning of the tide we shall see how the Axis grapples with adversity. At this report Herr Hitler was running out of patience, gas and Africa, respectively —Stratford Beacon-Herald.

"By returning to cotton hose, American women will obtain more comfort and fewer goose pimples," avers the Chicago News. Only a mere man's opinion of course.—Stratford Beacon-Herald.

Hitler can still lick anyone on earth, he tells the Munich crowd. For a fellow who never drinks, the Fuehrer sure works himself into the barroom mood. —Detroit News.

A farmer in Huron County found himself in trouble. When his silo was filled it toppled over, strewing the contents over the ground. Neighbors —real neighbors, which means more than the people who live next door —heard of it. They did more. They came over. More still they not only sympathized with the unfortunate agriculturist, but went to work. They set the silo up as it should be, repaired the damage and proceeded with the business of refilling it, and within 24 hours of the time the silo fell, it was up, repaired and ready for the days of winter feeding. A lucky man he was to live in that community. —Guelph Mercury.

Opinions differ as to whether Mussolini coughed during his speech to the Italian people. However Hitler, noting the tone of his mouthings, probably wishes he had choked. Windsor Star.

Even Mrs. Roosevelt hedged on the President's suggestion that old coffee grounds be dried and rebrewed. He "thinks" he is a coffee expert, she said. True, a hot, brown brew can be made as the President suggests. Such a concoction can also be made from chicory, dandelion root, sweet potatoes or rye. But is it coffee? Never! It's high time some one said bluntly that all such expedients lead down the devious bypaths of substitution. Coffee is an essence volatile, elusive. That essence is freed from the ground bean when first the hot water seeps over and through it. For a time the essence lingers to flavor and vivify the brew, but even a reheating banishes it. Re-brew the grounds and there is no essence at all; the product tastes as brown and lifeless as it looks. Honest coffee can be made in many ways. Grandmother brewed it in a pot and "settled" it with the white of an egg. The mountainer brews it strong enough to float a silver dollar; his wife, with a more refined palate, tests her coffee with a half-dollar instead. The South American demands it "hot as hell, black as night, sweet as a lover's kiss." But strong or mild, with sugar, cream, milk or neat, honest coffee can be brewed only when one starts with coffee. Rationing will inevitably bring substitutes; but that need not drown integrity in the dark brown depths. Enshrine the honest cup. Cherish it. Keep it pure. And listen with deep skepticism to the offhand schemes of all those who merely "think" they are coffee experts. Their intentions may be honorable, but their works betray them. —New York Times.

Christmas Eve has always meant much to Germans. Every family feasted and looked forward to a cheerful new year. Accordingly, Hitler's government is doing its best to make the most of the traditional spirit. There are to be special rations for the civilian population and one kilo of peas or beans, one of flour and sugar and a large sausage for every soldier on leave, while Czechs, Poles Greeks, Frenchmen and Yugoslavians starve. All this, Germans are already told, is made possible by good harvests at home and the exploitation of occupied countries. Thus are conquest and Hitler's conception of peace on earth and good-will toward men to be justified. Will the German people content themselves with this? They know that the little extra meat to be doled out comes from cattle slaughtered for lack of fodder, that six million foreigners who are forced to labor must be fed, that thousands of Ukrainians and Russians brought into Germany must be provided with shoes, that the health of the country is in a precarious state, and that the strictest control is necessary even in foreign countries to prevent inflation. Worst of all is the problem of national health. With only one physician left for every 12,000 civilians, Germany faces a medical collapse which must have far-reaching effects on war production. . . The death rate for live births and for the age group between one and 20 years has been rising alarmingly. Despite the attacks on the church Germans will sing "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht" as of yore. But this Christmas Eve will be neither tranquil nor holy. The older generation will heave a nostalgic sigh when it contrasts it with its predecessors of happier times. "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht" —the sentiment must seem a mockery now. And all because a ruling clique led by a fanatic has yet to discover that the precepts of the great religions express age-old convictions of civilized mankind and stand for something more than the imaginary predestination of any one nation to rule the world .— New York Times.

This is probably the story to end all stories about sugar rationing, but we like it because it's true. There's a man in the RCA building who lunches every day in one of the Centre restaurants. We sat down beside him the other day and saw him carefully pocket the one lump of sugar that came with his coffee. "You see," he explained, "I'm taking it for a horse. It's just a delivery horse but I've become very much attached to him and every day he looks for a lump of sugar. I can go without it, but the horse wouldn't. He'd think I was mad at him or something." — Rockfeller Centre Magazine.

Do you perhaps remember a discussion about the "correct" way to sit in a bath, whether facing the taps or back to them? I have been reminded of it lately since the marking of Plimsoll lines in baths. At that earlier time, being young and easily led, I changed my habits and faced the taps. Now, being older, and colder, I have reverted to former custom. The water is a little deeper and warmer at the tap end. A Gallup poll now might yield other and more interesting hints on how to keep warm while bathing.—Manchester Guardian.

Why Food Subsidies?

(In The Winnipeg Free Press.)
By Grant Dexter.

OTTAWA: In the ceaseless fight against inflation, the government's decision to reduce by subsidy the price of milk, oranges, tea and coffee will emerge as being equal in importance to the imposition of the price ceiling itself.

The announcement means that the campaign against inflation is becoming more tense and more perilous. A year ago it was the battle of the price ceiling. There followed at once, the battle of the "squeeze." Now a new struggle begins—the cost of living battle.

A few weeks or months hence, another and equally vital struggle will begin—the battle for essential production.

In its present day setting the change in policy on Thursday was due to pressure on the price ceiling which would have driven the cost of living index upwards and made an additional wage bonus payable in January. Unless measures were taken to relieve this pressure, the inflational spiral would have begun next month. The bonus, which is equal to $35 millions for each point of rise in the cost of living index (and there would have been a one point rise), would have increased the pressure on the price ceiling by increasing the costs of production all along the line. Consumers' goods would have cost more to make; munitions and war supplies would have cost more to produce.

At some point,and probably not very far away, one of two things would have had to happen to civilian production: either the price ceiling would have been broken or manufacturers and producers would have gone broke.

* * *

The immediate pressure on the price ceiling came from food-stuffs and its dominant influence is shown by the rise in the cost of living index since last July. Actually, July should be the yearly peak and when the index climbed 8 in October, the danger signals were flying.

To ease the pressure, the government did not attack the actual pressure points—eggs, beef, etc.—one government moved in on other items affecting the cost of living which were susceptible to speedy and efficient subsidy. Tea and coffee are imported solely by the government, and payment of subsidy is no administrative problem. Milk and oranges are also easily handled. By reducing the prices of these foodstuffs, the pressures will be offset and the rise in the cost of living to the point where an additional wage bonus must be paid in January will be avoided.

The answer to the criticism that other and more nourishing foodstuffs than tea and coffee might have been chosen for subsidy ignores the problem of administration. This was a crisis decision, and other items like beef will probably be dealt with in similiar fashion in due course.

The cost of these subsidies will be $40,000,000 per year. The subsidies now being paid under the price ceiling—largely for increased shipping costs—run to about $60 millions per year. The price ceiling-subsidy policy, therefore is now costing the taxpayers $100 millions a year and may well rise as the pressure increases. Under the tax structure this sum is spread over the people fairly, on the ability to pay. If the anti-inflationary policy was abandoned and the price increases were allowed to pass directly to consumers, no fair division would be possible. All persons not protected by the bonus or receiving the price increases would suffer.

On the other hand, if the pressure was blindly resisted and the ceiling maintained at all cost, essential production would fall away because people could not produce at a loss.

* * *

The important point in the new policy, therefore, is that the government has shifted the emphasis from price control as such, to control of the cost of living and the obtaining of essential civilian goods. If the pressure increases, the subsidy policy will be absence of price control, judging by the experience in the last war and in the United States in the present war, the cost of living index in the year ending December 1, 1942 (the first year of the ceiling) would have risen 15 points instead of 2.7 points. Calculating each point at $35 millions, which is the bonus rate, you have a conservative idea of what the policy has saved the consumers—about $450 millions. And this would only be the beginning of the saving, since basic rises in costs of this amount would have sent all costs and prices leaping upward.

* * *

Back of the immediate policy of subsidizing four food items, there is the complex problem of price control in general. Obviously, the over-all price ceiling will diminish in importance as the war continues. The reasons are obvious: the over-all ceiling was only practicable so long as production continued at a high level. The volume of production in any plant controls the cost of the output.

The first year of the ceiling was a period of maximum production. But as war industry hits peak production, there will be shortages of materials and of labor in civilian industries. War industry must come first.

Right now manufacturers of civilian goods are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain output, and, as they fail to do so, their costs are going up. They are being crushed against the ceiling.

Thus the task of deciding what is essential in wartime is arising in a new form—not as a means of freeing labor for the army and war industry,but to maintain the civilian life of the country. It was made clear by Mr. Ilsley that where the output is not essential, the manufacturer will have to close down. No subsidies will be paid and no price increases will be permitted. But where the output is essential, the increase in costs will have to be admitted and taken care of.

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