THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

Morning Daily (Founded in 1887)

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

By Mail in P.E.I., $4.00 per year; $2.50 for 6 months $1.25 for 3 months; 50c for one month
City Delivery $5.00 per year; $3.00 for 6 months $1.75 for 3 months; 60c for one Month.
By Mail to other Provinces and U. S. A. $5.00 per year
Saturday Weekly: $2.00 per year; $1.00 for 6 months, 50c for 3 months

The Charlottetown Guardian may be obtained at Hotaling's News Agency, Times Square, New York; Old South News Agency, Corner Milk and Washington, Boston; Metropolitan News Agency, 1248 Peel St., Montreal; J. Fine, 851 Bay St., Toronto; News Stand, Chateau Laurier, Ottawa; Wolfe's News Stand, Sudbury, Ont; Hub Tobacco Shop, Moncton N. B.

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1942.

Unconstitutional Pledges

A great deal of eloquence has been expended by the Prime Minister and some of his followers upon the sacrosanct character of the pledges given against full compulsory service during the last election campaign and afterward. High authorities, says the Globe and Mail, can be cited in condemnation of their position. Such an authority was Mr. Alpheus Todd, for many years librarian of Parliament at Ottawa, who wrote copiously about constitutional and Parliamentary practices: his "Parliamentary Government in the Colonies" and "Parliamentary Government in England" have long been accepted as standard works by politicians, officials of Parliament and historians.

In his "Parliamentary Government in England" on page 185 Mr. Todd lays down the following rule:

> "A Ministry have no right to bind either themselves or their Sovereign by pledges in regard to proceedings in hypothetical cases: or to forestall their own freedom of action in respect to contingencies not immediately occurrent but that may afterwards arise."

Todd then proceeds to assert that this point was finally established by general consent through a famous political episode, the dismissal of the Whig Ministry of Lord Grenville in 1807 by George III.

The constitutional issue thus raised was fully discussed in both Houses of Parliament, and in each resolutions were submitted to this effect:

> "That it was contrary to the first duties of the confidential servants of the Crown to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from offering to the King any advice that the course of circumstances might render necessary for the welfare and security of any part of the Empire."

Commenting upon this case, Sir Erskine May, an authority higher even than Mr. Todd, in his "Constitutional History" declared that the Grenville Ministry, although they had agreed to abandon a particular bill obnoxious to His Majesty were by virtue of their offices as the King's Ministers "free on any future occasion to offer such advice as they might think proper," and that no constitutional authority could now be found to defend the pledge.

Sir Robert Peel was a practical politician of great experience, who was also a stickler for proper constitutional practices. He accepted this doctrine about pledges, and in a speech in the Commons in 1835 declared as follows:

> "It would be unbecoming in me as a Minister of the Crown to consent to place any prerogative of the Crown in abeyance or upon the principle of a hypothetical case to pledge myself as a Minister of the Crown or a Privy Councillor how I should advise the Crown as to the course it should pursue."

Moreover, Peel acted upon this doctrine toward the close of his career. He was returned to power in 1841 as the head of a Ministry which had secured a mandate for the maintenance of the Corn Laws and the general system of protection. But when four years later he became convinced by the gravity of an economic crisis which arose that the Corn Laws must be abolished, he carried through a measure for their repeal with the help of the Whigs after more than half of his original Cabinet had resigned.

So the conclusion is that Prime Minister Mackenzie King is not on sound constitutional ground when he persists in abiding by pledges given on a hypothesis whose validity has disappeared. The contingency of a life-and-death struggle with three sinister powers, all waging war on a totalitarian basis, was not envisaged when the pledge was given. The Cabinet is the council of His Majesty, not of Mr. Mackenzie King, who is only its spokesman, and it must be free to advise the Sovereign as circumstances demand. Ministers cannot have this freedom if they are fettered by pledges, and in accepting these fetters they challenge the opinion of high constitutional authorities. The latter would certainly condemn a plebiscite for the release of Ministers from pledges as wholly superfluous and dangerous.

The Right Principle

It is gratifying to note one feature of the Dominion Government's war effort which meets with unqualified public approval. That is the Prime Minister's announcement that the Government proposed to place a billion dollars at the credit of the British Government for the purchase of supplies in Canada, and that this would not be considered in the light of a debt. There are, says an exchange, sound economic and political reasons for this policy. To begin with experience following the last war showed the folly of trying to collect such war debts. The fricton over war debts did much to keep Britain and the United States apart, and so paved the way for the present war. Canada wants no such cause of misunderstanding with the Mother Country following this war. In the second place, it is only reasonable that since Canada is escaping the enormous losses which Britain is sustaining from her presence in the front line that we should be willing to aid her people in the terrific burden that is laid upon them. That is the principle we Canadians held should have been the attitude of the United States in the last war, when Britain and France held the front line while the Americans were preparing. It is only consistent that we should adopt if for ourselves this time.

— EDITORIAL NOTES —

Friday and the thirteenth.

* * * *

Canadian Red Cross Society's annual meeting tonight in Zion Church hall, at which a large attendance is expected as usual.

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Mails from overseas have been delayed since the beginning of January, but latest advice is to the effect that the Island boys are all in good trim, and thoroughly enjoying the letters, parcels and papers from home.

* * * *

Now that the immediate fear of the presence of Mr. Meighen in the House has been got rid of, Liberals are talking National Government, with Messrs Hanson and Earle Rowe members instead of Meighen and Drew. Stranger things have happened before.

* * * *

"Soap for butter" is now a slogan in England. The former is being rationed, the Ministry of Food says, to economize on "certain important oils and fats so that a greater part of the shipping space available may be allocated to safeguarding our edible fat rations such as butter, lard and margarine."

* * * *

It is cheering news to find Sir Stafford Cripps, late Ambassador to Moscow declaring that "there is every chance of Germany being defeated by this time next year." The "chance," alas, depends upon us getting munitions and supplies to the Eastern arena in time. Otherwise—he hesitates to say.

* * * *

Prime Minister King's chickens are coming home to roost in Quebec. Mr. Liguore Lacombe, Liberal M. P., for Laval Two Mountains charged him at a meeting in Montreal with "running away to the United States to escape duty in the Canadian Army during the last war" but now preparing the way for conscription.

* * * *

Politics make strange bedfellows. The outlawed Communists of Quebec, distributed circulars in the recent Quebec elections signed by Evareste Dube and Emery Samuel for the Provincial Committee of the Party, urging the electors to "vote for the plebiscite and assure national unity." The Mounted Police say they are searching for the two signatories but cannot find them.

* * * *

The rioting in Montreal is just what one might have anticipated as the result of the political rancour let loose by Mr. King's plebiscite resolution. "After the war, the Province of Quebec will take control of Canada," Mr. Bouchard, Nationalist, declared at a meeting in Montreal, "if we can rally to our cause all Canadians *of non-Britannic origin*. But first, we must be united ourselves, because a country divided will perish. United, we will be able to play an important role in our country which we will lead to greatness and liberty." The first step is evidently anti-conscription rioting which could easily have been avoided had Mr. King been a statesman instead of a politican.

* * * *

A citizen who was present at the launching of the ill-fated car ferry steamer *Charlottetown* at the Davis Shipbuilding Yards, Levis, Quebec, recalls a curious incident. Mrs. Dalton, wife of the late Lieutenant Governor Dalton, had been invited to christen the steamer. The customary champagne bottle to be smashed on the bow was attached by a ribbon which Mrs. Dalton duly cut; but the bottle swung sideways and did not break. As the ship was moving down the ways an official grabbed the bottle and broke it against the side. Ships, as all are aware, are of the feminine sex and are proverbially temperamental. Could this informality in the launching have been the jinx responsible for her subsequent. disaster?

* * * *

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, French statesman, born this date 1754; adopted an eccesiastical career in which he rose rapidly but was excommunicated after resigning as Bishop of Austin; was proscribed by Robespierre after an unsuccessful mission to England; visited the United States, and afterwards returned to France when Robespierre's fall removed the proscription; attached himsef to Barras and became foreign minister under the Directory; broke with Napoleon, and brought back Louis XVIII, whose minister he became; and subsequently supported Louis Philippe; as a man always ready to sacrifice principle to expediency, but patriotic and an able diplomat: "It seems to me, sire, to be the beginning of the end."

* * * *

"Nothing that has happened since the outbreak of this war has had a more disastrous effect on national unity that the plebiscite proposal," writes the Ottawa Correspondent of the Liberal Winnipeg. Free Press, "and in the opinion of observers the confusion will be increased as the debate in Parliament and in the country gets hotter. A possible explanation is that the conjunction of opponents of the plebiscite, like Premier Bracken of Manitoba, Premier Hepburn of Ontario, Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, the Conservative Leader, and Premier McNair of New Bruswick, the Provincial Liberal Leader and veteran of the Great War, who favors compulsory service, might force a situation which will lead to the formation of a National Government which these gentlemen, holding the views they do, conceivably would be invited to join. The three Ministers for National Defense, the Army, the Air Force and the Navy, appreciate the urgency for reinforcements, and would support a compulsory selective service measure, as would the Ministers of Finance (Mr. Ilsley), Pensions and National Health (Ian Mackenzie), and one or two others, it is believed. The Prime Minister will endeavor to appease Quebec, which has always been the mainstay of his Administration."

NOTES BY THE WAY

On the eve of his eighty-second birthday, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts declined to frame any message to the Canadian people "It would be presumptuous of me," he said, and produced a tintype of himself at 15; "I was cocky then, but I've got over it." There sat the father of Canadian literature in a plum-colored velvet housecoat, with his huge yellow tomcat, Dingo, in his lap; and it was just impossible to create the atmosphere for an interview. Sir Charles refuses to be vulnerable, in spite of a great-grandchild of 11 and a row of books stretching back to 1880. He remains a great contemporary, keenly alive to the present and eager about the future. —Toronto Globe and Mail.

"It may seem strange to take the top off a glass jar and insert your toothbrush in order to get the toothpaste necessary to cleanse your teeth, but that may be what we will come to before long,' says Dr. Frederick J. Cullen, executive vice-president of the Proprietary Association, Washington, Dr. Cullen adds that while material necessary to make moulds would be available, sizes and shapes of the glass toothpaste containers would be strictly limited. — Marketing.

Perhaps, now that a start has been made, the responsible authorities will turn their attention to men's shirts. We are getting awfully fed up with neckties. We hate buying them, we hate getting them for presents, and we hate tying them. To keep them in place unless they are tied tightly is impossible, and if you tie them tightly enough to keep them in place there is danger of immediate strangulation. But perhaps a civilized shirt is too much to ask for. About all we can do is accept our freedom from the bondage of the clothing Hitlers and hope for the best. — Winnipeg Free Press.

Manufacturers of teapots are now making tin hats, a cap factory is turning out bullets, and makers of roller and ice skates are at work on aircraft components, as the result of factory control in Britain. Many British concerns have swung over to war production under earlier re-armament programs, but in the last six months the work of the Board of Trade's Factory and Storage Premises Control has brought thousands more works, large and small, to direct war production. Torpedoes are coming from a boot and shoe factory and aeroengine parts from a hairpin works, while a beauty-cream factory is applying its experience to the making of anti-gas and medicated ointments. Art silk manufacturers are busy on munitions and a wallpaper mill is filling shells. — British Industries Bulletin.

Some weeks ago Navy Minister Macdonald announced that enemy submarines were on the watch for prey off the coast of Newfoundland, and since then one of them has struck. Hon. Mr. Macdonald is confident that the submarine peril will be kept in control off Canadian shores, just as it was in the former war. Indeed, the prospects are that the undersea boats will have a far more difficult task now than then. In the years 1914-1918 the Canadian Navy was a small thing by comparison with other navies, but today it is a powerful and growing force. Mr. Macdonald, in his most recent survey, declares that Canadian warships are operating on both the Atlantic and the Pacific, and that the Navy's strength in officers and ratings will be increased to 40,000 by March of next year. It is a formidable force today and is doing effective work. According to the minister, some fifty million pounds of war material and supplies have left Canadian shores for the United Kingdom since the beginning of the war. This great merchant marine movement will continue, despite anything enemy submarines may do, or try to do. In the connection the minister explains that successful attacks on submarine boats are not to be reported, as such information might shown the enemy where naval strength is concentrated. Canadians will appreciate this precaution while resting assured that their evergrowing Navy will be fully equal to its task of protecting shipping in the sea lanes leading to and from the British Isles. —Montreal Gazette.

The German soldier is no longer the natty jaunty, young fellow who went out to do battle for his country. When a soldier in field grey returns from the front today his face is hardened and bleak, his mien is sombre, and he says nothing.... He is a much different soldier from that of the campaigns of 1939 and 1940. The reason? The frozen wastes, the marshes, the villages reduced to ashes, the death which pervades! The ferocity with which the Soviet soldier fights, the indifference with which he dies, his mortal hate, his war without quarter, the sabotage, the constant and spine-tickling danger of mines, the interminable massacre. Yes, all that and more has contributed to the slough of indifference and the bitterness written on the faces of the German army. — Part of a despatch to the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, of Milan, from its correspondent with the German army in Russia.

The western economy presents a "reasonably favorable outlook," according to the year-end review of the Winnipeg Board of Trade. It is noted with satisfaction that the cash income from sale of farm products has stood up well despite the greatly reduced wheat yield, that there has been a general increase in business, and that the gross value of industrial production in Manitoba has increased $31,000,000 in the last two years. As a result, there has been an increase in all public revenues. — Manitoba Free Press.

Before seeding commences next spring there may be far-reaching changes in the wheat situation. Accordingly it is too early for the government to decide definitely what acreage it will ask the farmers to sow to that grain and what measure it will adopt to keep this within the limit at which it aims. But if conditions are much the same then as now, there should be little difficulty in restricting the acreage to 65 per cent of that of 1940. — Edmonton Journal.

Some newspapers in featuring income tax tables do not include the national defence levy. This, we think, is a serious mistake. It gives a wrong impression to outsiders who might conclude that Canadians are getting off lightly in this war. It may also cause consternation to a few careless individuals who have made no provision for paying the tax, which if not collected through the employers may be due with income tax on March 31. The N.D.T. no matter how it may be collected is a direct and personal levy exactly like the income tax. — Toronto Financial Post.

PUBLIC FORUM

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

MYSTERIOUS COME-BACK

Sir:—We are pleased to see by a report of the Game Warden of the R.C.M.P. that the Hungarian Partridge has made a good come-back since last fall and we could not help but wonder where they came from. Not from some of the sportsmen's tables we know, and we have never yet heard of them having a nesting season in the late fall or early winter. They must have come back with the Snowy Owls, for he says they seem to be thriving at present; or they must be like the birds in the legend of Hunter's River where:

"The maiden believed as true
What the little birds sang
That from nowhere flew."

I am, Sir, etc.,
INQUIRER

TRANSPORTATION TO THE MAINLAND

Sir:—In referring to our approaching Summer touristry, you said in Thursday's Guardian, "Let us not forget that the Prince Edward Island (ferry) will have to go off the route for overhauling and there is no car ferry steamer to substitute for her." Presumably that means that during the overhauling period we shall have no means of importing or exporting merchandise by railway car, or of crossing to the mainland ourselves. Moreover, so far as the public has been informed, there is no steamer or steamship available either for passenger or freight service between Charlottetown and the mainland.

In a letter recently addressed to Mr. Ainsworth, as President of the Charlottetown Board of Trade, I suggested that the Dominion Government be asked to dredge the approach to the Charlottetown railway wharf, so that, until such time as the steamship, S.S. Charlottetown shall have been replaced, ships of all sizes could dock in Charlottetown on the East side of the railway wharf, which unlike the West side, is in good repair. All that would be required would be that the short distance from the wharf would be dredged, a comparatively inexpensive undertaking, and one that could be done in a few weeks time after the ice has disappeared.

I understand that the Board of Trade regarded the above proposal favourably but did not include it in the resolution addressed to Prime Minister King as it was felt that it would be unwise to make more than one request at a time.

A little further consideration would, I believe, have made the members of the Board realize that, as in any event, it will take many months and possibly years for the Government to supply the Island with a new ferry, the dredging would be simply a matter of safety insurance, while it would at the same time free the Island of it's present serious handicap of having to ship all it's produce over seas by rail to Halifax or Montreal at a prohibitive cost.

It is to be hoped that the Board of Trade and the City Council will take such steps as may be necessary to bring this matter before the Dominion Government in time to be passed upon during the present session.

I am, Sir, etc.,
H. K. S. HEMMING

Churchill Reaction On Churches

(St. Thomas Times-Journal)

It may not have occurred to many how the Churchill oratory may have produced a reaction in the churches, but a notable editorial in the United Church Observer proves the fact. The editor was among the journalists who were particularly addressed by Mr. Churchill at Ottawa and the former admits that he was greatly struck by the view that Mr. Churchill had much to teach the churches, particularly with respect to his faith in the common people's response to high challenge, no matter at what cost, this being a note that is almost lost in modern preaching.

Not in centuries has so vivid a challenge been heard anywhere as his declaration that all he had to offer the British people was "Blood, Sweat, Toil and Tears," by which he fired the nation with determination to resist and to go on to victory. The Observer editor was impressed by the fact that Mr. Churchill "continually strikes the note of sacrifice. He does not mince matters. He tells his audience they will have to do more, have to make greater sacrifices. His appeals have not fallen on deaf ears in England; they have a new sense of what sacrifice means." Here the editor points the lesson that that word lies at the very basis of religion which was founded on sacrifice, yet unfortunately the ordinary church member rarely thinks of his religion as demanding a sacrifice from him.

We compliment the Observer editor upon the sense he has gained of Mr. Churchill's greatness and of the lesson which the character and calibre of the man have brought to the churches of the country. Not infrequently indeed has a note of religion crept into the Churchill speeches, which have shown a fine aptitude for effective quotation of Scripture language or episode. We feel here impelled to remark on the parallel between Lincoln and Churchill, both having been obviously deeply religious, albeit not men of great professions, but of profound faith in an over-ruling, but of providence.

The editor has been otherwise affected, we are pleased to note, since the slant toward pacifism which the Observer formerly betrayed has disappeared from its editorial columns though occasional contributors have yet something to learn.

WORDS OF CHALLENGE

A Thought A Day For A People At War

"We are free men. We can cast aside self-indulgence and we have, we can plan and work for victory and we are doing it. We can win and we shall. Never yet has Canada failed in the hour of need."—B. W. Keightley, Advertising Manager of Canadian Industries Limited.

OTTAWA LETTER

By Robert L. Cotton

(Special to the Guardian)

OTTAWA, Tuesday night, Feb. 10—It was fitting, as well as good tactics on the part of the government, to have Mr. Ralston open the debate at the first sitting of the House, following the by-elections. Probably no Canadian holds to an equal extent the good will of the people of Canada regardless of political affiliations. No man has worked harder since the beginning of the war, his life's record is clean, his ability outstanding, and his training in special pleading peculiarly fitted him to persuade the House to settle down quickly rather than needlessly indulge in useless recriminations.

Mr. Ralston did it well and even if members of the Opposition could not read into the by-election results some of the implications which Mr. Ralston might suggest they do at least realize that their position as a party in both of the Chambers is definitely weaker than it had been a few months ago and that they have local problems of their own the solution of which will keep them thinking for some days to come.

Mr. Ralston with moderately and aptly chosen words and in conciliatory and persuasive tone reviewed the general Canadian military situation claiming that Canada has now overseas the most highly mechanized and mobile army in the world. He sought to relieve the complaints which he had heard from members of his own party, particularly from the west coast and strove, as well as words could, to stimulate the war effort in those areas where it may have been slack. He set forth the government's proposed program for the coming year more particularly in respect to man power believing and hoping that as many as could be effectively trained and equipped would be forthcoming this year under voluntary enlistment which he decidedly preferred, and promising so far as he was concerned that when that method failed he was prepared to adopt sterner measures. In the meantime he asked that everyone pitch in and help keep enlistments up. The address will doubtless be widely published and generally read.

I suppose that the two women members of the House would never have been elected if they had not been good talkers. Men are sometimes sent to Parliament because of other accomplishments. But it is hard for man at least to visualize a legislature of silent women. Anyway both Mrs. Cora Casselman from Edmonton and Mrs. Dorise Nielsen from North Battleford have in the past two days demonstrated that they can talk. The former didn't use quite all of her forty minutes to express her views but the latter went overtime to more than make up. The two ladies are quite different in manner and style. Mrs. Casselman is more the business type, sharp, direct, incisive, doubtless a good house-keeper, probably a good boss. But Mrs. Nielsen is the spell-binder. She has the gift of words, not so practically employed, not evidencing so much common sense, but oh, so eloquently delivered, so beautifully enunciated and in such rich tones. She has the male members of the House outclassed for old-fashioned oratory.

Both the ladies' addresses, as might have been expected were considerably devoted to social amelioration. Both are for increasing the payments to old age pensioners. Both announced their support of the plebiscite and Mrs. Nielsen, addressing herself particularly to those of French extraction, but appealing in turn to every group, in moving phrases, pleaded for better understanding now that conditions have changed, and in the face of great peril suggesting that the word conscription with its unhappy memories be expunged from our vocabulary and one of the equally inclusive but less offensive terms be used instead. Production she believed would be greatly stimulated if labor was given a greater share in the planning of the work. But let the government get the people mobilized, get them working, eliminate this sense of frustration which so many feel. She was anxious to help in the organization of women workers and wanted to hear the word "go."

There were a good many other speakers today all Liberals except Mr. Ross of Souris, Manitoba, including Dr. Fleming of Humboldt, Mr. Gauthier of Perineuf, W. R. McDonald of Pontiac, Quebec, W. Little of Temiskaming, Ont., and Hon. Mr. Gardiner, Minister of Agriculture. None of them added much in the way of new thought to what has already been said. Prior to the by-elections those who were seriously dissatisfied with governmental policies were anxious to express their opposition. Some may have exaggerated slightly those feelings which undoubtedly were widespread throughout the country. Now for a few days the opposite is likely to be the case and there will be a surfeit of fulsome eulogy of party and leader and past accomplishments from the lips of those who don't want to let the debate end without something to say for the benefit of the folks back home, and in the hope that their leader may be impressed

The Poets' Corner

EPITAPH

On a Poor Provincial Actor

Here lies a poor old worn-out blade,
Who, living, toiled like any Turk;
Yet never worked but when he played,
As playing was his only work.

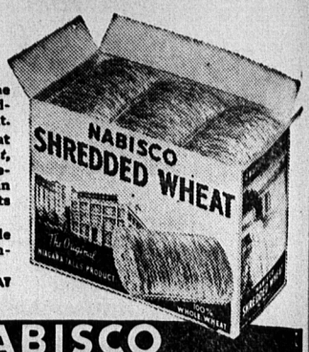
By playhouse work, till past threescore,
He lived unheeding time or tide;
And then, shut out from playhouse door,
The vet'ran in a workhouse died.

Thus, though in war he blazed, like Mars,
And shined in love, like bright Adonis;
His exit proved—'twas all a farce.
'Sic transit gloria histrionis.'

—John Collins (18th Cent.)

HELP CANADA KEEP FIT

MAN! HERE'S MY DISH!



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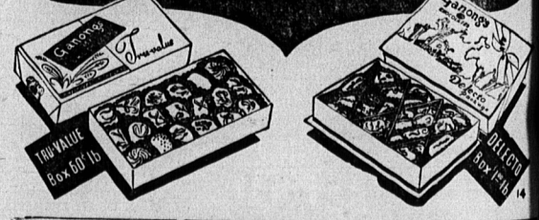

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