# THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

Morning Daily (Founded in 1887)

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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.
By Mail in Canada and U. S. A. $5.00 per year.
Saturday Weekly, $2.00 per year, $1.00 for 6 months, 50c for 3 months.

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

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1940.


## More Aggression In Output

The meaning of the criticism of the Chamberlain Government is that the British Parliament and people are dissatisfied with the rate of progress in the output of airplanes and munitions generally. They recognize that Hitler stole a march on us in our unpreparedness for war, but argue that no sacrifice is too great now to make up the deficiency without any sort of delay. This was evident in the Budget debate, and it is noteworthy that most of the critics then were among those who voted against the Government on Wednesday. Their complaint is that if we had fallen down on the job prior to September, 1939—and this applies to Canada and the other dominions as well—we should have outstripped our ally France and our enemy Germany in our production since. But what are the facts?

Germany is spending $16,000,000,000 yearly while Britain is spending about $9,000,000,000. All that the Chancellor of the Exchequer hopes is that Britain will be organized during the coming 12 months to spend at the rate of $13,000,000,000. We must not forget the flying start that Germany had and, in addition, the armaments she gained by her victories—the Skoda works (in Czechoslovakia)—and the productive power of the slave-driven Czech people, and in Poland; and the ship-building and engineering works of Denmark.

Members like Mr. L. C. Amery expressed doubt that the margin between German and British war effort was becoming appreciably less and stressed the magnitude of the French sacrifice. Instead of $13,335,000,000, he said, Britain should aim at the expenditure of $18,000,000,000, so that with the help of her Allies Britain might draw level with Germany.

It is not an easy matter when a Government once falls behind making up for lost time, and they will only do so effectively when they find the full pressure of public opinion behind them. The burden of the speeches of most of the critics was—"if youth but knew and age would understand", the dire straits the nation is in, the Chamberlain Government would not last another day. This will have the effect of gingering up public opinion in the old land; and if we are to judge by the recent outburst of the Halifax Chronicle something similar is necessary here.

## New Brunswick's Example

The Liberal Government in New Brunswick, like the Campbell Government in this Province, came into power chiefly on its "economy" pledges. The spending spree on which it embarked after attaining office in 1935 must now be met with tax demands upon the people of a ten per cent impost upon all tobaccos consumed in the province, a ten per cent surtax upon the taxes now being paid by companies doing business in the province and an increase in the profits tax on business concerns from one to 2 1-2 per cent. Other increased rates in taxation affect banks and some forms of insurance, as well as the Succession Duties Act.

These imposts come at a time when all taxpayers may have to contribute more freely than ever before to federal revenues. The tobacco tax is something new in the way of provincial taxation, and there is a good deal of scepticism as to whether it can be effectively imposed within one province. In any case, the New Brunswick Government finds itself in dire financial straits and having apparently tapped every other revenue source, is prepared to adopt this experiment.

There is a lesson here for our own unsuccessful "budget balancers" which it is hoped will not go unnoted. We cannot afford, any more than could New Brunswick, the succession of staggering debt increases to which we have been committed in the last four years. Going behind at the rate of a million and a half dollars a year, especially at a time when the whole resources of the country are needed for the Empire's war effort, is simply inviting disaster. The Government, as usual, has sidestepped direct responsibility by appointing an interim committee to consider ways and means of raising more revenue. But without the practice of economy and budgetary control, additional revenue would simply mean more waste and extravagance. What is needed is a return to those principles which the Government espoused in appealing to the people five years ago, but which it has neglected ever since.

## Buying British

The recently announced decision of the Canadian Exchange Control Board requiring holders of foreign exchange, including of course and chiefly meaning the currency of outside countries now in the possession of Canadians, to be surrendered to the Board's designated agencies for its equivalent in domestic currency, focuses attention on the heavy discounts to which our money has fallen in the United States.

There are, says an exchange, many reasons why this is so, but they may be summed up in the general statement that present dealings between the two countries require very much more real money to go from Canada to the United States than to come from the United States to Canada. The greatest factor is the two-way trade in merchanable commodities, on which the balance, under war conditions, has become abnormally heavy against Canada. To realize how heavy this adverse trade balance now is, it is only necessary to look at the figures for January and February of the present year. In these two months United States goods to the value of $98,604,710 were imported into Canada, whereas the Canadian exports to the States in that period were worth only $53,708,132. The resultant adverse balance of nearly $45,000,000 had a tremendously dislocating effect on the relative purchasing values of Canadian and American dollars. If the present trend continues, the excess of our purchases over our sales to the United States may shortly rise to a ratio of two, or even three, to one, and Canadian currency across the border will fall in buying power to the lowest levels ever known.

What the Canadian Exchange Control Board can do to keep Dominion currency from falling to ruinously low points will undoubtedly be done, and the order it has just announced requiring foreign exchange to be transferred into Canadian dollars may help to some extent, but at best it can only affect the situation slightly. This is, however, a case in which the people of Canada can help and help materially. This they can do by purchasing either Canadian goods, or commodities imported from the United Kingdom in preference to similar articles which are brought in from the United States.

On principle, as a self-imposed rule of practical patriotism, as a means of boosting Canadian exchange, British goods,—preferably the products of Canada,—should in all cases possible be bought by Canadians, rather than goods of foreign production.

## — EDITORIAL NOTES —

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Complaint is made regarding roller-skating in the busy thorough-fares. Parents should warn their little ones to confine their energies in this respect to side streets and the Park.

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An old and respected reader, who lives in a hotel, suggests a course of table manners in schools and colleges. He says it is lamentable the way some of the rising generation behave while at the dining table.

* * * *

What a lot was to be done for us before the election, and now we will have to wait for another election in order to have the promises repeated.

* * * *

James, 1st Viscount Bryce, born this date, 1838. A statesman and man of letters, his most famous writings being "The Holy Roman Empire" and "The American Commonwealth". Was British Ambassador to Washington in which he won golden opinions, and promoted cordial relations between the U.S.A. and the home country.

* * * *

The demands on the charitably disposed grow apace, and the danger is that some of the old reliables may be made to suffer through the claims of war time organizations. Tomorrow the Charlottetown Auxiliary for the Blind is making its annual appeal through tags, which the sympathetic may secure for anything up to everything.

* * * I

Details of the new British Sales tax have not been divulged, but Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House of Commons that clothes would certainly be included. If his new sales tax applied only to luxuries, as some members suggested, the Chancellor declared it "might just as well be abandoned now." He made it quite clear that a wide range of necessaries would be included in addition to clothes, but he admitted it probably would take time to work out with trade associations the machinery for putting the tax into operation.

* * * I

A chunk of five to ten pounds of a new substance, a close relative of uranium and known as U-235, would drive an ocean liner or an ocean-going submarine for an indefinite period around the oceans of the world without refueling for such a chunk would possess the power-output of 25,000,000 to 50,000,000 pounds of coal, or of 15,000,000 to 30,000,000 pounds of gasoline. The discovery, announced in the current issue of The Physical Review, official publication of American physicists and one of the leading scientific journals of its kind in the world, has caused such a sensation among physicists that none could be found among those questioned to venture to describe a modern discovery that could be regarded as of equal importance in its vast implications for the immediate future.

* * * *

Evidently the Fuehrer in his conduct of the war is acting upon the practical policy enunciated and followed by his predecessor Field-Marshal Count Von Molke, Chief of the General Staff in the Franco-German war. Molke argued that the more harshly you wage war the more humanely you wage it — which simply means the harder you attack the enemy on various fronts at once, the more quickly he will give in, and the hostilities will thereby be shortened. The Nazis did this in Czecho-Slovakia, in Poland, and now in Norway. In Molke's day they called the tactics *Schlacht ohne Morgen*, "the battle without a tomorrow." Today they call it the *Blitzkrieg*—or "the blast of death." It works, however, mainly where the enemy is taken by surprise and unprepared, and that accounts for its success so far.

* * * *

According to Sir Thomas White, Minister of Finance during the last war taking the base period of 1913 as 100 the cost of living index in Canada rose to 103 in 1914 and continued at that level during 1915, as against the 4 per cent rise in the first eight months of the present conflict. As the war progressed, living costs mounted, in some instances by staggering percentages, but Sir Thomas White's statement shows that the rise was less in Canada than in any other belligerent country, the United States included. In 1917 the cost of living in this country was up 31 per cent, in the United States 42 per cent and in Britain no less than 76 per cent. In the immediate post-war years the movement was accelerated and in 1919 the increase in Canada was 66 per cent; in the United States 71 per cent and in Britain 108 per cent. Not till 1920 was the peak reached and in that year the cost of living in Canada had risen by 100 per cent; in the United States by 111 per cent and in Britain by 152 per cent. In France the index figure in 1920 stood at 341, a rise of 241 per cent over the 1913 base.

## NOTES BY THE WAY

**Writing from New York, Henry** McLemore has expressed the belief that professional baseball, "with its competition between tobacco-chewing, flannel - wearing wage-earners" is not nearly as important as nations disappearing from the face of the earth... He gives convincing reason for his stand in a couple of epic paragraphs. After all, a man can't write of a baseball player having determination and courage when men are being pulled out of icy seas and walking into the face of machine-guns to gain a foothold on a rock. No one can ever convince me that there is one-millionth of the drama in anything sport can produce that there is in a battle wagon firing from a heavy sea, or a pink-cheeked kid squinting down the sights of a gun, or a group of men sitting around a table and moving thumb tacks which in more ways than one represent your destiny and mine. Mr. McLemore touches the roots of things in these few words. In due time they may be recognized as some of the best baseball comment ever written. — Toronto Telegram.

**Various expedients were resorted** to last fall by the Dominion Department of Agriculture to meet the situation created when Canadian apple exports to the United Kingdom were virtually cut off, but the results have been far from satisfactory. Canada leads the world in the quality of its apples, but many of the best varieties were rarities in the vast Ontario market during the past season. In these days when we import oranges from Florida and California, and pineapples from the other side of the world, it is not too much to expect that the best of our apples should be available for all who have the means to buy them. Yet dealers in Ontario display more second grades than selects. Ontario grows good apples, but the complaint has been raised that they are not permitted to grow long enough. Under-ripened, bruised, often ungraded, they are tossed on the market, while many potential buyers look at them and turn away. A few firsts among the better Ontario varieties are obtainable, but tastes differ and a few varieties are not enough. Meanwhile, Nova Scotia Gravensteins, Red Astrakhans, and Yellow Transparents—each a symphony in flavor—are going begging for a market in the province by the sea. Delicious British Columbia apples are hard to get. Obviously, both the Department of Agriculture and dealers have been letting an opportunity slip by. Ontario alone, if it had the chance, could consume all the first grade apples grown in Canada. Provincial loyalty does not oblige Ontario consumers to eat home-grown culls. There's a supply of the best and a demand for it. They should have a chance to get together. — Windsor Ont., Star.

**Masters of Norwegian and Dan**ish vessels on the high seas were in a bewildering position when German forces invaded Scandinavia. Messages from Allied and German radio stations were filling the air with conflicting advice. Scandinavian stations, controlled by the German invaders, advised Norwegian and Danish merchantmen to call at neutral ports — preferably in Spain or Italy. Allied broadcasts advised the merchantmen to make for Allied ports, to avoid seizure by Germany. The Norwegians' predicament was less puzzling than the Danes' Broadcast messages made it clear that Norway had decided to resist the invasion and become one of the Allies. But the Danes, hearing that their country had accepted invasion, and receiving various advice, even from their own government, were in a difficult position. But in spite of the natural bewilderment, Danish and Norwegian ships have been arriving at Allied ports. The anonymous harbor known merely as "An Eastern Canadian Port" has received about a score of the ships. These ships have entered the Allied ports of their own accord. Their services are offered to the Allied cause. And the obvious conclusion is that many of the Danes as well as the Norwegians have no love for Nazi methods. Free to choose, they decide to place their services with the Allies, rather than risk the uncertain future of accepting German control. — Halifax Chronicle.

**For years Sigrid Undset has lived** "above the battle" in a medieval house on a mountainside near Lillehammer. She spoke seldom except in the books that won her the Nobel Prize; but her defense of the humanities and of religious and racial tolerance angered Germany even before the war. Now German bombers over Lillehammer have brought the battle to her doorstep. She is not afraid. In clear crisp tones she calls on the courage of her countrymen. She bids them resist submission to "the loathsome catch-words about 'blood and iron,' 'blood and race'....and all those concepts which revolt the very depth of our being." No one understands the Norse people better than Sigrid Undset. She knows them as they are today, and through the long historical perspective. That there were at least a few traitors among them she acknowledges, but she does not doubt the readiness of the overwhelming mass of the people to fight stoutly for their freedom, as they have done since Viking times. In all Norway there is no voice that commands greater affection and respect. And beyond Norway there is none that will be heard more clearly than the voice of this quiet woman whose whole life has been dedicated to the cause of peace. — New York Times.

**From his pulpit in St. Thomas** Church at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street, New York City, Rev. Dr. Roelif H. Brooks had something to say recently about America's "empty-sounding neutrality". "I am not pleading that we go into the war by sending an army overseas. I do not believe the Allies who are today fighting our battles—do not forget that—for the preservation of democracy and the right of small nations to live, I do not believe they want our men. "Neutral or not, we are helping the Allies now by permitting them to buy for a price the implements of warfare —mark that—buy for a price the things they need for the prosecution of the war. "We are not giving them anything, not even our moral support, officially as a nation. Yet we stand by, and we say we hope they will win, so we may share in the victory without assuming any responsibility. "Now my friends, if this is not hypocrisy raised to the ninth degree, then I do not know the meaning of the word hypocrisy.' — Financial Post.

## New Growth For Bald Plains

(By Roy Davis in the Magazine Digest)

In ten short years, from 1929 to 1939, over one hundred thousand square miles of flourishing farm lands in the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were mercilessly assailed by soil erosion. The fruit of two generations' work went for naught. High winds, driving clouds of sharp, sandy particles, penetrated into the homes, buried the barns, covered the land, the fields, the meadows, dried up the rivers, brooks and wells, killed animals, made life a living hell for man. Whole townships were depopulated, while tens of thousands of farmers were forced to move to new districts, abandoning their patrimony to the mercies of the winds and sun. The situation took on the proportions of a national catastrophe.

Old established ways of dealing with the menace proved unavailing in most cases. The loose and drifting soil had to be anchored. The scattered, worn-out and blown-away soil fiber had to be restored through the use of suitable perennial grasses. A large-seeded grass, capable of thriving in parched soil and possessing an extensive root system, would best fill the need. But no such grass existed.

In 1935, therefore, a group of scientists employed by the Dominion Department of Agriculture accepted the challenge. They would create that grass! For five long years they labored until success has finally crowned their efforts. The new grass, although as yet in the experimental stages, will be tried out at several experimental stations throughout Canada in 1940. If found suitable, it will return to large, now bare and desolate areas of the West the flourishing aspect they had when first young Canada stretched its dormant muscles westward in the endeavor to awaken its gigantic powers and to set to work its inexhaustible resources.

Thrillingly great were those exciting days of the 'eighties when the shiny parallels of the Canadian Pacific Railway boldly struck out into the boundless West, opening the way to a new empire, spanning river and valley, mountain and plain even unto the distant shores of the turbulent Pacific.

And while the spikes were still being driven in, waves of immigrants began flooding the vast new world. English, Ukrainian, German, Eastern Canadian — men and women of a score of nationalities —rushed to take the land, to establish homesteads. In wave after wave they came until the human tide reached even the farthest subdivision of the prairies. In ten years, from 1901 to 1911, Saskatchewan alone increased its population from 91,000 to 492,000.

Soon the land was tilled, the seed was planted, the harvest gathered. The wave of men blanketed the land with golden waves of wheat. The future seemed to smile upon the hardworking settlers. From the beginning the farmers knew that the first generation would "have it tough." Three generations it takes to make a wheat grower, they used to say. But before the third generation could take possession of its heritage, the land which had so warmly welcomed the fathers turned violently against the grandsons

Even in 1900 it began to murmur against excessive labor. Land in cultivation only ten years in the province of Manitoba began to drift, refused to retain the moisture, dried and killed with its parched embrace all living growth. A few homesteaders here and there were forced to move. But no one worried overmuch. Land was plentiful. Nature's warning went unheeded except by a few bespectacled professors down at the university. But who listens to these men? What do they know about farming!

Even today people say that the farmer is only interested in dollars and cents. Perhaps they're right! But who can blame the farming man for this? For in the early days of this century dollars and cents were not too hard to get. In the newer districts rich crops rewarded hard labor. The industrial East, the foreign markets, then the war, demanded ever more wheat. High grain prices became the rule. More and more land was brought under cultivation; meadows, forage lands were plowed under. Wheat was king.

The rumbled warnings of Manitoba's land were all but forgotten. But by 1920 the situation could no longer be ignored. An agrarian conference held in Winnipeg from July 14-16, 1920, gravely listened to a report by Professor F. J. Harrison, who pointed out that the land was beginning to drift due to continuous grain cropping. The drifting began when the virgin fiber had disappeared from the loams, usually in 10 to 15 years.

Ah, these professors! Always taking the darkest view of things. What if a little land did burn up? There was lots of it left! So the professors met and planned, discussed and printed their reports, but their advice fell on deaf ears. Prosperity seemed to prevail everywhere. Farmers purchased furniture, radios, cars, sent their children to the university. Rare was the farm that did not have its tractor. Much was purchased on installment, but no matter — the bountiful earth would give enough to pay with interest.

Then came the crash in 1929. From far-away, oft-hated Wall Street its thunder was heard in the farm lands. Prices dropped, unsold wheat filled the elevators, it hardly paid to harvest the crop. Came nine years of drought, of poor crops, of insects. The land could no longer support its burden. The winds, hot, searing, destructive, scourged the soil. In places not a living thing remained, just sand. Water became scarce. Schools closed. Tractors and machinery lay buried and forgotten. Relief became the means of livelihood. That and charity. In some localities homes, schools, churches, stores were abandoned. Human suffering became intense. Human fiber began to weaken.

During the first years of drought agronomists worked ceaselessly to find some solution. Already in the two provinces, an area greater than the whole of England was affected. In Saskatchewan alone 4,000,000 acres had to be abandoned. A way had to be found to halt further drifting before the "good lands" would be engulfed by the sands of the "bad." One inch of soil blown from a single section of land menat the movement of more than 100,000 tons of soil!

Efforts were made to stop soil drifting by the introduction of strip farming under which the fields were divided into alternate strips of fallow and grain, a practice now widely adopted. In Southern Alberta where strip farming had been utilized for over 20 years, drifting on such farms has been practically stopped. Ploughed summer-fallows and ploughless summer-fallows have also been used to some advantage. In areas with a fair rainfall, cover crops were tried, consisting of a late summer seeding of Spring grain. In many cases erosion had proceeded so far that emergency measures were adopted. They included plowing furrows one rod apart through the field, ridging by means of duck foot cultivators, applying straw or manure, disking during winter months and deep reploughing. But these could not provide a solution for the vast areas already affected by drifting.

In 1898 a tough, crested wheat grass was introduced into the United States from Russia. In 1915 and 1927 it was brought into Canada and planted in selected areas in the West. In time a variety called the "Fairway" was developed by Dr. L. E. Kirk at the University of Saskatchewan. In millions of pounds it was disributed throughout the country and helped to halt erosion. Developing a most remarkable root system which takes complete possession of the soil by running laterally below the surface and penetrating to a depth of seven and eight feet, this grass has proven capable of restoring the fiber content of the soil in a relatively few years. But "Fairway" had one great weakness. Its small seeds had to be planted only one half inch below the surface. Stands could be established in the drought areas but only with great difficulty. Seeding methods were finally worked out which enabled it to be introduced even under very adverse conditions. But a large-seeded grass, which could be seeded deeply and which still possessed the desirable qualities of crested wheat grass, could have been established much more readily and, what is still more important, farmers would be more willing to include such a grass in the regular farm rotation even during good years, thus maintainging the soil fiber so necessary to prevent soil drifting.

In the summer of 1935 cross begun at the Division of Forage breeding of wheats and grasses was Plants, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, under the direction of Dr. L. E. Kirk, then Dominion Agrostologist, now Dean of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan and in co-operation with the National Research Council. Dr. J. M. Armstrong of the Central Experimental Farm, was in charge of the plant experimental work. Dr. F.H. Peto of the National Research Council co-operated by studying certain fundamental problems relating to fertility and sterility of the hybrids. Later Dr. L. P. V. Johnson and H. A. McLennan assisted in the work. An important part of the work was undertaken at the Dominion Forage Crops Laboratory, Saskatoon, Sask., under the direction of Dr. T. M. Stevenson, present Dominion Agrostologist, who was then in charge of the laboratory. This work has been continued at Saskatoon under the direction of Mr. W. J. White.

These men began the quest for a grass to save the plains. Their object was not to produce a perennial wheat, but to secure a vigorous growing, drought-resistant, large-seeded, perennial grass of suitable forage quality which could be grown in the drier areas of Western Canada. "The ideal type is to be large-seeded," later wrote Dr. J. M. Armstrong and H. A. McLennan, "in order that it may be grown more deeply than is possible with our available grass species. It should be perennial to avoid the necessity for frequent tillage with the accompanying soil-driving danger. It should be winter-hardy and drought-resistant, and lastly, it should be of economic value as pasture, hay and possibly as grain."

They were modest men, these scientists. It was just a research problem they insisted. Any scientist would work in the same manner. But they knew the urgency and the difficulty of the task facing them. No simple problem it was, no more cross between two plants. It was to be a "wide species cross," a crossing of two entirely different plants, always a difficult task. "None of your mathematics here," one of the scientists said. "In Nature, in real life, the same figures do not always give the same results even when subjected to the same operation."

Others there were who were somewhat skeptical, even derisive. "Well, it's a nice theory," they said benevolently, not wishing to injure the investigators' feelings, "but . . . aren't you trying to go a little too far?"

No, they weren't! They simply had to win, if hundreds of thousands of acres of good Canadian soil were to be saved.

The trek has been long and difficult. For five tedious years these men and their collaborators worked. From morning to night in season, they would be out in the burning sun expertly emasculating and pollinating the tiny wheat flowers. So tiny were the flowers, so minute the operation that many of the men had to wear special head binoculars. First, they would

(Continued on page 6, Col 5)

## The Poets' Corner

**PRELUDE IN E MINOR (CHOPIN)**

Perhaps it is a silent garden where
The ghosts of smiling childhood start up from
The rank grown grass and flowering weeds, or some
Old image kneeling sadness mid the fair
Of life; or when beside some grave a prayer
Is sighed; or when, alone, the bleak vision
Of waves that chant the slow eternal song
Heard all night through, the saddest theme to hear.

Was this the saddest music that he heard?
I hear the waves within its harmony,
In the recurring phrase, the minor third,
The modulation and monotony
Of rhythm, chords and theme. The waves have surged
Upon the shore. I see the sea, his sea.

—Irene Haugh.


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