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

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1947

Worst Tax Of All

One onerous tax which the Abbott Budget failed to touch at all was the sales tax. This tax, applying to thousands of articles in common use, stands at 8 per cent. As it is passed on from manufacturer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer, with profit added at each stage, it can pyramid as high as 20 per cent by the time the final buyer pays it. Of 33 cents paid for a pack of cigarets, 25 cents is Dominion tax. One cent in four for postage is war tax. There is a tax of a penny a hundred on matches. The Ottawa Journal lists the following other instances:

Tobacco pipes are taxed at 35 per cent. That is, when a man pays $2.70 for a pipe the Dominion Treasury gets 70 cents. Federal tax is likewise 35 per cent on the price of trunks, suitcases, wallets and purses; ash trays, fountain pens and propelling pencils. The tax is 30 per cent on chocolate, candy and chewing gum; 25 per cent on tooth-paste and other toilet articles, fruit juices, clocks and watches, jewelry, glassware and china. Soft drinks pay 40 per cent, plus sales tax.

Suppose a housewife in an afternoon buys a $5 alarm clock and a $10 handbag, spends $2 at the druggist's for toilet needs, and $1 elsewhere for candy and fruit juices, she has spent in all $19. Of this amount, though she does not know it, $7.13 is Dominion tax.

The main objection to such taxes (and a host of others not mentioned, like those on railway tickets), is that, besides being concealed, they fall with like weight on all income groups and so bear hardest on people with small earnings. These people need tooth-paste, alarm clocks, fruit juices, handbags and the comfort of tobacco just as much as the rich do. In Canada they pay the same tax rate on these things as the rich. Taxes of this kind, called "regressive" by economists, are condemned by all authorities as illiberal; and it is no credit to a "Liberal" Government that they are in force in this country at crushingly high rates.

Most of them were imposed originally, of course, in the wartime scramble for funds by any method and at any sacrifice of sound tax principles. Canada's tax system is a vast hodgepodge of levies unrelated to equity or any discernible economic theory, as Mr. Abbott has forcibly reminded the public by failing to do anything about it.

Thoreau On Price Of A House

The U. S. National Committee on Housing in its monthly Tomorrow's Town features a long quotation from "Walden" by Henry David Thoreau. As this Concord philosopher is remembered by countless persons today for having built his own cabin on the shore of Walden Pond, his words on housing have an authentic ring as coming from a craftsman who has thought about the economic aspects of living. Wrote Thoreau in 1847:

"If it is asserted that civilization is a real advance in the condition of men . . . it must be shown that it has produced better dwellings without making them more costly; and the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run. An average house in this neighborhood costs perhaps $800 and to lay up this sum will take from ten to fifteen years of the laborer's life, even if he is not encumbered with a family—estimating the pecuniary value of every man's labor at $1 a day."

The conclusion which Thoreau drew was that although the laborer "must have spent more than half his life commonly before his wigwam will be earned," renting instead would be a doubtful choice. What would the sage of Walden think of news from Massachusetts that Boston's new housing program for veterans has called for a city bond issue of $10,000,000 to finance the building of 1,550 permanent homes? This would bring the average to more than $6,450 a house. Although a wage rate of $1 a day is now uncommon, and although men live longer, and therefore expend less of life to pay for shelter, yet the original premise of Thoreau's argument is still pertinent.

General Gibson's Report

Many far-reaching reforms are indicated in the report of Brig.-Gen. R. B. Gibson, Commissioner of Penitentiaries, recently tabled in Parliament. He tells first of many new regulations, adopted since the Archambault report was made, which are less repressive in character and which thus conform to the reformative policy. A definite plan is proposed by General Gibson for the careful selection and training of penitentiary officers and guards. Immediate steps are also to be taken toward the segregation of incorrigibles from young and reformable prisoners, with more complete classification to follow. He believes strongly in the Borstal institutes; and he would make better use of employment in the penitentiaries as means to the reformation and rehabilitation of convicts.

In the reorganization of the penitentiary branch, General Gibson recommends the appointment of two deputy commissioners—one of whom is to have charge of the selection and training of officers and guards and the establishment of a training school for officers—and three assistant commissioners to act as inspectors.

The immediate need for a training school will be met by an arrangement with the R. C. M. P. who offer the use of their barracks at Rockliffe and Regina. A permanent school would be built later near one of the penitentiaries. The first men chosen for training will be from the present penitentiary staffs, which include many officers with whose character and interest in reformative policy the commissioner is well satisfied.

As regards classification and segregation, the habitual and hardened convicts will all be sent to the Kingston, Stoney Mountain, and St. Vincent de Paul penitentiaries, while young and reformable men will be sent to Collin's Bay, Prince Albert and a new institution of the Borstal type in Quebec, which would leave more room in St. Vincent de Paul for incorrigibles. General Gibson is convinced that the principles of the Borstal system "offer the best known opportunity for the reformation and rehabilitation of youths who have not yet become hardened criminals."

The means of classification should be improved, he says, by the appointment of a classification officer to secure complete information about the prisoners and their past histories before their classification is attempted by the classification board.

The women's prison at Kingston is no longer to be used for that purpose, but the provinces are to be asked to provide accommodation for the women prisoners—never more than fifty—in the provincial institutions "closer to their homes and their families and relatives."

The importance of continuous and useful employment is stressed by the commissioner, and he not only recommends the appointment of a supervisor of the penitentiary farms to assist and advise the instructors in farm operations, but he also recommends the replacement of obsolete machines by modern, up-to-date machines for industrial training. Believing that "ample, useful and instructive work" should be the objective, he says that the other departments of government should secure their supplies from this source as far as possible.

General Gibson concludes by saying that the proposals in this report constitute "the first stages" in the further development of the Royal Commission's recommendations. It will be agreed that the new commissioner is making a good beginning.

— EDITORIAL NOTES —

Community Radio broadcasts this week.

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Provincial Musical Festival all this week.

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Today's seeding in the Prairies is about 10 days behind last year but if things go right the wheat will all be in early this week. There is good moisture in the ground.

* * * *

Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, British High Commissioner and party thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the Province, and expressed regret their stay was not longer. Perhaps they may find time to revisit us when in all our summer glory, and then they will have something to remember us by for the rest of their lives.

* * * *

A 200,000-kilowatt electricity generating station is being built in the sea at Poole, England, at a cost of $28,000,000. A shallow section of Poole Harbor is being filled in to make the station site.

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It is pleasing to note that rural beautification is having its effect on city dwellers as well, quite a few residents having started to improve and embellish their property, which is all to the good, tending to make Charlottetown a "City Beautiful."

* * * *

Islanders are prominent in Saint John these days. Mr. Nelson McEwen, general secretary of the Y. M. C. A. has been the guest of honour at a banquet and dance of the Hi-Y chapters. Among the internes at the General Hospital are: Doctors L. S. Allen, Summerside, P. E. I.; M. A. Deacon, Freetown, P. E. I.; and W. M. Shaw, Clyde River, P.E.I.

* * * *

Our Premier will no doubt note that, according to The Canadian Press, a most unconscious celebrity is a day-old Holstein bull calf, owned by Jack Hayes of Brampton and born to Alcarta Gerben, a cow, which according to Mr. Hayes, is world's champion butter fat producer. Mr. Hayes was offered $5,000 for the calf 40 minutes after its arrival.

* * * *

Mary Lamb, (sister of Charles), poet and essayist died this date 1847. She was fascinated with the Elizabethan age of literature and with her brother wrote *Tales From Shakespeare.* She suffered from melancholy, and was tenderly cared for by Charles who never married: "A babe is fed with milk and praise."

"Anger in its time and place
May assume a kind of grace.
It must have some reason in it,
And not last beyond a minute."

* * * *

Mr. MacNaught, M. P. seems to be of the same opinion as "Pro Bono Publico" with regard to our uniqueness. "We in the Island have our own way of doing things," he says. "For instance ours is the only Legislature in the British Empire where the Government sits to the left of the Speaker. If we should also be the only division of the British Commonwealth to have a dual constituency, that is a distinction rather than a disadvantage." He could have added with even more effectiveness that we have the only Prohibition Act in the Dominion, and yet can show $600,000 Government liquor profit, purely for medicinal purposes.

Notes By the Way

One rather surprising result of the introduction of stirrups has been the use of heels on shoes. These were brought in about the sixteenth century to provide a rest for the feet of horsemen. They still survive, although we no are longer going about on horseback, in spite of the fact that they are uncomfortable and unhealthy, and that it is impossible to walk naturally in them. This is a striking example of how, through sheer inertia, something can continue to be used when there is no longer any need for it — G. N. L. Cooke, in London Times.

Canada, of course, was one of the first countries to adopt the airplane for forest guarding and fire control. That was a profitable investment and still is. Whether it is still in the lead in using modern war inventions to extinguish forest fires is not so apparent. Australian air forces have reversed the bombing of war and have bombs to drop on forest fires to extinguish the flames. These bombs explode on impact with the ground and spread a fire extinguished amounting to sixty-five gallons over forty to fifty square yards. Similar bombing tactics for fires have been tried in the United States with some effect — Brandon Sun.

One by one they are beginning to crawl out of their holes. Charles A. Lindbergh, who hasn't been heard from much recently, has come forth with some advice for the United States in particular and the world in general. All around the world Hitler's little helpers are peeking out to see if the weather is favorable to them and if they can begin to creep out of their holes. First thing we know, the Smithites, Coughlinites and other will be back with all tonsils.—W. L. Clark, In The Windsor Star.

"Russia, absorbing Sweden's out-put of electrical equipment under the trade pact, sells it back to Sweden at an 80 percent mark-up." This can't be a dirty capitalist trick, as Russia's heart is pure. — Winnipeg Tribune.

A friend told me of two incidents that happened to her last winter in buses. She accidently trod on the foot of a conductor, and apologized. He replied "My only regret, Madam, is that you did not stay there longer." She complimented another conductor, a cheerful man, always humming tunes on his high spirits. The reply was: "Camouflage, Madam, pure camouflage." The other day I was hurriedly boarding a bus bound for Victoria Station and asked the conductor if he went into the station yard "Yes Madam" he replied "and we would drive you straight on to the platform but we are otherwise engaged. — Letters in London Times.

Last fall the Russian press was busy criticising lynchings and racial intolerance in the United States. Last month the Soviet Union passed a decree that all foreign marriages were unlawful for Russians. Although we do not believe that the Russian Government has acted because it has come suddenly to disbelieve in mixed marriages, her decree on the United Nations... national scale is less tolerant than Negro minorities in the United States.—Peterborough Examiner.

Few could go along with the dissenter who felt the Greeks and Turks should be asked to put up some sort of collateral, which probably would turn out to be wrestlers. — Stratford Beacon-Herald.

Inability to spell correctly be-trays one's lack of formal education but has very little bearing on intelligence, character or capacity. It may be too much to ask for phonetic spelling at this time, but at least we could have a uniform system. — London Free Press.

A three-in-one model of a mach-ine of the type used on HMS Vanguard for the Royal visit to South Africa will be exhibited in the Electrical Section of the British Industries Fair at Birmingham. Available with a "squeegee" for absorbing dirty water after scrubbing and fitted with a silencer, this appliance combines the functions of a vacuum cleaner for carpets and a suction polisher and scrubber for floors. — UK Information Office.

Many moons ago when Will Rogers toyed with his lariat and cracked jokes for his English audiences, he had one pretty good standby: "I know why you drink tea over here," he used to say. "I've tasted your coffee!" Will had a weak point, thinks The Hamilton Spectator. A lot of English people would gladly take coffee in America—after tasting American tea. Now at long last someone is going to do something about it. In the interest of perking up Anglo-American goodwill, the National Coffee Association has offered in New York to lend, without lease, an American coffee-making expert to the British Ministry of Food. Visitors from this continent would thus get a break in the Old Land. "Much coffee is sold there in the bean," said the association's secretary-manager, "Here it is sold on its flavor." What about reciprocity? Can England send us someone over here to show North Americans how to make tea, and stop us dunking so much coffee? There is nothing complex about it. English know how to make it, and what it does for you. Seven cups of it wake you up in the morning; nine cups will put you to sleep at night. If you are hot, tea will cool you off, and if you are cold, it will warm you up. If you take it in the middle of the morning, it will stimulate you for further work; if you drink it in the afternoon, it will relax you for further thought. Then of course, you should drink lots of it in off hours. You need no fancy brewmasters around. The test of good tea is simple. If a spoon stands up in it, then it is strong enough; if the spoon starts to wobble, it is a feeble makeshift. We found that out in England!

Prof. McInnis Completes History of Recent War

("R.C." in Hamilton Spectator)

To write world history as it is being made is a formidable undertaking for any writer, whatever his capacity: to write it with clarity and admirable dispassion so as to make the achievement the more notable. That is what Edgar McInnis, of Toronto, has done. The final volume of his history of World War II has come from the presses and is known as The War: Sixth Year. It is published by the Oxford University Press of Toronto, at $2.50, and marks the completion of a work that is distinguished by competence, a clear interpretative faculty and an impartial evaluation of events throughout the six volumes of what is an impressive chronicle of the blackest tragedy ever to engulf mankind.

* * *

The author writes with cool evenness, his perspective always appears to be in true focus; and the wide praise bestowed on the work is the best testimonial to its excellence. The period covered by this volume is from October, 1944, to September, 1945, and the last phases of the titanic conflict are given lucid presentation, supported by documentary evidence.

Each theatre of operations is dealt with, including the Allied winter offensive in the West in 1944, the ferocious and surprising lunge of the Germans in the Ardennes which precipitated that alarming crisis known as the Battle of the Bulge and threatened for a few perilous days to demoralize the western Allies, disrupt their entire position and unnerve them by sudden disaster. This powerful stroke of the foe's was a bold one, but it was motivated by rising desperation and it failed. It is well to realize, however, that had the front not been faced with a two-front struggle at that hour, and thereby unable to hurl the last of his total strength upon his western antagonists, the outcome of the Battle of the Bulge might have been different. The Russian campaign is also given detailed treatment, showing the thrusts for position on the Danube and the invasion of East Prussia. Exerted from the East and the West the relentless pressure was applied in the form of a gigantic pincers, with the forces on one side driving toward Berlin and those on the other side pressing to the Rhine and beyond, until the once mighty Nazi host was crushed on the field and compelled to submit to unconditional surrender.

* * *

Nothing else but that supreme objective mattered during those climactic days of high drama; but when the curtain went crashing down amid flame and ruin and the long Nazi nightmare had ended, the fervour and the comradeship of a common purpose, the ideals which had triumphed, the faith in freedom that pulled tyranny from its saddle—all these precious gardens of the spirit seemed to vanish almost overnight. The brave and noble men of liberation had done their job in Europe, and the politicians moved in and took over, amply abetted by human nature. As a result peace still hangs in a precarious balance.

Professor McInnis traces the several campaigns in the Pacific theatres and carries his commentary on to the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an operation about which he feels none too comfortable and views with mingled feelings. He believes that the same stern effect could have been made by the Allies on the Japanese official mind by warning explicitly beforehand what the weapon was and the appalling destruction and loss of life it was capable of inflicting. Failing that, he suggests that the bomb could have been dropped on some isolated and uninhabited area of Japan and the same end would have been obtained so far as piercing the shell of Japanese official arrogance was concerned.

His closing thought is worth pondering: "With equal inevitability a new balance of power would arise in which the struggle for advantage would ultimately reach a point where neither side could concede any further gains to the other, and the stage would be set for the gigantic clash which might well mean the suicide of civilization. This was the brooding and terrible shadow which hung over the nations who now had the task of translating military victory into a lasting peace. It was a task which called for boldness and imagination on the part of the leaders, and for a readiness on the part of the peoples to abandon old concepts and habits and seek a fresh basis for a true world order. Victory carried with it a challenge and an opportunity. A world which had failed so often in the past was given one more chance to show that man's intelligence was equal to his ingenuity, and that his achievement in the field of physical effort and invention could be matched by his wisdom in social and political reconstruction. Success would lay in the foundation of an era of human well-being unparalleled in history. But unless wisdom triumphed over the forces of greed and ambition and fear, the world might find out that it had thrown away its last chance of salvation which it had bought at such a terrible price."

This history of six volumes is easy to read because of its compactness. It is enhanced by excellent maps, the inclusion of documentary appendices, chronological tables and an index. As a reference source it is basic and likely to be valued highly by historians of the future. This generation is therefore fortunate to have so comprehensive a work available to it so soon.

(Professor MacInnis, as is well-known here, is a son of the late Mr. David MacInnis of this City, and Mrs. MacInnis now of Toronto. Mrs. Waller, Pownal St., is an aunt.)

The Exterminator

(By Bruce Hutchison In The Winnipeg Free Press).

Our local vermin exterminator, a man of wide experience tells me that a rat is not very good at mathematics. He can count up to two, he can distinguish between two kinds of poison but when you add a third his calculations collapse. The third number baffles him. The skilled exterminator, with three or more poisons, can always fool the rat and exterminate him.

Thinking this over with the exterminator in a dark basement with the proof of his skill lying dead about us, I began to suspect that the human animal was suffering from the rat's trouble with figures. We can count up to a certain point but, after that, our minds reel and we, too, are likely to be exterminated.

When the budgets of governments were counted in millions we could understand them pretty well. Now, when they are counted in billions they have lost all meaning for most of us. Hence the widespread notion that money doesn't matter any more and the resentment when the taxpayer tells us that it does. If our mathematics were confined to money they would be inconvenient but not fatal—we could go broke and start over again. The really alarming symptom is our inability to count more serious things.

Destruction Or Survival

Even those who can count no further than a rat should be able to see that our species is now engaged in a close race between survival and destruction. But our mathematics do not extend even that far.

Thus you find men of good intelligence carelessly disposing of great nations as if they were nickels or pennies. I hear men say blithely that Britain is through and then turn to discussing their own business or the price of new automobiles. The simplest rules of arithmetic have simply deserted such men. If they could count beyond two they would know that the collapse of Britain, or even its continued poverty, would be ruinous for their own business and probably would prevent them getting a new automobile.

I hear other elderly gentlemen, of grade-one age, talking casually of an atomic war as if they were discussing a Saturday night hockey game. They have counted two. They have counted the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but they can go no further. The calculation which would follow the dropping of many atomic bombs is quite beyond human imagination. We have supped too deep of horrors and are drunk with atoms.

* * *

We are all overwhelmed by facts and figures too large for us to grasp in our present kindergarten stage. As a species we managed finally to grasp the facts of the war and, by an unparalleled feat of imagination, won it. That, let us say, was counting to three. But it now appears that there is still another figure to be counted. The world, psysically and spiritually exhausted by the war finds that the war was not the main challenge after all. Some thing still harder awaits to be done. We must now count to four or, like the creatures who can't we shall be exterminated.

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The Poet's Corner

IN AN ORCHARD

I walked alone upon a dreary road
While heavy clouds hung low above my head,
And in my heart was sullen discontent.
"Life is a sad and dreary farce," I said.

"What fools we are to strive and struggle on.
The world grows worse with every passing year.
Hatred and bitterness possess mankind,
And Love has lost the fight to brutal Fear."

And then—I turned a corner and, behold,
A tree that stood like a great crystal light
Before the altar of the most high God,
A blazing flame of pure ethereal light:

A cherry tree in bloom, and as I gazed,
Its radiant beauty like a heavenly balm
Moved my sad heart to sudden ecstasy,
And on my troubled spirit fell a calm.

Though it may seem the power of evil rules,
And o'er our weary earth has cast its spell,
As long as Spring brings orchard loveliness
God's hand is not withdrawn — and all is well.

—B. H. Warr,
In Toronto Daily Star.

Old Charlottetown
(And P.E.I.)

NEWSPAPERS AND THE HOUSE

From debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly, March 10, 1874:

Mr. Welsh said that he understood that the newspapers, laid upon the desks of hon. members of the House, cost the country about $400 per year. This expenditure might, in his opinion, be stopped, as there were now altogether too many papers sent to them by the publishers. He would move that the practice be discontinued.

Mr. Stewart seconded Mr. Welsh's motion. Each hon. member could purchase what newspapers he wished.

Hon. Benj. Davies did not object to the House paying for one or two papers, but the practice of supplying so many should be discontinued.

Hon. Colonial Secretary (Mr. Haviland) said that this practice of the publishers in supplying hon. members of the house with newspapers during the session had, by degrees, like some other matters, crept in upon the House. The contingent committee of every House had invariably paid for those papers. If the House did not intend to carry out the old precedent, the proper course would be to order the Clerk to notify the publishers of newspapers that the House did not intend to pay for or receive them.

Hon. Mr. Arsenault did not think it fair to exclude newspapers from the House. City members could receive the full benefit of the papers for which they subscribed, but country members, being absent from home, could not do so. As the House had for a long time been accustomed to this practice, and as every hon. member wished to see the opinions of the press upon public questions, the newspapers should not all be excluded.

Mr. Beer said that only a few days ago, the House was offered free admission for each hon. member to the Charlottetown Reading Room, by the proprietor. As hon. members would have the mornings to themselves they could avail themselves of the offer. A sum had always been voted out of the contingent expenses of the House for the privilege offered.

Other hon. members coincided in the opinion that the practice should be dispensed with. The motion was then put and carried.

BIRMINGHAM, England —(CP) Stainless steel instrument strings —normally made from catgut—will be exhibited at the British Industries Fair here.

LONDON —(CP)—Ivor Novello's "Perchance To Dream," which has been running for two years at London Hippodrome, has been seen by 1,080,000 people.

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