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

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1046

Dr. Lattimer And Sales Tax

Dr. Lattimer's report on Taxation in Prince Edward Island, which was tabled in the Legislature and recommended to the serious attention of the members, has already been favorably reviewed in these columns. Its 60-odd pages are crammed with valuable facts and figures. It is only when the report gets away from facts and figures that the compiler finds himself on questionable ground. An instance of this is the reference on page 53 to sales taxes, which would seem to have been inserted for some purpose other than of imparting unbiased information.

The sales tax is what is known as a regressive tax; that is to say, it takes a larger percentage of low incomes than of high ones, in contradistinction to progressive taxes—such as personal income and succession duties—which take a larger percentage of high incomes than of low ones. The sales tax is levied on all commodities not specifically exempted, and the rate is 8 per cent. It is relatively simple to collect because the taxpayer doesn't know, or forgets, that he is paying it. But it is really the most burdensome of all taxes on the poor, and many countries refuse to resort to such an expedient of raising money except under dire necessity.

Dr. Lattimer, however, does not appear to share this view: "A sales tax," he says, "is based on the principle of benefits received. This is a good principle. This tax is the only tax that will reach some people. This is particularly true of the spendthrift. These are the people that it is impossible to reach by any other method than a sales tax. Spirits and tobacco have both come into this category and have and do contribute much to public revenue in certain places. There is no need to confine sales taxes to these items. Recently the list subject to sales tax has been widely extended. There is no reason why it should not be extended still further particularly on luxury articles and amusements."

If it extended only to "luxury articles and amusements," of course, this argument would be plausible. But such is not the case. Why, then, this special pleading on behalf of sales taxes? Perhaps Premier Jones let the cat out of the bag when he stated, in discussion on the Estimates, that the Provinces were seeking at the Ottawa Conference to obtain wider powers with regard to sales tax imposition. Then, presumably, we shall have double sales taxes on all kinds of commodities as well as liquor and tobacco; for there is no evidence that the Dominion Government has any intention of quitting this profitable field.

The Sirois Commission, which made a much more exhaustive study of the taxation structure than it was possible for Dr. Lattimer and his associates to make, comes to a quite different conclusion on this matter. It finds that in the lower income groups the 8 per cent sales tax "may be estimated as taking from 3 1-2 per cent to 5 1-2 per cent of income, depending on the distribution of consumption." That is a pretty big slice to take out of a poor man's wage on the off-chance of getting at what Dr. Lattimer calls "the spendthrift." The percentage would, of course, be very much smaller in the higher income brackets, not to mention the fact that the average low-income family is larger and actually consumes more and pays more sales tax on food and other necessities than their better-off neighbors. This has been adjusted to some extent by family allowances; but the sales tax was in existence long before family allowances, and it is the principle of the thing that Dr. Lattimer professes to be defending.

The Sirois Commission report goes on to say: "Various aspects of the sales tax were brought under discussion in the public hearings. There is a strong case for the progressive elimination of this tax, partly because it is a tax on costs, partly because (except in the case of very low incomes) it is regressive, partly because, if social insurance premiums are collected from very low income groups, those who pay the premiums can hardly be expected to pay the sales tax as well. The sales tax is open to the further objection that the tax is pyramided because, if it is collected from the manufacturer, each subsequent dealer in the commodity taxed calculates his profit on the price which he pays—a price which includes the tax. The effect is that the tax, which collects for the Government a given percentage (today 8 per cent) of the manufacturer's price, takes from the ultimate taxpayer approximately the same percentage of the retail price."

After dealing with some of the arguments pro and con which were presented at its various hearings, the Sirois Commission concludes: "The upshot of this discussion was that a sales tax does raise revenue and if levied at the source excites no great opposition from those who pay it. Its incidence, however, when it is traced out, does not make it a desirable component in a tax system. Its indirect costs are high. Its rating on considerations of equity and efficiency must, therefore, be low. In particular circumstances it may well appear to be the least of several evils. *The Commission appreciates the full strength of the argument against the tax and hopes that its general recommendations are of such a character as to remove any demand for its imposition except by the Dominion.*"

Alas, the Sirois Commission recommendations have been thrown overboard, and it is precisely the opposite direction in which we seem to be heading now.

The Best Regulation

A Federal order-in-council has given City Councils legal power to give priority to essential buildings and to stop or delay non-essential construction.

The order, says an exchange, is a well-intentioned attempt to abandon long range control of building operations and to place responsibility on local authorities. It may be doubted, however, whether it will do anything worth while to improve housing conditions in this community.

Building shortage is a matter of labor and materials and prices. If price ceilings are too low, materials flow to the high-price United States market. If wages are not high enough, men are not attracted to the woods and supply lags. The best regulation would be one which would terminate all regulations and let nature take its course.

—EDITORIAL NOTES—

The ground-hog proved a good prophet this year.

* * * *

The development of trade between here and Newfoundland, and between here and the Magdalens goes on apace.

* * * *

The approval of the "loan to Britain" was a foregone conclusion. As the Finance Minister Ilsley well said it is in no sense an act of charity but an investment in future trade in which Canada will share full benefit.

* * * *

Joseph Ramah, English inventor and mechanician, died this date 1814; invented the hydraulic press, locks, and the first machine for printing bank notes and other securities and bonds.

* * * *

Train delays Thursday were due to two unusual happenings on the mainland—(1) the special conveying our new Governor-General and his party to Ottawa, his train spending Wednesday night on the tracks to prevent them experiencing "the rocky road" to Ottawa during what should be their sleeping hours; and (2) a brides' train with some 900 women and children which was given right of way over ordinary traffic.

* * * *

A big natural increase of population has its disadvantages. The rate of infant mortality in Quebec is "higher than that of the rest of Canada combined," it is stated in a report issued by the Quebec section of the Health League of Canada. The report recommended establishment of a maternity centre at Miserícorde Hospital, Quebec City, under expert supervision, "as a means of combatting certain private maternity institutions which are inadequately organized and supervised."

* * * *

Final tabulations of the election votes for seats in Argentina's congress showed president-elect Juan Peron will have the largest majority of any president of the republic—109 of 158 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and at least 26 of the 30 Senate seats. The opposition's 49 deputies will be less than the one-third needed to uphold any possible presidential veto. For the first time in 40 years, no Socialist candidate won a seat in either house.

* * * *

No single aspect of the new British budget is more significant than the provision for repeal of the excess profits tax. With wartime justification for the virtual confiscation of all corporate earnings over and above the accepted basic minimum gone, even Mr. Attlee's Labor Government has had to pay homage to the incentive principle of free enterprise.

* * * *

Mr. Pouliot, M.P., complained the other day that Hansard had quoted him as having said, speaking of Colonel Bovey: "The man who makes molasses peaches." "I did not say that," Mr. Pouliot declared. "I said that he was always making molasses speeches—sticky speeches for his own benefit." Now that this question has been settled, Parliament must be breathing easier.

* * * *

"I believe in a system of universal military training," Lieut.-General Guy G. Simonds said the other day in Toronto, "because, as I say, it is the most democratic of all measures to provide the necessary defence for a country, if and when it ever again has to face the ordeal of war. . . . I think in a democracy we must recognize the principle that with equal rights must be shared equal responsibilities, and that when the nation is engaged in a life-and-death struggle the whole effort of the nation must be put into the pool for victory."

* * * *

The average family in Quebec has 2.82 children compared with an average of 2.35 for the whole Dominion, it was reported in a return tabled in the Commons recently for J. L. Gauthier (L.-Nipissing). The return, compiled for family allowance payment records, showed New Brunswick in second place with 2.66, followed by Prince Edward Island, 2.54; Nova Scotia, 2.39; Saskatchewan, 2.34; Northwest Terriotries and Yukon, 2.30; Alberta, 2.22; Manitoba, 2.12; Ontario, 2.05, and British Columbia, 1.92.

Notes By The Way

A Japanese volcano, now in eruption, can be heard 20 miles away, doubtless reminding the natives of Tojo in his better days. —Edmonton Journal.

Some critics think that balancing a budget is as simple as the late Blondin's stunt of crossing Niagara gorge on a tightrope. But tightrope walkin has gone out, and so has this other balancing feat. —Ottawa Citizen.

"There is a garden in her face, where roses and white lilies blow" wrote Thomas Campion more than three centuries ago. The poet must have meant to write "on her head" just after his prophetic vision of this Spring's new hats. —St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Beans have played their part in the development of Canada and beans still are beans. In the old days beans and pork were the main items of the menus in many a logging camp. Out of these camps in the Spring came large numbers of men each fit as a fiddle and as hard as nails. In these days when there are food scarcities it might be well to try again a more liberal use of beans in the diet. If present-day cooks would serve them up in a variety of ways they would take the place to a considerable extent of other foods to which we have become addicted and which may be in short supply. —Fort William Times-Journal.

Two of England's dukes have simultaneously announced their engagements. The Duke of Rutland, who is 26, will marry 21-year-old Miss Anne Cumming Bell, of Yorkshire. They met at a ball last year. Miss Bell was at school when war broke out and, after working at the War Office, joined a nursing service. The Duke of Rutland served during the wars with the crack Grenadier Guards. His home is at historic Belvoir Castle, Grantham. He succeeded his father in 1940. The 10th Duke of Northumberland, 31, is to marry 21-year-old Lady Elizabeth Montagu-Douglas-Scott, elder daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensbury, and a niece of the Duchess of Gloucester. —London Daily Mail.

The small but ever present minority which is continually seeking to undermine the friendy relations existing between English and French-speaking elements in this province was dealt another blow when residents of Sherbrooke went to the polls to elect a new mayor and chose Alderman Bryant. For the past half century, an unwritten agreement has existed in Sherbrooke, whereby alternate two-year terms were given to English and French-speaking mayors. The agreement, however, is not binding and the electorate could have as easily elected the French-Canadian candidate. But, instead, the French majority chose Alderman Bryant, thereby signifying its willingness to continue the agreement —Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph.

A drastic plan for minimizing accidents in the streets of Edinburgh is to be discussed by Edinburgh Accident Prevention Council. The plan devised by a member of the council Mr. L. Gordon Sandeman envisages recommending to the town council the abolition of trams in favor of buses, the removal of all electric standards from the centre of streets and the pavements, the removal of all street islands, the proper marking and illumination by night of pedestrian crossings, the erection of railings alongside the pavements of narrow streets and at all street corners on main streets, the replacement of all wood and rubber blocks by granite blocks, the education of school children to walk rather than run across the streets, and of pedestrians to walk on the left side instead of, as at present, on the right side of pavements. —Edinburgh Scotsman.

Japan is reported making its first movie in which Japanese actors kiss. To many Americans acclimated to the fadeout clinch this news will come as a surprise. But it's true. Except for the few who have learned to imitate Occidentals, Japanese have not known the custom of expressing affection by kissing. And there are other peoples also who have their own way of doing or not doing commonplace things Americans and most Europeans take for granted. Some don't shake hands. Others are embarrassed if seen eating. Still others must never look at their mothers-in-law — origin, no doubt, of that particularly overworked breed of humor, the mother-in-law joke. There is a timely world lesson here: If peoples and nations can differ so greatly in homely customs, should we be discouraged if everyone does not at once grasp such intangible concepts as democracy, progress by compromise, and tolerance of minorities? But back to cinema osculation. We've just walked along movie row and we're half sorry we brought up the subject. The Tokyo movie people never should have got started on this celluloid kissing business. They didn't have to. —Christian Science Monitor.

In these skyscraping tropical cities you learn that the Latin-American siesta makes sense, Francis X. Martinez writes in Holiday. I had planned a busy schedule in Bogota. Despite the lazy feeling that steals over all new arrivals, I determinedly raced to and from appointments, as if I were at home. At siesta time, when the streets were stilled and all of Latin America had retired for the three-hour middle-of-the-day rest, I busied myself with paper work. In the evenings there was entertainment by friendly Colombians. "Slow up," they urged. "Don't smoke so much. Cut down on the coffee. Don't you know your heart beats faster at this altitude? You must allow time for your system to make adjustments." On the sixth day it happened. I was about to step into a cab. My knees buckled. The solicitous cab driver helped me back to the hotel. On the way he handed me some advice I had a chance to ponder over for the next three days in bed. "I have had much experience with visitors," he said. "You Norteamericanos especially always in a hurry. To rush in Bogota is to go slow, or even to come to a full stop, as you will for the next few days. We Colombians know this and come to a little stop each day for a siesta. That sage observation explains why life moves leisurely in the mountain cities of the other Americas, where the inhabitants spot a newcomes by his pace. The explanation also applies to the lowlands, but for a different reason. At sea level the intense heat saps your energy in the daytime, and in the balmy evenings a pleasant lethargy overcomes you.

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open fo the discussion by corre spondents of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessar ily endorse the opinion of correspondents.

AN APPEAL TO P. E. I. WOMEN

Sir,—How many women of Prince Edward Island have seen or thought about an article by Matthew Halton, that recently appeared in The Canadian Press. This article stated:

"In the next six months some 60,000,000 human beings will wither in slow agony into monstrous shapes . . . and then die."

It seems difficult for any Canadian who sits down to a well-filled table every day, to visualize such a hideous picture. None of us would refuse food to a starving child or animal. Yet we either refuse, or ignore, to do the one thing which might help in this time of dreadful need, viz., to allow ourselves to be rationed in bread, flour and wheat products.

We send missionaries to foreign lands to preach Christian ideals, yet we refuse to back them up at home by a little practical Christianity, such as doing with one less slice of bread, cake or pastry.

Just now, when grave decisions are being made in London and Washington, as to the advisability of rationing bread and wheat, a voluntary gesture from the women of Canada might swing public opinion.

Bread rationing does not mean giving up all wheat. It merely means substituting. Holland has voluntarily accepted a second bread rationing in order to ship more wheat to France. Great Britain, whose people are allowed only one pint of milk per week to a person, and one egg in six weeks, has agreed to ration bread if the U. S. A. will follow suit. Washington has replied to Britain, "What about Canada and Australia?"

What about it? This is an urgent appeal to the women of Prince Edward Island not only to voluntarily ration their families in bread and wheat products but to use their influence in every society and organization to which they belong. This crisis will be over in four or five months. Rationing may seem an insignificant step but it might help to save humanity, even this civilization.

I am, Sir, etc.,
ADELE PALMER HEMMING

DR. GRANT & UNEMPLOYMENT

Sir,—I notice in the Charlottetown papers that the Provincial leader of the Opposition and the editor of 'Current Comments" have ganged up to criticize my reference to unemployment in my remarks in the House of Commons.

I am not blaming the leader of the Opposition because we all know his political views and his faith in his party often leads him in the wrong direction. He is, however, no milk-and-water man and I hope he can at least say the same about me. But it is just as well for all concerned to make up their minds at once that the manager of the Patriot is out to defeat the present Liberal administration and some of the Federal Island Members. He did not have my speech in his possession before he began to criticize it, taking as his text a Tory press report. I would say to him that if he wishes to find out the extent of his own popularity he should offer himself for nomination at the first opportunity and after that he might have a little more respect for public men.

Now, Sir, I have always been an optimist and I never thought that anything could be gained by growling continuously about hard times; besides, there is no need of it when Liberal Governments are in power. Let Premier Jones and other Liberals, if they will, take repeated insults from the Patriot without protesting but I do not intend to do so regardless of the consequences. Indeed, it makes little difference to me as I have never received any compliments from either of the Charlottetown papers since the days of the late lamented Mr. Reuben MacDonald. If ever a man turned over in his grave it would be Mr. MacDonald if he could only read "Current Comments". Let me here point out, that the City of Ottawa has not a Liberal paper within its limits, yet the Capital returns two Liberal Members repeatedly. It is said also that the late President Roosevelt won at least two of his greatest victories when almost the entire press of the United States was against him.

Replying in the House of Commons to the Conservative Member for Queens who claimed that there was no provision in the Budget for the "jobless," I said and I still maintain that the only "jobless" in our Province are some returned soldiers and they are getting out-of-work benefits pending repatriation, not starving as they were under Tory rule. I wish also to point out that my Charlottetown critics got unemployment confused with reconstruction and rehabilitation, mentioning the name of Hon. C. D. Howe in this connection.

Then the Labourers' Protective Union of Charlottetown came out with a letter in both papers claiming that there were 1,000 unemployed in Charlottetown and calling me to task. No doubt my speech was a shock to the writer as full unemployment might put him out of a job. I admit that in my speech I overlooked the fact that there are always around 1,000 people in Charlottetown who will not work. They prefer to make a living without working and that perhaps is their own business, but they are not in my constituency. If these people would work they could come to Kings County and get employment with the farmers and factories.

In the brief time a member is given to speak in the House of Commons he has to leave some things to be understood, unlike the Island Opposition leader who generally talks several hours without wearying his audience. Had I time I could have added that anyone in Prince Edward Island who was physically fit could for the last five years at least find employment. When the leader of the Opposition scoffs at the idea of a fisherman and his son with their boat having banked $1000 a week during the fishing season in recent years he does not seem to be so well informed as he is on most subjects.

It is amusing to note that after denouncing me for saying that there were no "jobless" in Prince Edward Island the Guardian's leading editorial of March 30 deals with a difficult problem of getting farm help and concludes with the words: "Most farmers claim that the situation is worse today than during the war years." What has the leader of the Opposition to say about that? In the Patriot of March 29 we find a report of a brief presented to Prime Minister Mackenzie King and the Cabinet at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, including certain recommendations, and the first recommendation reads: "That every possible effort be made to improve the extremely critical farm labour shortage". What has "Current Comments" to say about that?

Again, on April 2, the Guardian's leading editorial said in effect that "Dr. Grant's speech is said to be highly unfavourable in Ottawa, that he is sharply criticized and condemned not only by the Conservatives but by the Liberals and the C. C. F. as well and that he played traitor to a certain Maritime block." To these assertions I want to say now that the editor of the Guardian either was misinformed or that he deliberately manufactured this false report. The facts are: I adjourned the debate at 6:00 p.m. after Mr. Gillis had spoken and, therefore, all the members knew that I would be the speaker after recess at 8:00 p.m., and almost every seat in the Chamber was filled when I rose to speak and I got as much applause during my remarks as any member who spoke in the House this year and more applause than 95% of them and this includes Mr. McLure. The applause came from all sides of the House except from the Tories; besides, I received scores of messages of congratulations from the Liberals and from every member whom I happened to meet since then except Mr. McLure; and to sum up, it is quite apparent that he and his Island Tory supporters just can't take it.

In conclusion, I may point out that in recent years it has been impossible in King's County at least to get men to work on wharves for which large sums of money have been voted and in many cases the money was reverted to the Treasury after all my trouble in getting it in the Estimates. Neither has it been possible to get men to work in the woods in order to get lumber for the construction of wharves. There are this year many large grants, one as high as $45,000, another $30,000, and several smaller grants for wharves in Kings County and it is questionable whether we can get men to work as wages are so high in private building, and men will not leave their regular employment to work for the Government on temporary jobs. Moreover, the farmers all over the Province are begging for help on their farms, especially during the busy periods. So, let those thousand so-called "jobless" in Charlottetown go out to the country (where school children are offered $2.00 per day and board for planting) and work for a change, thus helping to increase production of food for the starving children of Europe.

I am, Sir, etc.,
THOS. V. GRANT, M.D.
Member for Kings, P. E. I.
Ottawa, April 8, 1946.

(Dr. Grant's high opinion of his own speech was no doubt shared, at least professedly, by Government members and subordinates at Ottawa. It provided another alibi for ignoring our lack of employment opportunities here, except as hewers of wood and drawers of water. This was not the class of persons The Guardian had in mind in saying that his speech was roundly condemned. Perhaps "quisling" would have been a more appropriate word than "traitor" to have used in the paragraph in our editorial to which he takes exception. — (Ed. G.)

DR. GRANT'S SPEECH

Sir,—Three conclusions have we drawn after reading that speech by Dr. Grant.

(1) That Grant is to P. E. I. what Rose is to Canada.

(2) That the intelligence of this saboteur from Montague is still in the coocon stage.

(3) That his wife (who should know him better than anyone) was probably right when she said that his looks were the best part of him.

We are, Sir, etc.,
Society for the Enlightenment of Politicians.
MORTIMER J. SNERD
Pres.

West River 150 Years Ago

(From an Old Issue of the P.E.I. Magazine)

About the year 1800 it is said the whole of Lot 65 was sold for the quit rents for the sum of thirty-nine pounds, but it is not stated whether British sterling or Island currency. It has also been said that the sale took place at Charlottetown before the advertised time, so that some of the would be purchasers were too late. It was bought by General Fanning and Mr Cambridge, one-half each.

This Lot was the landing place of the British at the time of the capitulation of the Island (then called St. John's) by the French. They landed from a man-of-war at Canoe Cove, and cut a road through the woods, about the centre of the peninsula bounded by the West River and Hillsboro Bay, until they reached Fort Augustus on Warren Farm. The road can still be located in places, especially at the crossing of Ferguson's Creek, where the remains of the old bridge built by the soldier's may still be seen.

Another place of early note is Holland's Cove, near the blockhouse, formerly owned by Capt. Holland who was sent here by the British Government in 1760, shortly after the Island was taken from the French, to survey it and subdivide it into counties and townships. In times gone by Holland's Cove was said to be the resort of pirates, and part of Captain Kidd's treasurer at least was said to be buried there.

General Fanning came to the Island after the American revolution in 1786 and settled on Warren Farm. With him also came Sergeant Mutch, who lived with him for several years afterwards. He was the forefather of the several families who bear his name, most of whom live at East River, Lot 48. Another man, named Ladner, also came to the Island with him, and settled at Nine Mile Creek, who afterwards built mills known by his name, but they have long since gone to decay.

Another of the early pioneers was Surveyor Fox, whose name has gone down to posterity, owing partly to the many "line fence lawsuits." He settled about a mile from Rocky Point.

Many of the pioneers who settled in this locality were American Loyalists. Another class came from Scotland. Among the latter, who arrived in 1806, was the McNeil family of three brothers, Alexander, Dougald and Charles. They all took farms at New Dominion, which are still occupied by some of their descendants.

About the year 1818 Wm. White came from England and shortly afterwards settled on the farm formerly owned by Surveyor Fox. He was a draughtsman and shipbuilder, and said to be the only draughtsman on the Island at that time. He built several vessels for Ewen Cameron, at Clyde River, and later on for himself on his own farm, and afterwards many more at North Point and Charlottetown. His sons followed the same business, and built a number of vessels in Charlottetown and elsewhere.

Another early pioneer was a man named Seeley. He began to build a vessel for Rhaito Webster of Charlottetown; but before she was completed a forest fire started and she was destroyed by it. She was being built on Webster's Creek and was the first vessel built at West River. On the opposite side of the creek and within gunshot of the former spot, the last vessel on that river was also built, the brig "Atlanta." This was in 1868. She was built for E. MacKinnon, who had settled there before there was a ferry of any kind at Rocky Point. The first ferry from Rocky Point to town was run by Capt. Hubbard, about 1840, when there was no wharf at that place nor for many years afterwards. He lived about a mile from there for some years, and afterwards removed to Alberton with his family. After this the Indians were ferrymen for some years, and several others in succession for many years.

South Shore was settled about 1820, one of the first to locate being Laurence Murphy.

Among other discouragements the early settlers had to face the forest, fell the mighty beech, birch or other trees that abounded; burn them up and plant their scanty crop with the hoe between the stumps. They had no roads, but had to follow around the shores and wade the creeks; or, if they wanted to cross the river to town or elsewhere it was in a log canoe. If they wanted to take any cattle over they had to swim them. Bears and wildcats were very numerous and dangerous, and many people lost their lives by them.

The Poet's Corner

FROM "MESOPOTAMIA"

They shall not return to us, the resolute, the young,
But eager and whole-hearted whom we gave:
But the men who left them thriftily to die in their own dung,
Shall they come with years and honour to the grave?

They shall not return to us, the strong men coldly slain
In sight of help denied from day to day:
But the men who edged their agonies and child them in their pain,
Are they too strong and wise to put away?

Our dead shall not return to us while Day and Night divide---
Never while the bars of sunset hold,
But the idle-minded overlings who quibbled while they died,
Shall they thrust for high employments as of old?

Shall we only threaten and be angry for an hour?
When the storm is ended shall we find
How softly and how swiftly they have sidled back to power
By the favor and contrivance of their kind?

---Rudyard Kipling.

RUPTURED?

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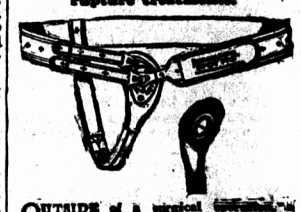

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