

NATO Defense Plans

By indorsing the American policy of increasing conventional (non-nuclear) armaments in Europe the NATO ministerial council probably acted under pressure. Nevertheless, this policy has everything to commend it, since its purpose is to meet conventional aggression by the Communists without instant danger of precipitating nuclear war. It will enable the national units of the Western powers to be merged into a NATO force possessing high flexibility and mobility, and, eventually, to grapple with any situation, short of nuclear attack, which may arise.

As it is, NATO is said to be running five to seven divisions behind its basic goal of 30 divisions in the front line of European defenses. France contributes only a little more than two divisions; the German contribution is weak, inadequately trained, and ill-prepared for co-ordinated action, and the British contribution (British Army of the Rhine) is below strength and lacks modern equipment.

As for nuclear weapons, the NATO council meeting had little choice but to steer clear of this controversial issue. British, French and American foreign ministers held their own meeting in Paris during the NATO session. The result of their deliberations has not been made public, but it is likely that they discussed a closer pooling of their activities. This would involve, on the part of Britain and the United States, a recognition of France's determination to have nuclear strength and a willingness to co-operate with her. The pooling would extend to warning and communications systems and distribution of targets—not necessarily to the point of France allowing U.S. nuclear weapons on her soil.

The vital question of who would be in command of a combined nuclear armament force in Europe still waits to be resolved. If the NATO nations are to trust someone with that role, they must forget national differences and have a completely formulated policy and strategy. Was this point raised by Prime Minister Macmillan in his talks with President de Gaulle over the weekend, before he left for Nassau to keep his rendezvous with President Kennedy? He is again, there are little to be gleaned from the news releases. They report "close agreement on defense views" at the Paris talks, and that is about all the public is likely to hear until some clearer policy emerges.

Bread Upon The Waters

From an Ottawa commentator we learn that in his 25 years' experience the House of Commons Postmaster has never seen a mail come within tons of this December's. A staff of 16 men, with two automatic cancelling machines, working a 13-hour day with two weekly nights of overtime, has been pumping out a daily 50,000 pieces of mail. By Thursday night, when the House rises for the month-long Yuletide holiday, the count will have climbed beyond a record 1,000,000. What is of concern to the taxpayer is that this spite of mail is not so much Christmas greetings; it's mostly election stuff.

Most of the mail, of course, is franked. Politicians claim that this free use of the mails really costs the country nothing, since the mails have to be carried anyway, and the additional weight of letters franked by parliamentarians is as nothing to the overall bulk. We could all use that argument with our own individual mail, but it wouldn't get us anywhere. A more plausible reason is that the franking privilege makes for free and unrestricted intercourse between the public and Parliament; a good democratic principle. But at this particular season, and with talk of another general election in the air, this privilege could well be restricted without impairment to the public interest.

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Last year the Christmas Commons mail ran a modest 480,049 pieces, most of it greetings with two of every three cards franked. The other half million plus pieces this December, figures the Postmaster, is made up of reprints of Hansard speeches, circular letters, pamphlets, and whatnot—all of a political nature.

This is how the members cast their bread upon the waters, hoping to find it after many days. And it's all perfectly legal; for under the act they are free to ship out any "mailable matter", which is broadly defined as "anything that can be sent by post." The Postmaster is even grateful that the boys are making such modest demands on his facilities at this time—it could be much worse, he opines, if they took to sending out bulkier tokens of their solicitude to the voters in their constituencies!

Laughton And The Bible

The late Charles Laughton not only excelled as a stage and film personality, but as a great interpreter of imperishable passages of English literature. During the Second World War, when he had become famous as an actor, he took to reading to wounded soldiers in hospital. He started with such authors as Dickens, Thomas Wolfe, Whitman, Hans Anderson and others, and found a heart-warming response from his hearers.

"One evening," he recalled in an autobiographical sketch, "I said I would like to read a piece from the Bible. There was a rumble of protest. I learned they thought the Bible dull. Then when I started to read they put on extra solemn pudding faces, which was not my idea of how the Bible should be listened to. So I set about how not to make the Good Book sound dull and how to cajole them into enjoying it."

Laughton's success in this field was as outstanding as anything he achieved in his great film roles. From captivating small groups in a hospital ward he was soon broadcasting his Biblical readings across the continent, and recording them for posterity.

He read from the sonorous King James Version, choosing some of the most dramatic incidents in the Old Testament. No one who has heard him in such passages as The Garden of Eden, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace, Noah's Ark, or David and Goliath will ever again have reason to think that the Bible is "dull."

As one critic has remarked, Laughton's achievement here was not due to dramatic talent alone. It involved years of intensive Bible study as well. Instead of declaiming the words as though they were over-familiar texts, he re-animated them with fervor and passion—read them as though they were a new experience, almost as though they had never been read before. The fresh interest and understanding he brought to the sacred narratives proved an inspiration to millions of people, to read and study them for themselves.

EDITORIAL NOTES

This year, we note, the population of West Germany will refrain from putting millions of candles on the Berlin Wall and along the zonal boundary as was done last year. This Christmas greeting, which, last year, was made to express the solidarity of the entire German nation on both sides of the Wall and the Iron Curtain, will be discontinued lest the people in the Soviet Zone of Germany should be reminded of their desperate, gloomy situation. A sad commentary on the existing state of affairs, and an example, in the circumstances, of Christian charity and understanding on the part of the West Germans.



WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WOLF?

OTTAWA REPORT by Patrick Nicholson

Absentee Problem Still Untackled

It is open season on our absentee M.P.s. The Ottawa "Times" draws timely attention to the several of the "Tuesday-to-Thursday Club," which consists of those M.P.s who attend Parliament only three mid-week days each week, and spend Friday to Monday at home. When the Speaker called the House to order on 3rd December, only 133 of our 265 M.P.s were in their seats. This attendance record, points out the "Times," is not a powerful argument in support of the agitation by M.P.s for an increase in their annual indemnity of \$9,000 plus \$2,000 expense allowance.

The Sarina "Observer" suggests that too many of our M.P.s like the Roman emperor Nero, who fiddled while Rome burned. Our modern "Neros" in the Tuesday-to-Thursday Club are fiddling, says the "Observer." They are shirking their well-paid jobs at this time when "our parliament is probably at the lowest ebb in its history."

INCREASING T. TO T.

Surveys when the House is

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open to the discussion of controversial questions of interest. The Guardian does not accept responsibility for opinions or statements. All letters published are subject to editing and condensation where necessary. The Guardian is unable to enter into any correspondence regarding letters.

ELECTION AFTERTHOUGHTS

Sir, It was with pleasure that I read the letter of Mr. Zakem which was published in your Saturday edition. Whether much comment is produced or not, will not alter the fact that the very large number of people feel as Mr. Zakem does. Having voted elsewhere I was deeply disturbed to discover that in this Province the ballot is handled by someone other than the voter after it has been marked. I do not suggest that my ballot was scrutinized before being deposited in the box. Frankly if I felt it had I would make a great public outcry. Yet with a heavy cross on the ballot it would not be difficult for anyone handling it to obtain a fairly accurate idea of what was going into the box. It is one thankful, that there is no issue of electoral reform. It is long overdue. Even the place of balloting was not clear in some instances. Personally, although balloting was taking place where I had voted for the past three years, I was directed elsewhere on this occasion and nothing had been posted to indicate that such a change had been made. This is apart from this iniquitous business of permitting property holders to vote in a number of districts.

Congratulations, too, to all who have protested this filthy business of bribery to obtain votes. Clearly no man or party is fit to govern anything when they resort to such tactics. If reports are to be accepted, and at least one editor has accepted them, neither of the parties in this Province are interested in high morality, or the maintenance of law. Ratios and just for power moves. This may not be official policy, but it is tolerated. If they are so untrustworthy in seeking votes, I wonder how safe our institutions are at other times when the chips are down. Many of us are frightened of the disregard for law which characterizes too much of our Provincial life. Knowing that there are men of integrity involved we appeal to them to struggle for honesty in every area of public life. I am, Sir, etc.

X. R. HOBSON

WARRANT ISSUE

PARIS (Reuters)—Justice authorities announced Saturday night that a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Jacques Stastie, a leading underground member of the Front National, Charles de Gaulle's government. The authorities said the warrant against the 36-year-old former governor-general of Algeria was issued several weeks ago.

EXPORTING CHURCH

LONDON (CP)—One of St. Christopher West's churches is to be dismantled, shipped across the Atlantic and rebuilt on the campus of Fullon University, Mo. The bomb-damaged church stands in the middle of London's commercial district.

Do Germs Live On Big Germs?

By Dr. Theodore R. Van Dellen WE have all heard saying that little fleas have smaller fleas. Are bacteria plagued by smaller bacteria? This is a most question but there have been reports that viruses attack bacteria. Viruses are many, many times tinier than bacteria; consequently it is likely to assume that this occurs a lot to bacteria. But viruses do not kill bacteria. In 1931, Dr. Victor Tsevenko discovered that a nontoxic prodigious diptheria bacillus could be infected by a virus. In this took place, the bacillus still was capable of causing an infection in the throat and, at the same time, switched to a toxin-producer. Perhaps the virus remained in the bacillus and was the toxin-producer. Unwed expectant mothers have less backache and easier confinements than married mothers, according to Dr. Albert W. Bauer, a Viennese obstetrician. He ascribes this situation to the posture of the pregnant women. Married mothers do not unlike the nonmarried, flaunt their condition as a matter of pride. The more the abdomen is propped up, the more the back muscles are spared overstretching, and the baby lies more parallel to the spinal column. Dr. Bauer suggests that all pregnant women assume the stance of the unwed expectant mother. He discourages the wearing of high heels because they tend to accentuate abdominal protrusion and lordosis of the spine.

Dr. Van Dellen will answer questions on medical topics if stamped, self-addressed envelope accompanies request. R.W. writes: How long does it take to cure tuberculosis in the early stages? REPLY: From six weeks to six months, provided modern remedies are used. With tuberculosis, we prefer to use the term arrested rather than cured. The disease is notorious for returning if the individual neglects his health.

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NOTES BY THE WAY

Canon Anthony Hynes, Roman Catholic rural dean of Bedfordshire, England, after he blessed cars at a Bedford ceremony, said: "Don't you think you can drive recklessly now because you are relying on God to protect everyone to drive carefully." — Winnipeg Tribune.

Publicly about the substantial Irish sweepstakes prizes won by a few Irish citizens seems to have fostered a wide-spread delusion that legalized lotteries could easily pay all or most of Canada's hospital costs. Perhaps it is simply an extension of the something-for-nothing delusion fostered by the modern welfare state philosophy. — St. Catharines Standard.

Our Yesterday's

(From the Guardian Files) TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO (December 18, 1937) J. G. Murdoch of Charlottetown was a member of the cast in the comedy drama "The Importance of Being Earnest," presented recently by the Academy University Dramatic fraternity.

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Salesman — "I've been trying to see you for a while. Would you like to have an appointment?" Executive — "Make a date with my secretary." Salesman — "I did, and we had a swell time, but I still want to see you." — Montreal Star.

Mr. Kennedy, trying to navigate between Mr. Krushchchev on one side and two old conservative members of Parliament on the other side, Mr. de Gaulle, he did remarkably like Ulisses between Scylla and Charybdis. — London Economist.

In Marolles, one voter was not content to cast his ballot for de Gaulle. He also enclosed a cheque to express his gratitude. At St. Die, on the other hand, officials couldn't open the ballot box to count the votes because they had lost the key. The mayor opened it with his belt buckle. It was a trick he had learned when he was a war prisoner of the Nazis. "But I hadn't tried it since," he boasted. — Le Meridional, Marseilles.

Apple growers are described as being shocked by the discovery that Canadians eat less than half as many apples as citrus fruits. Evidently the old adage, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," has worn thin in these days of government serfdom and medicine. But if the growers want to up their sales, they will have to advertise more — and convince the public that apples are as essential to the diet as oranges, grapes, etc. — Brandon Expositor.

A despatch from Manchester, England, tells of the noble decision of Mr. Arthur Fox, owner of a strip-tease club, to run for Parliament. He said: "I will use in the campaign the same methods I use in business; I will sell my product to the public in the best way that I can. Trouble is that the item doesn't identify Mr. Fox's political affiliation. No reason at all to think he's a Labor chap, because he's a baroque enthusiasts cross party lines. And even though it's a Conservative, even with a small 'c.' He's much more likely to be a Liberal with a small 'l.'" — Hamilton Spectator.

THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA Condensed Annual Statement 30th November, 1962. Assets: Cash on hand and due from banks (including items in transit) \$ 748,451,354; Government of Canada and provincial government securities, at amortized value 873,224,265; Other securities, not exceeding market value 701,519,919; Call loans, fully secured 342,913,111; Total quick assets \$2,666,108,649; Other loans and discounts 2,007,134,003; Mortgages and hypothec insured under N.H.A. 265,238,040; Bank premises 56,926,663; Liabilities of customers under acceptances, guarantees and letters of credit 126,442,080; Other assets 6,900,693; Total 55,128,750,128. Liabilities: Deposits 54,673,708,399; Acceptances, guarantees and letters of credit 126,442,080; Other liabilities 17,355,174; Total liabilities to the public \$4,817,505,653; Rest Account 243,071,200; Undivided profits 1,645,275; Total 55,128,750,128. Statement of Undivided Profits: Profits for the year ended 30th November, after provision for income taxes and after making transfers to inner reserves out of which full provision has been made for diminution in value of investments and loans \$ 21,492,267; Dividends 16,629,000; Transferred from inner reserves after provision for income taxes payable 10,000,000; Balance of undivided profits, at beginning of year 1,785,008; Total 54,645,275; Transferred to Rest Account 5,000,000; Balance of undivided profits, 30th November 1,645,275. \*Total provision for income taxes \$20,875,000 (1961—\$30,750,000). W. EARLE McLAUGHLIN, Chairman and President; C. B. NEAPOLE, General Manager.