THE GUARDIAN

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"The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink."

MONDAY, JAN. 3, 1955

Our First Century

The opening observances of Charlottetown's Centennial year were an impressive prelude to the varied activities which will follow. Fitting reference was made by His Worship the Mayor and other speakers to the achievements of earlier citizens in this Cradle of Confederation. It is worth recalling, at this time, an editorial reference to the responsibilities of our first City Fathers, which doubtless reflected their own views and which at any rate served as an admirable guide to their activities.

"Much will depend," said Hazard's Gazette of August 8, 1855, "upon the spirit in which the first set of municipal officers commence proceedings. In all changes of government, whether municipal or otherwise, most men are apt to expect too much from those entrusted with power, while on the other hand, a dread of being considered as extravagant and wasteful has the effect of introducing in the latter a niggardliness, which is the reverse of good policy and sound economy. In public as in private spending, a liberal method of doing business is ever the cheapest in the end. . .

"What we would recommend to the municipal authorities is that when public works are determined upon — and they should not be undertaken except after full consideration of their utility and necessity— they be erected and finished in the most substantial and scientific style. Every member should recollect, that though he is mortal, the Corporation, of which he is a part, is destined to immortality, and that the work ordered by the Corporation should be in accordance with this difference, so that, though the original founders have mouldered in the dust, the monuments of their good government and prudent administration will proudly rear their heads, and serve as an example to their successors, of the wisdom and propriety of erecting their edifices on solid foundations, and of imperishable material."

In the main, our civic leaders have followed this advice and no city in Canada has a finer record of conscientious service in the administration of its affairs. If we have not made sensational progress, we have moved steadily forward and it is with gratitude that we look back upon our past, which will become brighter this year in the minds of all our citizens as the centennial ceremonies are continued.

Starting Out Well

An encouraging note of optimism is sounded in the various New Year's greetings which appeared in our year-end issue. Lieutenant Governor Prowse, in his message, reminds us that for the first time since the Korean war there is peace throughout the world, and that the prospects, though still uncertain in this connection, afford ground for reasonable hope. For this Province and for Canada he forsees opportunities for greater achievement and progress.

Premier Matheson expresses the hope that the potato marketing situation may improve as the year progresses. He notes the continued high margin over the rest of Canada maintained by our Island hog producers, the progress made in dragger fishery operations and the new industries developing because of larger fish landings, particularly in the filleting of fresh fish; also the progress in rural electrification, more than 100 miles of power lines having been constructed in outlying districts during the past year. This construction marks the beginning of a program which, it is hoped, will be an inducement to young people to remain on the farm, bring back others who have gone elsewhere to seek their fortunes, and result in substantial improvement and development of our agricultural resources.

Charlottetown's centennial year affords Mayor Stewart an excellent opportunity of glancing briefly at past achievements and predicting a new century of development, both for the city and Province. In Summerside, Mayor Wedge notes with satisfaction an improvement in unemployment conditions over the previous year, and in economic conditions generally. Montague's Mayor Yeo notes with pride the town's new Federal building, nurses' residence, Federal warehouse, new concrete bridge and many new residences, all evidencing the growth and progress of this flourishing community. Souris also has notable achievements to its credit, as Mayor Peters points out; particularly in fish processing developments which are of far-reaching importance to the Island's fishery industry and to our Island economy generally."

This cross-section of official views expresses pretty generally the confidence and optimism of our people, both in the resources of the Province and in our ability to utilize them to greater advantage during the year. We shall certainly have difficulties to encounter; but in the past these have proved a challenge to greater achievement, and there is no reason to doubt but that the same will prove true in the future.

Celtic Grievance

Celtic grievance against the Sassenach has been stirred anew, notes an exchange, by the Protection of Birds Act of 1954 which has clamped down on the annual guga hunt in the Hebrides off the northwest coast of Scotland. Harsh words are being said about the English, who are held responsible for the enactment of the new law by Parliament at Westminster.

Guga is the Gaelic word for the gannet or solan goose, a sea bird regarded as an epicurean delicacy on Gaelic home tables of the Western Isles at festive seasons of the year. The guga hunt took the men of Lewis to the barren, uninhabited isle of Sulisgeir 30 miles north of the Butt of Lewis, where the hunters scaled steep cliffs and lived in bothies (rude huts) built of stone slabs while spending their days on the cliffs, killing, plucking, singing and salting the birds. As reported in the New York Times by Drew Middleton from London, the ban on guga hunting has aroused indignation on the island of Lewis, and the County Council of Ross has decided to raise the matter with the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The guga has figured importantly in Christmas feasts of the Hebrides for centuries beyond calculation. The dispatch from London said: "The gugas lay single eggs in individual nests. When the young guga is hatched, the parents feed it plentifully. Then they depart leaving the offspring fat and sassy in the nest. Just about that time the hunters arrive. There is a Lewis saying, 'When the barley is ripe, the guga is ripe."

The new law prohibits the killing and eating of sea birds including the guga. The people of Lewis, taking note of the traditional Christmas goose in England, are saying: Sauce for the guga is sauce for the gander. Anyone who eats so much as a slice of guga now is liable to be fined £5 ($14), and anyone who kills a guga is fined another fiver. At last reports no one knew whether the present Labor Member of Parliament for Lewis or the Conservative Government would bear the brunt of the islanders' displeasure.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Week of Prayer.

* * *

That the big schools do not always have the most eminent counsellors is shown in the acceptance by Dr. Albert Einstein, the famed physicist, of a seat on the advisory council of Black Mountain College in a small town of the same name in North Carolina. It is one of the smallest colleges in America and is owned by its teaching staff. Another adviser is the nationally known poet, William Carlos Williams.

* * *

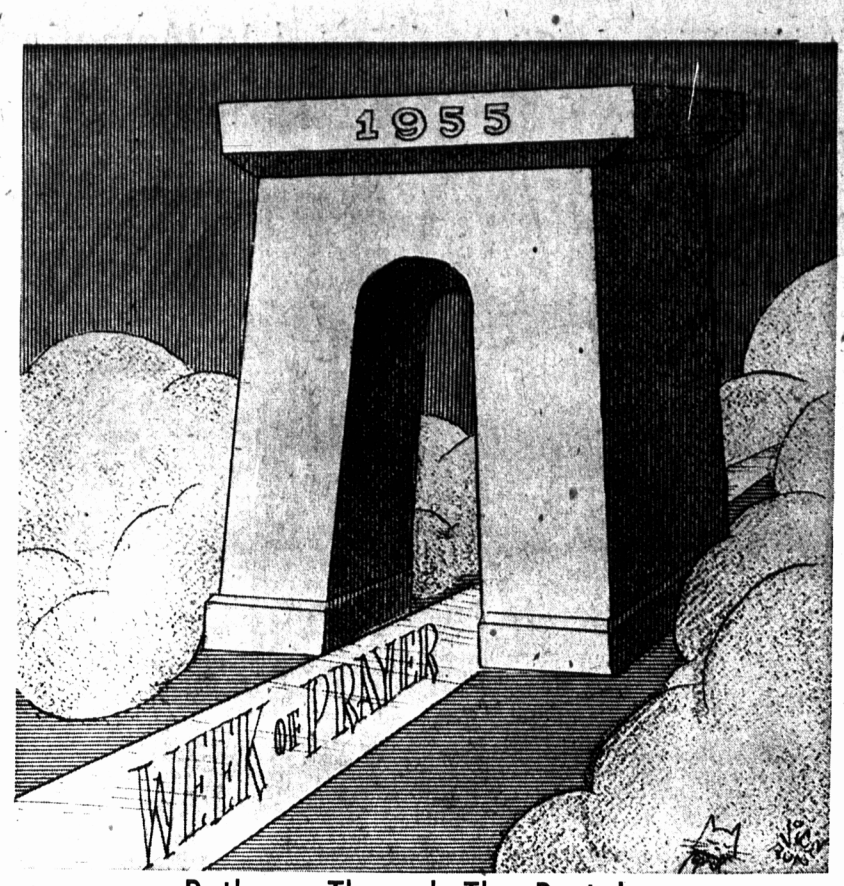
An increase in volume this year of Canadian exports to the United States, higher tourist expenditures by Americans in Canada and continuing inflow of capital for investment is predicted by President G. S. Thorvaldson of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Thorvaldson expects that consumer expenditure on goods and services will remain constant and that population increase will give the total a small boost.

* * *

Clement Richard Attlee, British statesman, was born this date 1883. An Oxford graduate and a barrister, he served as secretary of Toynbee Hall from 1910 and as lecturer on social science, London School of Economics from 1913 to 1923 with time out for army service. After the war he became mayor of Stepney and then Labour M.P. for Limehouse. He held many high offices, including cabinet posts in Churchill's wartime government. Becoming Prime Minister July 26, 1945, he was actually in office on VJ Day.

* * *

Further evidence of the thriftiness of the Canadian people is afforded by the year-end statement of Mr. A. Bruce Mathers, president of the Canadian Life Insurance Officers Association. New life insurance put in force up to the end of the year is estimated at not far short of two billion, six hundred million dollars. The nation's policy holders, now numbering more than five and one-half million, increased their life insurance holdings to about twenty-three billions at the end of 1954. This is a record level. Life insurance companies paid benefits totalling nearly three hundred million dollars, some twenty-five million dollars more than in 1953. A rise of ten million dollars in death benefits, and the rise in benefit payments generally, is due primarily to the greatly increased amount of life insurance in force.



Pathway Through The Portal

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open to the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinion of correspondents.

GERMAN REARMAMENT

Sir,—Twice within the memory of men still young this country has been involved in a major war. In the first of them 60,000 of our young men lost their lives, in the second 40,000. Had these wars never taken place most of these men would be alive today. Most of them, even those who fell in the First World War, would still be productive citizens. Canada still feels, and will continue to feel for another generation, the affects of these two blood-lettings.

What did these two wars have in common? Each was waged by us in alliance with most of the peoples of the world, against a militarized Germany, against a Germany which discarded every rule of international law, every standard of civilized conduct and, in World War II, every resemblence to sanity, in a ferocious attempt to conquer the world.

And yet, in the coming session of Parliament, our legislators will be asked to approve of a treaty which puts arms back in the hands of this same Germany.

The strange thing about it is that this is exactly what happened before! The First World War ended with Germany decisively defeated. Its armies had been driven from entrenchments stronger than the world had ever seen before. Its workers and its sailors were in revolt. By the terms of the peace treaty Germany was almost totally disarmed. Yet, within fifteen years, this same Germany was again a power, again menacing the world with arms put into her hands by those very nations she had previously attacked, and which she was to attack again.

And not only were the deeds of these western nations the same, but their reasons for them were the same as well. In the 1930's Germany was rearmed for the purpose of serving as a bulwark against Bolshevism. Today the only difference is that Bolshevism is now called Communism. Germany is to be a bulwark against Communism!

Some bulwark!

All propaganda (and we hear enough of it these days!) aside, the plain facts are these: Russia, against whom a German army was recreated in 1918-1939, has never attacked us. Germany, whom it is now proposed we again permit to rearm, has attacked us twice.

As I follow current events today I can only be reminded more and more strongly of the words of a poem which I learned in school. The last verse went like this:

Take up our quarrel with the foe!
To you, with failing hands we throw
The torch. Be yours to hold on high!
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, tho' poppies blow
In Flanders Fields.

I wonder how well they are sleeping today?

I am, Sir, etc.,
MILTON ACORN
Charlottetown

Books Received

THE MEGANTIC OUTLAW, written and published by Henry G. Kidd, East Angus, Que., 139 pp., $2. —There is nothing slick about this tale of pioneer Scots community in the Eastern Townships. The Megantic Mountains are somber and rugged. The story of Donald Morrison is told with directness and yet with an art that recalls true folklore. The narrative is interspersed with selections from the "Trial and Life of Donald Morrison" by Angus MacKay, also known as Oscar Dhu. These add to the atmosphere of balladry for the poem is a true ballad in all except its individual authorship.

Henry G. Kidd is familiar with the life of the woodsman and writes with feeling of the free life of the outlaw who declined to stand trial for a killing which was really self-defence unless justice was done to his parents who had been cruelly wronged.

The sympathy of his neighbours

Dublin's Abbey Theatre

By Alvin Steinkopf

DUBLIN (AP)—Dublin's Abbey Theatre enjoyed an anniversary in December and many are surprised to learn that it is only 50 years old.

It has no building of its own any more. The mildewed old structure in Abbey street, a former city morgue, burned in 1951. Many thought that from an architectural viewpoint it was good riddance.

But the spirit of the Abbey Theatre marches on. The organization makes the most of a little subsidy. And Dec. 27 a company of intense and dedicated players who have found a home in the Queen's Theatre in Pearse street will produce Lady Augusta Gregory's "Spreading the News" and poet William Butler Yeats' "On Baile's Strand." These are the plays with which the Abbey Theatre got started in 1904.

To youngsters the Abbey Theatre seems as old and as authentically Irish as the blarney stone. But it is expected that at the anniversary performances there will be many in the audience who were present at its first night.

* * *

It has been an eventful 50 years for the Abbey Theatre. In the record are great artistic triumphs, flops, displays of Irish temperament and incidents which seemed to be of hot political rather than theatrical significance.

Probably no modern theatre has had to ask oftener for police protection, or figured in more violent discussions.

The Abbey Theatre was founded by dreamers, poets, idealists, great Irish patriots and scholars. The scholars were determined to preserve the Irish language, and to nurture the special kind of culture that oozes from Irish sod. Speaking for himself and his playwright colleague, J. M. Synge, Yeats said: John Synge, I and Augusta Gregory, thought

All that we did, all that we said or sang
Must come from contact with the soil, from that
Contact everything Antaeus-like grew strong.

* * *

Yeats was inclined to be a dreamy mystic, and everything he touched or sponsored in the years when his influence was strong was full of symbolism, which Irish audiences found charming even if they did not understand everything properly. But in later years the theatre came under the influence of a group known as the "Cork realists." They made it a popular playhouse, portraying comedy and tragedy of everyday life, whenever possible in the Irish language.

But it was always experimental, bringing in many foreign plays which seemed to plow new ground.

In its time the Abbey Theatre had a lot of fun with George Bernard Shaw. In 1909 the censors of England would not permit the production of Shaw's "The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet." The Abbey Theatre, which wasn't bothered by censorship, put it on and made in-

was invaluable but sometimes strained, as where one old Scottish patriarch,, because he was incapable of deceit, invariably found himself locked in the barn by his family when the police were near.

sular London critics scurry across the Irish sea to keep up to date.

In its earlier days the Abbey Theatre delighted in pin-pricking the English. For a time its charter forbade the production of English plays that had not reached the stature of classics. Irish nationalists rallied strongly to its support when it refused to close its doors in token of mourning in the death of King Edward VII. The lapse, it developed later, was due to a misunderstanding, but the incident established it thoroughly as an Irish institution of great independence.

* * *

The old theatre building was given to the company by Miss A. E. F. Horniman, a friend of Yeats. It had to fight for a crown patent, the licence needed by a theatre. The document provided that the Abbey must not have more than 562 seats, must not sell liquor or produce modern English plays The restrictions have been modified. It first got a subsidy in 1924. The Abbey and an enterprise in South Africa are believed to be the only state-subsidized theatres in the English-speaking world.

Police co-operation was needed in 1926 when the theatre crowd objected to political slants in Sean O'Casey's "The Plough and the Stars." Members of the audience scrambled to the stage and tried to settle things with fists. The players, including F. J. McCormick and Barry Fitzgerald, tossed objectors back over the footlights, and the show proceeded with police protection.

Many of the theatre's players made great names in the world. Stars include Willie and Frank Fay, Fred O'Donovan, Sydney Morgan, Marie O'Neill, Arthur Sinclair, J. A. O'Rourke and F. J. McCormick.

The Poet's Corner

FROM 'A SHROPSHIRE LAD'

It is in truth iniquity on high
To cheat our sentenced souls of aught they crave,
And mar the merriment as you and I
Fare on our long fool's-errand to the grave.

Iniquity it is; but pass the can.
My lad, no pair of kings our mothers bore;
Our only portion is the estate of man:
We want the moon, but we shall get no more.

If here today the cloud of thunder lours
Tomorrow it will hie on far behests;
The flesh will grieve on other bones than ours
Soon, and the soul will mourn in other breasts.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust
Are from eternity, and shall not fail.
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

—A. E. Housman.

NOTES BY THE WAY

Asbestos is expected to remain Quebec's major mining industry for at least a century. And, the way things look in the crystal ball, we're going to need it easily that long. — Windsor Daily Star.

Philosophers assure us that the passing of time is only an illusion, but it's no use pointing this out to the manager of the bank which holds your note. — Edmonton Journal.

We hope it won't be construed as vulgar republicanism on our part, but we suggest the new 14th Street bridge be called something more original than the Queen Elizabeth Bridge. Canada's kings and queens are noteworthy and memorable enough without their names having to be attached to every school, road or bridge in the country. — Calgary Albertan.

There is the story of the Negro who stepped outside the store and dropped a bottle of liquor on the sidewalk. He shook his head sadly and said: "Christmas done come and gone!" Then there was the Scot from Aberdeen who carried his in a hip pocket. He fell backward one day and when he reached back, he felt something damp and he said "I hope that's blood!" —Fergus News-Record.

The cuckoo clock industry seems to be doing a thriving business in Germany. It originated in the Black Forest around 1740. All of which makes one wonder whether the Black Forest was anciently full of cuckoos. Last year 500,000 cuckoo clocks were turned out. It is expected that this figur will be topped in 1954. The big demand for these clocks offers statistical proof that the world is getting more cuckoo by the hour. —Kitchener-Waterloo Record.

If education is preparation for life, as it is supposed to be, what kind of preparation is it that makes classes as easy as possible, neglects discipline and promotes the pupil simply because he has spent the required number of hours in the classroom? Education which has deteriorated to the lowest common denominator is not education at all. It may be the easy way to empty the schools for next year's crop, but the products of such a system represent a colossal waste of time and money, a waste for which we shall pay, a heavy price. — London Free Press.

When ex-servicemen were crowding Canadian universities a few years ago, they were acclaimed as good students — sensible, serious and intent. Not only were they older but they had experienced life far removed from the academic atmosphere. They were able to set newly acquired knowledge against a realistic background. Younger students must get this very necessary experience through summer jobs. A varied "summer" career as a rubber factory worker, engine cleaner, groceteria clerk, welder, sleeping car porter and customs inspector was of considerable value to one Ontario student in winning a Rhodes scholarship this week. Wide variety in summer employment is important to all university graduates. Such experience not only matures thinking, but demonstrates aptitude and contributes to adaptability in later careers. — Financial Post.

Heavy imports of turkey are causing no little concern among Ontario turkey raisers at this season. Canadian turkey are, of course, of superior quality to the birds from south of the border, a fact which many Ontario buyers are prone to overlook. Corn fed turkey, just like corn fed hogs, has an inferior flesh to that of the Canadian product, finished on hard grains, including plenty of wheat. Corn feeding is, of course, cheaper and brings quicker gains. But there's nothing to equal the Canadian bird. —Owen Sound Sun-Times.

Jimmy Fraser is the grandson of the chief of the Songhee tribe of Indians on Canada's West coast, and Jimmy has a big toe. That in itself is nothing surprising, since most people have a big toe, but Jimmy's big toe is something out of the ordinary. He claims it is extra sensitive, that he can feel an earthquake, and he reports that his toe picked up the shock of the recent California earthquake. This, he says, is a sign of cold weather and snow, and he urged the Indians to prepare by piling wood all around their houses, and by finishing their hunting and fishing quickly. —Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph.

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