

"Covers Prince Edward Island like the Dew"
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"The strongest memory is weaker than
the weakest ink."
MONDAY, DEC. 19, 1955

Tariff Board Findings

It is reassuring to note, from the review of the Canadian Tariff Board statement on the potato tariff question as prepared by Mr. Campbell, manager of our Potato Marketing Board, that the findings are not entirely barren of constructive proposals. The fact remains, however, that the Board is opposed to tariff protection on the assumption that "historically" Canada is a large exporter of potatoes to the United States and that U. S. imports, being of a seasonal nature, would enter this country whether or not they faced a customs duty at the border.

Many pages of facts and statistics were given in the farm organization briefs before the Tariff Board, showing how the situation has changed in recent years, particularly with regard to seed exports as compared to the domestic table stock market. This was the gist of the whole presentation, as we understand it; and it seems to have made no impression whatever on the Tariff Board.

In the circumstances we cannot see how "an exhaustive investigation of all factors" could have been made, as Mr. Campbell says, or why the Board's adverse attitude on this cardinal point should be attributed to "shortcomings in the evidence submitted" rather than to the Board's own pre-conceived notions.

There is much in the Board's report which is of value and interest, but the disappointing nature of its main finding cannot be ignored. As Mr. Campbell states in his letter to Saturday's Guardian, in which he effectively disposes of attempts to minimize the importance of tariff protection in relation to our potato industry, lack of such protection "remains the most serious problem" facing our producers today. Efforts should now be concentrated upon convincing the Federal Government of the complete inadequacy of the Tariff Board's investigation on this point. If we fail to do this, we shall be in the position of the patient who underwent a "successful" operation but who unfortunately died as a result.

Age Of The Universe

Astronomers of three observatories in California have reported a new age for the expanding universe: 5.4 billion years, plus or minus a billion. That long ago, something happened to start all matter in space flying outward from a common centre. Light from the farthest galaxies shows them still speeding away, according to modern astronomical theory. A 20-year study of all available data on apparent expansion of the universe now upholds the theory. Dr. N. U. Mayall of Lick Observatory and Drs. A. R. Sandage and M. L. Humason of Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories summarized their work in a paper before the National Academy of Sciences, meeting in Pasadena.

Of 800 galaxies and 26 clusters of galaxies whose light was analyzed for so-called "red shift", some of the most distant were discovered in the far-reaching National Geographic Society-Palomar Sky Survey, for the last seven years engaged in photomapping the heavens. The most distant was a cluster so faint it could not be seen even with the giant 200-inch Hale telescope, but had to be located by long exposure of photographic plates. This Hydra Cluster showed an apparent speed away from the earth of about 38,000 miles per second, one-fifth the speed of light itself.

All visible galaxies, out to the limits of the 200-inch and in all directions, follow a direct relationship of speed to distance first discovered 25 years ago by the late Dr. Edwin P. Hubble of Palomar. On this law of red-shifts is based the theory of an expanding universe.

By tracing the outward motions back to a common starting point, the scientists find an "age of the universe". Their new figure is given as only tentative, pending a four-year study to find a more precise scale of cosmic distances. The value of 5.4 billion years (5.4 x 10⁹ years) "is provisional and may be uncertain by 20 percent," they report.

In recent years astronomical and geologic estimates of the age of the earth and the universe have come into close agreement. For the oldest rocks in the earth's crust scientists now give an age of about 3 1/2 billion years. The earth's very beginning, judged from comparisons with meteorites falling from space, is dated between 3 1/2 and 4 1/2 billion years ago. Various ingenious methods for calculating time on such a scale, working from different directions, often come up with amazingly similar answers. The slow accumulation of salts in the oceans; the 5-inch-per-year recession of the moon; the rate of cooling of the earth; the slow ticking away of radioactive elements in rocks and meteorites, all point to an age on the order of several billion years.

Since time immemorial men have pondered and tried to guess just when and how the earth and stars were born. In the 17th century Archbishop James Ussher dated all beginning at October 26, 400 B.C. The ancient Hindus, in the sacred book Manusmriti written 2,100 years ago, gave an age for the earth which as of A. D. 1955 would be 1,972,949,056 years—amazingly close, in general order of magnitude, to modern scientific calculations.

Scientific Confusion

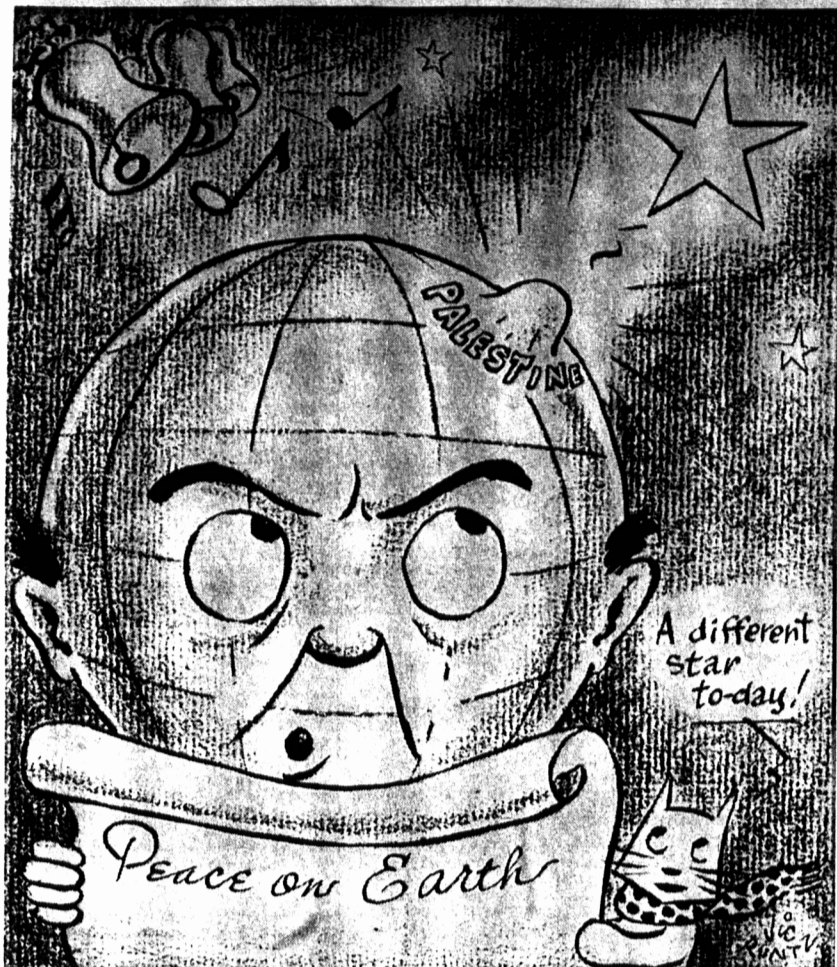
Sir Robert Robertson, president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and a distinguished nuclear physicist in his own right, caused a lot of public anxiety some time ago by suggesting that it was not outside the bounds of possibility that continuing hydrogen bomb tests would set off a nuclear reaction that could blow up the earth. Other scientists, not to mention a host of laymen, seemed to agree with him.

Now comes another British physicist, Professor M. H. Price of the University of Bristol, to say that Sir Robert was labouring under a misapprehension when he made his pessimistic statement, and that, in fact, the earth can stand any number of H-bomb explosions. The reason given by Professor Price for his cheerful analysis are, of course, highly technical in nature, as were the gloomy arguments presented by Sir Robert. If, in the one case, undue alarm spread over the world, it is reasonable to assume that in the other there is danger of too much optimism. Doubtless, the ideal solution would be for H-bomb tests to be discontinued. Since that is evidently impractical at the present time, it is a pity that the scientists cannot agree among themselves on what the explosions can or cannot do. So long as this confusion exists among the scientists, the rest of us cannot very well be blamed for sympathizing with the viewpoint advanced by the gloomy ones. After all, it is human nature to be suspicious of any strange thing, for which a certificate of absolute safety is not forthcoming.

EDITORIAL NOTES

"Fisherman's" letter in last Friday's issue indicates that a new and better lobster-trap has already passed the experimental stage. If our correspondent's confidence in his important invention is justified—and we have no grounds for thinking it isn't—fishery officials would do well to look into it. Anything that helps forward any phase of the fishing industry is entitled to careful consideration.

An Ottawa dispatch reports that the Federal Government is "concerned" about the current decline in hog prices. The concern is justified and, perhaps, overdue. The fact that hog prices in the United States are lower than they are here—a point often emphasized by federal agricultural officials—is not a valid excuse for further delay in attempting to do something helpful in the worsening situation facing this important phase of Canadian agriculture.



SOMEWHAT DISTRACTING

Progress In Research

By John E. Bird
Canadian Press, Ottawa

In the world of science this year Canada reached the threshold of industrial atomic power and threw a haymaker at one of the world's dread diseases—polio-myelitis.

The year's chief achievement in peacetime uses of atomic energy was a decision to build an experimental electricity-producing atomic power plant in Ontario at a cost of \$13,000,000 to \$15,000,000. The federal government also contracted for a fourth research reactor at the Chalk River, Ont., atomic project to help solve problems still blocking economical atomic power.

PRODUCED IN QUANTITY

The laboratories devised a method to produce polio virus in quantity. This paved the way for large-scale production of the vaccine for tests in 1954 and the 1955 vaccination program.

Canada gambled that the vaccine would work.

Long before April 12—the historic day the University of Michigan announced that its evaluation of the 1954 experiments proved the vaccine at least 60 per cent effective—Canada had spent \$1,000,000 producing the immunization agent. Federal and provincial governments, which shared the cost of the program, also had worked out a system of distribution and free injections.

If the Ann Arbor, Mich., announcement had said the vaccine was useless, \$1,000,000 would have been wasted, embarrassing both the federal and provincial governments. However, it was realized that if no vaccine were available April 12 and it was judged effective, the anti-polio program would have to be delayed until the fall.

FINE PROGRESS

By the end of June when the program was halted by previous agreement until early 1956, some 880,000 Canadian children had received at least two of their three shots. It's expected 3,000,000 of the country's 5,225,000 children under 16 will be inoculated by the end of next March.

Health Minister Martin has given qualified credit to the vaccine for having had a share in the below-normal incidence of the disease in 1955. Its true effectiveness now is being studied by the health department and a report likely will be issued early next year.

The incidence of polio in 1955 has been about one-quarter of the five-year average from 1950-54, although it is noted that the average includes the 1953 epidemic, the worst in history.

Up to Nov. 19 there had been 961 cases compared with the five-year average of 4,715. Paralytic cases were 480 compared with the average of 1,841 and deaths totalled 28 as against 96 in the same period in 1954.

IMPORTANT PROGRAM

In the atomic field, the health department in 1955 also launched a research program into the effects of atomic radiation on human beings. It involves possible genetic effects on humans and methods for disposal of dangerous radioactive wastes.

Detailed design of the demonstration atomic power plant now in progress. It will be built jointly by Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.,

PROPOSE UN MERGER

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. (CP)—Canada proposed Friday the establishment of a permanent headquarters for the International Telecommunications Union and the World Meteorological Organization, two UN specialized agencies. A Canadian-resolution tabled in the General Assembly's budgetary and finance committee calls for a new wing to be added to the UN Palace of Nations in Geneva to house the two agencies.

The crown company charged with atomic research, the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission and Canadian General Electric at Des Juchims, Que., 150 miles northwest of Ottawa.

The plant, expected to produce about 20,000 kilowatts of electric power, likely will be in operation in mid-1958. It will not produce electricity at a competitive cost but its construction will provide scientists with the information necessary to build a plant that can compete with coal-burning electric stations.

The fourth research reactor will be built by Canadair Ltd. of Montreal at a cost of \$250,000 to \$300,000. The small, low-cost "swimming pool" reactor will be used for research on uranium fuels.

POWERFUL NEW PILE

Two of the other three reactors at Chalk River also figured in the news.

The \$11,000,000 NRX pile, which developed 40,000 kilowatts, suffered its second breakdown in 2 1/2 years on July 25. The reactor, built in 1947, went back into operation Sept. 22.

The other reactor at Chalk River is the "ZEEP" (Zero Energy Experimental Pile) built during the Second World War.

Other developments during the year:

1. Canada and the United States signed agreements for a wider exchange of information on the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and defence against atomic attack.

2. Colombo Plan funds were earmarked to provide India with a Canadian-built atomic reactor and Burma with a cobalt-60 beam therapy unit for cancer treatment.

3. A junior size cobalt "bomb" unit was developed for sale to small hospitals.

4. W. J. Bennett, president of Atomic Energy of Canada, forecast that Canada's uranium production will be a \$100,000,000 business by the end of 1958.

The Age Old Story

By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.

FIRMS PAY \$500,000
TORONTO (CP)—E. W. Harris of the All-Canada Insurance Federation said Saturday that fire and casualty insurance companies pay out more than \$500,000 daily to settle claims. Mr. Harris told the Canadian Progress Club of Toronto his federation represents more than 200 companies and that claims totalling more than \$245,000,000 are paid, each year to offset the costs of a variety of mishaps.

MORE SAVINGS
CANBERRA (CP)—Deposits in Australian savings banks reached \$2,450,000,000 at the end of October, a gain of five per cent over the previous year. Biggest average savings are in New South Wales, \$366 per capita.

SCOUT GATHERING
SUTTON COLDFIELD, England (CP)—Some 22 countries including Canada have notified scout headquarters here they will send contingents to the World Scout Jamboree to be held in this Warwickshire district in 1957. The jamboree will celebrate the centenary of Lord Baden-Powell.

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Medically Speaking

By Herman N. Sundesen, M. D.

CANCER PRECAUTIONS EVERY ONE COULD TAKE

We don't know why cancer cells begin growing in a wild and uncontrolled manner. We do know, however, certain conditions which may contribute to development of cancer.

Long-continued irritation or constant heat appear to favor some forms of malignant growth. This irritation maybe chemical or friction and it may occur upon the body's surface, in the openings of the body or in the cells of the central organs.

Frequently cancer develops in parts of the body where there is a lot of chemical activity such as in the stomach or female reproductive organs.

The continued rubbing of a jagged tooth or a poorly fitting dental plate may cause a sore which can turn into cancer if left untreated for a long time.

Certain warts or moles if constantly irritated, by clothing or daily shaving for instance, might become cancerous.

Certain types of heavy oils or tars may produce cancer when smeared over the same portion of your skin over long periods.

Among these materials are pitch, soot, crude mineral oil, fuel and lubricating oils and creosote oil.

DIRECT SUNLIGHT

Men and women who have fair skins and become sunburned easily should avoid continuous overexposure to direct sunlight year after year. This does not mean you cannot get a vacation sun tan. But farmers, construction workers and others who are outdoors a great deal should protect themselves with adequate clothing, visored or broad brimmed hats or anti-sunburn lotions.

Cancer of the skin looks somewhat like a small abrasion. It may be a sore that does not heal, a wart or mole or a crack in the skin. While this type of cancer accounts for 14 per cent of all cancer cases, it causes less than 2 per cent of the deaths. If discovered early enough, we can cure about 95 per cent of skin cancer cases.

Now I know you are going to ask, "What about smoking?"

The American Cancer Society is making a study of smoking habits now. The first report shows that the death rate among regular cigarette smokers was 52 per cent above the rate for men who had never smoked.

The difference in the death rates was accounted for chiefly by cancer and coronary artery diseases. The mortality rate from cancer of the lung among smokers who used more than a pack a day was more than five times as high as that for nonsmokers.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

A.W.: I have been suffering with a severe pain over my eye extending from the ear to the back of the neck. What would you recommend I do for this?

Answer: In order to determine the exact cause for the pain which you describe, it is necessary that a careful physical examination be made, as there are numerous conditions which might be causing it. When the cause is found proper treatment may be advised.

NOTES BY THE WAY

It's some weeks since they told us about that space satellite business. Science is marvellous, but it's time it had something fresh to startle us with, before we get bored. —Hamilton Spectator.

Perhaps it's just as well most babies are born in hospitals nowadays so when they grow up and become famous there won't be campaigns to preserve their birth-places as national shrines, when the space is needed for parking lots. —St. Catharines Standard

It's hard to appraise this life's blessings correctly. Here's Dwight D. Eisenhower, for instance, famous, honored, rewarded above the dreams of most human beings. Yet, stricken by illness and recovering, he is reported "thrilled" at the privilege of sitting for a few minutes in a wheel chair. He must be really envious of the millions and millions of Americans going about their work and recreation in good health, all of whom some time must have envied him for one or another of his great achievements and distinctions. —Chicago News.

Factory furnaces are required by law to discharge smoke into the upper air through tall chimneys, the executive of an automobile consultant firm observes. But the horizontal exhaust of passenger autos and most trucks puff out their fumes almost at street level, although he says that "carbon monoxide and other gases from automobile engines are far more toxic than anything that comes out of factory smokestacks." His solution? It is "chimneys" for cars and trucks, possibly like the vertical exhaust pipes of some big Diesel trucks. It's an idea that suggests investigation by the medical men who have helped stimulate other new safety features in cars. And think what a new trend in design might stem from the lofty exhaust stacks. Chrome-plated naturally. —Milwaukee Sunday Journal.

During his British visit, Dr. Schweitzer heard critics attack him as "ostentatious" because he travelled third class, carried his own luggage and set up his headquarters in a humble cafe. When he met Britain's queen, he wore a coat 25 years old, carried a hat 40 years old, and wore a pair of ancient black shoes. As he was getting ready to leave the cafe, a young girl's autograph book was handed in. When he had gone, the reporter glanced at it. There was only one page left: On it the child had drawn the back view of an elephant, with the words: This is the end. Underneath were these words: "The elephants at Lambarene are much more elegant than this, even from behind." —Galt Reporter.

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