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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1955

Need For Firmness

The avoidance of war is, of course, the chief aim of free world policy. Other considerations enter into plans and strategies from time to time; but common sense, not to mention anything else, keeps the one great aim in the forefront of policy-making negotiations at all times.

Considerations of this kind were doubtless an important factor in the agreement reached on Tuesday by the Confederation Prime Ministers, India excepted, on the "vital importance" of standing with the United States in the Formosa crisis.

This information, along with a plea for Commonwealth resistance to the Government's proposal, was contained in a letter addressed to M. P.'s in Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It was not sent to the legislators of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, because these countries were not signatories to the Statute of Westminster which made the dominions sovereign states.

No one can say for certain that a firm stand on the Formosan issue—which, after all, is only a part, perhaps a small part, of the larger situation of danger—by the United States and other free nations will prevent war now or in the future; the balance between peace and war, quite apart from any particular issue, is much too delicate for that.

What is apparently clear to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, as President Eisenhower has emphasized, is that a vacillating and weak policy in the face of the present crisis will only confirm the Chinese Communists in their contemptuous disregard of free world hopes and strength; and that, in turn, will make them bolder and bolder in their aggressive ways.

Gabbiest Birds Alive

The African gray parrot and Indian hill myna rank as the champion "conversationalists" among birds that mimic human sounds. Whatever the situation among higher birds, the male bird usually outtalks the female, says the National Geographic Society.

The most familiar "talkers" are certain types of parrot, including the popular species of parakeet known as budgerigar, the garrulous myna, other members of the starling family, and a wide range of Corvidae—crows, ravens, jackdaws, magpies and jays.

Bird sound organs are quite different from those of humans. A bird cannot utter true consonant sounds that human beings articulate chiefly with the lips. But birds, like ventriloquists, make vowel-like sounds. Experts say talking birds, like songsters, have more muscles than non-talkers in the syrinx or voice organ at the lower end of the windpipe.

Some persons cling to the fallacy that splitting a bird's tongue helps it talk. Experts agree that a mutilated bird not only may be unable to talk; it can no longer make characteristic sounds. Teaching a bird to talk entails the painstaking process

of taming a young specimen, keeping it separated from other birds, and frequently repeating the word to be mimicked. Birds raised in pairs or groups seldom talk. They stick happily to their native noises. A talking bird that has become thoroughly identified with humans is considered useless for breeding.

Birds, especially gabby males, sometimes develop astounding vocabularies. Most experts agree, however, that a bird doesn't actually know what it is saying and cannot make any practical use of its word power; for example, by saying "food" when hungry.

One of the most celebrated talking birds in recent years was Raffles, a glossy black myna with the familiar orange beak, velvety yellow wattles and white wing spots. Raffles performed at wartime bond rallies and once whistled the national anthem with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. In 1946, it died of a cold caught while performing in a veterans' hospital.

Stories of talking birds are legion, some of them startling if true. The German naturalist Humboldt claimed to have met in South America a venerable green parrot "which remained the sole possessor of a literally dead language, the whole tribe of Indians which spoke it having become extinct."

A Plea For Support

Considering the thin boundary line that stands between war and peace at the present time, delegates to the Commonwealth Conference now under way in London will have little time for the discussion of matters which, under more settled conditions, might be expected to receive attention. It is not likely, therefore, that Prime Minister Johannes Strijdom of South Africa, or his deputy, will find the Conference a willing forum for debate on South Africa's intention to become a Boer Republic with little or no connection with the British Crown.

These three new members, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon represent peoples who in the main are not of Anglo-Saxon origin, nor do they speak English or follow the Christian religion. India as a republic bears no national allegiance to the Queen who rules in the other nations of the Commonwealth, and Pakistan may soon take one republican status also.

That may be; but, if the present Government of South Africa is bent on total separation and is strong enough to bring it about, there is not much that other members of the Commonwealth can do about it. Perhaps, if they wanted to, they could thwart a move to make South Africa a Republic within the Commonwealth—which is India's position—but, once nationalism has gone as far as that, it would be easy for it to go the rest of the distance to complete isolation. Meanwhile, it is encouraging to know that opponents of Mr. Strijdom's Republicanism consider themselves sufficiently influential in a political way to make their views heard at a Commonwealth conference.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Woodrow Wilson died this date, 1924.

Now that the Rt. Hon. Mohammed Ali, Prime Minister of Pakistan, has left Canada after what, we hope, was an enjoyable visit, someone should tell him that it is bad form to ridicule the family arrangements of one's hosts, as he certainly did when he referred to the Queen's place in Canadian affairs as "a pure fiction."

The Provincial Minister of Health is to be congratulated on his decision to go ahead with the vaccination of all Grade One pupils with the Salk vaccine for poliomyelitis. While definite proof of the vaccine's effectiveness is yet to be determined, it is known that it is perfectly safe. Moreover, many of the specialists appear to believe that it will do all that Dr. Salk expects of it.

If, as seems likely, New Brunswick farmers find themselves unable to provide the huge amount of farm produce that will be necessary for the larder at Camp Gagetown, our own farmers are quite capable of making up the deficiency. Come to think of it, it would seem only right and proper for Island farmers to be asked to share the responsibility in any event, since the base is national in character.

Popularity of Pastel Shirts and Vivid Vests Show Approval. Illustration of a man in a suit and a woman in a dress, with text 'Fancy Pansy wear' and 'Showy shorts'.

Just About His Last Laugh

Commonwealth Conference

Last Monday the leaders of nine countries met in London to confer on matters of common interest and to exchange views on the broader international situation. The conference is another in the series of meetings held by prime ministers of the Commonwealth.

General MacArthur Today

It would be difficult for the most miserable pundit, the most abandoned cynic or hypocrite, the most shameless egotist or paid brain-washer to question the courage, the moral fervor or the sense of mission of General Douglas MacArthur. The doubts which have been entertained by scribbling sceptics and, indeed, by "many others of entirely different mold" relate instead to the General's judgment.

Why Women Live Longer

The usual place for most women today is still in the home, and we suspect that the high rating for health and longevity that women have is not due to those of the species whose daily work is only partly, or not at all, with house and family.

Refrigeration

Refrigeration Repairs To All Makes APPLIANCES SALES & SERVICE MOTORS Rewinding and Repairs ELECTRIC Repairs Palmer Electric

Medically Speaking. Herman N. Bundesen, M.D. SUMMER BRINGS THIS SKIN DISORDER. Lupus erythematosus and pantothenylol. Ever hear of either of them? That stiff tongue-twister is a skin disorder with which I am sure some of you are familiar.

NOTES BY THE WAY

The Atlantic, in a boiling rage, hurled itself with tempestuous fury against the shores of Newfoundland's east coast the other day and swept from their rocky perches fishing property that had withstood other wild storms for many years.

Check For Infection

Your doctor should make a careful search for any infection especially in your teeth, tonsils and sinuses.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

A. C. R.: What are the effects of benzedrine and thyroid tablets in reducing weight?

Answer: Benzedrine helps reduce the appetite; thyroid speeds up the metabolism.

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