

THE GUARDIAN

Authorized as Second Class Mail Post Office Department, Ottawa. The Island Guardian Publishing Co. Editor and Managing Director, Ian A. Burnett, Associate Editor, Frank Walker. CIRCULATION "Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew" "The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink". CHARLOTTETOWN THURSDAY, NOV. 26, 1953

Maritime Union

Once more the threadbare project of Maritime Union is being mooted. This time by Dr. G. B. Sandford of Edmonton, plant pathologist at the University of Alberta and originally from the Annapolis Valley. It seems to Dr. Sandford that New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island would be better off financially and in many other ways if they were to incorporate into one Province.

Just why this should be so is never made clear. There is sometimes talk of high overhead of government of such small areas and populations. It is far from certain, however, that having a central Maritime government would result in any economies of administration. The same detailed administration would still be necessary and in fact additional subordinate authorities would certainly have to be set up in addition to those now existing.

The Legislative Assembly of this Province, for instance, deals with a great deal of detailed local matter which could not possibly be handled for so large a unit as the combined Provinces. It would be necessary to have not one Island government but three county councils, an increase in governmental overhead rather than a reduction.

There is something to having a united voice at Ottawa but that voice would not be stronger than that of the three Governments speaking in unison as they can well do when common problems are at issue.

Finally those who are at a distance from these shores may forget that Confederation was accepted as an alternative to Maritime Union and was promised to give these Provinces by the sea a better deal than that proposal. It would indeed be ironical if having accepted the larger union the Provinces were then to lose their identity in the minor union for which it was a substitute.

Dr. Neatby's Criticisms

It has been said that a conservative is one who keeps the reformer from going too fast and plucking the fruit before it is ripe. This definition is hardly adequate for Dr. Hilda Neatby, Professor of History at the University of Saskatchewan and the only woman member of the Massey Commission on Arts, Letters and Sciences, who as a conservative in education is not only bent on slowing up the reformer's pace, but on changing his direction as well. In "So Little for the Mind", recently published in Toronto, she has written the most vigorous indictment of modern educational methods yet to appear in Canada.

The virtues of the new education, Dr. Neatby says, emerge naturally from the humanitarian philosophy of the eighteenth century. The average progressive school is not, as certainly many traditional schools were, an abode of darkness and cruelty or, at best, of dull and meaningless fact grinding. Rather it is a place where all children find sympathy, understanding, and encouragement. What is wrong with this? Nothing, except that a great additional load is thrown on the educational system which undertakes to care adequately for all, the dull, the lazy and the misfits as well as for the bright and the industrious. It faces a threefold task.

First it must accept, and afford some sort of training for, every child above a very low intellectual level. This has meant an enormous and rapid increase in numbers in all schools, and a vast increase in the numbers of intellectually incompetent in the high schools. Secondly, the school must convey to these swollen numbers a mass of information useful and even essential to them, of which their grandparents never even dreamed. Thirdly, the school should, in addition, convey to all, insofar as they are capable of receiving it, the intellectual, cultural, and moral training which represents the best in a long and honourable tradition of Western civilization.

It is in the latter requirement, which Dr. Neatby regards as of prime importance, that modern educationists have fallen down. Instead of using their enormous new resources in material equipment, knowledge and skill to cope with the correspondingly greater demands on intellectual and spiritual discipline, they have taken the easy way out, concentrating on "the obvious, the practical, and the immediate." As a result, education has become increasingly

"anti-intellectual, anti-cultural and amoral." These serious charges are discussed at length by Dr. Neatby, but can only be referred to here in passing. They form the most controversial part of her book, and are supported by a formidable array of references.

Dr. Neatby deplores the influence of Professor Dewey on modern educational concepts. "He has been looked upon," she says, "as a fountain at which every novice must drink; in truth he is no fountain, he is rather a marsh, a bog where armies of school teachers have sunk, and, one might add, many of them have never risen, but speak with muffled accents from the depths." Several examples are cited of the resulting jargon emanating from educational sources on this point.

Dr. Neatby finds no fault with the dictum that "matriculation requirements must not hinder the development of a curriculum sufficiently flexible to provide for the needs of non-matriculants." No indeed, she says; why should they? "But one would like some assurance that, in the minds of experts, the converse holds true. No such assurance is given. What is not said, perhaps because it is not perceived, is that the 'democratic society' in the name of which education is being steadily watered down lives only on the creative efforts of the gifted few in all forms of endeavour, and on the ability of the majority in varying degrees to inspire, support and use them."

In calling for a re-direction of educational aims Dr. Neatby points out that our western society is a product not only of modern humanism but of Judiac morality, of Christian love, of Greek philosophy and Roman law. "But we are increasingly an unconscious product of these things. In the excitement of the modern age and the pursuit of nationalism, democracy and materialism we have forgotten where we come from and what we believed in. Ours has become a rootless as well as a faithless society." Modern educators and their systems are but a symptom of the malady. Even so, some symptoms require to be treated as if they were a disease. "A serious attempt to revise our current educational systems in the light of human experience might do much to put new life into our vague and visionless society." The key to the problem is in the hands of the teachers, and it is to this vitally important class that Dr. Neatby's arguments are directed. Whether or not they will find them agreeable to their views and experiences, every teacher and educationist should endeavour to read and study their implications.

EDITORIAL NOTES

A roast of meat has turned up in Jericho after 4,000 years. Service seems to be bad everywhere.

Sir Frank (Francis Bernard) Dicksee, English painter, was born this date 1853. He belonged to the symbolic school of painters, and combined skillful draughtsmanship with subdued and tasteful colouring. His many works include, "Evangeline", "Funeral of a Viking", "The Passing of Arthur" and "La Belle Dame sans Merci."

The ten million dollar loss by the Government on farm price supports, or even the forty-two million dollar loss if foot-mouth emergency measures are included, amounts to only a dollar or three dollars a head for the Canadian people. If price supports prevented farmers from reducing production and sending up prices the average consumer got the best of the deal by far.

The advice of Agriculture Minister Gardiner, derived from a Scots grandfather, is that farmers should find what their farm was best suited to produce and then keep on producing it. With the necessary and understood qualification that the product must be in demand at a generally profitable price the advice would seem to be good. In again, out again tactics are hard to follow successfully.

The problems of hard currency and soft currency, the dollar area and the sterling area are of great importance today and the report made by the Hon. Lewis W. Douglas, former U. S. ambassador to the United Kingdom, and the President is recognized as an outstanding exposition of the problems involved. The Bank of Montreal has done a public service in publishing verbatim the significant portions of the report in its current Business Review.

That gasoline tax and liquor profits have sunk to the "minor source" classification is some of the surprising information contained in an analysis of government finances published in the Saskatchewan Economic Review. It is, perhaps, also surprising that governments ever considered them as major sources of general revenue. The gasoline tax was originally thought of only as a means of highway upkeep and the handling of liquor was not at first intended as a source of revenue at all.

By The Seaside



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.

A GHOULISH FIGURE

Sir—The ideological gangsterism which Stalin did so much to consolidate and expand is now trying to confer immortality on its foremost champion in the form of a mausoleum. Stately tombs do not necessarily insure the deathless memory of those who slumber beneath them.

Stalin was a ghoulish tyrant who filled the earth with blasphemy, cruelty, lies, slavery, torture and murder. All tyrannies perish. "Passion raves itself to rest"—and tyranny burns itself out. It will take generations, possibly centuries, to erase the harm that he did. And one of the most horrendous crimes of which he was guilty was that of causing little children to be indoctrinated in atheism.

His enslavement of 800 million people puts him in the malodorous company of Tiberius, Caligula, Genghis Khan, Nabuchodonosor, Artaxerxes, Antiochus Epiphanes, and the other experts at race murder and mass slaughter. Stalin was an atheist, an anarchist, a political nihilist, a ruthless iconoclast who shattered creeds and demolished cults. Like Attila the Hun and Genghis the Vandal his passion was to destroy, to ruin, to devastate. Attila and Genghis were barbarians. So was Stalin. I am, Sir, etc.

W. J. ENRIGHT
Charlottetown.

Old Charlottetown

(And P. E. I.)

IRREGULAR MAILS

"We have again to announce the arrival of the Courier from Cape Tormentine, without the Halifax Mail; so that out of the five trips performed this season, he has been three times unsuccessful. This is, no doubt, extremely annoying, on many accounts; but apart from other considerations it is worth keeping in mind that every trip costs the country Six whether the Courier brings a re- pound, which must be paid, turn mail or not." —Royal Gazette, Jan. 13, 1835.

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Notes By The Way

Trans-Canada Air Lines expert predicts that a little later on passenger aircraft will be flying at 1,000 miles per hour. Ottawa to Toronto in 15 minutes. Makes Toronto awfully close, doesn't it? —Ottawa Journal

Some 6,000 pounds of Canadian honey have been sent to France, Austria and Italy for use in three homes for children established in those countries. Not much imagination is required to picture the delighted way in which the youngsters overseas will receive the gift. By way of contrast, we have the picture of warehouses and store shelves in Canada filled with honey which Canadians have been unwilling to purchase. —Fort William Times-Journal

When a baby refuses to eat spinach it may really be because he simply does not like the taste of the stuff. But before he is many years older the grounds for his dislikes will probably be much more flimsy and by the time he grows to manhood most of them may have no real foundation at all. It is good for us once in a while to stop and try to analyze why we think we do not like some particular thing. And if we are honest with ourselves we may be more than mildly surprised at

the results of our self-analysis. In many cases we are likely to find that the real reason of our supposed dislike is not in the thing but in ourselves and that it is one of these three: Habit, snobbery, a desire to attract attention. Snobbery is illustrated by the man who says emphatically: "I don't like Wagner." He once heard somebody proclaim that all Wagner's works were pompous and "popular" and that the real lover of music enjoyed something more subtle. So our man won't listen to anything by Wagner—and thus he has missed the delight of the Siegfried Idyll, which is far from pompous and as subtle as anybody could wish. —From an editorial for young people, Hamilton Spectator.

The Poet's Corner

ROTATION

Even the owls are lyrical
When the moon's right,
And we have no patience with the stars
On a dusty night.

Love is dull when the mood is wrong,
And age may outlast youth;
For there is no measuring a song,
Nor counting upon truth.
All's well, and then a flood of loss
Surges upon delight,
While the rose buds upon the cross,
And the blind have sight.

Morning wisdom vanishes
And dusk brings dread
That stalwart sleep banishes
Ere primes are said.
He who is sure, has all to learn:
Who fears, but fears in vain.
For never a day does the year turn,
But it shall turn again.
—John Drinkwater.

The Age Old Story

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his; and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

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The Passing Scene

By Observer "A CORRODING BLIGHT"

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