

THE GUARDIAN

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"The Strongest Memory is Weaker Than the Weakest Ink"

CHARLOTTETOWN, TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 1951

Defence Problems Of Common Concern

Canada is to be represented at the forthcoming conference of defence ministers only by a civilian and a military observer.

Prime Minister St. Laurent indicates that this country's interests in the matters to be discussed, including the Middle East and questions of equipment and training, are less direct than those of the other Commonwealth countries which will be represented there.

From the point of view of commitments and probable operations the Prime Minister's response can hardly be quarrelled with, but at the same time threats to peace are just as dangerous to us whether they are initially in the North Atlantic area or in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Fixed Date For General Elections

A seemingly innocent proposal put before the Commons by Mr. W. D. Wylie (S.C.—Medicine Hat) would set a certain date for an election every four years.

The proposal would result in very great convenience to those charged with organizing the general election and also to the political parties in timing their effort for the greatest advantage.

On the other hand the party in power and more particularly the Prime Minister would lose the advantage of selecting the exact time for an appeal to the country.

A fixed date for general elections would make Parliament that much more independent of the Administration but at the expense of becoming far too independent of the people as well.

Impressive Memorials

The heroic deeds of five Canadian fighting men, all winners of the Victoria Cross in the First World War, are being perpetuated by the Canadian Board of Geographical Names in a most impressive manner.

The five peaks stretch in a northwest line, a few miles northwest of the village and within view from the town and from Jasper Park Lodge. Mount Kinross towers 8,985 feet high immediately west of Pyramid Mountain, one of the most spectacular peaks in the Park.

Toots And Whistles

Now that Diesel engines are replacing steam locomotives on Canadian railways, there is concern that the familiar sound of the steam whistles of trains, no longer will be heard in the land.

This, comments an exchange, may mean more to oldsters than youngsters. It may be that a new generation growing up to the toots of Diesel engines, will find as much significance and association with the blattant blare of a Diesel engine.

a more train-like way of tooting than they do today. The Board thinks that motorists are getting hit at crossings because they don't recognize the new sound.

That may be, but in the U. S. the Southern Railway has changed the air horns of the Diesel engines to make them sound like steam whistles.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Board of Transport Commissioners will be singularly privileged to hear Islanders, for once, arguing how small is this Province.

In Quebec, starting Friday autos with 1950 licence plates are seized by the police and not returned until licence and storage are paid.

The rainy season is starting in Korea but troops there will endure the discomfort without suffering the disillusionment of their predecessors fighting in sunny France and Italy.

Orlando Gibbons, English composer and organist, died this date 1625. Gibbons' madrigals, anthems and hymns are masterpieces of their kind.

The early return of the car ferry Abegweit from her annual refit in Halifax offers hope that the shuttle service between Borden and Cape Tormentine will be in operation well before the expected date, the 15th.

The Senate, which has shelved a reform resolution, has since been busily discussing the why and the wherefore of variation in Army Officers pay, questionings which Senator Haig says "make the Senate Committee concerned, the laughing stock of the country."

The House of Commons elections committee has approved a new peek-proof method of folding the ballot, in three folds rather than two, so that the forthcoming by-elections may be the last occasion when some misguided occupants of the polling room try to see how ballots are marked while the deputy returning officer tears off the counterfoil.

For 13 weeks the Big Four Deputy Foreign Ministers have been attempting to settle the subject matter for their Ministers to discuss. Now the Western powers have invited the Russian Foreign Minister to hold the meeting anyway, a shift to higher-level discussion which could have been made as soon as it was found that the instructions of the Deputy Ministers did not permit them to agree.

The terrific sales cuts in New York resulted from a May 21 decision of the Supreme Court holding that non-signers of agreements with manufacturers of standard priced articles are not bound by fair-trade laws in 45 states.

A motion to increase the ministerial pension of the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. from \$600 to \$1,200 has been turned down by the General Assembly at Cincinnati as it would require a \$21,000,000 increase in the reserve fund, and an increase of 27 per cent in the amount which pastors and their churches now jointly contribute to the pension fund.

A politician who accomplishes things is certain to be subject to abuse. Trade Minister Howe was described in the House as a dictator by Mr. Howard Green, Progressive Conservative member for Vancouver Quadra.

Census Nonsense



Old Charlottetown

(And P. E. I.)

THE DOUGLAS CASE

The following excerpt from the report of a special committee on the Land Settlement Bill, submitted to the House of Assembly on April 16, 1940, deals with one of many instances of oppressive prosecution of the farmer tenants of this Island in days gone by:

"Many of our agriculturists have been compelled to pay rent, being denied at the same time a valid lease; on several townships the rents have been exacted in British coin, and several individuals have been obliged to pay rent for a greater quantity of land than their farms measured. As an instance, the case of James Douglas, of Bay Fortune, may be taken.

"His lease states the land leased at 150 acres, and several years afterwards, when it is measured, it is found to contain only 102 acres—his lease had been for forty years. The son of the deceased grantee of the township (James) was the acknowledged agent for the widow and the rest of the family bargains with Douglas to extend the lease 999 years, and receives for this extension \$35. This extended lease, as well as the first lease, has been laid before your committee.

"Sometime afterwards, Douglas ascertains that the will of the deceased grantee prohibited any lease being extended beyond the life of his widow. Douglas tries, both at law and in equity, to get his rent reduced, in proportion to the defalcation of the measurement, and to get credit for the money obtained under the false promise of extending the duration of his lease; and neither by law nor in equity has he, in proceedings protracted through eight years, been able to get redress, but has been stripped of his property for alleged arrears of rent which he had never paid, and is harassed with Chancery prosecutions, for the expenses of those who have been benefited by his being defrauded.

"To crown the whole, a criminal prosecution has been instituted against one of his sons, a young man of nineteen years of age, for an alleged assault on the Sheriff, at the day of the sale of the property distrained from his father; the Sheriff, on his examination, states that he was assaulted by the young man, while all the other witnesses maintain that they were present during the whole sale, and that the Sheriff was assaulted by Douglas, or any other individual.

"Your committee submit that many instances of oppression similar to the above have been consummated in this Island, the oppressed not having means to carry on prosecution; and that it is expedient that the case of James Douglas should be maintained at the public expense, till finally decided."

The House divided on the above recommendation, which was adopted on the casting vote of the Speaker, William Cooper. By way of amendment, the following clause was added:

"Which case is taken, not as the case of an individual, but as it is of the utmost consequence that the important rights therein involved should be decided, and that as individual agriculturists have not means to prosecute such suits to a final decision, it is for the benefit of the people that one case should be followed out to a final decision—but as nothing but the extreme necessity for a decision so interesting to many could justify the House in such an application of the public money, so they trust that individuals will not from this be led to derive any expectation that the House will apply the public money to their private suits."

The sequel is given in the Journals of the House of April 22, 1840, when Mr. LeLachur, from the committee appointed to wait upon Lieutenant Governor Sir Charles FitzRoy in the matter reported that His Excellency had been pleased to make the following reply: "In reply to this Address of the House of Assembly, request-

Notes By The Way

A pen company throws out its time clocks in favor of the honor system. And it was the honor system—as Eddie Cantor once told it—that took 12 strokes off his golf score.—(The Winnipeg Tribune.)

General Eisenhower's efforts to build a united military front in Europe are certainly not going to be made any easier by a series of articles on the last war just concluded in Life Magazine. From first to last these have almost totally ignored the fact that there were others than American soldiers and American generals fighting. "We did it single-handed: We made all the right decisions" was the tone... If peace prevailed today and if this were just another of those "we won the war" pieces by an unknown author it would not greatly matter. But the present times are far from normal and the author, General Omar N. Bradley, is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the United States.—(Financial Post.)

Mr. Sam W. Kratzer, 80, is currently riding from Alhambra, California, to Chicago, Illinois, on a motor scooter. The day he set out on his trip the news wires carried an item about Mr. James W. Harper, 82, of Butte, Montana, who found himself in police court for striking a mere striping of 68. Mr. Kratzer and Mr. Harper are whimsical reminders of the fact that because of the achievements of medical science in the last half century, people are living longer, feeling younger. All statistics indicate that an increasing large proportion of the population will consist of "old folks" as time goes on.—(Saint John Telegraph-Journal.)

We are accustomed to regard the Elizabethans as valiant trenchermen who ate and drank with hearty appetites. But apparently when they did decide to diet themselves their regimen was as strict as anything known to this age—at least, it was if they followed the instructions laid down by their own Gloriana. The "British Medical Journal" quotes a letter of advice from Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Shrewsbury regarding the meals to be served for Lord Leicester, who was staying with the Earl and taking the waters at a neighbor-

ing that a suit now pending in the Court of Chancery of this Island, wherein one James Douglas, of Bay Fortune, is a party, should be carried on at the public expense, I feel compelled to express my opinion that, independent of all other considerations, the novelty and peculiarity of this application preclude me from complying with the wishes of the House of Assembly."

In no case was he to be allowed to exceed "by the day of his meat two ounces of flesh... and for drink one-twentieth of a pint of wine to comfort his stomach and as much of St. Anne's sacred water as he lusteth to drink." Lord Leicester's stomach, one fears, would not get much comfort out of one ounce of wine per day and two ounces of flesh. On feast days and festivals he could relax a little—but only a very little. The meagre wine ration was not increased, but "as is fit for a man of his quality, we can be content," wrote the Queen, "you shall enlarge his diet by allowing him for his dinner the shoulder of a wren, and for his supper a leg of the same besides his ordinary ounces."—(Manchester Guardian.)

The Age-Old Story

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. . . . But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

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Needless Federal Levy On Rural Readers

(The Gazette, Montreal)

The issues of principle involved in the Government's move to boost postal rates for delivery of newspapers and periodicals, and the summary manner in which a long established policy is being jettisoned, were precisely spotlighted last week by Mr. George A. Drew, Opposition Leader, and other Progressive Conservative members of the House of Commons. They are to be commended for bringing forcefully before the House and clarifying for the public the major, questionable implications of the step now being taken.

The parliamentary debate upon the matter has at least brought out into the open for public edification, especially for newspaper readers and most especially for those in rural districts, the basic change of policy being made and the regrettable effects that are bound to arise from it. In essence the Government is scrapping or at least seriously breaching a policy, in effect ever since Confederation. It was designed to facilitate the dissemination of news and opinion on current events as widely as possible, in particular to those in areas beyond the reach of urban home-delivery and street sale services.

Mr. Drew and his colleagues properly challenged the argument of the Postmaster-General that the admittedly low mail rates hitherto prevailing were a "subsidy" with the implication that the newspapers in some way benefited from them. Mr. Rinfret also contended that the new rates were in the category of "fees for services rendered," though he estimated that there would still be a considerable "deficit" in postal handling of papers and periodicals. This sweeps aside with narrow brusqueness a well-rooted and accepted principle, originated in Britain as long ago as the Crimean War, that there should be a minimum of impediment to access to the news for residents of outlying, non-urban areas.

The maintenance of this policy has by no means resulted solely from the gracious beneficence of the Government but from a joint honoring of a sound principle by both the Government and the newspapers. The newspapers have not benefited from the low bulk-mailing rates, except indirectly from modest extension of their circulations. They have passed on the savings in distribution charges in the form of rural subscription rates which, for every daily newspaper in Canada, are lower than those for home delivery or street sales.

The proportions of the higher rates now proposed make it highly improbable that the newspapers will be able to continue for long to service non-urban readers at the more attractive rates. In the final analysis, therefore, the Government is not exacting these extra revenues from the newspapers, as "fees for services rendered," but from rural readers whose receipt of the news has been regarded for many decades as desirable to facilitate. The in-

ability of the newspapers to absorb these higher costs for distribution is aggravated by the heavy burden of newspaper prices, a further boost in which has recently been announced, and by the newly increased sales tax on newspaper, which incidentally is not collected on paper used by either domestic or imported magazines.

The insistence of the Government on exacting this extra revenue from a hitherto-encouraged segment of news readers is hardly justified by a deficiency of revenue from either the Post Office itself or from taxation and other sources. Buoyant Federal revenues of recent years have produced substantial budget surpluses over expenditures, and Post Office operations have contributed their share to these surpluses. Government accounts show that net postal revenues—excluding income and expenses of revenue Post Offices—in recent years have run above administrative and operating costs by as much as \$10 millions a year, though in recent years the margin has narrowed to between \$2 millions and \$3 millions.

The basic principle of postal services across the world is that they should, with high-volume business at low rates, provide an essential public service at cost or even less than cost. This principle is being whittled down by the present move to shove a less-than-cost policy which for long has been sustained for good and sufficient reasons.

The Poets Corner

SALTY ACRES To one brought up on a farm The sea was strange, It needed focus to narrow That wide blue range. He looked on the waves and troughs With a farmer's scorn. Those furrows that knew no plough And raised no corn. But turning his eyes to the north, He caught one day A herd of white manes moving In the saline spray. And saw in the swells and dips The homesick motion Of wind through the young green oats Of his farmland ocean. Rippling and swelling the timber Sunlit shoots, As if this great sea tide Pulled at their roots. He felt at home now, he said, Nor could he be Moved from the blue and salty Acres of sea. —Harvena Conrad Richter

PROFESSIONAL CARDS

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