The Guardian

Covers Prince Edward Island Like The Dew
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That Pension Issue

The Canadian Press reports that on Tuesday at Ottawa the government tried to force a Commons vote on the Canada Assistance Plan as it went through second reading but the opposition refused to take the bait. The measure won approval in principle without a vote and clause-by-clause study began. Health Minister MacEachen said the five-day debate on the bill had been "largely irrelevant," but he added that the old age pension was a distinct issue that would be dealt with by the government "in another context," and that "in a very short time."

This would seem to imply that the government is giving sober second thoughts to the question of aid for the aged, and to the widespread dissatisfaction resulting from the policy it has heretofore insisted on following in this regard. This policy can be better understood by recalling what the Canada Pension Plan provides.

When this plan is in full operation in 1976 it will be an excellent thing for those who participate in it, but it does nothing whatever for the very substantial segment of Canada's population who are over 70 at its inception, and very little for a substantial additional number now in their sixties. Their only dividend from the present exceptional prosperity Canada is enjoying is the fixed $75 a month old age pension, payable now at 69, or the old age assistance pension of that amount or less for which they may qualify by a means test.

Conservative, New Democratic and Creditiste parties have criticised the government for its oversight in this matter, insisting that it immediately raise the old age pension rate from $75 to $100 a month. Their objection to both the Canada Assistance Plan and to a Senate Committee plan for a guaranteed $105 total income for elderly people is based on the fact that both involve some sort of means test.

Under this system, as Mr. Macquarrie pointed out in statements quoted in yesterday's Guardian, not only must one be poor to qualify, but one must prove that he is poor to some official of the state. Another thing that concerned him was the possibility of regional variation because of the suggestion an old person in Toronto needs more than an old person in Prince Edward Island. He noted that the government of this province under Premier Shaw was providing an extra $25 a month to all its older citizens and not only for those who come forward to document their poverty. But it was the federal government which should be meeting this obligation, and he expressed hope that it would "emulate Premier Shaw instead of criticising him."

There is some indication that it may decide to bow to public opinion by doing just that. At any rate, it seems to be going through an agonizing period of reappraisal.

For The Record

We have been scanning the pages of other newspapers for their comments on Dominion Day, and their predictions of what the future holds for a nation which is still, after all, a youngling with its first centennial yet to be celebrated. One of our Western contemporaries, in underlining the progress we have achieved in this comparatively short time, saw fit to comment on the impoverished state of this part of the country before Confederation, when, as it says, "no road or railway crossed the jungle from the Laurentian settlements to the Maritimes," and when, consequently, "to the eastward New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland each pursued its own cranky way, in isolation, poverty and perpetual discord."

A rum lot we must have been, on this showing. But it doesn't quite tell the story. It is unfortunate that the true story tends very frequently to get sidetracked for piffle of the kind above quoted. Let's turn to a better authority and see where we really stood at the time of Confederation. Here it is, from the report of the famous Rowell-Sirois Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, now a quarter-century old but still well worth reading:

"At the middle of the last century, the Maritimes were one of the world's great commercial powers, holding fourth place in registered tonnage and shipping. They had begun by building ships to carry their own produce and this still provided the backbone of the business. In addition, however, the vessels of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were engaged in the trade from Europe to the United States, to South America, the East Indies and Australia. They carried coal from England to the East, guano from the Chincha Islands to England and France, petroleum from the Gulf ports to Europe and South America and wool from Australia to Europe. The 'Bluenose' vessels were to be seen in every great port in the world."

Prince Edward Island, the report goes on to say, "was neatly integrated in this Maritime economy. Its people had retired largely from the sea and taken up farming. It had already become a highly developed and specialized agricultural community. In 1367, it had approximately the same population, number of farms, occupied acreage and grain production as at present" (1940). "Its considerable agricultural surpluses went mainly to supply industries of the neighboring colonies. These, however, were not adequate to the needs of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick which imported large quantities of foodstuffs annually from the United States."

This was how we stood when we were induced to enter Confederation; and it lends force to our claims for more equitable treatment that we did not join it as beggars, or as nondescripts, but as partners able and willing to further its aims in the interests of all concerned. Let us keep our record to the forefront in the months to come. It is one we should all be proud of.

Much Too Modern

It won't be long now, says a New York management consultant, before housewives will be able to shop by computer without leaving the house. A closed circuit television camera will scan the supermarket shelves, the woman will make her selections from in front of the TV screen at home, and automatically in the store. Sounds wonderfully efficient, doesn't it? But the Ottawa Journal comes up with the inevitable answer: What woman would stand for it?

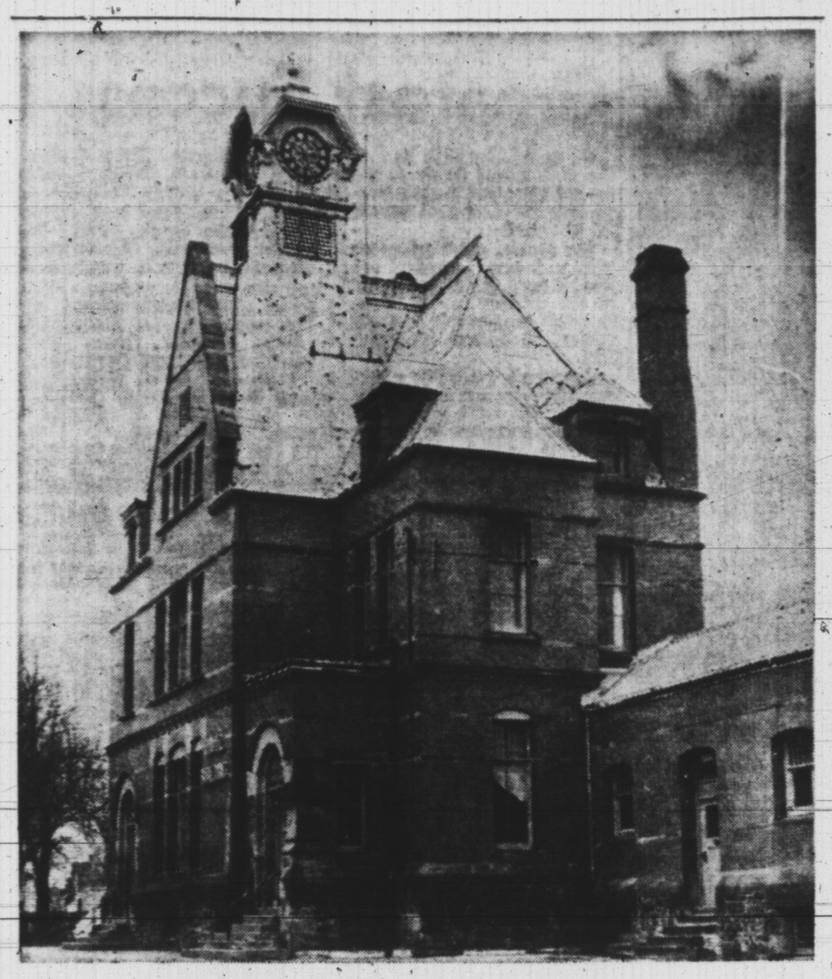
Today's wife and mother has learned to be a shrewd shopper. Even if the closed circuit TV is in color she would be suspicious that the vegetables have been made to look greener artificially. Producers today are being forced to expose more of their canned goods in packaging, but the camera will show the housewife only one side of the cantaloup.

How will the computer shopper be able to compare prices without having entire rows of shelves spread out before her—not just the one in front of the camera at a time? What if the machine goes too fast for her? By the time she has made up her mind on the tomato juice, she may have missed the cat food. And what of her desire to pinch the pineapple or shop lift?

Our Ottawa contemporary ambles on with other reasons for thinking housewives will not go for this gimmick, but we were most impressed by its concluding one. Many women, it says, look on shopping as a social event. The stores, supplied with background music, are air-conditioned in summer and have a clean smell of fresh fruit and vegetables, and the housewife who shops regularly can count on meeting friends amid the detergents or chilcken livers. Who wants to sit at home in solitude punching buttons in front of a TV screen?

EDITORIAL NOTE

The current issue of The Atlantic Advocate contains another of historian Lorne C. Callbeck's interesting Island stories, entitled Summer Vacation. This time Mr. Callbeck has researched among the memories of his own childhood, vacationing with relatives in Tryon, and the result is a charming description of the countryside, its people, its activities and its pastimes in years gone by. Islanders at home and abroad will enjoy reading it, and we can recommend it to our summer visitors as well.



TOWN HALL, SUMMERSIDE

OTTAWA REPORT by Patrick Nicholson

Sets Bad Pattern Of Acquiescence

Pearson's "Inflationary Government", flushed with its unavoidable success in assisting the settlement of labour disputes regardless of expense, has just awarded pay increases of up to 17 per cent to 40,000 civil servants and 10,000 other state employees. The bill to the taxpayers has been estimated at $23,700,000 per year.

Thus the government has set a pattern of acquiescing to demands for higher wages, rather than adhere to its piously expressed hope and essential aim of gearing wage increases to productivity increases. This, as the government's economic advisers have warned, is the only basis on which Canada can retain even its present slipping competitivity in world markets; now that the government is setting the bad example of ignoring this sound advice, our economic prospects are not rosy.

Average weekly salaries and wages in the civil service and government agencies are now $105.82 per week. This contrasts with the $94.93 average in industry, as calculated by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics for "wages and salaries at the industrial composite level." This reversal of the earlier position makes the civil service a more attractive employer than private industry, especially when one considers the generous fringe benefits such as paid holidays, paid sick leave without substantiation, pension, short summer hours, generous coffee breaks and a work pressure at the lower echelons which would not squash a fly and contrasts vividly with the unrelenting activity on a production line.

WASTE OF LABOUR

While pay scales in the civil service are soaring, the hidden inflation in the cost of government lies in the expansion of that work force — if "work" is not an overgenerous adjective to apply.

Total civilian employment in the federal public service on March 31 was 348,900, an increase of 11,700 over the preceding year. This total includes 212,650 civil servants and 136,250 employees of crown corporations and government agencies.

This staff of 212,650 civil servants costs over one billion dollars a year in wages: $1,066,800,000. This contrasts with the civil service staff in 1937 of 42,836 employees, costing $62,578,000 a year, and with the 125,337 civil servants costing $223,777,000 in 1947.

That mushrooming civil service, expanding considerably faster than our population, is a severe inflationary feature, more disastrous to our economy is the fact that so many potential workers are withdrawn from productive work.

RED TAPE WORM ERODES

Do we really need so much government intereference in our daily lives? Has the bureaucracy become so uncontrolled and self-propagating red tape worm which is wrecking the country by strangulation, by its reduction of our national productivity, and by its burden of taxes needed to sustain it?

The voraciously growing red tape worm, which an uncontrolled civil service can be, is illustrated by some figures I have obtained relating to the expansion of just one branch of the British civil service.

In 1914, the British Navy consisted of 50 battleships and dreadnoughts, 250 cruisers, 250 destroyers, 200 frigates and 50 submarines. Half a century later, the British Navy had shrunk to no battleships or dreadnoughts, only 3 cruisers, 150 destroyers, 175 frigates and 60 conventional submarines plus 3 aircraft carriers. Its size had diminished from 800 fighting ships to 391, notably of lesser class. Yet despite that more than 50 per cent cut in the number of ships in the Royal Navy, the civil service staff at the British Admiralty had grown more than sixfold, from 1,500 to 9,500. As a result the greatest threat to the British Navy today is not any potential enemy, but the avalanche of bureaucratic files which is swamping it.

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. All letters published are subject to editing and condensation where necessary. The Guardian is unable to enter into any correspondence regarding letters submitted.

NOTES FORWARD STRIDES

Sir,—It is a great pleasure for me, a former Islander, to return to my homeland on a visit and find P.E.I. making such rapid improvements in every way since my last visit in 1959.

It really has at last come alive and now all over the country are excellent roads, schools, industries of many kinds being established and a great stride forward in farming and fishing ideas.

In talking with the people a new spirit of optimism is abroad and confidence in the future for this neglected province.

I must congratulate your government in promoting such fine ideas and having the courage to carry them through. With the wise and clever leader you have in Premier Shaw, may the Island continue to prosper.

Your Confederation Centre is magnificent. Never did I enjoy a play more than "Anne of Green Gables" last night. I shall certainly boost it on my return to Ontario.

It has been a delight to enjoy a few days here among my relatives and friends who always welcome one home again, with such warm hospitality.

S. J. KING

London, Ont.

Bloopers And Boo-boo

Christian Science Monitor

For a decade now we have been hearing about wonderful machines being developed which will translate languages faster than one can read them. They are certainly needed in this multilingual world. But can they be trusted to do the job as well as human translators.

The Sunday Times (London), commenting on the ending of the British Broadcasting Corporation's Language Supervision Unit for economy reasons warns of the dangers of unsupervised translation. The bloopers it cites show that a rendering can be both literal and wrong.

An Arab, translating a news dispatch stating "Four coaches of the train were telescoped into one another" gave a dramatic version in his own tngue "Four coaches of the train were flung so far that it required a telescope to see them." Another non English translator, thinking "strike" had only one meaning turned "Australia's biggest oil strike" into "Australia's biggest oil stoppage."

And Mr. Khrushchev's famous challenge to capitalism: "We will bury you eventually" became, in the hands of a translator into French, the equivalent of "We will bury you, maybe."

The difficulties of mechanical translation appear even when an American travels to another English-speaking land. In a British bakery he may ask for biscuits and get, instead, cookies. We would like to see a machine so smart, that it would know which kind of English it is translating and respond accordingly.

Opportunity For Youth

Windsor Star

It is only human nature that the older generation will always advise, frequently wonder about, and occasionally deplore the younger generation. But it is true that today's younger generation in Canada has opportunities never known to the older generation.

The current theme is "stay in school," and its wisdom is abundantly clear if one considers the steadily rising educational standards and the steadily declining opportunities for the untrained and uneducated. What has not been stressed, however, is that both the opportunity to stay in school and the rewards for doing so are much greater than they used to be.

"Two decades ago, putting a son or daughter through university was a great financial strain for most Canadian families. Many youngsters left school long before university because they were needed to help out the family finances.

Today, there is not the same financial need for students to leave school before they have completed the education they plan. Those who intend to go into university have available to them far more scholarships, bursaries, student loans, and other forms of financial help than was ever the case in the past.

For the university graduate, too, there is greater opportunity. Not only the top two or three in a graduating class, but anyone who has shown even competence in his course, is eagerly sought by potential employers. Post-graduate scholarships, once available to only the very talented, are now offered much more widely. The student of ordinary ability, if he wants to work hard, can be virtually assured of finding a scholarship which will take him to Europe or elsewhere for further study.

Our Yesterdays

(From The Guardian Files)

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

In a swift, historic move, the forces in Iceland, and President Roosevelt directed the Atlantic fleet to keep the vast stretch of ocean between the strategic island and the United States "free of all hostile activity or threat thereof."

The first fox field day of the season was held in Summerside and was attended by about 100 visitors. One of the prominent speakers was Mr. W.R. Shaw, Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

TEN YEARS AGO

His Honour, Lieutenant Governor T.W.L. Prowse and Mrs. Prowse entertained in honour of the Commanding Officer and officers of the French frigate, L'Aventure, in Charlottetown on her annual courtesy visit to this province.

The Prince Edward Island Hospital campaign to raise $250,000 for urgently needed improvements in basic service facilities, was nearing a successful completion according to a statement made by J. David Stewart, the campaign chairman.

The Span Of Life

By Dr. Theodore R. Van Dellen

LIFE SPAN is the greatest number of years that a person can live. We know that relatively few humans survive more than 100 years. Christian Jacobsen Drakenberg, a Dane, was born in 1626 and lived to be 146. Another authenticated instance of a man who lived 113 years was reported from Canada. Centenarians are not common, especially when the date of birth can be determined without question.

The average length of life is the average number of years lived per person in a group traced from birth to the death of the last survivor. This is easily done if the birth and death certificates of all its members can be found. It is estimated that the average length of life in the United States is now 70 years, an increase of 30 years since 1850. The figure for the world as a whole is estimated to be 35 years.

Life expectancy is different. It refers to the average remaining years left to a group of some stated age. It is based also on a table of figures calculated from following a group of people from birth and determining how many survived from one year of age to the next. This life table depends upon the death rates at each age of life as observed in a specific group, age, sex, or race during a particular period. These tables are revised from time to time because of gains in longevity due to medical advances and public health developments.

Life expectancy at birth refers to the number of years a newborn is expected to live. This must be computed from the life table of insurance companies. Life expectancy figures are available for any age. At age 20 it is 49.12 years. The latter is the number of years a 20 year old is likely to live. Not everyone in this age group will make it but they all stand an equal chance of doing so assuming that they are healthy.

Insurance company actuarians take advantage of these figures to calculate risks. They may refuse to insure or increase the premiums of those with obvious diseases, disabilities, or poor health habits. A recent innovation is to lessen the premiums of those who do not smoke or drink on the assumption that they will live longer.

DEEPEST SLEEP

K.F. writes: When is sleep deepest

REPLY

In the majority of adults sleep deepens rapidly until the end of the first hour. It then lessens sharply for a time and more slowly thereafter until waking. With children there are two periods of deep sleep. One is reached in the first hour or two, and the second between the eighth and ninth hours.

USING THE EYES

J.M. writes: I am developing cataracts and love to read and sew. Everyone tells me I should spare my eyes. Does it really make any difference to the cataracts whether I use my vision as I do

REPLY

No, as age rather than use is responsible for cataracts.

Creates Red Rallying Cry

By Boris Miskew
Canadian Press Staff Writer

The United States bombing of North Vietnamese oil depots will bring members of the Warsaw Pact closer together at a time when Romania is nudging the Soviet Union for greater military independence for the pact nations.

The subject of military independence was believed to be high on the agenda of the seven active members of the Warsaw Pact, formed 11 years ago as Eastern Europe's answer to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

But the launching last week of the American bombing raids on oil storage facilities in the North Vietnamese cities of Hanoi and Haiphong, until then spared from U.S. attacks, will merely draw together the Warsaw countries in the face of the more dangerous turn of events in Southeast Asia.

The enlargement of the war in Viet Nam, with the threat of Chinese intervention lurking in the background, will overshadow to some extent the Soviet - Romanian differences on the future of the military structure of the pact.

TOP-LEVEL TALKS

The top - level conference is taking place at a time when the Soviet Union is having difficulty persuading some of her Eastern European allies to bolster their commitment under the eastern bloc umbrella, and Romania is stressing the desirability of breaking up all blocs including NATO as well as the Warsaw Pact.

Romania, trying to assume a somewhat neutral position in Eastern Europe similar to France's role in the West, was obviously disturbed by the American bombings of North Vietnamese oil installations and has become more critical of U.S. actions in Viet Nam.

There were no visible signs of discord among the pact nations—the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania — when Romanian Communist party chief Nicolae Ceausescu welcomed the delegates to Bucharest Monday. Albania, an eighth member, has not participated in the organization since siding with China in the Chinese-Soviet ideological argument.

OFFICIAL WELCOME

But after the official welcome, Ceausescu was reported engaged for three hours in separate talks between his delegation and that of the Soviet Union, headed by Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Soviet Communist party, and Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin.

As things stand, the Eastern bloc may try to reach a compromise by having the Soviet Union agree to set aside its demands for a tighter command structure and by having Romania relax its attitude on the greater sharing of responsibility at the command level.

The apparent split between Romania and the Soviet Union on the future structure of the Warsaw Pact command appears less serious than the problems created when France's decision to stay out of the NATO integrated military command forced the withdrawal of American and Canadian forces from France.

The new developments in Southeast Asia therefore may be enough of a rallying cry to keep the Eastern bloc countries pulling together despite Romania's urge for a more independent military posture among Warsaw pact members.

FIRE SECURITY MAN

BELGRADE (AP)—The Yugoslav Parliament Wednesday fired Svetislav Stefanovic, in charge of state security, who was kicked out of the Communist Party Friday. The central committee of the party accused him of wanting to use the secret police to control and dominate the Communist party and government.

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ASSISTANCE ON PURCHASE OF
CORN PLANTING AND HARVESTING MACHINERY

1. The Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture will provide assistance to groups of at least five (5) farmers who will grow a combined acreage of at least fifty (50) acres of corn.
2. Assistance will be provided on the purchase of a corn planter, two self-unloading wagons, corn harvester, and silo filler.
3. This assistance will be for one year only and will be to the extent of 10% of the purchase price of the above mentioned machinery, but the total assistance will not exceed $1,000.00 for any one group.

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