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CIRCULATION
"Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew"

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

CHARLOTTETOWN SATURDAY, JAN. 16, 1954

Well Done

The announcement that Mr. J. O. C. Campbell, Q.C., has resigned from his office of Deputy Attorney General to resume private practice will be cause for regret. The Government has now lost the services of two outstanding deputy ministers within a very short time, Mr. W. R. Shaw having recently retired as Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

During the past four years while Mr. Campbell was Deputy Attorney General and previously when he represented the Government in various capacities this Province has been able to rely on its case being very ably stated indeed before courts and commissions as well as in the day to day negotiation between governments and departments.

A great deal of the legislation enacted in the Province owes its form to Mr. Campbell's parliamentary draftsmanship and above all the Revised Statutes, 1951 stand as a monument to his astonishing capacity for work and skill as a legal draftsman. It was a very great achievement indeed to undertake as sole commissioner the responsibility for revising the Statute Book of this Province from the time before it was separated from Nova Scotia. It is to be hoped that it will be followed by ten-yearly revisions so that never again will our statute law become the tangled skein it was before the revision.

Despite the energy with which Mr. Campbell tackled governmental problems he is essentially a trial lawyer, being a familiar figure in all our courts, not excluding the Privy Council. To a very considerable extent, therefore, his work will be as before but without departmental responsibilities and with more time for the conduct of trials.

Federal Expenditures

If our members at Ottawa are to receive, as now seems likely, an indemnity boost of $4,000, plus a $5,000 raise in the salaries of cabinet members, it is incumbent upon them to make every effort to relieve the taxpayer in other directions. Only in this way will they be able to justify their own emolument increases. Certainly the Canadian public will not lose sight of the fact that this is being mooted at a time when the Eisenhower administration in the United States is submitting far-reaching tax reduction proposals to Congress.

While the basic U. S. rates of income and other taxes will not be changed for the moment, quite extensive relief is offered to taxpayers through allowances and exemptions of various sorts. Some, such as the liberalization of the rules regarding exemptions for dependents and for medical costs, are designed to help the hard-pressed family man. Others, notably the more generous depreciation regulations, are intended to encourage investment and modernization of industrial plants.

In both Canada and the United States, the biggest item in the budget is national defence. But whereas the Americans are planning large cutbacks in military expenditures, no such reductions are in prospect in Canada. The difference may be due to the fact that our defence planning has emphasized the air force, where cuts in strength are harder to make, and riskier, than they are in the ground forces. In addition, Canada has a much more extensive, and therefore proportionately more costly, social welfare system than the United States, and this is largely untouchable. Another big drain on the treasury, which has no parallel in the States, is the payments to the provinces under the tax-rental agreements; these, too, cannot be reduced by the federal government alone.

Even making allowances for all these items, however, there is a general feeling that a return to pre-war principles of thrift would make possible substantial savings at Ottawa, without reducing any of Canada's major commitments. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, in a recent brief to the cabinet, submitted some proposals along this line which deserve careful consideration. They include: grants to municipalities in lieu of regular taxation on Crown property, which would give indirect relief to the hard-pressed local ratepayers; allowances to taxpayers who make their own provisions for retirement, similar to those granted to persons contributing to approved pension plans; a more liberal policy in regard to exemptions for charitable donations; and a general review of the sales tax. To which should be added a more generous policy in respect to deductions for medical expenses, especially by making all such expenses deductible, and removing the present "floor" of three per cent.

Unfortunately our taxpayers have no immediate means of making indemnity boosts at Ottawa contingent upon more economic administration; but if our members are wise they will keep this fact constantly in mind. Killing the goose that lays the golden egg has long been regarded as the acme of improvidence.

Maine's Potato Surplus

Maine potato growers are being urged to help themselves out of their present market predicament by a Bridgewater, Maine, dealer, who has taken full-page advertisements in a Bangor newspaper to boost his proposals. Briefly, this dealer suggests that Maine could help do away with the national surplus by sizing and shipping only those potatoes between 2 1/2 and 4 inches, and diverting all the oversize, undersize and culls to the starch factories. This practise, of course, is followed by some growers, but the starch factories are still not operating at capacity. Siphoning off a larger percentage of the crop in this way would assure the consumers that all lower grades have been destroyed and, by the same token, would give them confidence that what they buy is the best quality.

In an editorial commending the scheme, the Bangor Daily News says the 1953 Aroostook crop started at 58-million bushels, but by the shipment of some 10-million bushels has been reduced to 48-million. "Somewhere in the 40-million bushel market," it says, "lies the 'common denominator', that is, the point that turns in a profit. When the shipment runs less than the measuring yardstick, it usually indicates a national shortage and a greater profit to the grower; when it exceeds that yardstick, it means the national crop has been large. Black then becomes red. Potatoes are a drug on the market."

Last year Aroostook was unable to market a 52-million bushel yield. This year's surplus is estimated at 12 million bushels, which would leave the bushels to be marketed at 46-million. It is now proposed that some 5-million bushels could be eliminated from the market between now and February 20 by diverting them to the starch factories which, though willing, are not operating at full capacity. "The same procedure," says the Bangor paper, "would probably eliminate much if not all of the remaining 7-million bushel surplus after that date."

It is rather late, however, to accomplish the full purpose behind the proposal. Aroostook cannot move its crop out of the country in time to meet the May 1 deadline. That date customarily spells the end of the crop in the 'late states', since southern potatoes are then available. To move the Aroostook crop by May 1 would mean the shipping of the equivalent of 400 cars a day from now to the deadline. The demand does not warrant that kind of potato traffic. But it isn't too late for a reasonably good salvage operation. The Bangor paper says that practically every grower polled in Aroostook expressed belief that the proposed plan had considerable merit. On the other hand, no one seemed willing to set the pace.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Corunna (Sir John Moore), 1809.

* * *

Tomorrow, 2nd Sunday after Epiphany.

* * *

The difficulties over the release of Prisoners-of-War in Korea are more characteristic of the struggle going on in the world than was the fighting that preceded it. More than a battle for power and territory it is a struggle for men's minds.

* * *

On the back of new series of Bank of Canada notes that will be put into circulation in September it is reported that Canadian countryside scenes will replace the symbolic figures representing agriculture, industry, communications and so forth. There are at least two dangers involved in the change. Some scenes are apt to be rapidly "dated" in a developing country and there will undoubtedly be a great deal of pressure from local boosters to have their own locality represented.

* * *

Edward Gibbon, most celebrated of English historians, died this date 1794. His great work, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," has placed him in the front rank of historians. He made little progress at school because of ill health but passed many hours in his grandfather's library. Later, under the guidance of tutors, he concentrated on history, not reading any book through, but pursuing a subject into every hole and corner. After sixteen his health became sound and he led a full life until settling down for his magnum opus.

Possible Unforeseen Developments

Economics Of The Atom

(Graham Hutton in London Calling)

Britain began the whole world's Industrial Revolution with coal and steam. Today Britain's main economic problem is the cost of getting her coal, which will last for 200 years more. It now lies deeper and farther underground, and it is costing the British people from £500,000 to £1,000,000 a waak, on the average, in new capital equipment for their coal-mines, in order to help the miners to get out the coal. So the cost of that coal continually rises, and that continually raises the cost of electricity, which in Britain is mainly produced from coal-fired furnaces.

On the other hand, according to the latest official statements, the initial cost of producing electricity from nuclear energy will probably be "competitive" with that of producing electricity in the old-fashioned ways; and—as with all new inventions after they are first put to work—that nuclear-energy cost is likely to fall steadily rather than to rise. Moreover, a strange aspect of atomic energy is that in the future nuclear reactors envisaged for making electricity the atomic material will breed new material which, in turn, can be further split in atomic operations.

In other words, whereas all forms of making energy up till now have been ways of transforming some fuel—coal or oil, for instance—into another fuel (electricity) at a consequent loss of material somewhere in the process, the new atomic fuel not only produces the electricity but also replaces itself to a considerable extent. This is, indeed, something unparalleled in economic development, and it offsets a good deal of the cost of producing electricity from a nuclear reactor.

* * *

But there remain several problems to be overcome before we all enter the atomic-energy era and throw away our coal-mines, hydro-electric stations, and oil refineries. First, there is the geological and geographical problem of finding and getting enough of the raw material for atom-splitting—uranium. It is mainly found in the Belgian Congo, Canada, and Australia, and a few other places. Doubtless in time we shall overcome this problem, and also develop machinery and methods for using lower-quality uranium ore; but it still costs a lot of money.

Secondly, there is the problem of safety for the human beings working on the nuclear reactors, or even those living within, perhaps, 100 or 200 miles of them. That is a problem for countries like Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, and most of Western Europe—or for Japan, for that matter—where towns are close together and people live densely. It is easier for newer countries with great open spaces like America, Australia, Canada, or old but sparsely settled big countries like China and Russia, where there are still vast, uninhabited spaces. We do not yet know enough about the risks of civilian nuclear reactors. One accident alone would suffice to kill hundreds of thousands of people and perhaps slowly destroy millions, if indeed an accident did not do worse.

* * *

This means that one big item alone in the cost of peaceful atomic energy will be that of safeguarding the plant against any and every risk of an accident, however remote. This safety factor becomes much more important—and much more costly—when we progress from the simple nuclear reactors now being built to the more complex ones (called "fast reactors") which breed nuclear material as they produce energy, and therefore become (as scientists hope) self-supporting. We in Britain are already looking for a remote, isolated spot in the north of Scotland where we can build our first "fast reactor", the breeder-reactor, the dangerous one.

So you can see that it is only industrial countries—Russia, America, Britain, France, and so on—which are within measurable distance of the civilian atomic-energy era. What none of us yet really knows is how much it will all cost, in order to be perfectly safe. We are all in the hands of our scientists; and they can only judge by the awful effects of the atom bombs already exploded. And merely on the production of such atomic bombs and other weapons the industrial nations of the world have already spent something like £6,000-million, enough to produce civilian atomic energy quite safely, and on a scale sufficient to make Britain independent of coal, or to make Western Europe independent of imports of oil. We are still a very long way from cheap atomic energy for all.

* * *

The tragedy of atomic energy is, of course, the tragedy of mankind's two natures: the evil nature making for war, and the good nature making for prosperity, co-operation, and welfare. Today in the atomic-energy age we face on the one hand the penalties of being a divided mankind: the race in atomic armaments; the Iron Curtain of mistrust and enmity, and on the other hand the Russians as much as the Americans or British are forging ahead with the application of nuclear energy for civilian and peaceful purposes. Indeed, the British have the biggest export trade of all in atomic isotopes for medical purposes.

What we all need to know—indeed, what we can perhaps get to know more easily and co-operative than about armaments—is the comparative costs of producing energy this new way, the best ways of securing the safety of human beings, the best methods of applying this new form of energy, and the best ways of cushioning the social and economic shock of the new energy upon the old-fashioned forms and their industries, such as coal, oil, gas, and others.

It is a very good piece of news that the British and Americans are going rapidly ahead with their civilian, peaceful production of electricity from nuclear reactors, because it may bring nearer the day when true and full international co-operation can take place for the safeguarding of all humanity from both civil accidents and from warlike experiments, with this biggest single source of power available to the human race.

The Age Old Story

Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

The Poet's Corner

POEM IN WINTER

Today the children begin to hope
for snow
And look in the sky for auguries
of it.
It is not for such omens that we
wait,
Our world may not be settled by
the slow
Falling of flakes to lie across our
thought.

And even if the snow comes down
indeed
We still shall stand behind a pane
of glass
Untouched by it, and watch the
children press
Their image on the drifts the sky
has laid
Upon a winter they think they
have made.

This is a wise illusion. Better to
Believe the near world is created
by
A wish, a shaping hand, a certain
eye,
Than hide in the mind's corner as
we do
As though there were no world,
no fall of snow.

—Elizabeth Jennings in the London Listener.

Old Charlottetown

(And P. E. I.)

IN THE WRONG SHOP

"Shortly before 4 o'clock this afternoon, an innocent-looking countryman entered the Police Station, and, after feeling his way, asked Sergeant Cameron if he could not sell him a little drop of liquor. The Sergeant asked the visitor how much he wanted, and he replied that he only wanted about a half pint in a flask to take with his medicine, as he had not been feeling very well of late. The Sergeant replied that he was very sorry he could not oblige him, as they were wholesale dealers and only sold by the case. The man then left to look elsewhere for his 'little drop'."

—The Examiner, Sept. 7, 1888.

BATTALION RETURNS

LONDON, Ont., (CP)—The Royal Canadian Regiment with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colors flying, once again marched the streets of London as the regiment's first battalion returned to the city after an eight year absence. Londoners braved frigid temperatures on downtown streets to welcome home the battalion.

The Passing Scene

By Observer

RE THE IRISH VANISHING

No one but an Irishman or, better still, a group of Irishmen, would have the right or the boldness to suggest, even so faintly, that the Irish race is in a process of decline. Such a book has recently been published under the title "The Vanishing Irish". It is really a collection of essays by outstanding Irish writers including Mr. Sean O'Faolain who is in the forefront of contemporary Irish men of letters. And, to give the symposium an undeniably respectable imprimatur, an Irish priest, the Rev. John A. O'Brien, was given the task of editing it. In fact, the idea was Father O'Brien's to begin with.

In his introduction this scholarly and candid priest has this to say: "Nothing in recent centuries is so puzzling or so challenging as the phenomenon being enacted before ous eyes: the fading away of the once great and populous nation of Ireland". This is the theme which runs, with varying degrees of deviation here and there, through the collected essays.

* * *

As in all works of this kind some considerable space is given over to statistics. Proceeding, as a non-Irishmen, on the assumption that anything put down in writing by an Irishman call for no verification, I simply quote the figures as they appear in the book. In 1840 the areas which now make up the Republic of Ireland had a population of approximately 6½ millions. By 1946 the population had dwindled to not quite 3 millions. That represents an approximate decline of 50% in a century. One does not have to be skilled in higher mathematics, or in any other kind for that matter to see that, should the trend continue for another hundred years (which the good Lord forbid), the Irish nation virtually will have ceased to exist. That is a prospect which no one but a veritable spalpeen would view with delight or even with equanimity.

As for the direct and classifiable causes of this rapid and sorrowful decline, the contributors to "The Vanishing Irish" have various opinions which may be sumed up broadly under three headings: (1) too late marriages; (2) too few marriages; (3) too many one-way trips to other lands, commonly known as emigration. According to Father O'Brien and his associates the average marrying age in that land of historic romance is 35 and only a minority of Irish girls marry at all, at least in Ireland.

* * *

Just what percentage of the decline is due to emigration the book does not say, but it may be assumed to be very considerable. Anyone who has travelled very much, especially in the United States, does not need any statistics to remind him that there are a lot of Irishmen who do not live in Ireland, North or South. That, of course, is bad for the Old World; no one would question its beneficence for the New. What would New York or Boston or St. Louis or Los Angeles or Detroit be like without the Irish? Who would man their police forces or add the spice of gaiety and excitement to their political battles? Who would keep alive the courageous spirit of St. Patrick, so very much needed in this age of fear and scepticism?

In every instance where a country's population is on the decline it probably would be found that economic conditions are involved in it. Certainly they are in this instance. The authors of these essays do not suggest that every Irishman who has gone to the United States or Canada was unable to make a living at home. And it's a good thing they don't for no Irishmn would put up with that kind of talk even from one of his own race. They do suggest, however, that this is a part of the sorry picture and that something must be done, and quickly, if mass emigration is to be stopped and earlier and more marriages encouraged.

Being literary men rather than economists they do not present any detailed plan which might expidite economic recovery. They are content with describing the situation as they see it in language which betokens a deep affection for their native land and which reveals a literary excellence which at times comes very close to poetic grandeur. In addition there is, of course, that mark of lively and cheerful wit which comes naturally to every Irishmen. The economists themselves, backed by government aid and encouragement, will have to look for the remedy.

* * *

Statistics and expert conclusions notwithstanding, one finds it difficult to believe that the home land of the Irish will ever disintegrate as a political and social unit. As father O'Brien and his fellow essayists seem to infer it may take a miracle to halt the relentless trend, but miracles do happen as the Irish know as well as any people on earth.

Even if the worst should come to pass, that would be by no means the end of the Irish. Into many lands they have gone taking with them their heritage of piety, passion for freedom, good cheer, good sense, and friendliness; these things do not perish. And, wherever an Irishmen makes his home, there is established for all to see a little bit of earth that is for ever Ireland.

Notes By The Way

Don't figure a girl's intellect by the silly hat she may be wearing. —Niagara Falls Review.

A vegetarian declares that people who eat meat are savages. What would he say if we insisted that all people who don't eat meat are donkeys?—Peterborough Examiner.

About all that's been proved by that Austrian fakir who lived a year in a glass bottle is that you can live in a glass bottle.—Brantford Expositor.

The high cost of children's haircuts jolts many young couples, who can't even use a bowl because their crockery is all the modern square type.—Stratford Beacon-Herald.

Skyscrapers do not make a modern city. The new idea is to have more open spaces to provide for school grounds, recreation grounds, parking grounds and less traffic congestion.—Oshawa Times-Gazette.

In view of the charges by doctors that cigaret smoking is conducive to lung cancer, the tobacco companies will now, no doubt, set out to prove that the doctors are suffering from pipe dreams.—Toronto Star.

An elderly teacher in England, appalled by the poor reading ability of her nine-year-old students, stopped a lesson recently and asked her students to explain why they needed to learn to read. The students replied variously that reading enabled one to read a book, a newspaper. big colored poster signs, to know where a bus is going and to look at comics. Not so far wrong was the best reader in the class who said scornfully, "If you don't read, you look daft."—From Kitchener-Waterloo Record.

Toronto, so individualistic in many things, has produced another expression of this flair for the unusual. There an angry husband, annoyed at his wife's boy friend, bit the end off that fellow's finger with one snap. Probably this kind of treatment comes under the category of mayhem, but in this instance it seems to have been used to good effect. "His teeth are sharp," the maimed "other man" admitted later. He will not be accused of overstatement.—Windsor Daily Star.

The "drunkometer," long used as a measure for intoxication in American courts, gave its expert evidence in a Toronto trial the other day. The result was unfavorable to the man, charged with drunk driving, against whom it testified. It declared him intoxicated. That is, the police chemist who made the test said the "drunkometer" showed the accused had 1.82 parts of alcohol in his blood, or enough to make him drunk. —Windsor Daily Star.

Southern Alberta, perhaps more than most parts of Canada, owes a special debt to its old-timers. These pioneers are leaving a rich legacy of color and tradition that is the pride of the community, the envy of the rest of Canada. To perpetuate the color and the tradition and to memorialize the old-timers, a $75,000 "log cabin" will shortly be built on a commanding site in Calgary. It will not be a complete museum or a formal archives, but it will house the records and memories of the South Alberta Pioneers and Old-Timers Association.—Calgary Albertan.

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