

The Guardian

Covers Prince Edward Island like the Dew
Published every week-day morning at 136 Prince Street
Charlotteville, P.E.I. by the Thomson Company Ltd.
44 King St. W. Toronto.
Montreal Office, 222 University Tower Bldg.
Editor, Frank Walker
General Manager, Ian A. Burnett
Member Canadian Daily Newspaper
Publishers Association
Member of the Canadian Press
Member Audit Bureau of Circulations
Branch offices at Summerside, Montserrat and Alberton
Authorized as Second Class Mail by the Post Office
Department, Ottawa.
By carrier, Charlottetown, Saturdays \$12.00 per an-
num. Elsewhere in P. E. I. \$9.00. Other Provinces and
U. S. \$12.00 per annum.

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

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 21, 1955

The Important Afghans

Strange how places and peoples, normally considered remote and of little importance, spring into prominence when caught in the current of big issues. Take Afghanistan, for instance. It is not long ago when that country was just a name in the school books, an unfamiliar blot on an atlas, an annoyance to children trying, without much success, to master the mysteries of geography. No one in the Western world knew or cared much what the Afghans happened to be doing at any given time; whatever it was was not likely to have much influence on the world at large. True, there was a comfortable wrap called an "Afghan", but it was just as likely to have been put together in Idaho or New Mexico as in Afghanistan.

Today, it's a different story. Afghanistan is, indeed, on the map; and it is considered so important in world politics that two Russian leaders have traveled to its capital city bearing gifts—\$100 million worth of them—which, it is hoped by the Russians, will store up merit for the Communist cause. That cause, in the frank words of one of the Russian leaders, is "to break the Baghdad Pact". For the first time in modern history, the Afghans are in a position to bargain with a great power; perhaps with all the great powers, for Mr. Dulles of the United States already has expressed concern over the honeyed words the Russians have spoken in the ears of Afghans.

It is all very simple, of course. Afghanistan borders on Soviet Asia and lies squarely between two members of the Baghdad Pact, Iran and Pakistan. Moreover, it has a long-standing quarrel with Pakistan over a border tribe called by some the "Pathans", and by others the "Pushtoons". But, by whatever name they may be called, their troubles are made to order for the fashioners of Soviet intrigue. Just how the Afghans will feel about all this, once they have studied it by the clear light of day, remains to be seen. However, for a people who have never had anything to say in world affairs, the temptation to act as pawns in a Soviet game—for a consideration, of course—will be very great.

Change In Food Habits

"Canadians," says L. E. Drayton, in a recent article in the Economic Annalist, "have either been buying more food, better quality food, or more services with food." In 1950, the per capita food expenditure in Canada was \$220, and in 1954, \$225. In terms of constant 1949 dollars, food expenditure per capita was \$214 in 1950, and \$227 in 1954, an increase of six per cent. We spend, on the average, from 23 to 24 per cent of our total disposable income on food, and there isn't a great deal of change from one year to the next. Nevertheless, there are changes in the kinds of food on which we spend our money. Generally speaking, in the last five years Canadians have tended to eat more animal and protective foods and less of the lower-priced energy foods, such as cereals, potatoes, sugar, syrups, fats and oils.

In 1953, consumers ate 10.6 pounds per capita less of cereals than in 1950; 33 pounds less of potatoes, seven pounds less of sugar and 1.5 pounds less of oils and fats. On the other hand we ate 35 pounds more fruit per capita, 10.4 pounds more meats, 3.8 pounds more poultry or fish, and a little more each of eggs, milk and cheese.

Supply, says Mr. Drayton, has not been a major factor. Grains and other energy foods have been plentiful, though butter and potatoes have been in short supply for limited periods. Nor can prices alone account for all of the shift. Mostly,

It was due to an increase of one per capita disposable income, which rose, for the country as a whole, from \$12,674,000,000 in 1950 to \$16,747,000,000 in 1954. There was also some increase due to what is called "technological change," as, for example, the introduction of concentrated frozen fruit juices, of which Canada imported over 1.5 million gallons in 1954, or the equivalent of about eight pounds of fruit per capita. Along with these influences has been that of nutritional education, long concerned with the importance of a balanced diet.

The same type of changes are under way in the United States. There, in 1909, total wheat consumption for food was 475 million bushels. The figure for 1954 was exactly the same, despite the fact that population is about 50 million greater, or enough to consume another 375 million bushels of wheat at the 1909 consumption rate. In the United States, too, less bread, potatoes and cornmeal are being consumed, but substantially more processed foods and vegetables, as well as poultry and eggs and some dairy products.

A Site Of Dangers

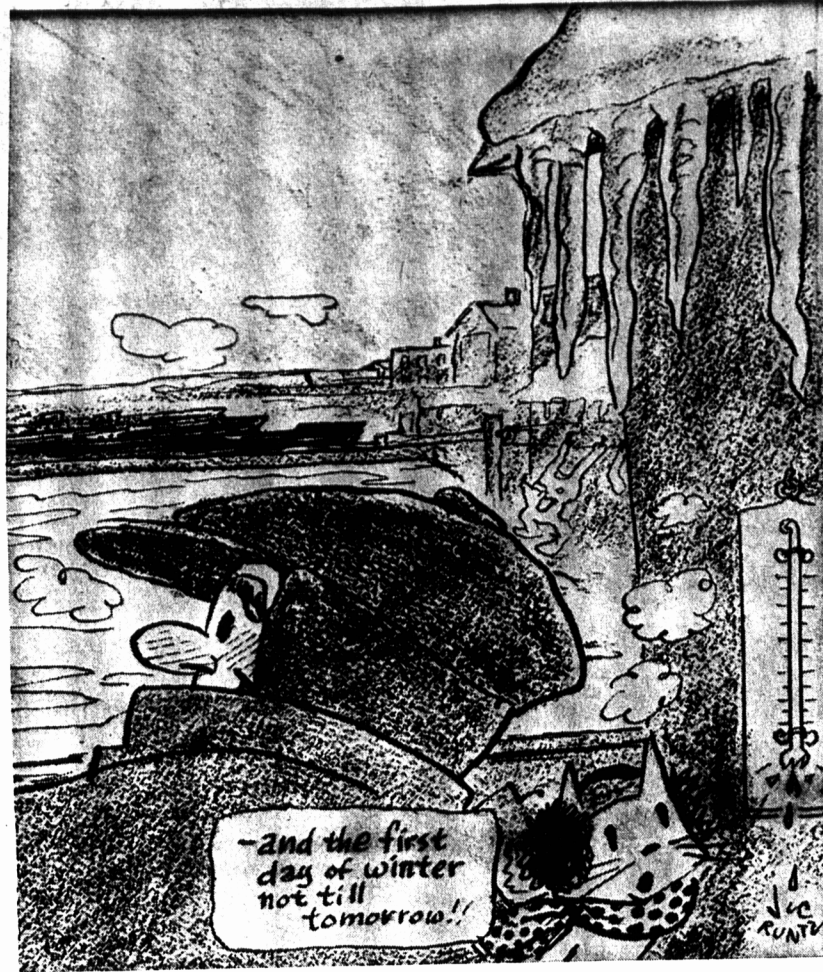
The results of the election in the Saar came as no surprise; they represent, indeed a mere anti-climax to the pro-German sentiments expressed by the residents of that much disputed territory last summer. The only unexpected development was that the French interests managed to keep their German opponents from making a clean sweep, thus delaying the constitutional amendment which is necessary to restore the area to West German sovereignty. But, although it may be delayed, it cannot be hindered; for neither France nor any other Western power interested in the Saar's future can refuse to heed the verdict of the polls in a free and democratic election.

Within a few months, therefore, the Saar with its heavy industry, which heretofore has contributed enormous strength to the French economy, will pass once more into German hands. For, like it or not, the French may as well abandon the idea that they can retain economic control over a territory that will be a part of the West German Republic. In may or may not be of any significance, as far as future relations between France and West Germany are concerned; but it is to be noted that the man who led the pro-German forces last Sunday did the same thing for Hitler in 1935—with the same results. Things, of course, are different now from what they were then. At that time, Franco-German relations were rapidly deteriorating; now, if reports are at all reliable, they are growing more amiable. Nevertheless, it would be foolish to dismiss the Saar as a possible site of danger. It is to be hoped that Sunday's election results will not be the beginning of new troubles for Western Europe which has plenty of them already.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Senator Knowland of California has stated that if Mr. Eisenhower has not made an announcement on whether or not he will run again in 1956 by mid-January he himself will declare presidential intentions. Mr. Knowland, it will be observed, is the leader of the extreme isolationist right-wing group in the Republican Party. His chances of winning the nomination are considered almost negligible; but the fact that he feels strong enough even to enter his name in the state primaries is evidence that isolationism is still a factor in United States' politics.

Sir Winston Churchill, in accepting the freedom of the cities of Belfast and Londonderry, expressed the hope that some day "all Ireland will be loyal because it is free, and will be united because it is loyal, and will be united within itself and united with the British Empire." Some will call all this the wishful thinking of an old man; others, with just as good reason, will call it a prophetic utterance of a statesman whose 60-year association with the Irish political scene entitles his views to a respectful hearing. Stranger things than those which Sir Winston mentioned have occurred from time to time.



WHEN ICICLES HANG BY THE WALL

Fluoridation Tests

Ottawa Journal

Those who oppose the fluoridation of water—as some in their time opposed vaccination against smallpox and the toxoid treatment against diphtheria—will not find it easy to overcome the evidence offered now by the city of Brantford, in Ontario, and the cities of Newburgh and Kingston in New York.

On the basis of a ten-year test, with careful records kept under supervision of the Ontario Department of Health, Brantford reports 60 percent, fewer decayed, missing and filled teeth among its school children than before treatment of the water. Incidence of tooth decay in Brantford, it is stated, has decreased to a point to make it comparable with the rate in the neighboring city of Stratford where fluoride naturally is present in the water supply.

The report was prepared by the medical statistics branch of the Department of Health, which added the information that physicians and dentists in Brantford had attested to "the absence of any clinically observable ill effects" from the use of fluorides over the ten-year period in the light of these findings. Dr. Phillips, the Minister of Health, pronounces fluoridation "both harmless and beneficial."

NEW YORK EXPERIMENT
The controlled experiment in the New York cities is equally emphatic in its conclusions. Newburgh and Kingston are cities on the Hudson river 35 miles apart. Newburgh's water supply for ten years has been treated with fluorides in the proportion of one part to one million parts of water. Kingston water contains no fluoride. The comparison of the two communities in the matter of tooth decay as given by Dr. Herman Hilleboe, state Commissioner of Health, and his department scientists is summarized by the New York Herald Tribune:
"The younger a child is when he starts drinking fluoridated water the more effective it is in reducing decay."
"The report indicates that among the children who drink fluoridated water, the number of missing, decayed or repaired teeth will be between 38 percent, and 40 percent, lower, depending on age than the children who don't drink the water."
"Children who do not drink fluoridated water may lose between one and a half and eight times as many teeth as those who have the specially prepared water."
Dr. Hilleboe agrees completely with Ontario's Dr. Phillips on the significance of these findings, in fact is even stronger. The experiments, he told a New York medical gathering, "present irrefutable evidence of the safety and effectiveness of the fluoridation of drinking water," and denounced opponents of fluoridation as "misguided and misinformed persons who are ignorant of the scientific facts."

Over the opposition of those Dr. Hilleboe calls "faddists and cultists" fluoridation continues to make progress. Thirty-one communities in upper New York state are using the treated water and five more are ready to start. In the United States 115 communities are distributing fluoridated water to 22,000,000 persons. Progress has been slower in Canada, but Toronto is getting ready to join the parade, and it is interesting to observe that North Bay by referendum has decided to do the same.

Ottawa's Board of Health is on record as approving of fluoridation and it is in City Council that obstruction has been found—rather a degree of indifference that amounts to the same thing. With these reports from test cities in Ontario and New York, with the official opinions of the heads of the provincial and state health services, it would be difficult to justify additional delay. This is not something to be decided on prejudice and hysteria but on the medical and statistical evidence—and that evidence now is conclusive.

Britain's Defense System

By Ken Methelal
Canadian Press, London

Britain's atomic age defence forces enter 1956 with a streamlined organization, a growing arsenal of modern weapons and a big question mark hovering over compulsory national service.

The year now ending saw the country boldly tackle the problem of giving fully co-ordinated direction of the 1,500,000,000 pounds defence effort.

PRODUCE H-BOMB

It also saw the government and the forces:

1. Decide to begin production of the hydrogen bomb as a deterrent to war.
2. Announce a planned reduction of 40,000 annually in the overall strength of the forces to a total of 700,000 by March, 1958.
3. Adroitly side-step a final decision on the long-range desirability of national service which accounts for 280,000 of Britain's 789,900 men under arms.
4. Continue development of a wide range of atomic weapons, super-sonic aircraft and guided missiles.

STREAMLINE SETUP

To meet the need for close co-ordination of all services under conditions of modern warfare and to eliminate costly overlapping of defence efforts, the government in October broadened the authority of the ministry of defence to give it directional control over all efforts, both at home and abroad. The top-level reorganization means that Britain has adopted the form of ministerial control used by Canada. And it breaks a long-standing tradition that the three armed services should each be directly responsible to the cabinet.

As in Canada, the defence minister now is responsible for ensuring that the composition and balance of the forces within the individual services meet the over-

all strategic policy. Prior to October, the minister's responsibility was only the apportionment of available resources between the three services.

The government continued the drive for co-ordination by creating a new post of chairman of the chiefs-of-staff committee, again following Canada's lead.

AIR FORCE KEY

In keeping with the emergence of the air force as the key service in the nuclear age, the appointment went to Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir William Dickson.

The defence budget also reflected the RAF's dominant role. To the air force went 540,400,000 pounds more than a third of the total defence estimates of 1,537,200,000. It marked the first time in Britain's history that the RAF had received the lion's share.

With 3,400,000 more than in 1954, the air force began building up its force of Valiant medium jet bombers, which along with the Vulcan jet bomber—now reaching production—will form the backbone of the RAF strategic bomber force.

Hunter jet fighters rolled off the production line in increasing numbers but the once-promising swift jet fighter was abandoned. The government announced that development resources would be concentrated on the English Electric P. 1 fighter, which has an unofficial speed of 1,000 miles an hour, and the R.R. 53, a top-secret rocket-powered interceptor that may reach speeds up to 1,500 m.p.h.

NAVY PROGRESS

The Royal Navy continued a modernization drive initiated in 1954 despite a cut to 347,000,000 pounds from the 1954 expenditure of 367,000,000 pounds.

A defence white paper issued in February said a "radical reorgan-

The Poet's Corner

LIGHT AND DARK

Plead, as we will for antioxidants rare
To gulp at twilight hopefully, when we
Choke with the virus of easter-trophe

That the plague of time has spread upon the air.
And beg and cry for any antidote
Against assassination and assault
The fortress of the blood can never halt

The forceful scourge, remaining safe, remote.
Only the vaccines of the vital stars
And burning antibodies in the sun,
The red inoculation spied on Mars
And milk-white colonies where space is spun

Maintain immunity against that blight,
That avoc robbing us of living light.

—Harold Zlotnik
In the New York Times

zation" of the reserve fleet was being carried out in order to give immediate readiness in the event of war.

The navy reported, "considerable progress" has been made in improving high-speed submarines of great underwater endurance and in developing shipborne guided weapons.

MOBILE ARMY

The army, forced to absorb most of the 102,700,000 pounds cut in defence spending from the 1954 total of 1,639,900,000, pounds laid plans for a smaller but more mobile and better-equipped land force. The army's share was 484,000,000 pounds compared to 561,000,000 pounds in 1954.

The main problem facing Gen. Sir Gerald Templer, chief of the Imperial general staff, was striking a happy medium between the army's need to prepare for nuclear-age warfare and its more conventional "cold" war and police-action roles in trouble spots like Malaya, Cyprus and Kenya.

Selwyn Lloyd, who succeeded Harold Macmillan as defence minister early in the year, said the army in Europe is being maintained at a strength of four divisions equipped with up-to-date weapons to help man "the NATO screen." Canadian forces in Europe are attached to the British command.

Home defence forces were also brought directly under the defence ministry in 1955 to co-ordinate plans of military and civil authorities. It was announced that Gen. Sir Robert Mansergh would relinquish his post as commander-in-chief allied forces in northern Europe early in 1956 to take up a new post of commander-in-chief United Kingdom land forces.

Twenty-five mobile defence battalions were raised and another 23 planned for special training in first aid, rescue work and fire fighting.

COMPULSORY SERVICE

As the year ended there were growing indications the government was considering a review of the whole question of compulsory national service.

Some service authorities are known to feel that the country's defence would be better served with a smaller but highly-technical regular force. They feel that the two-year period of national service does not give recruits time to acquire the skills needed in modern warfare and that knowledge acquired is quickly outdated by technical advances.

In October Prime Minister Eden announced changes in the terms of national service designed to reduce the number of national servicemen in the forces by 100,000 by 1958. The reduction will be realized by a gradual raising to 19 of the age of call-up, now about 18 years.

He also said the purpose of national service "is no longer chiefly to build up trained reserves, but to supplement the regular forces."

Medically Speaking

By Herman N. Sandesen, M. D.

AVOID HOLIDAY TRAGEDY

A cozy fire in the fireplace is especially nice during the Christmas season. But that's probably the worst time to have one. That beautiful Christmas tree standing in the corner is like dry tinder, just waiting for a spark to turn your gay holiday into tragedy.

HOLIDAY EXCITEMENT

And the children, excited by the tree and Christmas gifts, are apt to stray too near the open flames. Even disregarding holiday excitement, fireplaces account for an alarming number of burn accidents.

By taking a few simple precautions you might prevent a holiday mishap and severe injury to your children.

Both plain and raised cotton clothing burns easily and quickly. The porous weave of materials like organdy, cheesecloth, net, gauze, veiling and sheer voile also make them catch fire easily.

Materials like brushed-up rayon and chenille can go up quickly, too. These latter two sometimes are used in children's toy teddy bears and in housecoats.

On the other hand, wool, silk, nylon, vinylon and velon are not considered flammability hazards.

It's easy to flameproof these combustible materials which are sometimes used for clothing, curtains, drapes rugs and the like.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters recommends the following method:

Mix nine ounces of borax in a gallon of warm water and stir well. When it has dissolved, add four ounces of boric acid.

Douse the fabrics in the solution until they are saturated. It might take a little longer for heavy materials than it will for light ones. Then simply wring them out and let them dry.

Unwisely articles such as drapes, rugs and slip covers can be sprayed instead of dunked. Washing the materials removes the flameproofing. Otherwise, the solution will remain effective for about a year.

Except for a slight stiffening, the solution is not likely to harm the fabrics.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

F.A.F.: Can an existing neurotic condition classified as "neurocirculatory asthenia" cause, aggravate or affect bronchial asthma, or a cause asthma to become chronic?

Answer: It is not likely that neurocirculatory asthenia would cause the asthma to become worse. It is possible that both conditions may have one primary cause, that is, some disturbance of the nervous system.

Of course, you should be under the care of your physician.

for him

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NOTES BY THE WAY

Little Jack Horner, who stuck in his thumb and pulled out a plum, boasted about it publicly, this being before the days of parliamentary investigations.

—Edmonton Journal.

In the old horse and buggy days we did not buy a new style buggy before the old one was worn out, and they did not cost hundreds where they cost thousands today. The money upkeep was not so great, either, and Ottawa did not soak us 30 per cent tax on the hay-fuel we fed into the engine either. As we remember it, people did not buy a new stream-lined horse every couple of years and yet they seemed to be quite happy.

—Ridgetown Dominion

The National Association of Home Builders has invited Russian specialists to inspect American housing developments. We trust the plan includes an exchange visit to Russia by American builders. Even if what we do here, including building is all far superior to Russian accomplishments, trips to Russia by our experts are still useful if only for verification and comparison. We should never assume we have a monopoly on brains, or cannot learn. That is overconfidence, and he who is overconfident sometimes loses the decision.

—Detroit Free Press

It could just be that the barbers' union has bitten off more than it can chew in trying to prevent those Redford township mothers from learning how to cut their youngsters' hair. Embattled mothers are a mighty tough group to deal with. A Missouri mule is a compliant creature indeed compared to a mother who is convinced she is doing the right thing by her child.

And we rather suspect that the unionized barbers will find this out to their sorrow, unless they let Mom have her shears and clippers back.

—Detroit Free Press

December is not only the last month of the year, but also the darkest. Her dawns arrive late and her dusks descend soon. She brings the longest night of the year. But she brings, too, that point when light commences its upsurge toward the summer solstice. Her last week will comprise of lengthening days. Imperceptibly lengthening, at first, but by the end of January humankind will comment on how much longer the sunsets rest in the western sky.

—Kitchener-Waterloo Record

It used to be said that the man who played a good game of billiards displayed evidence of a mispent youth. By way of a variation, we have just heard a story about two men who were sharing a seat on a train. One of them was no less than 80 years old. But his eyes were keen, his laugh sounded young, and there was a vigor in his every movement. The other man, about middle age, envied the stranger his youth. He asked: "What is the secret of your astounding vitality?" "I'm living on the interest of a well-invested youth," the elderly gentleman replied.

—Fort William Times-Journal.

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