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

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1955

The Prime Minister's Office

It is perhaps true to say that no other responsible-government leader on earth has as much personal power and influence as that exercised by the British Prime Minister.

As political institutions go, the office is of comparatively recent origin. Sir Robert Walpole—1721—is commonly regarded as the first holder of the office.

Until then, the leading minister of the crown was known as the First Lord of the Treasury; and his prestige depended more on the personal goodwill of the Sovereign than on any popularity with the people.

Although the Prime Minister has not the right of veto, in the sense that it is exercised by the President of the United States, he does possess an even greater authority: the power to advise dissolution of Parliament and call general elections at will.

While in practice each department head is responsible for his own policies, independently of his colleagues, it is the Prime Minister who has the final say in any controversial measure that may be proposed or any major problem that may arise.

Whatever his personal religious affiliation may be—or even if he should happen to have none at all—he nominates—or, more accurately, advises the Sovereign to nominate—prelates of the Established Church; and the filling of clerical vacancies in more than one hundred parishes, known as Crown livings, is part of his responsibility, although, usually, he acts in co-operation with ecclesiastical authorities in this matter.

It is on his recommendation, too, that appointments are made to peerages, baronetcies, knightships, ambassadorial posts, colonial governorships, and the like. In fact, there is no office under the Crown to which he has not the right of recommendation, which, in practice, means the authority to appoint, since the Sovereign always acts in accordance with such advice of his or her first minister.

Of the 47 men (it may be one more or less) who have held the office since it was first recognized in 1721, about half have been members of the nobility. Since 1902, however, the year Lord Salisbury was replaced by Mr. Balfour, commoners have occupied the post exclusively. It is now a tradition that no Prime Minister shall accept a peerage while in office.

The youngest Prime Minister was William Pitt (the younger) who was only 24 when he took over the responsibility. The oldest, at the time of his resignation, was William Gladstone, who retired at 85 after serving with great distinction for three full terms. Sir Winston Churchill assumed the office for the first time when he was 65.

Religious Leaders' Protest

The fourteen religious leaders in the United States who complained to President Eisenhower about what they called "the drift to war" among certain Washington circles were influenced, no doubt, by the highest motives. There has been in recent months a good deal of war talk; and it is by no means certain that the advocates of a "preventive war" have given up the idea, although the actual phrase seems to have dropped out of circulation.

It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why the fourteen denominational leaders thought it proper to speak a word of caution to the President. Whether it was a wise thing to do, considering all the circumstances, is another matter entirely; conceivably, it could do as much harm as good.

Surely no fair minded and reasonable person believes that President Eisenhower will ever resort to war of his own free will and choice. Not only his words ("there is no alternative to peace"), he said recently but every official action of his Presidency may be said to have revealed his uncompromising will for peace and his deep abhorrence of war.

No President in the history of the United States has been more sorely tried; none has ever been called upon to show more restraint and patience in the face of almost constant provocation from aggressive powers. It is hard to see how all the representations which well-meaning men could think up could possibly make the President any more cautious than he is now and has been all along.

On the other hand, even one such representation could make his task heavier. The Communist leaders are quick to seize upon any pretext for increasing the unreasonableness of their demands. If they should get it into their heads that any considerable body of responsible religious opinion in the United States is opposed to the Pres-

dent's policy of moderation from a position of strength, there is no knowing how they would twist that discontent to their own advantage.

It would seem that—in foreign affairs, at least—President Eisenhower, by both precept and example, has proved himself entitled to the sympathy and understanding and goodwill of all those people who hope and pray that, somehow, major war will be averted.

What Chance? It seems that the main difficulty about getting negotiations between the Western powers and the Soviet Union under way in earnest is the Soviet habit of regarding every conciliatory gesture that comes out of Washington or London as a sign of fear and weakness. They appear utterly incapable of considering any statement on its merits.

To illustrate: A few days ago Senator Walter George, Democratic Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the United States Senate, happened to say that, in his opinion, the great powers should confer as soon as possible on world problems. The words were hardly out of his mouth before the Moscow newspapers began telling their readers that Senator George's statement shows that "public opinion in the United States is turning against the Eisenhower administration, which is trying to force the American people into war." The fact that Mr. George had said nothing whatever derogatory to the administration but had merely expressed a personal view—which, in fact, is shared by the President himself—was not mentioned.

Then, a few hours later, President Voroshilov made an address in which he expressed the opinion that those Western diplomats who are in favour of arranging top-level talks among the Big Four powers are afraid that "war would be the end of the capitalistic system which has outlived its time." He went on to say that, whatever happens, Communism will survive. (This, incidentally, is a reversal to the original Molotov line. Lately, most Soviet speakers have been saying that civilization, and not merely capitalism, would be endangered by war.)

No wonder that President Eisenhower, although he agrees in principle with the need for a top-level conference, is finding it difficult to believe that any such conference at this juncture would be anything more than a waste of time. When statements like the foregoing continue to come out of Moscow with monotonous regularity, and, obviously, with the Government's sanction, what chance is there of any amicable settlement, or even of the slightest progress towards one?

EDITORIAL NOTES William Wordsworth born this date, 1770.

The 10 percent sales tax should never have been imposed on materials used exclusively in production of feeds for cattle and poultry. The tax has now been removed on these commodities, and import duties eliminated on chemicals of a kind not made in Canada when used in animal feedstuffs.

The Opposition in the Saskatchewan Legislature have been blasted by the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. C. M. Fines, for not being on their toes. He charged them with "weakness and incompetence" because they failed to question why expenses of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation had increased by some millions of dollars.

Engineers in Britain are constructing a new "gun" with a barrel a 100 yards long, known as a proton linear accelerator. It is not a weapon, but an important new tool for the nuclear research worker. It will be used to speed up the protons of hydrogen with which atoms are bombarded and split. The gun's bombardment will produce mesons, (sub-atomic particles about which present knowledge is incomplete) at 1,000 times the rate now possible at Harwell.

David Low, the Manchester Guardian's world-famous cartoonist, depicted Sir Winston Churchill tiptoeing into retirement on stockings feet because of the London press strike. That is just what happened. The BBC gave out the news at 5.30 p.m., but a lot of Londoners were still working then or riding subway trains and buses home, and they didn't hear it. Ordinarily they would have learned about this page in world history from their newspapers. With London's thirteen daily newspapers shut down by a wage strike of maintenance men, a great many people didn't know "Winnie had done it" until they stopped in at the neighboring pub for their evening pints. "Thus", comments an Associated Press correspondent, "one of the great British news stories of recent times was spread largely by word of mouth in a city whose dwellers are the world's most avid consumers of printed matter." It proved once again the value of the printed word over all other forms of mass communication.



On A Hill Far Away

When A Volcano Blows

(Milwaukee Journal) A group of Hawaiian plantation workers were eating lunch in a cane field one day earlier this month, their food spread out on the ground before them. Suddenly they noticed cracks opening up in the earth under their sandwiches. In their own phrase they "took off like scalded cats."

As well they might. For the cracks shortly spewed out boiling lava, which eventually consumed hundreds of homes and caused more than three million dollars damage.

To be on hand when mother nature blows her top has been a tragic experience for many and a terrifying one for those lucky enough to escape with their lives. Unique, however, was the reaction of the famed naturalist John Muir when he experienced a heavy earthquake in the Yosemite region in 1872.

His attitude was sheer delight at being "trotted and dumped on our Mother's mountain knee". In a letter to a natural history society he described how he ran out of his cabin when he felt the first tremors, shouting, "A noble earthquake!" It was, he maintained, "the most sublime storm I ever experienced."

But fear and amazement are more common and understandable responses, as in the case of a humble Indian farmer, Dionisio Pulido, on February 20, 1943.

He was plowing a cornfield in his small farm about 200 miles west of Mexico City. His wife and young son were watching when, just ahead of him, Pulido heard a snorting noise and saw smoke coming from the earth.

"The ground thundered for about 10 minutes," he said later. "Soon water seemed to be running beneath me. Phuyee! A snort came from the ground, like steam escaping from a boiler."

He had courage enough to drop a stone on the smoke hole, but the underground force pushed up around it. He realized then that this might be a volcano, for an

OTTAWA REPORT Canada's Fastest Train By Patrick Nicholson

Western M.P.'s are very interested in the speed-up of the transcontinental rail schedule which will be effected when the Canadian Pacific Railway's crack new express train, "The Canadian", goes into service later this month.

"We will be able to travel between Vancouver and Ottawa during the week-end," Hon. Ralph Campney, the Minister of National Defence, commented to me. Although the minister in charge of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Vancouver's representative in the cabinet is obviously not an air-travel fan. If he flies between Vancouver and Ottawa, he told me, he finds that he can achieve little on the journey, and he arrives tired.

On the other hand, the journey by train gives him the opportunity to work while travelling, and the ability to get normal nights' sleep in the train makes him fresher at the end of the journey than when he started, he said.

The timetable and full details of the Canadian have been sent to me by Marc McNeil, that ever-thoughtful public relations officer who keeps the flag of the Canadian Pacific system flying so high in Ottawa.

This timetable shows that the new streamlined diesel express will cut no less than sixteen hours off the present 85 hour journey from Ottawa to Vancouver. In future, the busy cabinet minister or any other traveller will be able to leave Ottawa at 3.20 on a Friday afternoon, and pull into Vancouver refreshed and ready for work at 9.10 a.m. the following Monday morning. That is, as Mr. Campney says, no more than a week-end on wheels between our Capital and our West Coast metropolis.

NEW SPEED RECORD I understand that a new record for speed on a regular schedule will be set up by the Canadian

engineer had predicted one might develop because of the recent earthquakes in the region. So Pulido hurried off to the village to fetch a priest. When he returned, the next day, the cone of volcanic dust was 10 feet high and the crater 30 feet deep. The bewildered Pulido had been an eye witness to the birth of a baby volcano—the first in our time known to have started from scratch.

In a week, the volcano, called Paricutin after the nearby village, had built a cone 550 feet high. It was three times that size some months later, and still growing. The story of what happened when a whole city was overwhelmed by a volcano is told in the excavated ruins of Pompeii, buried for centuries under the ashes and pumice of Vesuvius after a terrific eruption in 79 A.D.

Excavators found the skeletons of two prisoners who had been chained to the prison wall that fateful day and had wrenched furiously at their bonds before succumbing. In a Pompeian bakery were found loaves of bread, left in the ovens by the fleeing bakers.

Another skeleton was that of a man with 10 pieces of gold in one hand and a large key in the other. He might, just possibly, have been able to escape if he had not thought of taking money with him.

A more inspiring motive kept a Roman soldier at his post near the city gate when the deadly rain of ashes fell on Pompeii. Mark Twain, in "The Innocents Abroad", commenting that this figure was "perhaps the most poetical thing Pompeii has yielded to modern research".

"Let us remember," wrote Twain, "that he was a soldier—not a policeman—and so, praise him! Being a soldier, he stayed, because the warrior instinct forbade him to fly."

"Had he been a policeman," he added with a smile, "he would have stayed, also—because he would have been asleep."

The Poet's Corner

BRITISH FREEDOM It is not to be thought of that the flood Of British freedom, which, to dark Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity Hath flowed, with pomp of waters, unwithstood, Roused though it be full often to a mood the check of salutary bands, That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands Should perish; and to evil and to good Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung Armoury of the invincible knights of old: That Shakespeare spoke; the faith and morals hold Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold. —William Wordsworth.

The Age Old Story Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearken unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

boasts an electric express train which travels 136 miles from Milan to Bologna at 72 miles per hour, while Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden all operate expresses whose schedule average speeds are well over 60 miles per hour.

France also boasts the fastest diesel-drawn express train in Europe, which averages 69 miles per hour on the run between Evreux and Bernay.

Europe's fleetest steam-engined express train in Britain's old favourite starting from Paddington station, which runs the 118 miles from London to Bristol in 105 minutes at an average speed of just under 60 miles an hour.

France has recently sent an experimental train racing along a regular track at the sensational speed of 205 miles per hour. That is not intended to become a regular scheduled speed, but it does show the hurry-up which may come, especially if we have a thorough program of railroad electrification.

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Medically Speaking

Herman N. Sundesen, M.D. CAUSES OF FAINTING

Have you ever fainted? Know why you did? You can probably blame your abdomen or legs, or at least the blood vessels in them. Or again, maybe your collar or tie was too tight.

Let me explain. Fainting is usually caused by fright, a drug reaction, a temperature change, severe pain or sudden loss of a large amount of blood.

Any of those conditions can dilate or widen the blood vessels in your legs or abdomen. When this happens, large amounts of blood flow into these widened vessels and not enough goes to the brain. Robbed of an adequate supply of blood, your brain can do nothing but permit you to lapse into unconsciousness.

Fainting may also occur if you've been standing for an exceptionally long period of time. Also, a tight collar may cause you to faint, especially if you are one of those who are extremely sensitive to pressure on nerves along the large blood vessels in the neck.

Fortunately, Nature helps you revive, in the event you faint. If you lose consciousness, naturally you will fall. Ordinarily this will rest your head on a level with the rest of your body and make it easier for the blood to flow to the brain once again.

How to Help The best thing you can do for a person who has fainted is to stretch him out so his head is tilted downward and his feet are raised slightly. This will help him regain consciousness much faster than if he were to sit with his head between his knees.

Never force a person who has fainted to sit up until he has recovered completely. You can loosen his collar, too. This will be especially helpful if the neck nerves have caused the temporary black-out.

Once he has regained consciousness, give him some sweetened fluids. This might bring marked improvement if he is sensitive to hunger fainting.

QUESTION AND ANSWER C. M.: I have been taking barbiturate drugs for a number of years for my nerves. How can I stop taking them?

Answer: Barbiturate drugs are not habit-forming. You must merely make up your mind that you will not take any more of these preparations.

OTTAWA (CP)—The board of transport commissioners Thursday approved application by the Canadian National Railways for permission to cease operation on 5.24 miles of its tracks serving part of the New Glasgow-Pictou Landing area in Nova Scotia.

Hearings were in Stellarton, N.S., last Feb. 8.

LENTEEN MEDITATION Before The Passion

The Times, London

Once again the curtain has been raised upon the greatest drama in human history. Christians sit up their hearts, but now their needs, for Good Friday and Easter are at hand. This most dramatic week in the Christian year began with Palm Sunday, when the cry of "Hosanna" was raised with starting suddenness after the sober tones of Lent.

In the life of Jesus there was no event, other than those of Good Friday and Easter, so obviously dramatic as the events of Palm Sunday. Normally Jesus sought to avoid the crowds; then he was glad to attract them. It was the only occasion on which he employed what the modern world would call stage-management. He was going forward to the city which was to break his heart. When he beheld it, says St. Luke, he wept. It was part of his purpose that all the city should be moved. Later on St. Paul was able to say of the whole event to which the triumphal entry was the prologue, "This thing was not done in a corner."

The plan for the waiting ass had been carefully made. The rider upon it would recall to the minds of many of the religious pilgrims who accompanied Jesus the exultant prophecy of Zechariah, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass."

Already they had told them how their fathers had told them that when Simon Macchabeus captured Jerusalem he "entered it was praise and palm branches, and with harps and with cymbals, and with viols and with hymns and with songs: because a great enemy was destroyed out of Israel."

The ass is often ill-treated in the east, but it is hardly regarded as an animal to laugh at; it is so necessary. When Jesus used one he was riding the beast which, in contrast to the horse, represented peaceful conquest. And as the news of what was afoot spread through Jerusalem

"all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?" The pilgrims who had come up to Jerusalem with Jesus had their answer. "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee," they said. He was their prophet and they were proud of him. Jerusalem had produced no prophet. He had come from their despised Galilee. They may or may not have joined in the cry "Crucify!"; but when their prophet had been removed by death they remembered him only as another prophet who had failed.

Not much later Thomas knelt before the risen Jesus, saying "My Lord and my God." Thomas, according to tradition, took the Gospel to the east. Later Paul wrote of the same Jesus, "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Paul took the Gospel to the west. Those for whom Christ is only a prophet are not likely to become his disciples.

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