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Editor, Frank Walker; General Manager, Ian A. Burnett; Branch Offices at Summerside, Montserrat and Alberton.

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A Momentous Year

The year 1954 may well be remembered as the one that saw the H-Bomb brought to the testing stage by the United States, showing conclusively that it is now within the power of man to wreak unlimited havoc on earth.

There has been much of interest besides the survival of the human race. In this country the first spade has been turned to commence the building of the St. Lawrence Seaway in partnership with the United States, a development of great magnitude and unforeseeable results.

Prime Minister St. Laurent carried the message of Canadian friendship and co-operation on his Commonwealth tour which went well beyond the technical bounds of Commonwealth. This country has made it clear that it desires the friendship of all but is prepared to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with members of the United Nations and NATO who may be subject to aggression.

This year has seen the United States farmer approve of greater flexibility in price supports and although the immediate effect has been slightly depressing the long-term result should be healthier agriculture in many parts of the world.

This Province, after weathering one difficult year, has enjoyed a measure of prosperity for which we should be thankful, particularly as it would seem that we are in for a satisfactory year for farmers which is perhaps more to be desired than a dizzy boom.

Railway Passenger Service

The application of the Canadian National Railways for permission to reduce its passenger service in Prince Edward Island should occasion no surprise. In 1952, in applying for provincial permission to operate buses in lieu of mixed trains, spokesmen for the railway made it clear that those trains were considered uneconomic.

The briefs and testimony before the special Legislative Committee indicated not only a marked divergence of opinion on the subject, but considerable misunderstanding of the railway's proposals. These were clarified by railway witnesses, particularly with respect to rail freight services, employment of railway men and retention of existing railway stations.

Editorially it was pointed out in these columns that we have no special guarantee with regard to railway passenger service within the Province. In all matters touching upon this service we are in the hands of the Board of Transport Commissioners, from whom we have had several adverse judgments, most of them hinging on the factor of uneconomic operation of the particular service in dispute.

The difference between 1952 and 1954 is that we are no longer presented with any choice. Under the application now before the Transport Commissioners, such high-

way transportation as the Province is to enjoy for eight months of the year must be provided by I. M. T. One favorable change suggested is that Summerside would continue to have mixed train service connecting with the daily service between Charlottetown and Borden. There is also some concession in the railway's undertaking to continue the mixed train service from mid-December to mid-April, when highway transportation is apt to be at its worst.

Vive Mendes-France!

Premier Mendes-France won an outstanding victory yesterday when the French National Assembly reversed its stand and approved a composite measure which will ratify a Western European Union, including a re-armed Western Germany.

When the measure has the approval of the upper house and of other signatories it will bring into being a coalition of British, French, Belgium, Dutch, Luxembourg, Italian and West German forces for the defence of Europe. Had it failed, there was a scarcely veiled threat that the United States and perhaps Canada would lose interest in defending a continent which apparently did not feel inclined to defend itself.

In fact, however, the proposed union should considerably ease the burden of European defence. The addition of twelve West German divisions is in itself an important factor and being able to include German territory and resources in strategic planning should simplify the problem even more.

Premier Mendes-France has had many notable successes in his term of office which has been brief by any standard except that of French politics. Under his skillful guidance France is once more becoming a vital force in the world rather than an unpredictable factor on which no reliance could be placed.

EDITORIAL NOTES

New Year's Eve.

While his articles entitled "The Passing Scene" are being discontinued, our readers will be pleased to learn that Observer has agreed to contribute more actively than ever to The Guardian in the form of regular editorial assistance.

London, Ontario, has taken a leaf out of Charlottetown's book by sending out "summonses", couched in legal phraseology, to Londoners across Canada and the United States reminding them of their duty to visit their native city next year during its centennial.

A Canadian archaeologist, Dr. Richard MacNeish, is trying to prove the theory that North American Indians came from central Asia by way of Siberia and Alaska. If tests show that tools found there are of the same age as others in Asia the trail will be traced through Siberia back to Lake Baikal in the north of Outer Mongolia.

John Wycliffe, English schoolman and reformer, died this date 1384. He carried scholastic hair-splitting to extremes and although his desire for practical reforms was sincere and justified, he was largely a destructive force. He translated the complete Bible into English, but the fear of violent change which he produced caused future translations to be discouraged. His followers, known as Lollards were largely eradicated shortly after his death.

Administrators of the Rutgers' College of Engineering are asking a few of their more brilliant students to put their imaginations to work on ways and means of converting solar energy into electricity. The hope is not that they will be able to out-do scientists in an extremely difficult field, but that in thinking up ideas, no matter how fantastic, they will cultivate a flair for original and unconventional thinking. It is just possible, of course, that among the many novel suggestions that are certain to come in, one will be found that can be put to work. Stranger things have happened.



1954 In Retrospect

There is always a tendency to look hopeful toward the future at this season of the year, but we also spend a good deal of time in reliving and reappraising the twelve months which have just passed. It is altogether appropriate that the first month of the year is called for Janus the ancient Roman deity who was represented with two opposite faces.

There were other notable settlements during the year also, especially in the disputed Suez and Iranian questions. For many months these two quarrels were highly charged and explosive and it was a great victory for western diplomacy when peaceful agreements were reached. But other tensions in the Middle East continued and the whole question of Israeli-Arab relations remains as far from settlement as ever.

In 1954, as in every year since the end of the war, the German question was the most important consideration in the diplomacy both of the East and West. When the French National Assembly killed the European Army Plan there was gloom in the free world and rejoicing in Moscow.

There was much talk of "coexistence" in 1954 and many visits across the Iron Curtain with Mr. Atila and his Labor colleagues arousing considerable comment by their extended tour of China and Russia. There were other signs of a slight thaw in the cold war with the Malenkov regime continuing its un-Stalinlike approach to many issues. But on occasion the old order returned as in the case of Molotov's grim warning to France on the question of German rearmament.

But if Russia occasionally bewilderment the Western allies by its moderation there was none of this ingredient in Chinese-American relations. Hostility between Peiping and Washington increased and incidents like the imprisonment of the American fliers and the shooting down of aircraft brought angry cries for retaliation from many Americans. Senator Knowland and his supporters wanted a naval blockade of the Chinese mainland but the Eisenhower administration rejected this as being an act of war. While Chiang Kai-shek continues to enjoy the protection of the United States Navy he has given no reason to believe that his powerful protector will assist him in any invasion of the mainland. Under the circumstances it looks as if the status quo will be preserved as far as Formosa is concerned.

All in all 1954 was a year of setbacks and victories. There is no denying the extent of the Communist gain in Indo China, nor can it be argued that the new plan for German rearmament is as satisfactory as EDC. On the other hand the settlement in Iran, Suez, and Trieste are significant entries in the credit side of the ledger. And while there were times when the Western alliance showed a serious lack of unity, as it did at the Geneva conference, the year closed with the anti-Communist allies standing closer together than they have for many months. The new steadiness of the American government has brought about a resurgence of confidence which had been somewhat shaken by the occasional rash utterance of Mr. Dulles and other policy-makers in Washington. The condemnation of Senator McCarthy by his colleagues has also increased American prestige. Of course most important of all, 1954 was passed without the outbreak of a general war, the horrors of which were terribly demonstrated by the hydrogen bombs explosions in the Pacific. Amid all the tensions, strains, and hostility the fact that we were able to keep the peace is surely sufficient cause for abundant rejoicing.

The Poet's Corner

AT THE YEAR'S PASSING

The old year Slips out of sound, rolls into all-gone. And is gone. The past folds over it, The ripples close it.

So all this Being, tenuous and frail, A tide lifting to a tideless shore, A sudden wind shaking, A dream dream before dawning.

Now is the midnight tremulous with hope, And quick with shadow-shapes of things to be; The velvet wings that will be joy in June

The music of the bells comes clear; A passing and a birth . . . How strange that what the darkness takes

The mists lift long enough to show a star . . . The young year, with a shout Strides underneath the lintel Like a laughing boy.

—William Whitney.

STEADY POST

OSLO (CP)—Niels Odgaard has been re-elected to his 33rd term as chairman of the municipal council in Gjøvik, southern Norway.

SAFETY NOTICE

DEAR CITIZEN:

Some sixty Canadians lost their lives in motor accidents just during last year's Christmas and New Year weekends. An important cause of this tragic death toll has been the large number of holiday revellers who have persisted in getting behind the wheels of their cars after over-indulging in alcoholic beverages at various Yuletide festivities.

I would, therefore, urge you to heed the following safety tips:

- 1. Avoid as much as possible using your own car to attend holiday parties. It's safer to travel by taxi or on foot, especially if you expect to drink alcoholic beverages.
2. If alcoholic beverages are served or consumed at holiday parties, let this be with care and moderation.
3. Make that final drink at holiday parties—the "one for the road"—strong, hot coffee instead of something "stronger". It is a medically established fact that coffee has a sobering effect when taken after alcohol. It may not sober you completely, but it will help. You'll be better off with a cup of strong, black coffee than with a last alcoholic beverage. It is too often the last alcoholic drink that spoils the fun and leads to danger.
4. Prevent anyone who appears to be in no state to drive from even putting his hand on the steering wheel. As a host be thoughtful to your guests who may be even a bit "high". Send them home in a taxicab or as passengers of non-driving guests.
5. If you have over-indulged, park your car at your post's and either take a cab or have a sober friend drive you home. And warn your driver, even if he is an old friend, not to go over 20 miles an hour in town and 35 miles an hour on the highway.
6. Stay alive in "55".

J. DAVID STEWART, Mayor of Charlottetown.

The Passing Scene

By Observer THE NEW YEAR

I suppose that New Year's Day that at present, nor is there much hope for it in the immediate future. It is essentially, like any other day, in that it brings new hopes, new years, new resolutions, a new chapter in life's story. It is the new day, not the new year, that counts the more; and if we could only get into the wise practice of living one day at a time, without burdening it with the loads which properly belong to tomorrow, we should be the better for it.

Actually, newness is a relative quality, and it never lasts more than a day. The ageing process, we are told, begins at birth; once growth has stopped, decay begins to get in. That is the way of all things that live. Within a few minutes of midnight, Jan. 1, 1955, another year will have come under the pressure and the routine of time. It will go unnoticed for a few weeks; but the trend is unmistakable. Nothing remains new for long.

There will be many predictions made for 1955; but even the few first-rate prophets among us — they seem to be getting scarcer every year — must indulge in guess-work. They know very little that is definite. And isn't it just as well? Who would want the future laid out in little unerring charts and maps?

As a matter of fact, the years are very much alike — taking one with another over a long period of time — in the things that are really important. Progress and setbacks, hopes fulfilled and hopes dashed, contentment, discontent, faith, disillusionment; these things tell the common story. There are, of course, questions which we wish someone could answer fairly accurately before 1955 gets well under way. And the biggest question of all, as befits this generation, has to do with the possibility of war. There is some rejoicing these days that, as 1954 goes into history, there is no all-out war being waged anywhere in the world; but the peace, if that is the right name for it, is so uneasy and so precarious that it differs from war only in degree.

Will war come any closer in 1955? Time alone will tell; but avoidance of war, though it is to be desired, is only a negative virtue at best. What we really hope for is the positive fact of good friendly relations among the peoples of the earth. We do not have to wait for that.

His Honour Lieut.-Gov. T. W. L. PROWSE will receive at GOVERNMENT HOUSE ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1955 from 3:15 P.M. to 5:15 P.M. Each gentleman should provide himself with two visiting cards. L. E. PROWSE, Private Secretary.

The Honourable ALEXANDER W. MATHESON, Q.C., Premier of Prince Edward Island will receive at his residence, 18 CRESTWOOD DRIVE, ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1955, from 3:15 P. M. to 5:15 P.M.

His Worship MAYOR J. DAVID STEWART, D.S.O., E.D. will hold his NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION At The CITY HALL ON JANUARY 1st, 1955 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. J. A. FULLERTON, City Clerk.

CHARLOTTETOWN Y. M. C. A. Board Of Directors NEW YEAR'S DAY RECEPTION 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. All Gentlemen Cordially Invited HYNDMAN AND CO. LIMITED INSURANCE Since 1872. Offices: CHARLOTTETOWN - SUMMERSIDE - MONTAGLOTT