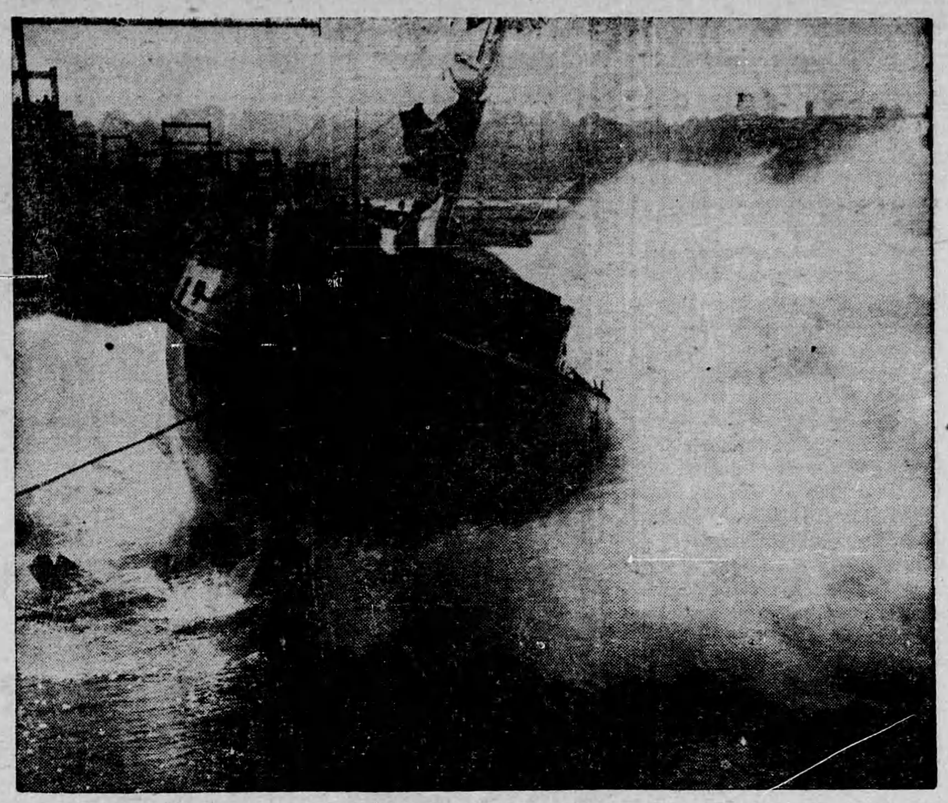

Waters of Midland Bay receive in sideways launching the first vessel built for French registry by the Midland Shipyards, Ltd.—the motor vessel Midland, named after the town in which she was built as an expression of French gratitude for Canadian help in rehabilitating France.

Sports – And One Thing or Another

By FRANK MANN HARRIS

("A Sixbit Critic")

We have a feeling that one of these days what is known as "the reform element" is going to turn its batteries on the Ontario horse-racing scene; and when the shooting is over, a lot of folks who make a nice living by operating race-tracks are going to wonder just exactly what hit them. It has happened before, and can happen again. And if we personally happen to be on the scene at the time we will assume our favorite role of Job's Comforter by saying to the survivors, "Well, you certainly asked for what you got!"

* * *

Horse-racing is supposed to be a sport—or at least to have some of the elements of sport in it. But this year we have been treated to the spectacle of race-tracks cancelling meetings at a few hours notice, then starting up afresh, much in the manner of some gambling joint which operates when, if and as the cops are looking the other way. Old charters are dug up and revived, until they have made the biggest kind of a joke out of the racing law's original intention, which was that no track should have more than two seven-day meets in a single year.

* * *

Nor is it only the frankly commercial tracks that are to blame, as even the mighty Woodbine started the ball rolling this Spring by holding a cheap meeting, under a charter few people had ever heard of, a week in advance of its regular Soxiety "opening." It's a sorry mess indeed; and some day those responsible are going to regret that they allowed the money angle of their racket to stick out so prominently.

* * *

There are a number of things we don't like about the average radio comedian—but above everything we detest the growing practice of "milking the audience" for laughs. When a joke or gag fails to click, the comic—by means of funny actions unseen by the listening audience—pulls a roar of laughter from those in the studio. Maybe there are some of those sitting at home by their radios who enjoy such stuff—but to us, and to a whole lot more we have spoken to, it savors of the cheapest sort of shoddiness.

* * *

Much has been written about the Brooklyn Dodgers great action in giving a chance to Jackie Robinson, first negro to play—openly that is—in the Major Leagues; and many pats on the back have been bestowed on Branch Rickey, boss of the Dodgers for his great-heartedness. Now, it would appear that Mr. Rickey didn't allow his generosity to run away with his sense of profit and loss.

* * *

By including Robinson on his team, Rickey not only got the greatest box-office attraction— both at home and away—the team ever had. He also got a man who was probably more responsible than any other individual for the Brooklyns being able to win the pennant, and get into the World Series. Robinson, playing in a position where he is not at his best, hit, fielded and ran the bases in a manner thrilling to behold, or even read about, especially when you considered the terrific handicap he was under.

* * *

Now with the season over, comes the news that Rickey paid Robinson "something under five thousand"—which is merely peanuts in those circles— and didn't even come through with the tiniest sort of a raise. Maybe the Dodgers think that Robinson should consider himself lucky that they didn't charge him admission to the park; and perhaps, all things considered, he was!

* * *

Latest triumph of science is a new wrist watch—of all things—has an alarm attachment which can be set to go off at any hour. As one who has trouble enough groping around in the darkness to choke off a regular-size alarm clock every morning, we can just imagine trying to find anything so tiny as a wrist watch when we are half asleep; and as the price of the new gadget is announced as from $150 to $300 apiece, we think we shall just wait till they come down to 98 cents or thereabouts. And they needn't hurry about going into mass-production either.

* * *

Of course the unseasonably warm weather during the first few weeks of the season may have something to do with it; but we have a notion tha professional hockey addicts are due for some fairly dull games between now and play-off time. The rookies are out there slinging their weight around and trying to stir things up; but a lot of the veterans seem to be imbued with the "what's all the excitement about" spirit.

* * *

What happened to the Montreal Canadiens last year seems to have made quite an impression on many of the boys. They saw the Flying Frenchmen practically outclass their opposition for nine-tenths of the long journey—then blow most of the gold and glory to the Maple Leafs, who were lucky enough, or canny enough to arrive at top form just at the proper moment. Too great emphasis on getting into the playoffs—and not enough on the necessity of giving the customers a run for their money, can do hockey a whole lot of harm—just as it is already hurting football, where we find two or three weeks of games scheduled which, with playoff positions already cinched, mean little or nothing either to spectators or players.

* * *

It may not mean a thing; and then again it may be a sign of the times. Anyway, just a few days ago we happened to overhear a couple of small boys arguing. "I tell you it's true," said one. "The Russians were on OUR side in the last war." To which the other replied, in tones of deep disgust, "Aw, go on—you're nuts!" And, after reading much of what is published nowadays regarding the world situation, it's rather hard to realize that, not so long ago, we were hailing those same Russians as the saviors of the world.

★

A New Approach

"Darling," said George, as gently and as diplomatically as he could, "doesn't it seem to you there might be a little something—just a teeny-weeny little something—lacking in this pudding?"

"Yes, dear, I suppose there is," came the unexpected reply. "But it's your own fault. I told you we should have a better radio."

"What's the radio got to do with it?" demanded George.

"Everything," wailed the little woman. "That's as far as I got with the recipe before the dilapidated old thing broke down!"

★

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Forced Labor On Large Scale Found In Russia

(The following is a review in the Christian Science Monitor of a new book, "Forced Labor In Soviet Russia").

"Forced Labor in Soviet Russia", by David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, is one of the saddest books that has recently appeared in any language. It describes in much detail a practice which the authors compare to human slavery at its worst. It is rather loosely thrown together, somewhat repititious and not perfectly organized. But it contains much terrible material, the basic authenticity of which one cannot reasonably doubt.

What the book appears to show is that forced labor is found in Soviet Russia on a large scale, that it has become a basic part of Soviet economy, that it is accompanied by flagrant inhumanity, that it is not decreasing.

The number of such forced laborers is placed at from 10 to 12 million men by Mr. Dallin—in addition to a million or more women. This is said by the chief author to represent more than one in seven adult male inhabitants of the U.S.S.R,

* * *

One of the most impressive sections of the book is Chapter IV, entitled "How Many Camps and Prisoners?" It lists 125 forced-labor camps by name.

The camps themselves — some small, others enormous—resemble well-guarded penitentiaries. They contain professional criminals, unfaithful Soviet functionaries, and political offenders. The professional criminals are said to live the best and to play leading roles in the camps.

* * *

The authors consider forced labor an inevitable result of the Soviet system, evolving from political concentration camps and obligatory labor. They call the Soviet claim of "economic democracy" deceptive and ask: "If this is economic democracy, what is slavery?"

They say that the widespread, relentlessly applied forced labor shows how the Soviet system is reviving and augmenting the worst features of Czarist Russia.

The practice of forced labor on a large scale in Soviet Russia seems proved beyond question. It is one concomitant of the Communist experiment.

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