

# City of London Burned St. Paul's is Little Hurt

ARTICLE NO. 20  
By Hugh Tomlin

Last week, I undertook to say something about wartime London so that those who have never seen the city might know something of its layout. Actually, I didn't get very far, describing only the Thames and a number of the buildings and landmarks close by.

Most of the famous parts of London are north of the Thames. I was south of the river only a few times, once driving out past Croydon, the famous airfield to which most of the London traffic came before the war. It was, as you may remember, the first part of the city to be bombed, which was not surprising for many of the German bomber pilots undoubtedly had been commercial pilots before the war and they would know the way to Croydon with their eyes shut. Now the air field probably isn't used and that district does not show the scars from bombing that some other parts of the city do.

On another day, I went by bus to the East End and Tower bridge, going by way of the Elephant and Castle, probably the name of an old pub in days gone by, but now one of the main traffic centres, with his routes in five directions. Incidentally, the bus conductors are nearly all ladies in uniform. A stranger must depend on them for help in finding his way around for maps are taboo and the windows of the buses are nearly all covered with a blackout material, so that one doesn't see much.

One Sunday afternoon, I took a special train from Waterloo station which is south of the river, to Hampton Court, which is up the Thames, not far beyond the suburbs of the city. The train is passed through industrial districts with small factories and most of the houses fairly small. Much damage had been done in some places and it looked as though the Germans often dumped their bombs just wherever the nation came to them. At Hampton Court, Argo Craig met me and showed me through the fine old castle which was built by Cardinal Wolsey and taken over by Henry VIII. There are famous gardens, still beautiful though obviously not so well kept as in former times. Mr. Craig, elder son of Mrs. J. J. Craig of Ferguson, is an engineer who stayed in England after the last war and he works with explosives and weapons of various kinds. His home is at Hampton Court.

**North of the Thames**

The Canadian editors stayed at the Savoy hotel, which is considered the height of luxury. No doubt it is, but I am not going into details about the Savoy at present. But it might be added that the very fact that we all had suites in that famous hotel is another proof, if any was needed, that the British Council was treating us as honored guests. The hotel and the Savoy theatre are all in the same block and the hotel is said to have been built out of the profits of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, as played by the Savoyards.

The Savoy is on an alley off the Strand, one of London's most ancient and notable streets. The back of the hotel where most of the dining rooms were looked out over the gardens and the Embankment to the Thames. A couple of blocks away to the west were Charing Cross station and Trafalgar Square, to the east were Waterloo bridge and the old "city of London."

Canadians are often confused by references to the City of London and London. The former appears to have been where the ancient walled city stood and it is in this district that most of the old streets mentioned in Pepys' Diary and books of that time. It remains, I believe, a separate borough of modern London, and it has certain traditions. For instance, in the centre of the Strand is a monument marking the old Temple Bar, a point beyond which the King cannot go without permission from the Lord Mayor, no doubt referring to some hard-won ancient right like the right to march through the old City with fixed bayonets. The keeps, tumbling into dust traditions in London.

It is in the City that St. Paul's stands, and the Guildhall and the Law Courts were there and some of Christopher Wren's old churches. I am not sure of the exact limits but the Bank of England is there or just east of the City.

**The Old City of London**

It is this district which suffered the most grievously from the bombing. Whole blocks are gone. These were mainly wholesale houses, closed establishments, business offices. The whole area was cleared out. It was the most impressive lesson in bombing that I saw anywhere except Coventry. And now there is some consolation in knowing that certain German cities probably look as bad. It was partly the fault of the owners of property in this district that it was destroyed. This great "fire blitz" took place on December 29th, 1940. It was the holiday week-end between Christmas and New Year's when business was more or less suspended and no one was around to do "fire watch-

ing" duties or to put out incendiary bombs. It was a sustained attack, first of all with thousands of small incendiary bombs. These burned the whole area in spite of the concentration of firemen and apparatus. It is believed by some people that it was not only an attempt to burn much of the centre of London, but also to wipe out the fire-brigades. When the firemen had concentrated in the burning area, the bombers came "back again and began dropping high explosives, which were meant to kill since the fire had already finished the buildings. But Providence came to the aid of the British once again. A heavy mist sprang up over the air fields back in Germany and the big bombers were ordered home for fear they would not be able to land if they delayed their return.

Now London won't be caught like that again, nor will any other city in Britain. Fire watchers are on the job continually, and extra supplies of water are stored up in concrete foundations of ruined buildings, or in big water tanks on the streets. St. Paul's Cathedral escaped, although buildings are gone around two sides of the big church and damaged on the other two sides. Again, it seems to have been the design of the roof that helped, though no doubt the fire watchers were on the job too. The shape of the great dome shielded the incineraries as they showered down over the City, and they didn't penetrate. I was in St. Paul's and saw only one sign of damage of any extent. A high explosive bomb apparently fairly small, came through the roof, leaving a hole some three feet in diameter and exploded where the altar used to be. It is being repaired.

I first saw the area behind St. Paul's on the day after I arrived in London. It was a Sunday afternoon, with few people around. The destruction in that area is so thorough as to be beyond belief. The most dangerous walls have been torn down, or were still being demolished. Little things seemed to make more impressions than the general destruction. In one pile, for instance, were a dozen typewriters, battered almost beyond recognition. And homely little desk fittings lay amid piles of rubble. I found, again and again, that it was these little things that attracted my attention when looking at ruins of houses or other buildings. It might be some child's plaything lying there forlorn; or some article of clothing still hanging on a peg on a wall, although everything else in the room had disappeared.

On the north edge of this big area of ruined buildings there was a plot of green grass, the lawn of an institution. On it a number of men in white trousers were practising for a cricket match. I was new then to English ways and I did not understand how they had the heart to play a game in such dismal surroundings.

**The Newspaper District**

The Strand, which ran in front of the hotel, had a church in the centre of the street at its east end, and beyond that, it became Fleet Street. The church was one of the beautiful structures designed by Sir Christopher Wren after the great fire of London in 1666. It went by the old name of St. Clement Dane, and its span of life was from one great fire to another, for it is completely ruined now except the spire.

Fleet street is the newspaper area of London strange how they have managed to group everything into "arenas" in this great city. Along that street, and around the corners in the streets nearby are, or were, the great newspapers and even such lesser but well-known ones as that boyhood favorite, The Boys' Own Paper. Most of them still carry on, but passing Houvers Street, we turned down to see the Daily Express office. Nothing remains but the bare walls.

I have told in a previous story of the way I spent an evening at The Daily Express office, part of it up on the roof with the fire watchers, while a German plane approached from the East, the only one to get near London during my stay. There's a system of alarms which show only in the A.P.P. office and the newspaper buildings. As an enemy plane approaches the coast, a yellow light goes on. When it is definitely headed towards London a purple light glows. On these alerts, the public knows nothing. But when the plane reaches the outer defences of London, a red light shows. It is then that the alarm is sounded in the streets. That night the purple light was on and from the roof I could see the flashes from the anti-aircraft guns down the Thames.

The Daily Express and The Standard are London newspapers. The Standard is said to have spent \$7,000,000 in rebuilding its two buildings, and succeeded. The Standard stands up amid a patch of ruins. The Express is on Fleet street which is not so badly damaged as a whole.

The London Times is the most famous of all the papers of course. It is larger than the others, usually eight pages to their four or paper is scarce and rationed. It costs more and unless you're a regular subscriber, it's desperately hard to get a copy of it. During the bombing

# Good Inn-Keeper Was Canterbury's Ceremonials Aid.

Publication "But Not a Sinner" in Unique Position of Landlord, Parish Clerk and Sexton in Kent Village

BY ALAN RANDALL  
Canadian Press Staff Writer

CANTERBURY, England, (CP) — First let it be said the crowd was considerable for the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Rev. Dr. William Temple.

Then it can be added that the crowd was well handled, that seating arrangements for this cathedral ceremony of age-old ritual was made and executed by none other than a tavern owner. He is William G. E. Wood, landlord of the Beverlie Inn at St. Stephen's, a hamlet on Canterbury's outskirts, who for many years, was chief verger of the cathedral.

Mr. Wood is in the same way as far as they relate to Canterbury Cathedral, this man who discarded his robe and wand of office a year ago and "decided to become a publication but not, if I could help it, a sinner."

So the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral called him from behind his 16th century bar, to work on the enthronement ceremonies and he was in charge of sending accommodation and the organization of a small army of stewards for the ceremonies on April 25. "Bless you," said Mr. Wood afterwards, "it's quite busy when you know how. I have had to handle 3,000 people a day for a whole week at some of our special festivals."

# As Chief Verger

As a chief verger Mr. Wood was exemplary. Now as in the same way as far as they relate to Canterbury Cathedral, this man who discarded his robe and wand of office a year ago and "decided to become a publication but not, if I could help it, a sinner."

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# Sheep Give The Army Wool, Grease for Its Dubbin

Dublin, with which all boots issued to Britain's Home Guard are in future to be treated, has for one of its main ingredients grease salvaged from the wool of sheep.

To-day the demand for dubbin is phenomenal in Britain because it not only softens leather and keeps boots waterproof but it is protective against gas.

From one London factory alone tons of dubbin are being turned out not only for the Home Guard but for the Army, the Royal Air Force and the women of the A.T.S. A single contract runs to 250,000 two-ounce tins, but it also goes off in 38 lb drums into which it is poured from large vats.

From the same factory great quantities of boot polish, which they produced to the tune of 500,000 tins a week in peace time, are going to the Canadian Army and to the Forces of the United States.

Every window in the front of The Times building was blown out and much other damage done. But The Times never failed to come out as usual, and the other papers, have usually sent reports. They were not using all their equipment anyway, and they helped each other out, when necessary. It is said that during the height of the blitz, it gave Londoners a comforting feeling to be able to get to the depot in the morning after a night of terror and find the morning paper and a bottle of milk, there as usual. No doubt it would.

The visiting Canadian editors were made members of the Press club in London. That's something of a fix. London I believe, one night some of us visited that interesting club. It is situated in a smart lane, somewhere off Fleet street. We went in the dark, just past the blackout, peering out as we went the bricks and rubbish in a street that hadn't been cleaned up yet where a taxi couldn't go. The staff of the club is bordered with valuable historic pictures and documents, and in the library upstairs I saw some photographs of the burning of London.

Saved Asok. It takes the West End of London beginning at Trafalgar

# The Week at OTTAWA

Specially Written for The Acton Free Press by M. E. FRANCOIS Canadian Press Staff Writer

OTTAWA, (CP) — The House of Commons is still looking forward to debate on what at face value appears to be one of the most important items of the session, the amendment to the National Resources Mobilization Act which, when passed, will give the government power to impose all-out compulsory military service.

The \$2,000,000 war appropriation bill resolution kept the House busy most of last week with Munitions Minister Howe and War Services Minister Thorson up for questioning. Mr. Thorson was still before the House Monday and Labor Minister Mitchell was to follow.

So the matter of amending the N.R.M.A. was kept in the background by French Canadian opposition to overseas conscription was quiescent. Parliament Hill and the nation waited for what is expected to be a literally a continuation of the plebiscite debate this spring when 37 members of parliament came out flatly compulsory service outside Canada.

But whether passage of the N.R.M.A. amendment nobody doubts that it will be adopted ultimately will actually mean much is a matter for argument. There were indications at the week-end that overseas conscription is not an immediate prospect.

# Praised War Effort

Mr. Thorson told the House that "a strong case could be made" for continuation of the voluntary enlistment system, from the point of view of effectiveness of the Canadian war effort.

And Justice Minister St. Laurent confirmed in the chamber a report that he had written to a Liberal club in his constituency that "there is no intention for the time being to bring in conscription for overseas service."

The plan was that as soon as the war appropriation bill is passed, sometime this week, Mr. King will move second reading of the N.R.M.A. amending bill, launching a full-dress debate on the measure.

While extension of the field of compulsory service was indefinite, however, there was virtual promise that the call-up age categories are to be increased.

Mr. Thorson said in the House that the maximum age for compulsory service might be raised from 30 to 35 years "within a very short time."

The minister warned, too, that the government has under consideration regulations which will prevent university students and those in Reserve Army units from evading compulsory service.

# Civic Recommendations

Before the government has made any recommendations from Canada's municipalities on what should be done to strengthen civilian home defence and improve the living conditions of the underprivileged.

Delegates to the fifth annual conference of The Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities asked the government that federally-owned war industries pay an indemnity to the municipality in which they are located in lieu of regular municipal taxes from which the government claims exemption for defence plants.

They asked for continuation of the National Housing Act, a 25 per cent increase in old age and blind pensions and mothers' allowances; and a lowering of the minimum age for old age pensions from 70 to 65 years.

In view of municipal responsibility for A.R.P. organization they suggested local governments should be given authority to enforce protective measures and take over necessary services in emergencies.

On the military front, The British Commonwealth Air Training Conference has offered a new week of the liberations aimed at extension of the training agreement for two years to March 31, 1945.

# On The Home Front

Two major developments on the domestic front are interesting. One is the proposed that less gasoline will be available for the average motorist. The other is the new fuel price set up from coast to coast.

Already the Ministry's gasoline ration has been reduced by three-fifths. The indications are that while the reduction is not likely to be so drastic in other sections of the country, the pleasure driver is going to find his self more restricted than ever before in his motorist's enjoyment.

Another announcement expected is on the "Plan for the Regulating of Gasoline" which is known to be under consideration. Details of the new maximum fuel price regulations, part of the government program to maintain domestic supplies were announced by The Wartime Prices and Trade Board last Friday.

Under the new scheme, prices are set up across the country and uniform prices which packers and wholesalers may charge in each zone are established. The price range in various sections is small.

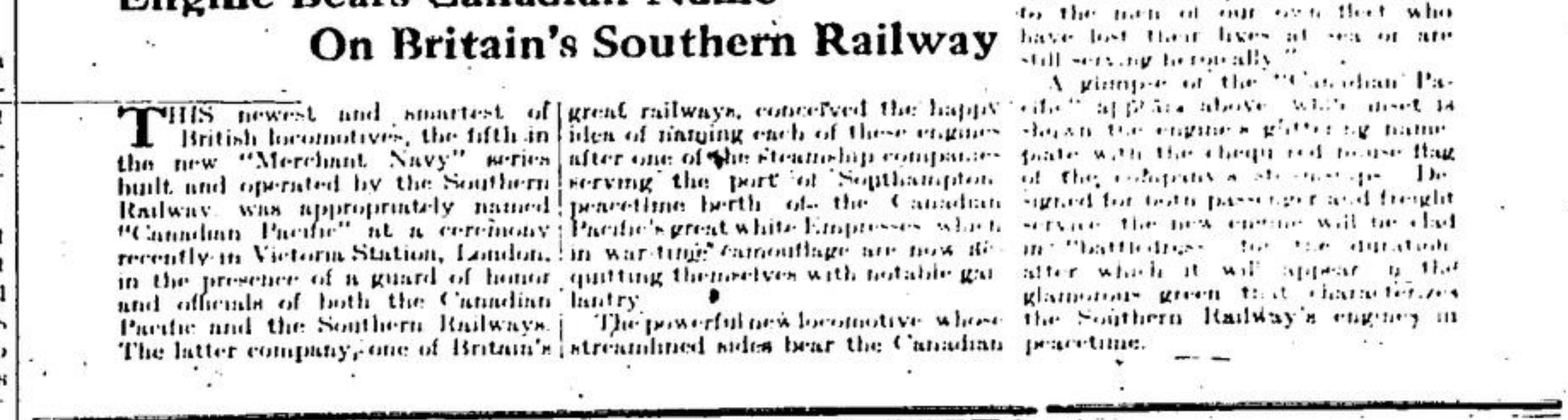
# Women Throng In War Moves

Girls in Uniform, Soldiers' Families and Others Boost Travel in Canada

TORONTO, (CP) — Canada's women on the move in wartime migration on a vast scale was an outstanding impression gained by Miss Julia Matoukova in a trip through the Maritime provinces and noted in report to the National Council of the Young Women's Christian Association.

"Not only the armed forces and their families, but also labor, civil servants and girls in uniform are on the move. The people who are travelling on some special war business would constitute only about 25 per cent of those travelling," said Miss Matoukova.

"Women aren't travelling before and need assistance, girls arrive in strange cities at impossible hours due to delayed trains, and turn to the Y. expecting there will be room for them. Our rooms registry service is one of the most needed the Association is carrying now," she said.



Engine Bears Canadian Name On Britain's Southern Railway

THIS newest and smartest of British locomotives, the fifth in the new "Merchant Navy" series built and operated by the Southern Railway was appropriately named "Canadian Pacific" at a ceremony recently in Victoria Station, London, in war time camouflage are now in the presence of a guard of honor, quelling themselves with notable grace and officials of both the Canadian Pacific and the Southern Railways.

The powerful locomotive whose streamlined sides bear the Canadian



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