

Free Press Editorial Page

Pierre kicks the pigskin...

The Grey Cup game, billed as Canada's greatest sports spectacle, dropped some of its glamor to one of the most improbable sources—the prime minister for a few minutes Saturday afternoon.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the enigma who rides herd over 20 million Canucks with something the pundits call charisma, stole the opening ceremonies from the other personalities. While over 30,000 fans in the stands and millions more on TV watched the P.M. turned the opening kick-off from the usual mundane formality into an entertainment.

He introduced this new wrinkle by being as completely natural as anyone could with that many people looking on.

In stead of turning up in top hat and tails with a stuffed shirt to match, Pierre appeared in a turtle-neck and casual matching accessories. Oozing the Gallic charm which turns the ladies into melted eyelashes and streaked mascara while still preserving the respect of the gentlemen he dominated the show despite the hordes of photographers tailing him.

We can remember when other prime ministers officiated at openings. They were accorded the respect due the office with polite

applause. But none captured the mood of a crowd out to enjoy themselves so well as Trudeau.

The daily press and other communications media let it be known the Mr. Trudeau had been practicing kicking a football for the two-weeks prior to the game. Sports fans watched to see the result. He was an apt pupil learning where the parliamentary goal sticks were located but a football is a poke at a different kind of pigskin.

You could hardly call Pierre's kick one of consummate skill. He drove the ball far enough to draw a round of applause. But he could have kicked it two inches and received the same reaction.

Call it charisma, call it color, call it plain, old fashioned conceit, there's no doubt Mr. Trudeau is well versed in how to please the multitude. It's nice to have the bleachers pulling for you.

Later the behemoths of the gridiron took over the spotlight but the memories of the kick-off will remain with the spectators for some time.

Ottawa won the Grey Cup, proving their Yank imports were better than Calgary's on this particular day at least. It was a great show and one no doubt which will be repeated next season.

Need more passenger trains...

The Christian Science Monitor, one of the most influential newspapers in the United States, has taken a cut at the U.S. railways and the Washington government for proposed cut off of research subsidies for development of high speed trains.

The Monitor declares that since Washington is pouring millions of dollars to develop high speed aircraft it can surely spend a few pennies for more comfortable and faster trains. There are millions of people, the newspaper declares, who would travel by train if they were available.

Roads will continue to become more and more congested and more and more people will be looking for rail accommodation, the Monitor

says. Subsidizing passenger trains would benefit more people than shots to the moon.

You can draw a parallel between the Monitor's statement and what is taking place in Canada. The C.N.R. is cutting off passenger service in communities where the demand for it is going to grow. The C.P.R. is doing likewise.

Some communities are more aware than others of what the future will bring. Acton is located in an area where we'll need increased passenger service, especially a commuter type, rather than the phasing out of the railway has been carrying out.

The town fathers know it but apparently the railway doesn't.

Off the cuff...

Christmas lights are going up and coming on all over town and district, adding a touch of the holiday season which is more delightful each year. A good snowfall is all we need to make the picture complete.

An other wise dull sermon can be brightened sometimes by the sight of a price ticket dangling from a woman's hat.

One of the greatest equalizing factors for novelist, political pundit or biographer is a book clearance sale. What must a proud author think when he glances into a book store window and sees a work he labored over labelled: "Clearing at 79 cents, published at \$7.50."

Keep your chin up high and you'll walk into a low clothesline.



THE FIRST FALL of snow caught this reminder that winter's icy blasts will follow. A few still rustled in the wind, chilly (Staff Photo)



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

We'll never forget Mrs. Popovich. My wife phoned from the bus station the other day, just home from her weekly stint at college. "Bill, I'm in a terrible mess." I groaned silently: "What is it this time?"

To cut a long story short, she had started out with a little act of Christian charity, or plain humanity, and wound up with a problem that would have made the Good Samaritan take to his heels.

Mrs. Popovich has Parkinson's Disease. She can walk by inches. On a good day, she might travel 40 feet in 40 minutes, possibly falling flat on her face twice during the procedure.

My wife helped her onto the bus in the city. Four days later, we practically hauled her onto a bus going back to the city.

In the intervening time, she was a thorn in the spiritual side, a scorpion in our minds. In short, we worried like hell about her.

She is sweet, and she has faith, and she has a sense of humor. And she's as stubborn as a mule.

She had come here to visit the Shrine, with a view to a spot of faith healing. The Shrine is closed in the winter. No priests, no services. Just a big, dark, cold church.

We got her settled in a motel room on street level because she can't climb steps. Arranged for hot food and drinks to be brought to her. Visited her. Made her promise to phone her daughter to come and get her.

She was adamant. Saturday, somehow, she got to the Shrine by cab. It takes ten minutes to get her into or out of a car. Told the cabbie to come back in two hours. Door of church was locked. She sat for two hours, high on a hill-top, in a bleak November wind, on the steps of the Shrine.

Sunday, after checking by phone, we took her to the Shrine. Two hours hard labor. Church like a holy barn.

She did begin to see that it was all a bit fruitless and agreed to take a bus back to the city on Monday. After an hour's struggle, we got her onto the bus, which is

three minutes from the motel. Another chap and I carried her aboard.

Cane, baggage, purse, all in place. And the bus driver's look said loud and clear, "How can you be so rotten as to pour your poor old mother onto a bus when she can't even walk? What kind of people are you?"

I guess this is because my wife kissed her goodbye, and I patted her shoulder. And his voice said, "Who's going to help her off the bus?"

And we've been haunted ever since by her dark, sad eyes, and that sweet smile, and that indomitable spirit: "If I don't keep going, I'll be in a wheelchair for the rest of my life."

What got both of us was the coldness and the eager curiosity of the onlookers. The only person who offered aid, the chap who helped me carry her onto the bus, was a rough-looking character who was obviously a junkie or an alcoholic. He said he'd look after her.

Well, what a paradox! All those well-fed, well-clothed, well-looking people sat there and watched, as though it were a horror movie. And the only guy in the crowd who looked as though he needed help himself said, "We have to help one another, don't we?"

A certain Levite was mugged, rolled and left to die. Two of his own race passed. One didn't wanna get involved. The other was late for church.

And a Samaritan, an alien, heard his groans, and said, "Oy, boy, what's with you? You don't look so good." And bound his wounds and found him an inn with wall-to-wall.

And was probably charged for practising without a license. I often wonder what became of the Good Samaritan.

Free Press

back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, December 9, 1948.

Erin Township electors on Monday returned Goldwin Burt as reeve for 1949. Deputy reeve George Clark was elected by acclamation.

Voted in at deputy reeve for Acton at the elections Monday was Ted Tyler. L. Holchen, T. Nicol and W. McLeod are councillors. The Public Utilities Commission will be C. Hansen, R. MacArthur and Reeve Theron Jones, who was acclaimed at the nomination meeting. S. G. Bennett, owner of Scotsdale Farm and president of Beardmore and Co., won many prizes at the livestock show in Chicago.

Consideration will have to be given to increasing accommodation at the public school in 1949, it was revealed in a report from the inspector at a public school board meeting this week.

Mike Cox had three ribs broken during a hockey game with Georgetown. Acton managed to trim the "gentle" Raiders and also won a decision over Oakville on Thursday. They are in first place.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, December 12, 1918.

At a meeting of Guelph physicians recently it was decided to increase the fee for a first call from \$2 to \$2.50 and that for subsequent calls from \$1 to \$1.50. Some of the doctors claimed that they actually lost money on many of their calls into the country, and the rates for country calls were increased considerably. The new fees go into effect at once.

Dr. Frederick D. Pridham, a U. S. medical student for four years at work on bone diseases has discovered that double nitro oxide salt applied to sections of the bone causes absorption of diseased marrow and healing of the bone disease from the inside toward the surface results.

Mr. John Williamson, who recently sold his splendid farm, lot 25, con. 6, Nassagaweya, two and a half miles west of town, to Mr. Charles Oldham of Ufford, Muskoka, will hold a clearing sale on Wednesday, 18th inst.

Mr. and Mrs. Blow of Woodstock, are spending the week at the home of their son, Mr. Fred Blow, Church St.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, December 7, 1893.

Winter was ushered in last Sunday in real old fashioned style. In the morning, churchgoers had to plow their way through banks of the beautiful snow. With the falling snow, there was a strong wind and at times a mild blizzard prevailed. Towards evening the winds moderated and the temperature fell to zero. The weather since has been clear and cold. Sleighting is good.

For years the farmers of the county of Halton have been suffering serious loss through the attacks of dogs upon their herds of sheep. Never has this evil of worthless, ravenous dogs about the county been more apparent than this year. Township councils have been obliged to vote amounts to partially recoup farmers for their losses aggregating on several occasions considerably over a hundred dollars at a single sitting. Something should be done about these worthless curs.

The new post office at Crewson's Corner will take a few customers from Rockwood post office, it is expected.

Several of our citizens are suffering from la grippe.

Rev. T. Albert Moore of Dunnville, a former editor of this journal, will speak at the meeting of the Epworth League on his popular theme "Mating and Mismatching". The youngsters are having a jolly time "jumping on hots" now that sleighing is here again. If accidents are to be averted, a trifle more care will have to be taken.

For shame! An old lady was taken in a half-frozen condition in an old house at Berlin last week. She is about 80 years of age and though having well-to-do children, has to shift for herself.

100 years ago

A strange metallic substance has been found in the township of Binbrook, county of Wentworth. It is of a light color, much like silver, and although long known to the residents as existing in large quantities, has never been submitted to proper testing. Hamilton Times says that during the War of 1812 it was used by militiamen for bullets, first supposition being the ore was lead. It was found, however, to be considerably harder than that metal, inasmuch as to prove injurious to the musket barrels.

Salt and Pepper

by hartley coles



What was Ontario like 75 years ago?

Maybe gramps can tell you some pretty good stories about old Upper Canada when he was a boy, running around barefoot in the puddles on muddy roads but Lovell's Gazetteer of British North America has done the statistical side up brown.

Published in 1895, this particular edition was lent me by Don Hiltz, of Rockwood. He's been accumulating historical items almost as fast as the Royal Ontario Museum, most of them related to Rockwood but others like this book covering a pretty wide territory.

In this particular hard bound edition there is "reliable information concerning the climate, soil, industries, history and statistics of the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, the different provinces and their counties, as well as accurate descriptions of over 7500 cities, towns, villages and settlements and fully 1,500 lakes and rivers in British North America."

Quite a mouthful, isn't it? But the book contains almost all the figures worth noting except for the number of people with store teeth. It catalogues every hamlet in British North America where a pioneer set up a tent or brewed a spot of tea.

It's interesting to see the relative sizes of some communities compared to their size and population today. For example, let's see what the book says about Acton. It was Acton West in those days.

ACTON WEST—An incorporated village in Halton County, Ontario, on a branch of the River Credit and on the Grand Trunk Rivers. It contains six churches, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of England, Disciples Baptist and Catholic, 28 stores, three hotels, a grist mill, a saw mill, two planing mills and a stove and shingle factory, two glove factories, five tanneries, several shops, a bank, and a printing office issuing a weekly newspaper; also a telegraph, express and telephone office. Population 1209.

Acton has grown a bit since then. We're crowding 5,000 now but we haven't got a telegraph and express office. Yet, the old town has changed, critics to the contrary. Take a look now at our nearest neighbors to the west. Rockwood, for instance.

ROCKWOOD—A flourishing post village in Wellington County, Ont., on the River Speed and on the Grand Trunk Railway, 41 miles west of Toronto. It has extensive water power and contains four churches, one telegraph office, one large woollen and one glove factory, several stores and hotels

and one saw, one shingle, one oatmeal and two flouring mills. Gray lime for building purposes is manufactured here. Population 550.

Those were the days my friend, yes those were the days. Rockwood was a busy manufacturing centre, a small Manchester. Over in Eden Mills there was quite a bit doing too.

EDEN MILLS—A post village in Wellington County on a branch of the River Speed. It contains one store, a hotel, a four mill and a pump factory. Population 360.

Another busy spot was EVERTON. The book says it was a post settlement in Wellington County, four miles from Rockwood. It contains two churches, Disciple and Methodist, three stores, one hotel, one flour and one saw mill, one telegraph, one express, one telephone office and one washing machine factory. Population 200.

They weren't letting any grass grow under their feet in Everton then, either. Over in LIMEHOUSE the Chamber of Commerce must have been out for lunch when Lovell's Gazetteer representative arrived. Limehouse was a bustling village then with a population of 700 but all the books gives its location 32 miles from Toronto on the G.T.R.

SPEYSIDE had a population of 110, contained one store, one tannery and two saw mills 75 years ago. It is located on Speyside Creek, five miles from Acton.

BALLINAFAD had a population of 150 in 1895. A post village in Wellington County, six miles from Acton and Georgetown stations on the G.T.R. and seven miles from Erin on the C.P.R. It contains two churches, Methodist and Presbyterian, one store and a hotel. Mails daily.

GEORGETOWN, an incorporated village with a population of 1509 was a far cry from the small city it is today. On the River Credit, and on the G.T.R., 29 miles northwest of Toronto. It contains six churches, Episcopal, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational, one bank agency, two telegraph offices, paper mill, planing mill, wallpaper factory, knitting machine factory, foundry and machine shop, six hotels, 25 stores and one printing office, issuing a weekly newspaper.

And those were the good old days.



MEMORIES OF THE Second World War and the "Victory Loans" campaigns which Acton people continually oversubscribed are awakened by this picture. Acton was the only centre in Ontario to have a Mosquito bomber named

after it for the part it played in promoting the fourth Victory Loan. The late G. A. Dille, E. S. Force and Amos Mason accept the award from Kenneth A. Henderson at a dedication ceremony at the DeHavilland plant near Toronto.

Et Cetera

Children are more susceptible to carbon monoxide poisoning than adults because they breathe deeper and take in the gas more rapidly, says the Ontario Safety League.

A newspaper artist in British Columbia has suggested a new coat-of-arms for Canada. It would have the grouse as the national bird because Canadians are notorious complainers, and the weeping willow as the national tree for the same reason, and vichysoisse as the national dish because we are cold, half French, and hard to stir.

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PHONE 853-2010
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