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THE SIROIS REPORT

A great deal is heard these days, and more will be heard in the coming months of the Sirois Report. Early in January Prime Minister Mackenzie King will sit in conference at the capital with representatives of all the provinces to discuss this report with its far-reaching recommendations. R. M. Fowler of Toronto who acted as one of the secretaries of the Commission recently said he considered the Report the most important document affecting Canadian development, since the Durham report. Undoubtedly it will affect the future of every Canadian and it deserves the thoughtful consideration of every citizen. Our hope is that our leaders will approach the big question as Canadians, with a Canadian outlook and that untrammelled provincialism may be conspicuous by its absence at the deliberations.

Everyone has heard of the size of the Report — it fills 32 large red volumes, but it is not as difficult to know the contents of these volumes as the size of the Report would suggest.

The Commission was appointed in August of 1937 with the widest possible terms of reference. In a word, it was asked to find out what was wrong with the Canadian form of government. After seventy years it was quite clear something was radically wrong with our constitution. Changes were necessary and the problem was to discover what form the changes should take.

To assist in discovering underlying facts, the Commissioners called in a group of experts in various fields of study — accountants, economists and lawyers were asked to prepare factual reports on different phases of the Commission's problem.

Having started these studies, the Commission set forth on its travels. It went to every province in Canada and to its public sittings came representatives of provincial governments, municipalities, teachers' associations, farmers' associations, doctors' associations, social service workers, civil servants and others.

In these public hearings and private discussions, the Commissioners learned a great deal about the realities of the Canadian picture. When they came to write their report they were able to do so with a knowledge of how Canadians thought and felt. They sought to make their report realistic and politically practicable.

The main Report of the Commission consists of two important volumes, plus a volume of statistical tables. The main volumes deal first with the historical background and secondly with the recommendations.

Recommendations

The recommendations volume fills some 300 pages and deals with many matters which may be important to individual provinces and groups but which are collateral to the main recommendations of the Commission. We group together five main recommendations of the Commission which make up the Commission's main financial proposals.

1. **Unemployment:** The Commission recommended that the Dominion should be responsible for the entire cost and administration of unemployment relief to all unemployed persons in Canada who are able to work. In addition, the Dominion should have power to inaugurate unemployment insurance and a national system of employment offices;

2. **Provincial Public Debts:** The Commission recommended that the Dominion take over the entire "dead-weight" debt burdens of the provinces, and it should do so by taking over all provincial debts and receiving from each province an annual sum equivalent in amount to the present income from revenue-producing assets. Provision was also made for co-ordinated borrowing in the future.

3. **Taxes:** The Commission recommended that the Dominion alone should have power to levy personal income taxes, corporation taxes and succession duties. Revenue from these taxes should be retained by the Dominion except in respect of a very important rebate of corporation taxes collected from mining companies, such rebate to be paid to the province in which the mining company carries on its operations;

4. The present system of subsidies from the Dominion to the Provinces should be abolished; and

5. In its place a new system of national adjustment grants should be paid by the Dominion to the provinces, such grants to be sufficient in amount to enable each province to provide to its people educational and social services at a national average of quality provided each province would tax its people with average severity.

SCIENCE WORKS A MIRACLE

Several audiences in Toronto and vicinity, including those of service clubs, have had the privilege of hearing a remarkable young man. He was 21-year-old George Campbell, of Oklahoma, U.S.A. A gifted speaker with a most pleasing personality, this young man thrilled each audience which heard him. Young Campbell was born blind, and lived in the dark world of sightless people until he was eighteen. At that age his eyes were operated upon and the hard opaque lenses were removed but he could still see only blurred images like huge shadows. Then lenses were ground to replace those removed from his eyes and George Campbell saw for the first time in his life, but it was not until after his eyes were trained to function together that he was able to see normally.

Then the combined knowledge of great surgeons, and eye specialists was used to give him his sight. It was a moving story that he told of the dark world in which he lived the greater part of his life. All who heard him, blessed as they were with the privilege of sight, were given a new understanding of that strange life that is lived by the blind. They have no conception of shapes, or colours or sizes. They know only what they can feel, hear, taste or smell. The fifth sense of sight is completely lost to them. This young man impressed all who heard him with his courage and his delightful outlook on life. He never considered blindness a handicap until he received his sight and realized what he had been denied during those eighteen years. Now he travels about the country trying to impress upon people that their sight is the greatest blessing they have, and urging them to take every care of it. He has addressed some seven hundred audiences during the past two years.

The other striking thing about the visit of this young

man was the realization it brought to us of what science is doing. In great laboratories all over the world men work quietly and ceaselessly to better the lot of mankind. A few years ago no one would have believed it possible to give sight to a person born blind. There is no telling to what purpose man may put the talent with which the Almighty have blessed him. There is always hope for the sanity of the world, even in such days as these, when science can work the miracles it is working every day.

OUR ONLY INTEREST IS GOOD MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

It is regrettable but true that there are some people in the world who cannot concede sincerity and good purpose to any who hold an opinion different from their own. One such person must be the one who speaking at the Markham Township nomination meeting, insinuated that The Liberal had mercenary motives in opposing the two year term legislation.

We have voiced our opposition to the two year term legislation because we believe it is less democratic than the present system of municipal elections, and we have consistently maintained that if any change is to be made it should be made after a vote of the people. To those who differ with those views we hold no ill feelings. Our sole interest in the question is as a newspaper interested in the continuance of good municipal government. The question of two year terms for municipal councils has nothing whatsoever to do with the election or re-election of any municipal council. To insinuate that our opinion on this question is influenced by the fact that under the two year term there might not be as much municipal printing is unjustified and unfair. To the speaker who made that statement, or those who prompted him, we say very definitely that our opinions and principles mean more to us than dollars and cents. Those who judge everything by the yardstick of selfish gain are apt to judge other people by themselves.

Thornhill United Church News

The Parsonage, Thornhill, Ont., Monday, Dec. 30th, 1940.

Well, here we are at the end of the year, and about to launch out into the deeps of another one; wonder what it will bring to pass? The past year has certainly been most eventful, but in spite of all the 'ups and downs' which have been experienced by most of us, we are still here and have much for which to be thankful. These are wonderful days in which to be alive, and even more wonderful days lie not so far ahead. Looking back, and in terms of the devastation of life and limb and property as a result of the war, we are glad to know that London's Big Ben is still faithfully booming out the passing of the hours. By the way, do you know what he is supposed to be saying?

WHAT LONDON'S BIG BEN SAYS
 All through this hour be Thou my Guide,
 That by Thy power no step may slide.

Not a bad idea to make these words our motto as we set out upon the New Year, and let us hope that Big Ben shall continue for years to come to serve faithfully in the ringing out of this message at the heart of the Empire!

THE NEW YEAR

"Like a ship with orders sealed;
 Whence, or whither, unrevealed,
 Cargo of a worth untold,
 Joy and sorrow in its hold
 The New Year comes.

He who made the stars will guide;
 Knows the sea, the wind, the tide;
 Knows the channel deep and still
 To the haven of God's will
 For this New Year.

With His hand upon the helm
 Storms that rage cannot o'erwhelm:
 With the ship in His control
 New horizons wait the soul
 In this New Year."

And so, in this New Year, may we all remember to lift up our eyes unto the hills, and unto the God of the hills beyond the hills, who is ever near, to be not only our refuge and our strength in every time of stress, but our inspiration and our joy at all times. May the Lord "so teach us to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom." "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God!"

Commencing this Sunday evening our Hymn-Sings and Fellowship Period will be held in the Church immediately following the evening service, and will be regularly so, except when otherwise announced. We would be very glad to have you with us on these glad occasions, and although we would like to think that you could attend the evening service and then remain for the after-service, it may be that in some cases this would be inconvenient or impossible. If such be the case, therefore, let us assure you that we would be glad to have you come in after the service, and enjoy with us this period of Christian Fellowship which will be a feature of our Sunday evenings from now until Easter. And, speaking of Easter, let us start making our plans right now to make it the most glorious and the most richly appreciated Easter we have

ever had! Let us plan big things, pray for big things, and expect big things, and according to our faith be it unto us! If we don't expect and attempt big things, God is not very likely to make it possible for big things to materialize. So will you do your share by being as regular in attendance as possible, by being interested in all that it is planned to accomplish, and by praying for God's blessing upon all that is attempted? Come and join us, and let's have a 'good time in the Lord' together! Let's make the atmosphere of our Church so neighbourly and warm and friendly, so filled with radiant good cheer and Christian friendliness and optimism that our church notices will not be stating an untruth when they say that ours is a friendly place in which to worship, a warm church, and one where a warm welcome awaits you! This coming Sunday would be a good time to start. It will be the first Sunday in the New Year, and a good time to get out of the rut of non-attendance which we got in simply because it was much easier to stay home and listen in and drowse and not bother getting dressed up! Let's all start off together, and by God's help, and in sincerity, we can keep going together throughout the year, and make it a better one than any that have gone before; If you belong to a church, go to it; if you don't, start going to one of your choice, but above all, GO. We can so easily fool ourselves with excuses and so easily take the line of least resistance, and so easily justify our staying away, that it requires no effort at all to become quite pagan, and perhaps that is largely just what is wrong with the world and why it is where it is today. "I am the Lord thy God... thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the Lord thy God." In the words of the great Johnson: "To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and reimpresed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example." We need you, and we need the influence of your example. It was a man of wisdom who said: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee." It is indeed the part of wisdom to become acquainted with the source of all wisdom.

We enjoyed having a part to play during the Young People's New Year Candlelight Service at Woodbridge United Church last Sunday evening, but we began to enjoy it still more when we saw a group of our own young people coming down the aisle to the front of the church, and in time for the collection, at that. In all, sixteen of our own young people were at the service, and the majority had participated in the service at Thornhill United Church first, which began at 7 p.m. D.S.T. The evening was very wet, the roads slippery and the driving conditions not of the best, but the church at

Woodbridge was pretty nearly full, and we felt very much at home with such a splendid group of young people and such a splendid congregation as was there to greet us. Really, it is most refreshing to discover how many very fine and wholesome young people there are in the congregations of the church-going citizens of this land! "Hail, blooming youth! May all your virtues with your years improve, Till in consummate worth you shine the pride Of these our days, and succeeding times

A bright example." A series of union prayer meetings will be held during the coming week in the Protestant churches of this community, in observance of the Universal Week of Prayer. We commend these meetings to your earnest attention and attendance and can assure you that, along with the millions of others throughout the world who will be lifting up their hearts in prayer to God at the same time, they will be abundantly worthwhile. Please see the complete program of speakers and places of meeting as printed elsewhere in this issue.

We have noticed that there is a safety campaign in progress at the present time, and the following poem though not having any direct bearing on the matter as brought to our attention, nevertheless came to mind, and we pass it along as something really touching and beautiful:

The school bell had rung, and four little boys ran,
 Tommy and Billy and Harry and Dan.

Back to their school books, back into line,
 Such bright little fellows, so healthy and fine.

A clod and a trip and a-tumble they go,
 All down in a heap with wee Tommy below;

Not done on purpose—not playing the fool,
 Only an accident, scampering to school.

Up they all scrambled, laughing and bright;
 But no! Little Tommy lay back, sick and white.

"My leg, it's so hurt," and he sobbed with the pain,
 But he tried to get up, and then fell back again.

When the Doctor said, "broken," poor mother and dad
 Felt almost heartbroken, but the brave little lad

Said, "It's not the kids' fault—they were awfully true,
 For they carried me in, and were crying some, too."

And as under the ether he went dreaming away,
 Those tenderly watching couldn't help hear him say,

"I wish I'd been careful, it'll cost, oh-so dear—
 And Daddy and Mother — haven't got-much-this year."

Brave words, little man. Ah! Your bright little brain
 Was thinking of others, not of your own pain.

And we pray that those healing days soon flee away,
 For such spirit will make you a big man, some day.

And so, with this thought for the week, we say goodbye until next time: Were it not for hope, the heart would break.

Sincerely, your minister.

Funeral services were held at Kettleby cemetery on Tuesday, December 24th for Mrs. Minerva L. Proctor, 83-year-old widow of the late Wakefield Proctor, who died at Newmarket on Saturday, December 21st. Mrs. Proctor was the former Minerva L. Stokes. Tuesday's services were held from the home of her son Howard.

"So you put in a telephone again?" asked the enquiring soul.
 "Yes," nodded the old-timer. "My wife says the radio's alright for national events but there is nothing like a party line for local news."

Charles Graham

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