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A New Deal for the Municipalities

Everyone agrees that the municipalities across Ontario are facing difficult times. They find themselves in an era of declining revenues and increasing expenditures. The municipalities are the creation of the provincial government and therefore the responsibility of the province. Yet the Frost government has continually ignored their plight, or at the best offered them more money simply by juggling the system of grants. What is really needed is a fundamental reform of the present provincial-municipal structure.

The provincial laws under which the municipalities operate were drafted at a time when urban areas were relatively small and their functions uncomplicated. The principles governing these laws need to be thoroughly overhauled, and a new division of responsibility between the municipalities and the province devised.

Municipal revenues depend, as they always have, largely on real estate. But municipal responsibilities extend far beyond the fields that benefit real estate directly, taking in a variety of social welfare duties as well as education. At one time — even as recently as 30 years ago — this did not matter very much,

because the demands made on municipal governments for highways, sanitation facilities, and education and social welfare were relatively light. But today with municipalities compelled to build extremely expensive super-highways, sewage disposal plants, and recreation areas, real property cannot carry the burden of education and social welfare (which accounts for more than half the budget of most municipalities) without discouraging home ownership and adding considerably to rents.

Unless the municipalities are to be given new sources of revenue, they should be relieved of the social welfare burden and of other obligations which benefit the general public rather than real estate. The province could then pay for social welfare out of general revenue, while the municipalities concentrate on the services that benefit real property, such as roads, sewers, and police and fire protection.

Now is the time for the Frost government to take a more realistic viewpoint of the whole problem, and offer a solution which would bring provincial-municipal relations into line with conditions in this year of 1959.

Many Work Past 65th Birthday

Statisticians of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company have reported that large numbers of people in the United States and the same could easily be said of Canada continue in gainful employment beyond their sixty-fifth birthday.

According to estimates by the Bureau of the Census, in March of 1957 more than half of the male population in the age group 56-69 was still in the labor force. Even at ages 70-74, the proportion was virtually two-fifths, but at ages 75 and over it was only one-sixth. The proportion of women in the labor force at the older ages is much lower.

Farm workers show a greater tendency to work beyond age 65 than do those in non-agricultural industries. Consequently, men and women gainfully employed on farms constitute an increasingly large segment of these ages.

While only one-tenth of males in the age range 14-64 are engaged in agriculture, the proportion is nearly one-fourth at ages 65-69 and almost one-third at 70 and over.

The majority of older employed persons work full time, the proportion of full-time workers being two-thirds for the men and more than half for the women.

"Older workers drop out of the labor force for various reasons," the statisticians said. "Many retire voluntarily or because they have reached mandatory retirement age. Pension plans, social security and life insurance benefits have made it possible for an increasing number of people to retire. Since the incidence of disabling disease rises rapidly with advance in age in later life, failing health and physical disabilities are among the major reasons for older workers leaving the labor force."

Amber Lights For Safety

The action taken by Edmonton, Alberta traffic engineers in installing overhead flashing amber lights, to replace twenty-mile-an-hour school zones in twenty-five city areas, may well be repeated in other school areas throughout the dominion to good advantage.

City officials in Edmonton state, "the school zones were ineffective in slowing traffic" — they expect better results with the use of the flashing amber lights.

This might well be the answer to traffic problems in rural school districts surrounding Richmond Hill, with so many schools adjacent to highways and busy through roads. There is nothing more noticeable than a flashing light to warn motorists.

A driver may proceed for miles, following the line of traffic ahead of him more or less automatically, but let someone signal a right or left turn . . .

with a flashing red glow from the tail light on any of the cars visible to his eye in the line ahead . . . and something clicks a warning signal to the brain of the driver in the rear and he at once becomes alert to the necessity of "proceeding with caution."

Stationary warning signs have become part of the scenery to many motorists on the road these days, so liberally are they scattered along the highway. Statistics prove that even "Railway Crossing" signs are constantly ignored with the loss of the driver's life as the penalty for his carelessness. But here again, with the installation of the flashing "wig-wag" signals, the flashing light has cut these tragedies to the minimum.

The Ontario Department of Highways might do well to consider the installation of "flashing amber lights" near school centres throughout this province.

To Be Successful-Be Enthusiastic

Those who do the most and best in life invariably have the radiant quality of enthusiasm; they take hold of a job with zest and stimulate the forces of accomplishment in themselves.

So writes an internationally-known clergyman, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, in a recent issue of Reader's Digest. If you are defeated by weaknesses, tensions and fears, it may be only because you have never tapped this source of power.

In his article, "The Priceless Power of Enthusiasm," he says the first step toward unleashing this power is to observe the character of your thoughts and attitudes. Enthusiasm cannot live in a mind filled with dull, unhealthy, destructive ideas. To change this, look in the mirror every morning and say something like this: "Today is my day of opportunity. I have so many

blessings — home, family, job, health. I will do my best all day and God will help me. I am glad to be alive."

This daily process, he says, can be important, since your ideas affect your whole being. Unhealthy thoughts can make you unhealthy; defeatist thoughts can defeat you.

Another effective way to develop enthusiasm, Dr. Peale writes, is simply to act enthusiastic until you become so. It is a demonstrable psychological fact that you can be freed from an undesirable feeling by assuming the exact opposite feeling. If you are unhappy, you can induce happy feelings by deliberately acting as though you were happy. Similarly, you can make yourself enthusiastic simply by acting with enthusiasm. In a short time, you will no longer need to force it: it will become natural.



Facts and Faith

A Weekly Comment On
Christian Life and Action
— By Calvin H. Chambers —
God's Promises

In Shakespeare's great play, "All's Well That Ends Well," one of the characters is described as a person "who was ever precise in promise keeping." This, without doubt, is one of the important features of the God of the Bible. He is a promise keeping God. Men's promises are easily made and easily broken. The treaties which nations have signed with each other, have often been valueless, because neither party intended to keep his promise. But God is altogether different. What He says He will do, He performs.

This is abundantly illustrated throughout the Bible. God promised that He would never again destroy mankind through a world flood. The rainbow in the sky has been the traditional symbol of that promise. Abraham responded to the call of God, "Get thee up and out of thy country into a land that I will show thee . . . and I will make a great nation of thee . . . and in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." God kept that promise. Israel gained her promised land. But of Israel came Jesus Christ through whom the world has been blessed beyond measure. God promised man a deliverer. He kept that promise in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, the greatest deliverer of men.

This biblical witness to the faithfulness of God is most encouraging. It means that we can count on God. What He says He will perform.

His faithfulness to us is something that we need to take seriously. Are you walking through the valley of the shadow of death, feeling the loneliness of bereavement? Listen to His promise, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Are you seeking for an answer to some problem? What is His promise — "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." Are you wondering how you will make ends meet and whether God will take care of you or not? Hear His promise — "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ." Are you losing faith with God and man as you look upon world conditions? Are you tired praying "thy kingdom come," and never seeing it? True faith rests in the promises of God, and thus finds inner strength. God's kingdom will come for He has said "Thy Kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ." Are you seeking for Truth? God promises every seeking person, "If ye shall seek me with all your heart ye shall surely find me saith the Lord."

Is your faith anchored to the Promises of God? It should be. Jesus said "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Peter reminds us "The word of the Lord abideth forever." Life built upon the rock like promises of God, will not be submerged when the storms of life attempt to engulf us.

A member of the House of Commons who had listened to the wartime speeches of Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill made this comment: "When Mr. Chamberlain said the fine, true thing, it was like a faint air played on a pipe and on the wind at once. When Churchill said it, it was like an organ filling the church and we all went out refreshed and resolute to do or die."

This is certainly the difference between the promises of God and the promises of men. Human promises are often like faint airs which fade away on the breeze. Gone as soon as they are spoken. But when God speaks to us, as He does through His Word, it comes home to our hearts with power. It is like a great cathedral organ filling us with faith, determination, courage and power. Rest on His promises. They cannot fail.



Over Hill, Over Dale

by Cicely Thomson

While some of our youngsters dress in the paraphernalia used for hockey from October to the end of March, some two hundred other boys and girls don their figure skating togs . . . for the girls immaculate white boots, elegant skirts, of a ridiculous length, but swirling full . . . and work at edges, turns, spirals, and so forth so that by the end of March they will acquit themselves well in the CARNIVAL.

The Richmond Hill Figure Skating Club came into being when artificial ice was put down in the arena. The initial effort was spearheaded by Ann Featherstonhaugh with Kay Smith, Rosalind Anderson, Chris Gibson, Muriel Gillard, Rita Hall and Ella McGregor. (Pearl Wilson is this season's hard working president). They engaged Chuck Kiel as their professional and that popular man (the kids adore him!) is still with the club, not only teaching the three to seventeen year old children but designing the annual carnival including the steps and figures used as well as the imaginative and colorful costumes for the many courts.

With a skating club of this nature a carnival each year is essential for the kids' morale. There must be an end in sight for all the practising (a half hour lesson plus about two hours practise time per week for their twenty-two dollars) hence the carnival. Early in February rehearsals begin and continue until the dress rehearsal.

But without Court Mothers and Sewing Mothers the carnival could not be put on. These dedicated women should have a paragraph each at least, for they start work the same time as rehearsals begin. They check attendance, are responsible for promptness on the ice at rehearsal time; they work together, measuring children, handing out pre-cut material for new costumes, or rented costumes which the mothers make or alter to fit. Three weeks before C-Day is pictures. For the first time the costumes are all seen together and of course a refitting program follows for uniformity of hems, decoration, etc. At the dress rehearsal, which is run almost exactly as the real show, the six dressing rooms are used with almost split-second timing as one court goes in, is stuffed into its costumes, gets its make-up on, out the door, into the ready position and the next court goes in to the same dressing room. Whoof.

The job of music plus supervising also needs the complete co-operation of the mothers, although if all could take their turns it would only mean once or twice during the season . . . for when one cannot go a "club-approved mother" takes an additional turn. Over the four years of organization the club has built up quite a record collection, but the big work on music comes again with the carnival rehearsals when a combination of instinct plus an interpretive sense for frantic arm signals enables the music-mother to get the record back on the right section where the little ones lost their place. (If you've never seen the very smalls at a carnival, go some year, it's absolutely out of this world, although they say it is "amazing" how much can be taught to a three year old and with boots designed the way they are now they don't skate on their ankles.)

As well as the always popular dancing (which looks so easy when we watch it but is far more difficult and exacting than it ever looks to a spectator) the club is running its own preliminary tests once a week which have to be passed before taking the official tests. Two judges are on hand for these tests and there is never any arguing about the results.

There is also the adult skating club of which Walter Smith is this year's president. They have an hour and a half of chiefly dancing on Sunday evenings, and although they don't use a professional, Jo Taylor (you've seen her skate) is instructing, and this year they expect to do a dance court which is always a delightfully graceful thing to watch. (They have room for some more couples, and I'm told you can be a real beginner on the silver blades and still pick it all up pretty fast in spite of being "grown-up".)

Well, we've reached Carnival Day (this year for three nights to accommodate crowds) when all the sequins have been securely stitched in place (1,000 on one jacket alone!); the scenery all is up, the lights ready (father's slave labor); all the ruffles are in the right place; all the hats and headgear fit all the different shaped heads, and the six dressing rooms are working in rapid assembly line fashion (there are many costume changes to be worked in) stuffing the assorted youngsters into their eye-catching costumes. Make-up follows for such as toy-soldiers (mustaches) dutch dolls (eye-lashes) or fantasy courts (eye make-up). On coats and out of the dressing room. Line up RIGHT side of entrance, court mother takes guards in a box, coats off, there is applause, the lights change, the music plays YOUR tune . . . one shivering youngster looked up to her court mother, shaking all over but with a heavenly smile confided, "I've never been so happy in all my life!" Suddenly, so quickly, it's over, you go off the LEFT side, there's your court mother waiting, box of guards in hand, coats ready . . . the C.M.'s deserve a medal!

The skating club is proud of not being subsidized in any way . . . in fact by their co-operation with the recreation committee they are in fact assisting the town with other recreational endeavors. While they would like to have a larger membership, indeed there is a long waiting list, they cannot deprive their members of adequate space and time for lesson and practise and until they can get more ice-time they regret are limited to their two hundred members.



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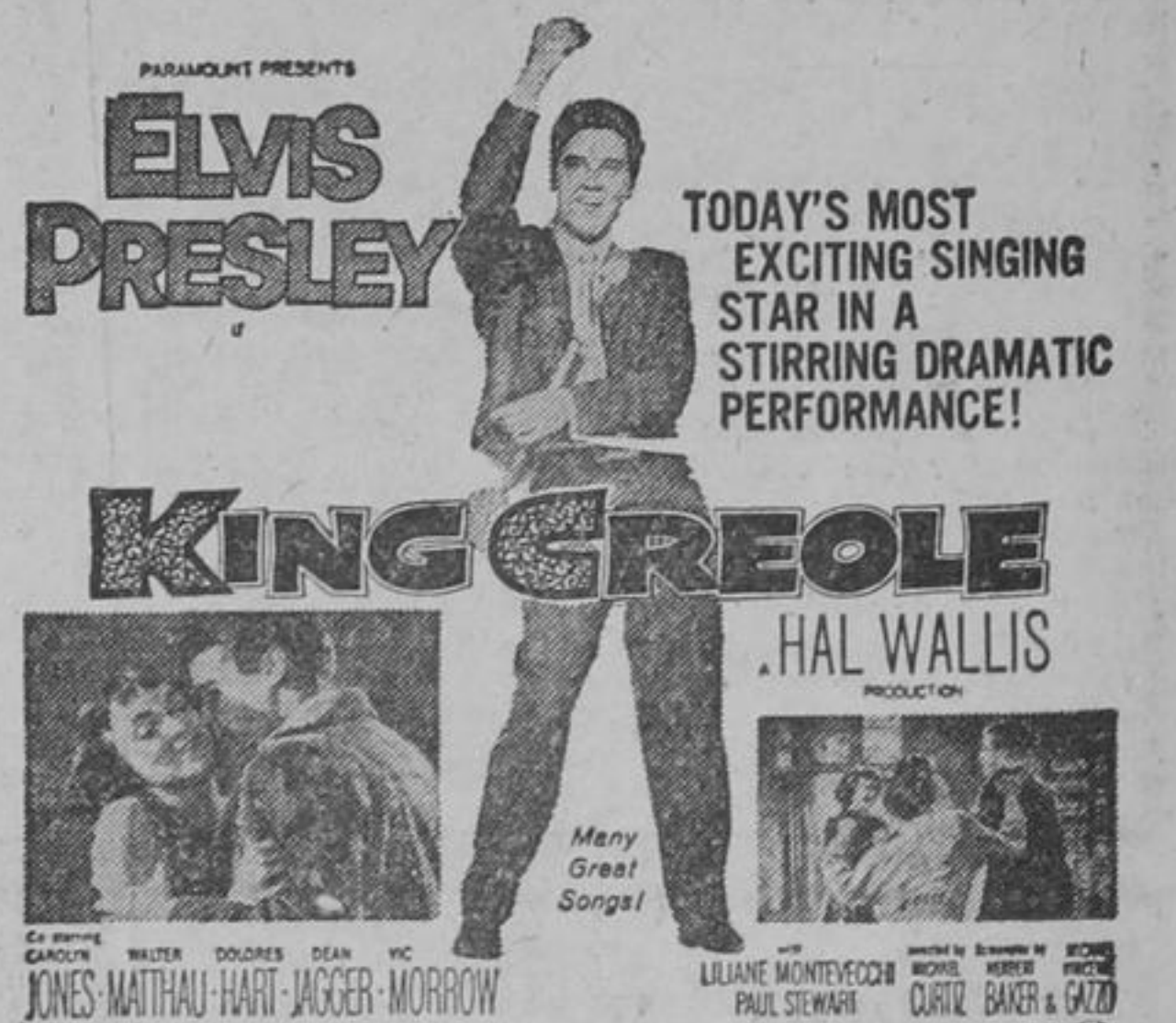
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