

The GAMBLE REPORT

By JOHN GAMBLE
MP-York North

While I might have liked to report on my first impressions as a Member of Parliament, at its Opening, there have been three major issues which received a great deal of public attention, both over the summer and more recently over the past two weeks and I should comment on these.

The issues are increased interest rates, petroleum pricing and the Petro-Canada matter. I propose to review my position on the first of these matters, and, as a result of space limitation, make brief reference to the others.

During the month of August, I wrote two letters to John Crosbie, Minister of Finance, taking issue with the increase in interest rates established by the Bank of Canada and passed on by the chartered banks to Canadian consumers.

I disagreed with his observations to me that increased interest rates would reduce the pressures of inflation and stated instead that higher rates of interest fuel inflation as the cost thereof was passed on to consumers in the increased cost of goods and services.

Wage earners, because of the natural increase in the cost of living, pressure for higher wages and these as well are added to the cost of goods and services.

Those Canadian producers who cannot incorporate increased costs of borrowings into the price of their product faced, in my view, difficult economic times and perhaps insolvency.

The Department of Finance is convinced that it is essential to curb credit and believes that the best way to do this is to make it extremely expensive. But, as I explained to the Minister of Finance, as long as Canadians are aware that in a period of two years interest rates have increased 10 times, they will conclude that if they do not borrow or purchase today interest rates or the price of commodities will increase tomorrow, and accordingly the time to make a fixed-rate interest loan or a purchase is now.

The conventional wisdom of the Department of Finance is that if interest rates are not raised in Canada to correspond with increases in rates in the United States much needed investment capital would flow to the U.S. and our dollar would weaken.

But this does not necessarily follow. When I first wrote to the Minister of Finance, the difference between discount rates, as established by the central banks in Canada and the United States, was 1 3/4 per cent. It is currently 1 per cent and while the dollar has weakened slightly, the decline against the U.S. dollar has not been as marked as expected.

I have had an opportunity to discuss this matter with Canadian economists, who like some of their U.S. colleagues, are not prepared to accept the traditional view that interest rates must be pushed increasingly higher in order to save a substantial devaluation of the currency of either country.

In any event, however, our situation is unlike that in the United States and to

blindly answer that our economies are similar and interdependent is a great error. Dollar valuations are influenced by a number of factors including, in our case, the respect that the rest of the world has for our natural resources and our closer proximity to energy self-sufficiency than the United States.

In addition, with a government dedicated to economic reforms with respect to public expenditures, international confidence can be established for our own currency without reference to the United States influences.

I am in substantial disagreement with the Department of Finance with their preoccupation with the temporary remedy for our balance of payments deficit through increased foreign investment, which obviously has a direct effect in strengthening the value of our currency.

It seems clear that to follow this course will simply be to postpone the day of settlement to that time when the new foreign investment is to be redeemed or interest paid thereon.

If we follow the argument of the Department of Finance, we will inevitably be left, at some time in the future, with a substantial balance of payments deficit and will, in the interim, have laid out large amounts of interest in satisfying that indebtedness. What is required is a program, through tax incentives, designed to promote the investment in Canada by Canadians.

While I do not attribute my correspondence with the Minister of Finance with closing the gap between U.S. and Canadian discount rates as fixed by our respective central banking institutions, it is encouraging to see that, at the very least, every U.S. interest rate increase has not been followed by a similar increase in Canada.

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Travel

Shakertown - in bluegrass country

By AILEEN ADAMS

SHAKERTOWN, Ky. — Sometimes, when seeking a respite from what can be a worrisome world one thinks — oh, to return to the tranquil days of the past.

Of course, it is true the past had its own tranquility but it also had its full measure of troubles.

There is one place, however, where the troubles have been erased and the tranquility allowed to remain.

This is Shakertown, at Pleasant Hill in Kentucky — high above the palisades of Kentucky in the fertile bluegrass country about 25 miles south of Lexington.

It was the Shakers, for whom the town is named, that are looked upon, almost awesomely, by today's most distinguished furniture designers, because the work they achieved was strictly utilitarian but of unusual grace.

Shaker history too, is almost as unusual as their practical achievements.

The original group, formed in England in 1774, was a breakaway from the Society of Quakers. Derisively known first as the Shaking Quakers because of the frenetic shaking and whirling dances of their worship, the title became diminished to Shakers which they liked and used.

Their leader to America was Mother Anne Lee. We can now, rather cynically, believe that she made celibacy one of the first rules of a Shaker community because she had endured a wretched marriage and all her children died in their infancy.

Nevertheless, at her death in 1784 the 11 Shaker colonies established in the U.S. left as our present heritage such inventions as the flat broom, circular saw, washing machine (and clothespins!), the metal paint pen, screw propeller, the threshing machine, pea sheller, cut nails and the double-barrelled Shaker stove.

The Shaker community at Pleasant Hill is now

known as Shakertown and is open as America's only historic village that offers overnight accommodation in original buildings.

There are a number of gracious lodges with guest rooms furnished with reproduction Shaker pieces, handwoven rugs and handloomed curtains and bedspreads.

First settled in 1805, the community soon became an unofficial experimental station with imported Bakewell sheep (still grazing there), Berkshire hogs and English Shorthorn Durham cattle.

Although the Shaker community believed that farming offered a man a life of purity and simplicity, they developed the first hydraulic water system in Kentucky, used dumbwaiters in the dwelling houses, and built a miniature railway in the barns to carry feed to the stock.

Their ingenuity was great but probably their outstanding achievement was in architecture, much of which has been restored and is in active use.

Micajah Burnett, a self-educated lad who joined the community in 1807 at the age of 17, was soon applying his gifts to a plan for the entire village and most of the major building.

These buildings are architecturally beautiful, but also unique because, governed by the rule of celibacy, there are two entrance doors to each house. Within the house there are two stairways in the centre hall — and that in the trustee's office boasts a twin spiral staircase.

Today, the trustee's office houses the dining rooms which are open to the public. Waitresses in period gowns will serve you steak, combination fried chicken and country ham, or the Shaker dish of the day. The main course is accompanied by home grown vegetables and salads and village hot breads. For dessert one can have chess or lemon pie or a seasonal tart, then a beverage (alcoholic drinks are not

served because of county laws). All this for under \$10.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of young Micajah Burnett was the meeting house where the community gathered for their ritual dances, songs and chants. The room in which these dances, which gave the Shakers their name, has a clear span ceiling of 40 feet by 60 feet.

Two things contributed to the eventual breakdown of the Shaker community. First, because of the practice of celibacy there was no second generation, and the practice of adopting orphans failed.

During the U.S. Civil War troops from both sides plundered the gentle village, demanding food, horses, livestock and wagons.

Finally in 1910 there were only 12 sisters surviving and they deeded the property to a friend who promised to care for them. The last Shaker died in 1923.

In 1961 began the reincarnation of Shakertown in Pleasant Hill, as the Shakers preferred to call it, when a board of trustees formed a non-profit organization.

Open to the public for only the past 11 years, you can tour the buildings for

several hours or enjoy the quiet serenity of the village for several days. Spring is earlier than ours, autumn is as colorful and winter more gentle. As a gentle gesture to the present, bedrooms are air-conditioned and have adjoining bathrooms.

Rates for accommodation for 1979 are from \$24 to \$35 U.S. double occupancy. Tour rates are \$3.25 for adults, \$1.50 for students and 75 cents for children under 12. Because some of the buildings are closed during the winter months, rates are progressively lower.

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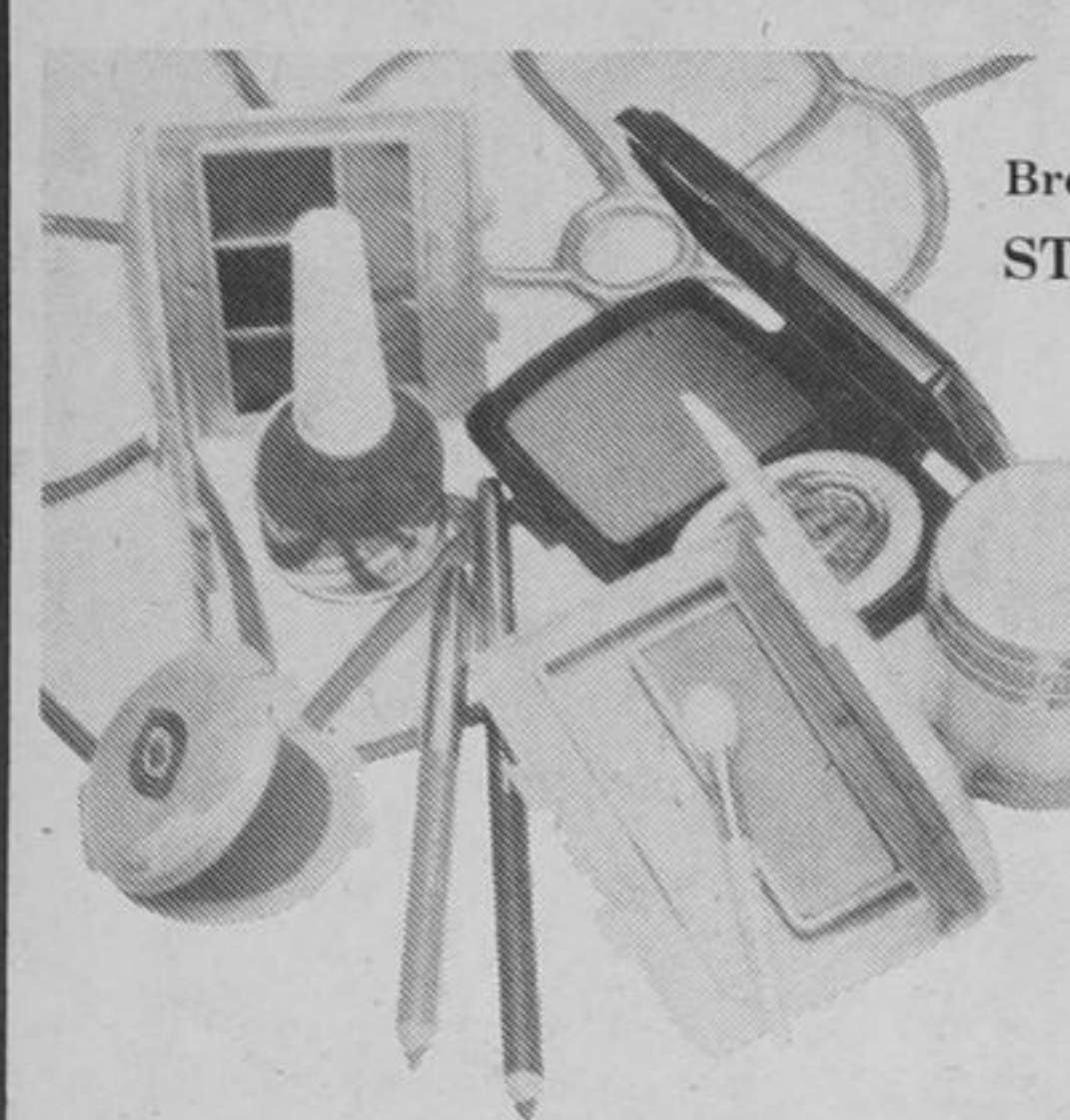
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