

The Porcupine Advance

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AT THE LUNCH COUNTER

A gentleman who was one of the Timmins curlers going down to Kirkland Lake on Saturday for the attempt to wrest the T. & N. O. trophy from the curlers in the Lake Shore town was greatly impressed with the examples of humour that may be noted around the T. & N. O. lunch counter at Porquus Junction.

The T. & N. O. lunch counter at Porquus Junction is a veritable cross-section of life. There will be found the rich and the poor, the farmer and the professional man, the miner and the prospector, the lawyer and the labouring man, the thin and the fat, the doctor and some of his patients, the good and the bad and the ordinary people, male and female and communists, the loud and the shy, all other nationalities and the Scottish.

It is a revelation of the quality and quantity of human nature to watch people at the lunch counter. Some wait service and everybody hears about it. Some have remarkably long arm reach and seem to profit by it. Some are quiet but have a way of getting things just the same. Some appear to be able to get a lot for a little money; they are the clever ones. Some seem to be able to eat a lot; they are the strong ones. Some seem to be ready to buy lunch for all in sight; they are the popular ones—at the lunch counter.

On Saturday one man asked for a reduction because he worked on the T. & N. O. Railway. "No reduction," snapped the clerk, "except to those in uniform." Life is hard even at a lunch counter. But the gentleman had his revenge. He went out on the platform and saw the seven provincial policemen who were about to go to Timmins to see why the unemployed in this town were working so hard making banners and parades. He told the uniformed men of the reduction for men in uniform at the lunch counter. It looked like a loss for the lunch counter.

There was a Scotchman there with his boy of seven or eight. He looked around quite a while, then he noted the cute pots of tea being served to customers. They had tags attached to the lid of the teapot by coloured cords. The tags gave the name of the tea used. The Scot ordered a pot of tea for himself and the lad to share. He allowed the boy to play with the tag.

"I think we should have a reduction or rebate on our lunches," said one of the Timmins curlers. The patient waiter asked why so. "You see we're going down to bring back the T. & N. O. curling trophy to Timmins," stated the Timmins curler, but the waiter interrupted:—"Say, if and when you bring back that cup, we'll give you your lunch free!" Life is cruel, even at the lunch counter.

Two of the men at the lunch counter drifted into an argument about peace as it is between China and Japan. "It's like this," said the one, "This is Japan," and he shoved a doughnut over to one side, "and this is China," and he touched the blueberry pie slab with his hand, "and this" (slapping a hot dog) "is Manchuria." A commercial traveller noting that all the waiters seemed busy, reached for an extra cake from the dish on the counter. The old friend he had seen many a time before on other trips eluded him, but he upset the coffee all over the doughnut, the blueberry pie and the hot-dog. "Just as I told you," said the second man, "the Russian Soviet is going to make an awful mess of the whole works."

A gentleman, who had been anxiously calling for an egg sandwich, seemed to get his wish. He eagerly sunk his teeth into the sandwich. Then, "vell, vell, vell!" he said. And then, "Damn, it's ham!"

"All aboard!" cried the conductor, and there was a rush! such a rush! Once upon a time a man had to wait a day at Porquus Junction for the next train. Few of them are taking any chances any more. All arguments were off. The weather was dropped. Japan and China were left to fight it out in peace.

The waiter at the lunch counter started to mop up! "The idea," he muttered, "of that fathead talking about a mess in China, or those two thin ginks howling about the mess the politicians have made of things! Look at the mess they have made of the coffee and tea and the food on the counter! That is what I call a real mess!"

No, the waiter did not really say that! He wouldn't dare be so impolite, working for the T. & N. O. But even the T. & N. O. Railway spirit of patience and courtesy couldn't keep a man from thinking like that.

No, a lunch counter isn't so funny, but people certainly are!

FOR WHOSE BENEFIT?

Remarks made recently by Hon. Mr. Martin, Minister of Public Welfare in the provincial government, prompt the question as to what purpose the old age pensions are supposed to serve. Hon. Mr. Martin's reference would suggest that his department now is obsessed with the idea of economizing on pensions for old people—"saving money" he called it. If the whole aim and object is so to "save money," this can best be accomplished by cutting off all the pensions. Instead of discriminating against some helpless and pathetic old people, why not place them all in the one class and save all the money by refusing to grant the aid to any? That would at least be honest. The Advance, however, doubts whether Hon. Mr. Martin would father such a proposal. Yet such a plan would have something of consistency and sincerity about it. The present idea is neither fair nor equitable.

Until one of the Old Age Pension Board inspectors gave information to the contrary, The Advance was of the opinion that the old age pension plan was designed solely to assist old people who were in need. It seemed reasonable and logical that men and women who had lived long and honourable lives should have some comfort in their declining days, when in most cases their only fault had been that they had lacked the greed and acquisitiveness and elasticity of conscience that permit of amassing money. Most of the old people of to-day have contributed their share to the progress and development of Canada. They are accused of no crime but the misdemeanor of being poor. For a nation professing some measure of the finer feelings of life it seemed plausible enough that attempt should be made to free old age from the burden of want and hardship.

The Old Age Pension Board inspector referred to, however,

appeared to be of the opinion that the whole plan was simply a matter of red tape and heartless formality. "If a man has unmarried sons, they are legally bound to support their father and mother," was the way he put it. "But, if he sons do not support their father or mother,—if they cannot give support,—if they are not employed themselves,—and if they cannot even support themselves, what then?" he was asked. "That is none of my affair," he replied. All he had to do apparently was to follow a rule of thumb. Old men and old women could starve to death, but red tape must always triumph. The inspector did not agree that he should prosecute sons who failed to provide for their parents. That, too, was none of his affair. Pressed as to whether the old folks should be allowed to starve to death, his reply was to the effect that the local board might prosecute sons who failed in their duty. In view of the fact that the local boards were convinced that the sons could not support the parents, it is difficult to see what grounds they could have for any prosecution. In the view of the local boards there was no one they wished to prosecute, unless it were the inspector. Under the logical working-out of the inspector's theory, no man with a son can secure an old age pension. If the son is able to support the father, of course, he must do so. If he cannot give support then it is none of the inspector's business! Such is red tape in its naked glory! Followed out to its logical conclusion, the inspector's idea of the old age pension plan is of value only in giving the said inspector a position.

Hon. Mr. Martin's references to the thought that political advantage has been taken of the old age pensions is a gratuitous insult to the many men who have given unstintingly of time and effort to carry on the onerous work of the local boards, without any reward or expectation of reward. It should also be remembered that if there is any fault to find with the local boards, then the onus rests clearly on the shoulders of the government responsible for their appointment. There may be isolated cases of misuse of the old age pension plan, but the chances are that these are rare indeed. In Timmins, for instance, the unpaid local board, spends hours and hours on applications, with investigation in every case, yet it is doubtful if the political leanings of any of the applicants are even known. All the board is interested in is whether the case is worthy or not. The one fault that has been charged to the local board at Timmins has been that of being too careful before granting a pension rather than the other way about. From occasional references in newspapers throughout the province, it would seem to be that the same sort of situation prevails. The district boards have had even more difficult work than those in the organized sections, but have carried on solely with the hope of being of some help to the old people in need. No one with any connection with the work could fall to be impressed by the fact that very few indeed try to impose upon the law. There have been remarkably few attempts at misuse of any kind. Cases of wrong are perhaps inevitable, but the fact should not be lost sight of that they are the rare occurrences and not the rule.

There are a number of people and newspapers who were opposed to the old age pension idea from the start. It would be regrettable if any support should be given to these people by those directing the work of the old age pensions act. Hon. Mr. Martin should boldly take one of two stands. He should make it known that he is in favour of old age pensions for all old people in need, entitled by law to benefit from the legislation. Or he should press for the abolition of the plan altogether. Surely no one is in favour of the old age pensions being conducted solely for the glory of old red tape and to provide positions for so-called civil servants, who are not always accused of being civil.

WHEN IS A COMMUNIST?

That loving apostle of tolerance, The Ottawa Journal, points out that while the appeal of the men convicted of belonging to an unlawful association, namely, the communist party of Canada, has been finally and completely disposed of, still this does not signify what it means, or words to that effect. The Journal argues that while the communist party of Canada is now clearly illegal it is absurd to suggest that there is any law against communism. The Journal says:—"All the Supreme Court judgment means is that the communist party of Canada through and because of its avowed purposes, which were to seek the overthrow of constituted authority by violence, or any other means, is an unlawful association." What The Ottawa Journal seems to be striving to say is that the communist party of Canada is an unlawful assembly but the doctrine that makes it illegal is not necessarily to be condemned. The only glimmer of sense to be seen in such a thought is the idea that communism is a doctrine that is capable of exposition without the threat of violence. This does not make sense, however, because there is no brand of communism known or preached to-day that does not base itself upon force and violence. It may be a surprise to The Journal to know that it is just that fact that has made all the row about communism. The French commune was established by violence, and as the violence was dropped, the communism passed out. Russian communism depends to-day on force and violence for its existence. Karl Marx and his German communism are also founded, based and fostered on force and violence. Without force and violence there is no force or vitality to the thing called communism. So far as can be known or learned there is no brand of communism that does not place its trust in physical might, though it is true that the chief apostles of the creed are a craven lot, leaving their misguided tools to bear the force of the blows the doctrine tempts to use.

GRAVEL AND SAND—AND PLACER

There is talk of developing the St. Lawrence waterway. Although the United States is expected to bear part of the cost, it is certain that any such enterprise would cost Canada millions upon millions of dollars. Yet the matter seems really under consideration. It is certainly pleasing, indeed to know that Canada is in such position that this great work can be undertaken and financed. Those who thought this country might be financially embarrassed these desperate days will be delighted to know that there is money available for this stupendous undertaking. For the sake of Hon. Mr. Finlayson, it should be noted that this is written in a sarcastic vein.

George Bernard Shaw, the Old Country gentleman with the long whiskers and the longer tongue is quoted by some of the daily newspapers as saying:—"In America I am considered a god. They worship me!" America's answer is:—"Oh yeah! Sez you!"

J. S. Woodsworth, Labour member for one of the Winnipeg seats in the Dominion House, this week attempted to introduce a bill into parliament to amend the criminal code by rescinding Section 98 which forbids unlawful assembly and the advocacy of violence in overthrowing constituted authority. Mayor Geo. S. Drew this week in replying to a group of men, chiefly alien, who desired the repeal of this section, made very effective answer. The mayor said he had read

Committee Named at Renfrew in Enquiry

Charges Against Police Department to be Investigated by Committee of Five Named by Mayor. Man who Made Charges Not Pleased.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found reference to the finding of the police committee in regard to the charges made some days ago by one of the Renfrew town councillors in reference to alleged actions of Chief of Police Moses Greer of Renfrew. It develops that the report of the committee as given did not represent the ideas of the committee but was simply the opinion of Councillor Fennessy who made the charges. The council meeting called to receive the report of the police committee learned that two of the three members of the police committee only signed the report so that it might be brought before the council. At the council meeting they refused to support Councillor Fennessy. As a matter of fact he received no support from the mayor or any of the council except to the extent that there was an agreement for a complete investigation of the charges. Instead of the judicial enquiry proposed by Councillor Fennessy there is only to be an enquiry by a committee of the council. Despatches from Renfrew as published in the daily newspapers give the following report of the Renfrew town council meeting on Saturday last in reference to the question:—"A committee of five was named by Mayor D. B. McLaren at a special meeting of council Saturday evening to investigate complaints regarding fines paid to Chief Moses Greer and also to inquire into general police conditions in Renfrew. The decision of council followed recent complaints made by Councillor James Fennessy and a meeting of the police committee, held the previous Tuesday night, when the three members of the police committee signed a report recommending a judicial inquiry into the charges.

Unable to Get Secondor "When the police committee report came before council last night, Councillor Fennessy, the chairman, was unable to get a secondor. Councillors W. R. Kirk and Frank Plaunt declared they had only signed the recommendation after first dissenting and then deciding it was one way of bringing the matter to a head before the general council. They had reserved their right to oppose the recommendation in council if some more suitable suggestion were brought forward, they said.

"Being unable to obtain a secondor, Councillor Fennessy then submitted a motion asking for a judicial probe into fines paid to Chief Greer and Magistrate W. A. Mackay since May, 1930. An amendment was moved by Councillors P. H. Bulger and M. J. Sulpher. This asked that the mayor name a special committee of council to go into the complaints already before them, as well as such further complaints as the mayor and committee might deem advisable. This committee would also study general police conditions in Renfrew.

"On the question being put, the amendment was carried by seven to one. Those voting in favour of a special committee of council were Reeve Frank Plaunt, Deputy Reeve W. C. Miller, Councillors Alex McLachlan, W. R. Kirk, M. J. Sulpher, P. H. Bulger, and

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his section carefully and felt that it did not interfere in any way with decent, law-abiding people. "No man who is loyal and law-abiding will suffer in any way from this section," said Mayor Drew, "and the only people who would be affected by its removal from the code are those who wish to create trouble."

"Isn't there any way that my name can be kept out of the police court news in The Advance?" is a question asked with discouraging frequency. The answer is an emphatic "Yes." All that is required is to keep out of the police court. The trouble seems to be that so many people are like the drunken man in the story,—they do not want to take the best way. The drunken man stopped a friend on street and said:—"Say, I know I'm very drunk. What do you think I'd better do?" "The best thing for you to do," said the friend, "is to go home to your wife." "Yes, I know that," was the response, "but what's the next best thing." The best thing to do is to refrain from the sort of action that results in police court action. The next best thing is to accept the penalty, both fine and publicity, without undue irritation, or blaming any part of the trouble on the newspaper that is in no way responsible.

All the towns of the North should join together in urging on the Ontario Government the imperative necessity for an early start on the work of completing the roadway between Sudbury and the Porcupine. Such work would provide employment badly needed, and in addition would prove of more advantage to the progress and development of the North than any other single public work that has been proposed.

In these days of investigations and enquiries, one more seems to be needed. The conditions that appear to have developed at the University of Toronto are well worth investigating and considering. It is only a few months ago



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W. G. Demareo, Councillor Fennessy was the only one opposed to the amendment.

Fennessy Not on Committee "Mayor McLaren then named as his committee, Reeve Plaunt, Deputy Reeve Miller, Councillors Kirk, Sulpher and Bulger. Councillor Bulger, named as chairman by the mayor, later told The Journal that the committee would work in camera and bring in their report in detail before a future council meeting.

"When Councillor Fennessy was unsuccessful in his motion for a judicial probe, he declared he would bring the matter to the attention of the Attorney General of Ontario. He also declared that "it seemed" to him that "the mayor and the majority of council were trying to shield someone." This was vigorously denied by the mayor and other members of council.

"At one point in the proceedings, Councillor Fennessy interjected the question: "Mr. Mayor can you tell me how many members of council are sitting here legally?"

"Mayor McLaren smiled and replied: "I don't know."

"Councillor Fennessy stated his opposition to a council committee was because their members would be unable to hear evidence under oath and might, therefore, be unable to get all the information which should

be forthcoming. Other councillors replied that if the findings of the special committee warranted such action that would be the time to ask for a further step by a judicial inquiry.

"The meeting attracted but a small number of spectators, a championship hockey match between Carleton Place and Arnprior proving a greater attraction to the people of Renfrew.

Committee Members Dissenting "Mayor McLaren, in opening the meeting, asked members to avoid personalities. To Councillor Fennessy he declared it was not the intention to permit an open or lengthy discussion on the report.

"Councillor Fennessy, as chairman of the police committee, then read the recommendation of that body for a judicial inquiry into fines paid to Chief Greer. He recognized, he said, that he was unable to get a secondor as the other two members of the committee had signed, although dissenting.

"Councillors Kirk and Plaunt, the other two members of the police committee, stated, in turn, that they had signed the report to bring the matter before council. They had reserved their right, in signing, to vote for a better suggestion if it were made at the council meeting.

"Councillor Fennessy: "I asked Mr. Plaunt and Mr. Kirk at the police com-

mittee meeting if they had anything better and they didn't."

"Councillor Plaunt: "If there is no better proposal here tonight, I will stand by that report."

"Councillor Bulger then took the floor. He stated that it would be doing an injustice to the members of council, as well as the ratepayers, if council "relegated" to some one else the powers and duties with which they had been entrusted.

Might Ask Judge Later "He saw no reason to do so in this case, he said. Furthermore, the police committee report would permit a judge to inquire into further complaints which might be brought forward by Councillor Fennessy, as well as those already on hand. He believed the mayor should be the person to decide where and when such a probe should end. Otherwise, the charges might go on indefinitely. The mayor should set a time when all complaints must be received. Were charges to be made indefinitely the town could be run into all kinds of expense, he said.

"Councillor Bulger felt that a committee of council could handle the inquiry honestly and in keeping with the interests of ratepayers, "let the chips fall where they might."

Councillors Sulpher, Miller and Plaunt spoke in similar vein.

"Councillor Fennessy again took the floor and charged "there is a lawyer going about trying to show up people."

"Mr. Chown, Renfrew lawyer: "To whom are you referring?"

"Councillor Fennessy: "You shut up. We got the floor now."

"The mayor interposed to call the councillor to order.

"Councillor Bulger stated Councillor Fennessy seemed to be under the impression the investigation was being taken out of his hands. It was not, he declared, as Councillor Fennessy, being a member of council, had as much to say as anyone else in the matter.

"The motions being put, as given above, council adjourned, there being no further matter up for discussion."

TRIP MADE FROM KIRKLAND TO TORONTO IN RECORD TIME

The current issue of The Automotive World says:—"A special 1932 Chevrolet Sedan of the McCauley's Taxi, Kirkland Lake, recently made the trip to Toronto, a distance of 410 miles, in 12 hours. The trip was uneventful in spite of the snow-covered roads on the northern end of the trip, where a rut through the snow was the only passage. Three days later the same car, with the same driver, made the return trip in record time. McCauley's Taxi in Kirkland Lake is Chevrolet equipped throughout and has been operating since 1925, under road conditions and range of temperatures that require rugged and efficient vehicles."