

# The Porcupine Advance

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## OPERA COMIQUE

Some weeks ago The Advance suggested that the Timmins town council was producing some amusing and amazing comic operas in the ordinary course of business. Why not give a detailed criticism of some of these productions? asks a reader. Why not? The Advance aims to please, even when that displeases.

Accordingly the first of the operas comique as presented in the Hotel de Ville is hereby reviewed.

It was that famous Gilbert and Sullivan fantasy, "The Mikado, or the Town of Titipu," with variations and less of charming harmony than in the original. If the council did not adhere strictly to the text of the original comic opera, the cast at least made the production sound as much like the first "Mikado," as the average motion picture play appears like the book after which it may be named.

In the original "Mikado," the plot centres round Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner of Titipu. Ko-Ko was condemned to death for flirting but at the last minute his life was spared on the understanding that he take over the duties of the Lord High Executioner. Ko-Ko has a long list of useless and undesirable peopled whose heads should be chopped off for the public good. In the council version only useful and desirable public servants are chosen to make up a basket full of heads. The Council Ko-Ko had a larger snickersnee than Gilbert and Sullivan ever dreamed about. The High Executioner of old always gave some sort of reason for threatening to take off anybody's head, but the ferocious conception of Ko-Ko prevailing in the Hotel de Ville comic opera is to take off the head and then wait until nobody can reply before whispering an excuse.

In the original version there was a song and dance about many an execution, but never an actual execution staged. In the council production the actual beheadings are the motif of the presentation, while Ko-Ko and the Pooh-Bah seem to wonder why the public make a song and dance about the odd execution.

There is a marked difference between the cast in the original version and the roles in the Council conception. Indeed, some of the council refused to take a part, leaving only Ko-Ko (Lord High Executioner), Pooh-Bah (Lord High Everything Else), Katisha (an old woman in love with Katisha), and Yes-Yes (a noble peer—using the last words in its Highland or Germanic pronunciation) to carry through the plot. All of them had immense snickersnees and all insisted on being the Lord High Executioner, except Pooh-Bah, who held that as he was the Lord High Everything Else, he was at least assistant Lord High Executioner, and so had the right to name the successor to the victim.

Despite the difference in cast and the many other changes made, the Council opera company gave a faithful reproduction of the "Mikado" opening chorus. There was only an occasional change from the original. Huskily and heartily they sang:

If you want to know who we are!  
We are the council of the town.  
Oh, many a fight and jar,  
Oh, many a sneer and frown,  
We'll figure in lively paint.  
Our attitude's queer and quaint—  
You're wrong, if you think it ain't.  
If you think we are worked by strings  
Like a Japanese marionette,  
You don't understand these things.  
That's Hotel de Ville etiquette.  
Perhaps, you suppose this throng  
Can't keep it up all year long?  
If that's your idea, your wrong.

Then after the briefest of song and dance, the council troubadours leaped to the heart of their comic opera theme—the execution of the chief of police. In the excitement of the moment the Pooh-Bah quoted from another comic opera, "The Pirates of Penzance." But why find fault with that? The public is entitled to as many laughs as possible from the year's council, even if all the comic operas have to be rifled. The Pooh-Bah sang:

When the kind bootlegger's busy selling  
He likes to bribe a bobby on his beat,  
When the high-grader is fooled with brass chips,  
He likes to have a friend in council seat.  
When a friend has quit a-kicking of his mother,  
He loves to lie a-basking in the sun.  
Ah, take one consideration with another,  
A policeman's lot is not a happy one.

The whole cast wept at the troubles of a police chief. If a policeman's lot is not a happy one, then what must be the troubles of a chief of police? The whole cast wept again. Then one of them says: "I wouldn't give a job like that to my worst enemy!" "Neither would I," replies another, "I've got a friend that wants that job."

"On with the opera!" some of them cry.  
"Off with the chief's head," the others reply.  
Then the whole comic opera company sings in unison:  
We have no open season  
For asking for a reason  
For firing any chief.  
When he's away and has no say  
We may reply in brief.

Next there is the business of firing, not only the chief but all but two of the constables falling in the fierce onslaught. As the heads fall into the basket, the council's comic opera cast carol tempestuously:

There is beauty in the bellow of the blast;  
There is grandeur in the growling of the gale;  
There is eloquent outpouring  
When the lion is a-roaring,  
And the tiger is a-lashing of his tail;  
Volcanoes have a splendour that is grim;  
There is joy in shipwreck on a reef;  
But in spite of all our meekness,  
If we have a little weakness,  
It's the passion for the firing of a chief.

In the original "Mikado" all ends happily, as it should in comic opera. Though Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah and some others are sentenced to be executed, they are pardoned at the last minute. With the council comic opera it is different. The end is not yet. In the grand finale it is to be hoped that Ko-Ko and Pooh-Bah and Katisha and Yes-Yes will all have a sharp sword pain in their necks, when their own snickersnees are turned against them.

There are many other comic operas to be reviewed. For instance, "The Snow Plough," in which Eliza crossed the ice pursued by high pressure salesmen; "The Follies," repeatedly presented, despite request to the contrary; "Pina-

fore," wherein a fire chief is fired and fiercely blackguarded, and then given \$500.00 of the people's money, as a mark of appreciation; "Utopia Limited," in which alien disturbers are given facilities to collect money from the town to make more trouble for the town. It will be apparent before the year is out that as a council the 1934 incumbents are excellent comic opera material.

## ANOTHER BAD SHORT-CUT

At the annual convention of Ontario police chiefs last week Attorney-General Roebuck is said to have advocated a unified control of police in the province. To some, who remember, for instance, the fact that the town of Timmins was for a time this year without adequate police protection, there may be tendency to agree with the Attorney-General and to favour some form of police organization that would be removed from the danger of municipal politics and the evils that grow therefrom. It should be remembered, however, that to seek to avoid evils in municipal politics by accepting the tender mercies of provincial partyism, is to attempt one of those dangerous short-cuts that are too liable to end in a mire. People are forever seeking these short-cuts. As a matter of record, the short-cuts seldom, if ever, lead to the desired location. There may be faults in the present system or systems in policing. The remedy is not likely to rest in any short-cut, but it may be taken as an accepted fact that the evils arising will need the longer route of interest and thought and effort from the people. Agreeing that troubles arise occasionally from municipal control, it is equally beyond question that a provincially controlled police force would be open to even greater evils. Under the present system municipalities can have as good a police force as they merit. If there is anything amiss with a police force under municipal control the remedy lies to the hand of the citizens themselves. Timmins can trace year after year in its history when its police force was as near perfect as human organizations can expect to be. At the present time Timmins has a police force that is giving excellent service and no man, woman or child need have any fear of falling to receive adequate protection. There have been times in the history of Timmins when the police force did not fulfil its duties to the satisfaction of the public. The municipal authorities were responsible for this, just as the present council was responsible for inadequate police protection earlier this year. To remedy evils in a police force the people have only to bring the necessary pressure to bear on the municipal authorities. Although it is not generally realized, the police service is one of the most vital factors in municipal management. The comfort, the safety, the property and the very lives of citizens in general depend on the efficiency of the police. In theory it is all very well to talk about the added efficiency of a large, well-trained and fully disciplined provincial force. As a matter of fact because any provincial police force is handicapped by political considerations, the true interests of the people in general are better served by a municipally controlled body of police than by the most capable of officers controlled by outsiders unacquainted with local needs and conditions.

The proposal to "unify" the police of Ontario has been made on many previous occasions. The Advance has always opposed it. At the present time The Advance would urge double opposition to such a plan. In making the proposal the Attorney-General is apparently failing to credit the public with much intelligence. One of the first actions of the present Attorney-General was to attempt to control the police of the city of Toronto for the advantage of some of his own friends. He has attempted similar action in the case of the police of Stratford and other cities. There was a striking example of the evils of any sort of provincial control of the police when Mr. Wicks recently was unable to secure any protection when thugs visited one of his camps and used violence and threats of violence on his workers. So far as can be learned the provincial police have not made any move to see that the law-breaking bullies in the case referred to are brought to justice. By wholesale dismissals and by the threat of further changes, the Attorney-General has apparently brought much of the administration of justice into his own hands and under his own personal thumb. No thoughtful man can believe that this is a good policy for British people. "God bless you," the Attorney-General is quoted as saying to his communist friends. Loyal and decent citizens are left to bless themselves. The people in general should fight from the start any move to interfere with municipal police. There has already been enough threat of undesirable partisanship in the administration of justice to rouse every citizen to do his best to avoid any further inroads on the administration of the law in Ontario. The actions and attitude of the present Attorney-General certainly do not inspire any confidence in the fairness or impartiality of the administration of justice in the hands of provincial politicians. Ontario municipalities should see to it that they keep control of their own police officers and avoid the burden and handicap of a body of law officers under the direct orders of political captains in Toronto.

## SOMETHING TO WORRY OVER

There are some people who are worrying over the chances of war in Europe or Asia. It would seem that there are lots of other matters for real worry much nearer home. For instance there is the case of the young man of 20 years of age, living near Massey, Ont., who was convicted last week of shooting at his father with intent to wound. He was sentenced by the magistrate to a term of six months to a year at the Ontario reformatory. The young man told the court that his father refused to buy him an automobile that could have been purchased for \$10.00, and that was why he fired three shots at his father. The father said that the young man had never attended school and had never been inside a church or Sunday school, though living near Massey from birth. Perhaps, it was his lack of education that made the boy so inefficient that none of the three shots took effect. The court in any event seemed to have some sympathy for the lad. When the young man offered to give up the rifle, if sentence were suspended, the court was inclined to accede to the request, but when the young man insisted that the car be purchased as part of the bargain, the magistrate simply confirmed his original sentence, and left further problems until the youth comes out of the reformatory. To climax the story as given in the despatches from Massey, it is noted that the father and family have been on relief for some time.

War in Europe or Asia are poor things to waste worry upon, with cases like this Massey one right at home. To some people war seems the most terrible thing. To shoot at a stranger whom one hates, though that hate be only of the synthetic variety does not appear to have half the horror that lies in the thought of a young man shooting at his father because the father has enough honesty or fear of the consequences to refuse to piffer relief money for the purchase of \$10.00 automobiles. It is surely not too much to say that with incidents of the Massey type before the eye something more is needed than sermons on peace and disarmament. The Massey case, of course, is an unusual and extreme one, but it is typical of an attitude of mind among many young and old to-day. Unless there is general and earnest effort to conquer this spirit of brutal and senseless selfishness, it will need the horrors of war right in Canada to bring people to their senses—if any.

## Says 80 per cent of Fires Preventable

Innocent and Guilty Alike are Sufferers, Says Ontario Deputy Fire Marshal. More Care Needed.

by George F. Lewis  
(Deputy Fire Marshal of Ontario)  
The greatest tragedy of uncontrolled fire seems to be the fact that it is unnecessary. Statistics show that fully 80 per cent. of all fires, large and small are preventable. They are due to someone's carelessness, indifference, or oversight—a little care, a little thought, a little money judiciously expended, or a little time spent in manual effort would have prevented them.

Fire would not be so serious if it were entirely an individual matter—if the person who allowed his property to burn because he permitted unnecessary hazards to exist, paid the bill. But everyone pays—each member of the community is assessed directly or indirectly for a share of the cost—the innocent suffer with the guilty.

Everyone Pays  
We pay it in depressed business if a factory is destroyed—men are thrown out of work. We pay it in higher taxes—a fire that removes buildings from the tax roll makes it necessary to increase taxes on all other property to make up for the loss—this has been known to be as much as two mills on the dollar. We pay it in fire insurance premiums—for the rates charged for insurance protection are based on the amount of loss in the community or business classification over a period of years.

For the last decade the direct fire bill in Canada has averaged thirty-nine million dollars a year, equal to a payment of \$4.19 per annum by every man, woman and child. The indirect loss is several times greater, and a portion of the cash to pay all these enormous bills comes out of your pocket, whether your property suffers a fire loss or not. This is why everyone should be vitally interested in the work of fire prevention.

Fire Prevention Easy  
Fire prevention is easy. It costs little and means much—care, thought, and systematic inspection are the main essentials. Every fire that is prevented means actual money saved to you, and what is more important is the concomitant safeguarding of human life. The average fatalities from fire are over three hundred a year, and very many more than that are severely injured.

Fire prevention should start in the home—for man's dwelling ought to be a safe place in which to live. A home should be built to resist the spread of flames. All rubbish, litter and old furniture should be cleaned out of attics and basements. Matches should be kept in metal receptacles, out of the reach of children. Smokers should be careful and see that discarded matches, cigarettes and cigars do not come in contact with inflammable material. Gasoline should not be used in the house, and kerosene should be handled with great care.

Start in Home  
Chimneys should be cleaned, and heating equipment overhauled at least once a year, stoves or piping should not be allowed near wood or other combustible material, and only metal ash barrels should be used.

Fire extinguishers should be installed at strategic points so that they may be quickly available in case of emergency. If these simple precautions were taken we would not now be confronted with a steadily increasing number of fires from month to month throughout Canada. Fire dwellings have increased from 16,000 in 1922 to more than 34,000 in 1933, and the loss has jumped from seven million to ten and a half million dollars during the same period.

Most of the precautions suggested for homes apply with equal force to commercial and industrial plants as good housekeeping is paramount in all cases. In addition there are many hazards developed in manufacturing processes that need special attention, and the operation of some industries is in itself extremely hazardous. These require study and research by fire prevention engineers so that steps may be taken to safeguard the lives of employees as well as the property itself.

Within Everyone's Reach  
Even the most hazardous occupancies can be made reasonably safe, and fire safely in general is now within the reach of practically everyone.

Fire prevention and fire extinguishment have been developed along scientific lines and require practical knowledge and special study to keep abreast of the times. If, therefore, in doubt, consult your insurance agent or fire

## GRAVEL AND SAND—AND PLACER

"It is a serious thing to deprive a man of his livelihood," said the Attorney-General to Col. Drew, Ontario Securities Commissioner. The Attorney-General should not have said that to Col. Drew. He should have said it to Premier Hepburn.

"Small town stuff" is a phrase often used in derision. The North Bay Nugget is not the sort of a newspaper likely to use such a phrase, but no doubt at the present moment The Nugget is thinking how nice some of this "small town stuff" may be. The small town of Powassan is planning to have a covered skating and hockey rink ready for the coming winter, while big North Bay has been unsuccessfully attempting something similar these many years. Powassan has the money nearly all in sight, and intends to have the covered rink in sight also, very shortly. "Small town stuff?" The answer is the big city's smart reply, "Oh, yeah!"

On a train the other day it was impossible not to hear snatches of what seemed to be a very personal or family affair. A man with a heavy voice was telling an acquaintance about Susie Marie. It was useless to attempt to avoid hearing some scandal about Susie Marie, whether she were wife or daughter or mother or friend of the man with the big voice. "If it hadn't been for Jim, Susie Marie would be

chief, and don't take a chance. Celebrate Fire Prevention Week by making a good and effective start toward the elimination of all hazardous conditions. Why pay when you don't have to?

## More Than Double as Many Autos This Year Than Last

Will the output from Canadian automobile plants ever again reach the height it attained in 1929? That question brings up the pleasing spectacle of more than a quarter of a million cars and trucks turned out in the year mentioned, but it also recalls the picture for the succeeding four years; and for 1931, 1932 and 1933, the total all rolled together didn't add up a quarter of a million. But 1934 will awaken new hopes. At the first of September, according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, automobiles produced num-

bered 103,102—as compared with 50,881 for the same period last year; or as compared with 65,852 for the whole of 1933; 60,789 for the whole of 1932; 82,559 for the whole of 1931; and 153,372 for the whole of 1930. Not within striking distance of the 1930 total, it will be observed, but a great deal better than 1931. Sharp point is given to the meaning of such gratifying figures by C. E. McTavish, general sales manager of General Motors Products of Canada, Limited, who, in a recent statement, said production of his company for the first eight months showed an increase of 105 per cent. (Increase for the whole industry in Canada, 103 per cent.) Mr. McTavish translated the percentage increase into figures the man in the street can understand, when he said the better selling year had meant an increase of 294,761 in the number of hours of work this year at the Oshawa and Walkerville factories of General Motors of Canada, Limited.

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Kiwania Magazine—It isn't fair to judge the human race by what you see in the mirror.

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## Breakfast Bacon sliced lb. 34¢

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Rennie's BIRD SEED	Christie's GRAHAM WAFERS	Domino Red Pkg. TEA	Ovaltine a food and a drink
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## PEARL SOAP - 7 Bars 25¢

"in the gutter, down and out!" said the voice. "Poor Susie Marie! Poor girl!" was the thought. "Yes! Jim has been a great old mayor!" responded the other man and the scandal was clear. "Susie Marie" was one man's way of pronouncing the city name that has so many pronunciations—famous old Sault Ste. Marie.

"I see the Government is talking of electrocuting the T. & N. O. Railway," said a visitor to town the other day. It will be hard on the North Land if part of the T. & N. O. is given back to the Indians and the rest electrocuted. In such a case it might be truly said that Chairman Geo. W. Lee electrified the line and Premier Hepburn electrocuted it.

That man arrested on Saturday in California in connection with the murder of his mother in the city of Belleville, Ont., was picked up just in time. In another day some of the newspapers would have had him here with Meisner and Pegram and Labatt. That's enterprise.

The State of Ohio once put up white crosses by the roadside to mark each and every scene of a traffic fatality. If this plan were tried in the North it would serve a double purpose—it would give warning of the danger of car accidents; and it would, with the use of a little wire, provide a nice fence for the Ferguson highway, now largely without road fences over most of its length.

## BOWL ALONG

Did anybody see Bill McHugh and Joe Toal last Friday? Well, it worked Bill.

Army says the Flying Scotchman is O.K. but the T. & N. O. is good enough for him. No alibi, Army!

What happened to the T. & N. O. captain? Come, 95 is not cold enough. Where was Saintry Art? Cigars too strong?

The power boys sure put on the voltage, and there were no flies on that Webb in the Towers!

Yes! The T. & N. O. got electrified last Friday.

There were all kinds of fruit, but that "sunshine" orange is still to make his appearance.

The printers made a few more pins, but they are still in the junior class. Tomorrow will see very little change in the league standing unless the fruit-ers and printers get into the game.