

The Porcupine Advance

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FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Fire Prevention Week has become an accepted tradition in Canada and the United States since its inauguration some twenty-five years ago. In Canada, it is given official designation by a Proclamation of the Governor-General and in the United States by Presidential Proclamation.

Why do we have such a Week? The main purpose is undoubtedly to call attention to the devastating toll of life and property taken by fire each year and to urge that every precaution be taken to reduce the tremendous losses suffered by this country and our neighbouring country to the south. It is with a great deal of consternation that we note that 408 lives were lost and property damage amounting to nearly \$49,500,000 was occasioned by fire in Canada in 1946. This compared with 391 lives lost and \$42,000,000 property damage in 1945. These figures and many others which may be found in the Statistical Report of Fire Losses tell us that we are making progress in reverse in so far as fire prevention is concerned.

What can be done to correct this condition? In the United States, the situation had become so bad that President Truman called a conference on Fire Prevention in Washington last May. It was hoped that by this means fire losses in the States might be reduced on a comparable basis to traffic fatalities following a conference on the traffic situation in 1946. Apparently it was felt that the keystone to success in the matter of fire prevention as in many other fields of public endeavour was publicity. Consequently we are going to hear much concerning the prevention of fires this week. To many of us the heedings will appear repetitious. How often have we been told to be careful in our smoking habits? How many times have we been cautioned about the necessity to keep heating appliances in good condition and at a safe distance from combustible material? Can we count the number of times we have been warned against the use of gasoline for cleaning clothes in the home or kerosene for lighting or accelerating fires? How about that old bug-bear "accumulation of rubbish"? Do we continue to build fire-traps in spite of other people's experiences with construction of that type? As an evidence that we still carry on "in the old good way" we may refer to the fact that there were 55,400 reported fires in Canada last year.

Not only this week but for the next 52 weeks let us resolve to pay heed to the warnings which have been sounded. It can be a major weapon during peace time as well. How can this country maintain its economical footing if our citizens by their carelessness, negligence and indifference consume this orgy of burning up the country's resources to the tune of \$50,000,000 a year? How can we hope to alleviate the housing shortage when we have over 40,000 fires a year in our homes? Serious as the food situation is, we are aggravating it by fires which destroy elevators, warehouses and barns. Remembering therefore that eternal vigilance is the price of safety let us apply the simple principles of fire prevention in our daily routine so that we may safeguard our lives and property from destruction by fire.

Time For Decision

By George W. James
The Canadian Statesman,
Bowmanville, Ont.

ARTICLE NO. 23.

Amendments to the Old Age Pension Act finally passed the House on July 1, 1947. After many days of sharp debate during which the measure was criticized by the entire opposition and many leading government supporters, only one change was forced, namely, that pensions for the blind will commence at age 21, instead of age 40.

BASIC PENSION

The new regulations now provide pensions for the aged and blind at \$30 per month to which the Dominion contributes 75 per cent. This applies to the blind and to people 70 years and over who must submit to the means test. That is to say, a corps of government employees will visit the aged to learn their private resources. Their \$30 pension will be scaled down accordingly.

INCOME LIMIT

To this basic pension provincial governments may add supplemental payments on top of the 25 per cent they must pay under the act. Pensioners may also get out and work if they wish to live decently and may earn not more than enough to bring income up to \$50 per month. If they exceed that the Dominion scales down the \$30 in proportion.

TOTAL COVERED

The amendment adds 60,000 aged people to those presently qualified

for pensions bringing the total up to 275,000 all told. It is conceded that thousands are too greatly handicapped to earn extra funds, hence if any provinces declined supplemental payments it appears many will have to exist or starve on a bare \$30 per month. At the moment six provinces have voted cash supplements.

PUBLIC CONCERN

In order that the public may estimate fairly the effect of this legislation on aged and handicapped citizens a general review of current living costs together with the original statement of government policy, as well as points raised in debate, will be set down before we conclude the consideration of this particular question. Few matters are of more concern than treatment accorded helpless citizens.

COMPLACENT PRIDE

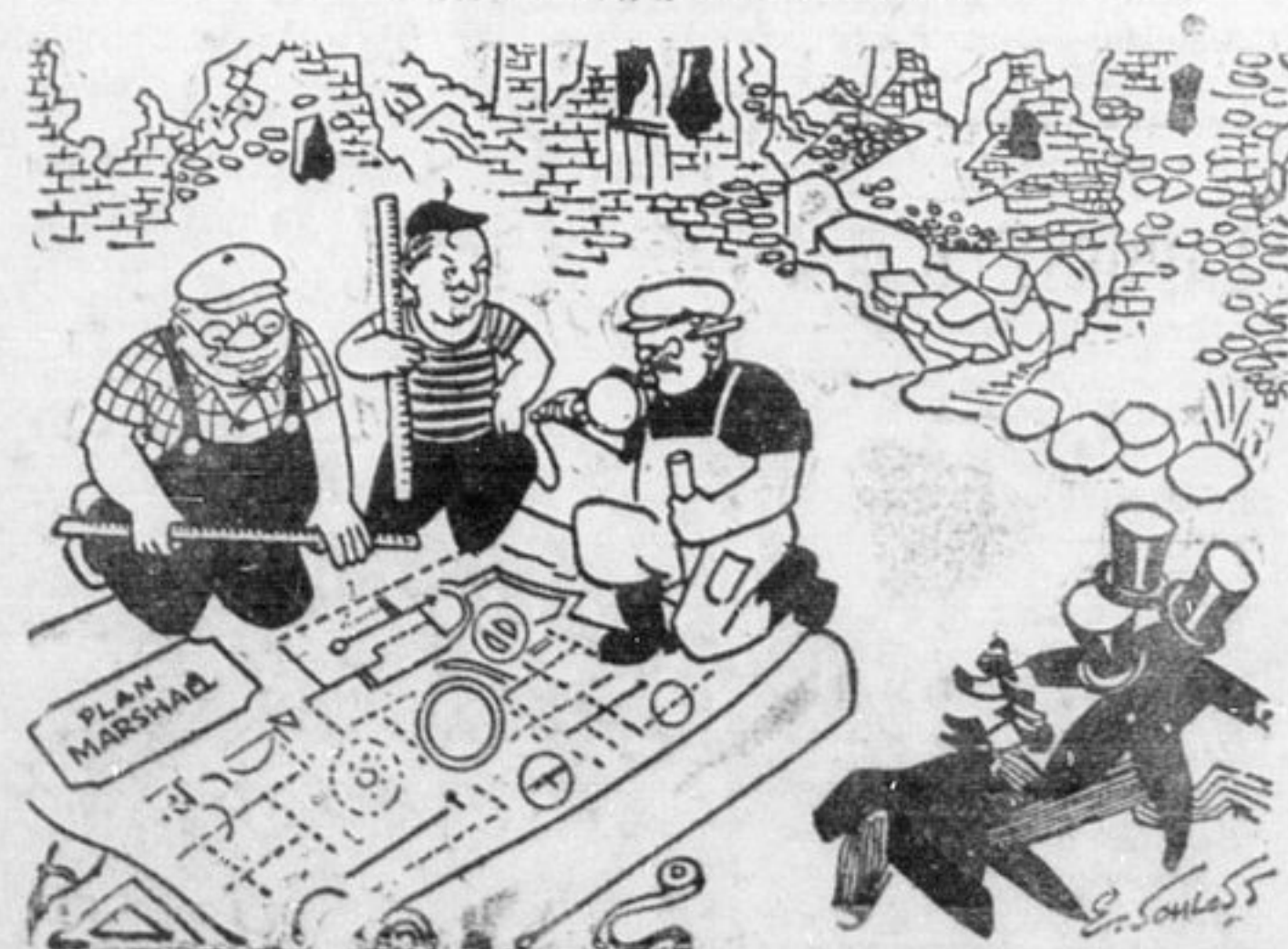
Closing the debate, Hon. Paul Martin said: "I am proud to have brought forward such a commendable measure on the part of the government; we have raised the level of pensions for the aged." But he also affirmed: "An old age pension was never intended to cover the complete cost of living; it is only a maintenance grant."

ANOTHER MATTER

Replying to a question by a member of the opposition as to what an aged or handicapped individual was going to do who has no other means of livelihood, the Minister said: "That is another matter." How this matter is viewed by responsible members in all parts of the House will be told in the next article.

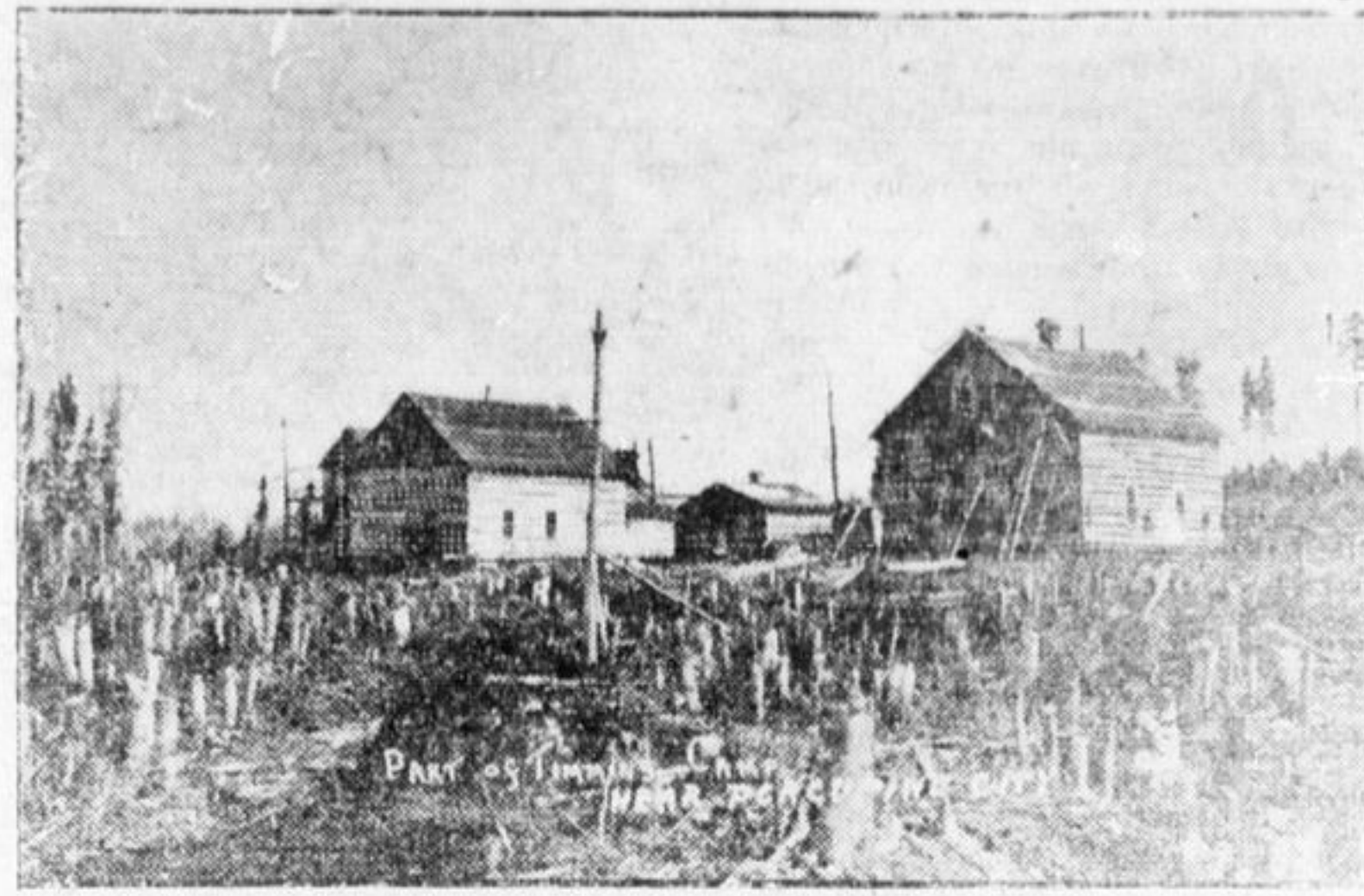
Nearly two months have passed since the "GOP" took over, following its famous victory, and no one knows what is holding up its beginner's luck.

"LET'S ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES"



When The Porcupine Was Young

By G. A. Macdonald



Timmins In Its Early Days

Most of the citizens of this town are proud of Timmins, and are inclined to look upon it as a "first" among towns. That is as it should be. It is all right, and fair, to think of Timmins as the biggest and best town in the North. It is probably the best and biggest town in Ontario, and, possibly, in Canada. As a matter of fact, it is bigger and better than many of the smaller cities. But, in thinking of it as one of the "first" towns, it is well to remember that there are some ways in which it cannot claim to be "first." The caption written by the photographer on the accompanying photograph emphasizes this point. "Far, of Timmins, near Porcupine City," were the descriptive words used by the photographer, suggesting that few might have heard of Timmins, while all would know about Porcupine City, the first town in the Porcupine Gold Mining Camp. The photographer was trying to be helpful, though describing Timmins as "near Porcupine City (Golden City, today)" sounds odd at present. However, municipal pride would not have been soothed had the caption read, as it might well have done, "near South Porcupine," for South Porcupine was an important centre north of Timmins developed.

As noted in Article No. 18 in this series, the lots in Timmins townsite went on sale to the public September 4th, 1911, the original townsite being a part of the Township of Tisdale. Later in the year, sixty-eight property owners in Timmins townsite petitioned the government for incorporation of the community as a town. The petition was granted on December 1st, 1911, the incorporation to be effective on January 1st, 1912.

The first mayor and council for Timmins were elected by acclamation, and this plan was continued for several years, the cost and trouble of elections being avoided, while the record shows that the new town was served so well that it is difficult to see how more formal elections could have improved the quality of councils.

The first regular meeting of the Timmins Town Council was held on January 31st, 1912, with the mayor, W. H. Wilson, in the chair. The councillors were: C. B. Duke, D. Jacobs, Ed. McCoy, A. R. Globe, J. D. Vaillancourt and J. P. McLaughlin. In August, Chas. Piers, merchant and lumberman, was elected by acclamation to take the seat vacated by the resignation of Councillor Jacobs.

At the inaugural meeting of the council, C. H. D. Brooks was appointed town clerk; Jos. Ryan, chief of police; Dr. H. L. Minthorn, Medical Health Officer; and the following were named as chairmen of the four committees formed to handle council business: C. B. Duke, chairman of Fire and Light Committee; A. R. Globe, Public Works; J. P. McLaughlin, Finance; E. McCoy, Miscellaneous.

Certainly, that first council faced a mighty task. They had everything to do, and practically nothing to do it with. Six years later, one of that first council said: "We had to start from scratch, and then keep on scratching." The whole organization of a town had to be created, public works and services had to be built up, and from practically nothing had to be created a going concern. The chief resources in view were the faith and the talent of the mayor and council, and the co-operation of the miners and the townspeople. Fortunately, the faith and talent and co-operation were strong enough to surmount all difficulties.

Apparently, the new municipality hadn't even the Bible to support them, for in the minutes of a council meeting held on June 24th, 1912, there appears a motion, moved by Councillors Globe and McCoy, that the clerk be ordered to "procure" a Bible. "Procure" (not purchase) was the word used, suggesting that the new town hoped to supply some needs other than by purchase. It is not known whether that Bible was "procured" as a straight gift, or a loan, or on the deferred payment plan, but there is a tradition that a quarter century afterwards that self-same Bible was the one in use in the Timmins police court.

The questions discussed at that first meeting of Timmins town council evidenced the problems that had to be faced. Everything mentioned seemed to be necessary, imperative, unavoidable. All seemed to call for immediate action, and all seemed to call up the particular problem of finances. Stumping the streets, waterworks, lighting, banking, purchase of some sort of fire-fighting equipment, and police

protection appeared the most pressing for the moment. Councillors Duke, Globe and McLaughlin were appointed a committee to report immediately on stumping the streets, waterworks, and lighting for the town.

Early in the year, the Imperial Bank was designated as the financial institution to handle the municipal account. One of the first by-laws passed by the council was one authorizing the borrowing up to \$5,000.00 from the bank. There may have been no connection between the two matters, but anyway right after the passing of that by-law it was decided a three-cell jail and quarters for the chief of police were absolutely necessary. It will rouse nostalgic memories to recall that this desired building was estimated to cost no more than \$1,800.00—the present-day price for a woodshed.

Before 1912 had travelled far on its course, there was evidence that the 1912 council was doing things and getting things done. Progress was being made in providing services for the town. Arrangements was made with the Porcupine Power & Light Co. for lighting town streets. Work on the waterworks system was underway, and the police force was growing, as shown by one resolution passed by the council to the effect that the police constable be authorized to act as chief of police in the absence of Chief Ryan, and that said acting chief inspect and test installation of waterworks pipes.

As a matter of fact, the problems that seemed the least serious were the ones that proved the most trouble. For example there was the matter of stumping the streets, or more accurately, the up-stumping, or de-stumping of the streets. At early sessions of the first council that question of stumping, or de-stumping, or un-stumping, was always coming up, like the stumps themselves. Even when half the year had passed, council was still worrying about the stumps on streets "in the heart of the town" as councillors phrased it. Also, a resolution in the matter added: "And that parties having mounds of sand on the street be asked to remove same as soon as possible." It was actually 1917 before all the streets in town were freed from stumps, the last stumps taken cut bringing grateful praise from the late Chief Borland, who disliked anything liable to hamper his fire laddies in their rush to fires.

In the minutes of early meetings of council, it was evident that fire protection was not neglected, though it was the late Dr. McInnis, as chairman of the Fire and Light Committee, in later years who fought so bravely and so well to establish a first-class fire brigade with sufficient equipment to meet the needs. As early as 1912, however, council planned the purchase of a fire engine and a fire hall, with sleeping quarters for the firemen.

C. H. D. Brooks, the first town clerk, resigned from that office, being succeeded on July 19th, 1912, by Thomas M. Wilson.

Another resignation about the same time was that of Fire Chief McKay.

At the August meeting of council, Clerk Wilson reported the birth of a son (John Peter) to Frederick and Malina Gauthier, on August 1st, 1912, a.m. Births in the new town of Timmins were not so numerous as they are today, and consequently they were of special interest and importance. This birth, however, was not the first for Timmins, a daughter being born to Mr. and Mrs. John Peter Kyllonen, on July 2nd, 1912.

Probably, what will interest the present ratepayers of Timmins in regard to the first council of the town is the tax rate struck for the town. No other council ever struck so low a rate since. The first tax rate was only 20 mills. There was another feature about that tax rate that set it apart from more modern cases. The rate was payable Nov. 1st, with a discount of 5 percent, if paid by that date, but with an added penalty of 5 percent, if not paid by due date. It is needless to say that Councillor Barleman was not a ratepayer of Timmins at that time, or he certainly would have called attention to the illegality of doubling discount and penalty in that fashion. However, the 1912 council "got away with it," and no one seemed to suffer in any way as a consequence of this double-jointed encouragement to the paying of taxes on time.

The by-laws passed by the first council of Timmins are of special interest, and will be referred to in a subsequent article.

The Nations Business

The return to Canada last week of our Minister of National Defence, Hon. Brooke Claxton, from a British Empire Conference held in Australia to discuss the Japanese peace treaty has stimulated renewed discussion on our interest in the far East and in the Japanese peace treaty.

At the opening of the conference Mr. Claxton outlined Canada's interests. The first was that the peace treaty with Japan must guarantee security against aggression; never again must our west coast feel the threat of danger from Japanese military expansion.

Next in importance is Canada's interest in trade. Canada has a long Pacific coast line and is now the third largest trading nation in the world. For this reason the establishment of political and economic stability in the far East is a matter of vital concern to us; a matter affecting our prosperity, our standard of living.

Isolation Out of Date

One of the points made by our Minister of National Defence in Australia was that "isolation is out of date." The same point was stressed in different words by our Minister of External Affairs, Hon. S. St. Laurent, last week in his first address to the United Nations assembly in New York.

While no one in Canada opposes this view openly, there are many dangerous forces in our country which still believe in isolation. Not long ago the leader of Canada's socialist party (the C. C. F.) wished there was an ocean separating this country from the United States. Many leaders of the same party advocate linking our economy with that of Great Britain.

Realistic observers here deprecate any move to isolate Canada from association with the other nations of the world by too close association with any one country or group. Canada's interests lie in world trade and the friendly world associations that promote trade by fostering peace and preventing war. In spite of many difficulties and discouragements they believe that we must persist in our efforts for world association of all nations of good will and refuse to be drawn into any smaller group. Any less ambitious attitude is a defeatist one that would lead to depression and war.

Labour and Industry

Labour matters in Saskatchewan, where a socialist (C. C. F.) government is in power, are being watched with interest by observers in the nation's capital.

Friends of labour who are opponents of socialism were quick to note that, while the C. C. F. points to Saskatchewan labour legislation as a model for the world, they had no faith in it when a strike occurred. They immediately wanted to pass their responsibilities to the federal government.

Another incident that is creating interest is the seizure of machinery from a long established local industry in the city of Saskatoon to satisfy a claim from the "board of labour relations" for \$1004. The "board" levied the fine on account of the company's refusal to re-employ five dismissed men. The "board" said they were dismissed for union activity which the local company denied. The Saskatchewan C. C. F. government passed a law preventing any appeal from the decisions of the "board."

On Canada's Final Rites

"Prejudice's Final Refuge" is a quotation. "It is this den of prejudice which must be cleaned out, then purged by fire so that it shall no longer exude poisonous gas."

"Some are fearful before the size of the task. Unfortunately! Do they not see that we have made progress? The number of fanatics has grown smaller and is diminishing unceasingly. They cry louder, to create the belief that they are numerous, but these cries must leave moderate people unmoved. We shall attain the goal, our Canada united in mutual respect, in mutual affection, in cordial relations, in firm kindness."

"Therefore, moderate people, dare to declare your lives; it is you who are in the right, but your timidity permits the fanatics to exhale their venom. Have the courage to close their beaks. Put into it insistence, a resolute voice and cold determination."

Five Injured In Head-On Collision

An accident occurred at 9 o'clock on Friday evening on the "back road" when two cars met in a head-on collision, resulting in five teen-agers being sent to St. Mary's Hospital, Timmins. Four of them were detained, and all are reported to be rapidly recovering from their narrow escape.

Those injured were: Colleen Cooke, 16 Way Avenue, Willistie Tallen, 13 Way Avenue, Frank Perello, of Timmins, and Douglas MacDonald and Edgar Montigny of Schumacher. The most seriously injured was Douglas MacDonald, who suffered a fractured jaw and severe head cuts.

At a club in Hollywood a young author was introduced to a film critic. The writer's first picture had just been shown, and he immediately asked the critic for his opinion of it. "It was very refreshing," returned the critic. "Very refreshing."

"Say, that's swell," beamed the author. "Did you really find it so refreshing?" "Absolutely," was the reply. "I felt like a new man when I woke up!"

"As I Was Saying" by Man O'the People

One of the greatest sacrifices a person can make is to become a leader in any community, whether it be in the field of industry, politics, civics, welfare, or religion!

Perhaps this, at first glance, would seem to be rather discouraging to those who aspire to office, to those younger people who are ambitious to make something of their lives, or to those who have a desire to serve their community, but we are quite convinced that such persons are better fitted to enter public life if they have that knowledge PRIOR to the experiences that are bound to follow their acceptance of leadership in any field of endeavor.

We still believe, however, that if one is prepared to pay the price, there is nothing that can bring greater rewards than will the knowledge of service done in the cause of humanity. To most leaders, such a reward far outweighs the disadvantages that come from being in the public eye. Hence, we still have leaders, we always will have leaders. True, many would-be leaders fall by the wayside, unable any longer to pay the price, but there are those who have steeled themselves to lead DESPITE the attitudes of those in whose cause they labour.

It is indisputable that the selection or election of a man to a position of leadership is the signal for an outpouring of abuse and vituperation on the part of certain segments either of the community or the organization which he represents. Timmins is no exception to this rule!

Let's take this municipal council of ours as an example! In so doing, it might be wise to emphasize that we have no axe to grind and that we are not personally acquainted with the Mayor or any of our six Councillors!

It would seem to us that the abuse that was heaped upon the candidates in our last Municipal Election has only been exceeded by the abuse heaped upon the victors' SINCE that election.

Even without a personal knowledge of these men, we would venture to say that the Mayor, and all six Councillors are actively engaged in public life because of a sincere desire to serve the community. Each of them placed his separate qualifications before the citizens of our community during the last election. Each of them was given a vote of confidence by the electors at that election and, as a result, are the men in whose hands we have placed the onerous duties of finance and civic improvement.

No one, by even the wildest stretch of imagination, could accuse them of being "yes-men"—the Council meetings this year have proven the rugged individualism of each representative. Nor would it be a healthy state of civic affairs if our Councillors were guilty of such a sin.

Each of them has fought for or against every measure that has been introduced in Council during the year. They have individually been outspoken in placing their views before the public. Is this a healthy or an unhealthy sign? No doubt, individually and collectively, they have made mistakes, but as was mentioned in last week's column are, they expected to get a hit every time they come to bat? If so, no candidate should receive any votes at our next election!

It is not to be expected that the citizens of this community should sit back and allow our Mayor and Council to push through measures that are not in the interests of our town, but we do maintain that these men, like other public men, are all too often held up to ridicule by others who should know better!

We suggest that these men are sincere, that each vote cast is cast in the belief that it will protect or further advance our way of living. Should there be no differences of opinions on the part of our Council? Surely our whole civic progress depends upon the ability of our Mayor and our Councillors to think for themselves and to vote accordingly!

We hold no particular brief for either the Mayor or any of our Councillors but we do feel that there must come about in our community a greater recognition of the fact that these men were placed in office by the will of the people and, as such, are entitled to speak, to the best of their ability, for the people they represent.

It is well to remember that the few paltry dollars that constitutes remuneration does not go much farther than cover the expenses entailed. It is obvious then that the desire to serve must be the predominating motive.

There are at least two methods that can be used to show disapproval of Council's action. One is by means of the ballot-box which, thank God, is still free in our country, and the other is by strong representation to the Council through the Press or by attendance at Council meetings. Both are dignified approaches, both of them are effective and should be used when necessary.

But there is no excuse whatever for the lamponing of our public men. We have been shocked, time after time, at the scurrilous attacks that have been made on these representatives of the people, attacks that come mostly from small self-opinionated groups who, by their actions, seek to destroy everything that is fine, and clean, and decent.

There have been many fine leaders who have been compelled to withdraw from public life, not because of a lack of moral courage, but rather because they were unwilling to involve their families in the mud-slinging that seems to be the delight of those whose personal lack of ability precludes them from any such position of leadership.

There are many countries in the world today where intolerance and dictatorship holds sway, where the freedom of the press is a thing of the past, where freedom of speech is unknown, where men are told where they shall work, when they shall work, the kind and the amount of food that will be dropped on their dinner plate, but we Canadians have not showed any willingness for such regimentation. We still believe in freedom of speech, not only for noisy minorities but ALSO for those who represent the majority of our citizens.

All too skillful is the attempt being made to undermine Canadians' faith in their public men. It is an insidious movement to weaken the structure of our society, a movement that must be resisted by every believer in true democracy.

The right to criticize and voice opinions is still with us. We are not worthy of citizenship unless we do have opinions and are prepared to exercise that privilege. But the below-the-belt attacks that are made on men in public life are definitely unfair and are simply contributions to the intolerance and injustices that are so rampant today.

The Golden Rule has an application here!