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Russian Gold Rush

May 13th issue of the Porcupine Advance carried an editorial entitled "Will Gold Go Up?" which sketched briefly the international effects of the Russian drive into Siberia for new gold fields. This week a copy of the London Economist came into our hands as a result of the editorial and we find that Britain is definitely interested in Russia's work in this respect.

For some time now the Russians have been subsidizing heavily government projects in the goldfields in Siberia. "Private prospectors are a thing of the past in Russia," says the Economist Correspondent. "In 1927 when the 'New Economic Policy' was still in force, private prospectors were encouraged to go and make what they could, provided they sold their gold at a fixed price to the state trust, Soyuz-Zoloto. This private prospecting was allowed to go until 1932, but was then brought to an end by the Soviet Government for three main reasons. In the first place, after the inception of the first Five-Year Plan it was contrary to public policy to leave any important industry in private hands. Secondly, much of the gold found had gone abroad, for the prospectors, instead of delivering it to the Soyuz-Zoloto, had found it more profitable to sell it in exchange for consumer's goods to Japanese fishing boats calling on the uninhabited stretches of the Okhotsk Sea coast. Thirdly, the Government wanted to have more gold and have it quickly, but as long as the country remained a roadless and almost uninhabited wilderness, no rapid expansion of the industry was possible.

The increase in Russian gold production has been due almost entirely to the exploitation of the very rich goldfields in the basin of the Kolyma river above or close to the Arctic Circle in North-Eastern Siberia. It so happens that great resources of the metal which the convention of mankind has decreed to be precious are located in what is perhaps, the most inhospitable area of the earth's surface. The region of the Kolyma and the neighboring river Yana holds the distinction of the world's record for winter cold; temperatures as low as 94 degrees below zero Fahrenheit have been recorded there. The subsoil of the whole region is "permafrost" or "geological ice"; only a thin upper crust is thawed out during the brief summer. The rivers are ice-bound for eight to nine months of the year. The country is broken up by mountains; elsewhere the landscape consists of vast expanses of swamp, dwarf forest—large trees cannot grow because of the subsoil ice—and moss "tundra."

The native inhabitants of this bleak land consist of a few thousand members of primitive tribes who traditionally subsist by hunting, fishing and reindeer-keeping. Up to a little over 20 years ago there were no Russians there except a handful of traders and officials; according to the Soviet census of 1926-27 the population of the whole Kolyma region was only 7,560. No official figures have been published since, but from what is known of the number and scale of the goldfields and ancillary enterprises it can be estimated that the population is now somewhere round the half million mark. In 1940 there were 66 goldfields grouped under seven administrative agencies, each field employing some thousands of workers; the number of fields is believed now to have been increased by the working of newly discovered deposits east of the Kolyma along the coast of the Arctic Ocean.

"The rapid development of the Kolyma region has been one of the most remarkable processes of internal colonisation in the Soviet Union during recent years," says the Economist. "It is worthy of study as an economic phenomenon in comparison with other historic regional developments consequent on the discovery of gold, as in the Transvaal, California and Alaska. Normally such a development has gone through two stages: the first "gold rush"—of extraction of alluvial and surface gold with little or no capital, and the second, or regular mining operations by companies with large capital. Curiously enough, Kolyma, in the early days, even under the Soviet regime, followed the individualistic gold rush precedents."

The Economist Correspondent believes that the gold rush in Siberia may also be a front for strategic purposes, as well as helping out on the economic front. He says that the largest gold areas are in north-eastern Siberia which approaches nearest to the territory of the United States, and since the construction of the Alaska highway during the war American power has existed not only in name, but in reality to the east of the Bering Sea.

The Russians are digging the gold with slave labor. Well over 90 per cent of the population of Dalstroy works under the control of armed guards and specially trained dogs and under the pressure of an ingeniously devised system of economic incentives. Norms of work are fixed and the prisoner's rations are proportionate to the percentage of the norm he achieves each day. Refusal to work is punished by death, work less than 80 per cent of the norm is counted as refusal and earns the same penalty.

Escape from the slave camps is virtually impossible, not so much because of the guards as because of the dogs. Discipline is very harsh, as it has to be when the conditions of life are in any case so highly punitive; insubordination is requited with death or with cruel punishments often fatal to the victim. But there is no merely wanton killing, for the slaves have been brought to Kolyma to produce gold, and the Dalstroy officials have to calculate the point at which the cutting of labor costs begins to yield diminishing returns through too high a mortality of convicts. Production has been kept up, however, with mining machinery from the United States and since the war slave labor has been again abundant with the result that new fields have been opened up and the output increased. It is reported to have risen from about 11 million ounces in 1940 to 16 or 18 million last year. The Dalstroy system has undoubtedly been successful in furnishing Russia with an enormous hoard of gold, second only in quantity to that held by the United States—for whatever gold may be worth in the world today.

The Russians are not unmindful of the fact that whoever has the largest gold production in the world today may be its ruler. The Russian concentration on their gold fields will no doubt have an international effect and has stirred the economists of the U. S. to the realization that all the available gold fields on this continent must be brought to full production. How soon the Canadian Government will come to this realization is anyone's guess. Already it has been suggested that the gold bonus is the answer. Maybe, but much more will have to be undertaken by way of building good roads to the mining areas and making possible the comfort of large numbers of workers. The provincial government's Hydro project for the North is a step in the right direction. But they will have to keep on stepping.

Drew And North Cochrane

It's just a suggestion but it might be a good one. How's about George Drew borrowing the North Cochrane seat and representing the North for a change. After getting six of the twelve Northern seats, Drew should consolidate his new found strength and really get to know the people of the North. His trip North a few weeks ago was his first trip up here during an election. His gracious wife and his own impressive self created an impression that won't soon be forgotten. But it would be a gesture in the right direction, and I do mean right, toward the Premier of the province representing the district of North Cochrane. That area is opening up on a new boom—the radium boom—and the value of the district to the province is unlimited. It would be a good move politically, and it would be a move which

In The Days When The Porcupine Was Young

By G. A. Macdonald

No. 55. The Patriotic Porcupine

The public speaker who recently referred to "The Patriotic Porcupine People" must have stirred many memories among the old-timers of this section of the North.

At the commencement of the 1914-1918 war, the Porcupine Camp had not attained even five years of age, and the Town of Timmins was less than three years old. It is doubtful if the total population of the Camp exceeded seven thousand men, women and children, yet approximately one thousand men enlisted for overseas service from the small communities of the new mining camp.

Those who stayed on the home front showed patriotism equal to those who joined one of the services. As a matter of fact there were few indeed who stayed at home for any other reason than that they could not squeeze through into one or other of the fighting forces.

There were many who managed to get overseas and into the thick of the battle, despite the fact that they were over military age, or suffered some physical handicap that normally would have debarred them. Old-timers will remember Capt. Lindsay, who dyed his grey moustache and Paddy Rowe who cut off his moustache to fool the examiners. It may be that the medical officers were not deceived, but felt that men so anxious to serve should be respected, especially when they were in such splendid physical condition. In any event, these two men reached the fighting lines and did credit to themselves and to the Porcupine as efficient and sturdy soldiers.

Another case was that of a young man in South Porcupine who appeared physically unfit and was carelessly rejected by recruiting officers in this camp, despite his earnest declaration to outwalk any big fellow, and that he thrived on hardship and danger. Recruiting officers at Halleybury were no more sympathetic, so he journeyed to Montreal. Finding no sympathy even in Montreal, the young fellow from Porcupine went to his native England where he squeezed in as a stretcher bearer. Volunteering for service in that hot spot of Mesopotamia, he proved that he was right, and the doctors wrong, so far as his hardness and ability were concerned. He came through some of the toughest times endured by any serving in the war.

When conscription came into force, the readiness of the men of the Porcupine to serve was still evident. The first man to come before the medical examiners at Timmins in the conscription roundup was promptly turned down.

"You can't squeeze me through?" the applicant asked but not very hopefully.

"No!" the doctor replied. "Your physical condition bars you from service!"

"I guess you must be right!" the attitude of the people in general. Desperate the fact that councils naturally believe I could make a good job had the greatest difficulty in financing of it. But your fourth army officer to turn me down!"

The classic story of a Porcupine man anxious to join Lieut. Jack Munroe's forestry battalion is another example. This man had only one good eye. The other eye was totally blind, but the gentleman thought one eye enough to see past medical examiners. He was passing first-class until it came to the eye test. The doctor pointed to the words on the card. "Read those letters!" the medical man said. That was a snap for John. "Now, put your right hand over your right eye, and read this."

Again, John was successful for the left eye was the good one. "Now put your left hand over your left eye, and read this!" John never hesitated. He carefully, and ostentatiously, brought up his left hand, and covered his right eye, and read the new card with ease. He passed. But later, to his deep disappointment, he was caught.

Of course, there were a few who used that eyesight test the other way! They could not read the cards at all with both or either eye. But some of those lads were caught too. Unknowingly, strings were stretched across their pathways, and the blind fellows ducked to avoid them.

Those who went overseas from the Porcupine all gave a good account of themselves as soldiers, sailors and airmen. Before there was a Royal Canadian Air Force, there were more men enlisted with the Royal Flying Corps from the Porcupine than from any other section of Canada.

The patriotic people serving on the home front in Porcupine did their part as well as those on the other fronts.

The Red Cross, the Patriotic Fund, the Navy League, and all the other patriotic causes found full support in the Porcupine.

The Porcupine, for example, subscribed double its quota in proportion to population to the Victory Loans. Some items may be of special interest even at this time.

The D. Y. B. Club all through the war carried on knitting and similar activities and sent parcels to soldiers overseas. The D. Y. B. Club was organized among the young people of Timmins and district by Mrs. M. A. Ellis, who roused enthusiasm and effective work by her own enthusiasm and talent. The D. Y. B. Club was so well organized and conducted that it was continued after the war as a social club. For years it was considered a distinction and an honour to belong to the D. Y. B. Club. It is of interest to recall that the letters, "D. Y. B.," stood not only for the words, but also for the spirit, "Do Your Bit!" Municipal councils evidenced the at-

Timmins spent thousands to help recruiting. There were recruiting meetings practically every Sunday evening, the theatres being available free for these gatherings, and local men always ready to assist with their talent at these meetings.

One even in 1917 at the Timmins Rink, then owned by the Hollinger, and netted \$266.08 for the French Red Cross.

One year the Tisdale Red Cross gave \$1000.00 to the British Red Cross.

The Township of Chamberlain, District of Temiskaming, then in the same District, and the same electoral riding as the Porcupine, had a patriotic touch that is worthy of note. At the back of the printed voters' list there was a special page, headed "Honour Roll," with seventeen names recorded, these being Chamberlain Township men serving overseas. There were only 132 other names on the whole list.

To some there seemed to be a humorous touch to one resolution passed by the Tisdale Council in 1917. The resolution read: "Moved by Councillor David Mackie, and seconded by Councillor Boyle, and carried, that the Clerk be instructed to purchase \$1000 worth of Macdonald chewing tobacco, and have same forwarded to the members of the 169th Battalion, C. E. F."

The suggestion that there was something funny in that motion was well answered by a Porcupine man returning from overseas in the fall of 1917. "If there is any humour in that motion," the returned soldier said, "then let me tell you it's a mighty good joke, for that chewing tobacco tasted better in the trenches than ever tobacco tasted anywhere before. Everybody should encourage good jokes like that."

Another patriotic plan that some short-sighted people took as a joke was the proposal of T. F. King, of the Timmins Board of Trade, that vacant lots of land be used here to grow vegetables to help the cause of production. "Even the farmers cannot grow stuff in this neck of the woods, with frosts every month in the year," said one new-timer of those days. But the Board of Trade rallied round President King, and considerable produce was made available as a consequence. And, better still, the plan showed what could be done in the way of production in this area, and faith and confidence in the agricultural possibilities of the country were increased and encouraged.

Previous to that production plan trial, F. C. H. Simms applied to be the only man in the Camp who had full faith in the possibilities of the land here. He had a garden here more than thirty years ago that proved that the Porcupine could and did grow beautiful flowers and notable vegetables.

The Same Old Joe

by Robert C. Ruark

The passage of time is not a pleasant topic to those who are beginning to thin out on top and bulge a bit in the middle. It gives you an unpleasant shock to see a shot of Shirley Temple dandling her daughter, or a picture of Jackie Coogan showing bald as a bone.

It was the same sort of thing yesterday, when I was standing in a rubbing room at Pompton Lakes, N.J., listening to Joe Louis expand on how a man his age—Joe is 34—has to train himself on rest and stored energy, instead of beating himself viciously into shape. Seems less than last week Joe was an inarticulate lad with a pan-hers energy.

"Like treating a sick man to get him well," Joe said. "You got to get him healthy by degrees. I do it all but now I do it slow."

Louis looks the same—to me, anyhow—as he did 12 years ago. Just a little heavier—he was 220 yesterday—but he's grown bigger and taller in all these years, and 25 championship fights. He has become suave with years of money and attention, but never any less nice. I never yet left a talk with Joe Louis without marveling, a little, at the instinctive gentleness of the guy—a sure touch for the right thing that never led him to make a wrong remark.

It would be my idea that Joe Louis has done more for interracial relations than all the organizations which devote time to lobbying for brotherly love. This big, brown boy with the sleepy eyes, who says he is fighting his last fight next month, has been

would be good for the province as a whole. To have a man with the organizing talents of Mr. Drew representing the North, things would really begin to pop.

Roads are badly needed throughout the North to open up the vast resources of mines. A minimum of forty mines are in the west of Timmins area which need equipment and men to develop them. They can't begin to develop without a road. If Drew could beat a few paths through the Northland he could then sell all the mousetraps he wanted and he would have no trouble at all carrying another election—come what may. Neglect of the North at this time would be a crime which George Drew would never live down when trying to obtain higher standing in political life. Read through the foregoing editorial carefully and see what the Russians are doing to open up their gold areas. It is a race against time, and the sands are running out. We must awake to the great opportunities which have been cast in front of us by a bountiful providence and make use of them. Drew has shown himself to be a man of words—now let him be a man of action, and fight the Russian menace by producing more gold and uranium.

squarely on a spot since he stepped into the ring. With the memory of Jack Johnson's gaudy profligacy still fresh, they just sat back and waited for Louis to pull some sort of trick to buy him—and his actions ever commanded respect. I doubt if anybody thinks of Joe as white or colored, any more. He is as categoryless as Babe Ruth.

They say there should be a heavy cruelty quotient in a man to make a good competitor, athletically—the kind of meanness and sadistic brutality that people like Dempsey and Ace Hudkins had inside the ring. I don't think Louis was ever real sore at anybody but Max Schmeling. He had all the competitive heart in the world, but he rarely angered. I remember once in a fight with Lou Nova, that Nova started making those ridiculous yoga motions of his. Louis threw back his head and guffawed, then he shuffled in and destroyed Mr. Nova's chin with one swipe, setting back the cause of oriental mysticism some several thousand years. He was still chuckling when he left the ring.

Louis was born with dignity. He had it even as a raw youth, in a wild, rude racket. The dignity has always rubbed off on the people around him.

I never saw anything ribald or rowdy around a Louis camp. It was run by calmness, courtesy, and the subdued atmosphere of a minor shrine. Only a few people were able, ever to joke with Joe. The rough pranks that featured other camps never were obvious around a Louis bivouac.

Somehow—even in stilted press interviews—voices were kept differentially low.

This was an obeisance to something the sports people call "class." It is a thing that a few bullfighters had, a few baseball players, a jockey or two, and not many fighters. It's way apart from a skill, a technique, or even innate ability. Sort of a refinement of all those things, needing no advertisement.

Joe looked awful in his last fight. He lumped Walcott with Johnny Paycheck and some of the other bums personal remarks about anybody. He blew down. Joe rarely makes somebody asked him if he made the crack because he was sore at Walcott. "Naw," Joe grunted. "Maybe it's because I was mad at me." Months later, the champion was still whipping himself for appearing inept in the ring with a man of his own race, whom he regards as inferior to his own standards of professional behavior.

SALES TAX CRITICS WRONG? -- The widely criticized sales tax has a staunch defender in Prof. J. L. McDougall of Queen's, who suggests that the time has come for easing the burden of the income tax, particularly in the lower brackets, and for relying more on the sales tax. The Financial Post takes the view that Prof. McDougall has given Finance Minister Abbott and other taxing authorities something to think about.

Says The Post: "Certainly we are not producing as freely or as much as we could and there is good reason to suspect that high taxes are partly responsible. And as for the resentment among farmers and wage earners against the present scale of income tax, again there is backing for Prof. McDougall's opinion. And yet so long as present rates and exemptions are in force the government has no option. Salaried people and wage earners who have no escape whatever from paying the last farthing of income tax due, are not convinced that farmers and other self-employed groups are playing the game. That situation is not a healthy one."

Sharp decrease in industrial accidents under the present government's stringent safety campaign is reported by the Department of Labor. Fatalities decreased from 62 to 42 last year, while injury cases were 3,000 lower.

Inside Labour

by Victor Riesel

You can get fired out of some of the biggest firms in the East these days if you're actively anti-Communist.

Not that the boss wants to fire you. He must if — as some of the nation's largest stores already have — he has been forced to sign the latest kind of terror-gimmicked labor contract which pro-Communist CIO union chiefs have just invented.

Under these new type "agreements" the Commie-line leaders have the right to fire as well as tell the employer whom to hire.

Let me re-word that cool gap for power. Under the new contracts won by threat of vicious strikes, pro-Communist union officials can order a man fired right off his job if they don't like his politics. That's the new "right-to-fire" clause you'll be hearing much about in the months to come. For, the Comrades, fearing that they'll be swept out of power by popular resentment against their tactics, plan to introduce the "right-to-fire" clause into union contracts wherever they still have power in unions from coast to coast.

That's how they operate, these great howlers for civil liberties who have been flocking down to Senate hearings here. That's the kind of civil liberties they hand out when they have power.

And they're blunt about it. I have before me the evidence. On page 9 of a contract now in force between a baldly pro-Communist union and an East-chain of stores, there is a clause which says that the union may order the "boss" to fire any employee who interferes "with the harmonious relations among the employees." That phrase does it.

If you distribute leaflets against the Pro-Communist leaders complaining against their political activity; if you run for office against them; or if you're dissatisfied with the way the union is going, you're interfering with the harmonious relations "among the employees." If that doesn't gail you, if that doesn't provoke your contempt for those pro-Commie pious leaders for civil liberties, you have no glands left.

And what happens when union members organize inside the pro-Communist union to fight the whole sleazy kind of thing implied in the "right-to-fire" clause? Why, they just get dumped out of the union by the pro-Communist leaders — who then turn about and demand the employer to fire the critics right out of their jobs.

This has just happened to a small group of New York department store employees. The anti-Communist rebels were ousted from the CIO union on charges of "issuing false and slanderous statements against the union leadership, hindering its negotiating strategy and attempting to divide and disrupt the local." That's fancy jargon for criticizing the pro-Communist leadership of a party-line union.

And what sort of a trial did the anti-Communist critics get? They were denied the right of outside counsel.

They were denied a public stenographer to record the so-called trial.

They were told the couldn't leave the building to make a private telephone call.

Their request for a full bill of particulars of charges against them was denied.

One of their attorneys (from the firm of Delson, Levin and Gordon, representatives of some 50 unions and therefore certainly pro-labor) was kicked out of the trial room and refused permission even to be an observer.

Their other lawyer, another labor expert by name of Joseph Glass, when informed of the trial board's rulings, warned the defendants not to participate because the union's constitution had obviously been violated.

Now just suppose this had happened to Communists — in the government service, or in a right wing union, or during a Congressional investigation. There'd be national publicity, new and heavily financed "defense committees," everybody'd be accused of starting a fascist state and thought police.

Let's have none of this double morality. If the pro-Communists want civil liberties, let them practice them right now.

Not only is President Truman preparing to run; he's actually secretly wooing some of the men who were booming General Eisenhower just a few weeks ago. Among them are labor leaders who have been slipping quietly into the White House through the side and back doors for off-the-record parleys with the President. And it can also be safely predicted that Mr. Truman will talk to a lot of local labor chiefs on his swing across country. . . . All this is part of a speed-up effort to line up the labor vote before the national conventions

But not all the labor people are being fraternal to Harry Truman. The AFL elevator jockeys who were picketing the sumptuous Hollywood Hotel Ambassador have sent word to the President that they'll not withdraw their lines — and he'll have to cross them to get into the hall to speak to the Press Club there June 14 — unless there's a settlement first. And that would give the news photographers a field day and the brotherly Mr. Truman a headache throughout the campaign. . . .

When John Lewis starts lit, it catches on. Now the AFL butchers want a royalty on every cow they slaughter in the packing houses from here on in. The money would go for pensions to elderly butchers There has been much loose talk about "a conspiracy of big business" to smash wages down and bust unions. I'd like to nail that, in all fairness, by reporting that just a few days ago Ben Fairless, head of the giant U. S. Steel Corp., told a friend that the generous General Motors wage settlement with the auto union was a complete "surprise" to him. It can also be reported that Ford and Chrysler were also startled. There's no doubt GM could have hurt the auto union by standing pat. It didn't. Let it so be reported. . . .

Walter Reuther's lieutenants celebrated his return from the hospital by holding the union's high command board meeting in his house this past week — much of the time being spent in the very room where his arm was shattered by shotgun fire. . . . Sharp word has been sent by their political gons and Communist unions in the U.S., warning them to keep their political gons and organizers at home. The Canuck CIOers say they'll do nothing to hinder the Canadian government from deporting the Communist unionizers back to the U.S. Their warning was sent after the Ottawa authorities had picked up five pro-Communist CIO men who had been heading for northern Ontario's gold mining industry. . . .

Jimmie Petrillo has just gotten up the first pay schedules for musicians who will be hired to televise. The rates are good but the number one musician has sent out word that the fiddlers and horn blowers shouldn't be optimistic. There are only 20 television stations now operating and they're confined to cities with over 1,000,000 people (except for Milwaukee). Only seven channels are available in each of the big cities such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Meanwhile, some 53 construction permits have been granted to prospective television stations throughout the country. . . .

Finger Man . . . CIO southern organizers have been trying to unionize a Knoxville, Tenn., textile mill which has 15 dead employees. They all joined, although they couldn't hear any of the union pep talks. The CIO regional director got to them by having one of the other workers, T. C. Ray, stand on the platform and "interpret" the organizers' speeches in sign language. Ray is sufficiently skillful as a finger man to translate even the question period. . . .

Some of the country's most powerful labor politicians who will be delegates to the Democratic National Convention are pledged to vote for a man who's virtually unknown although his signature is one the world fights for. He's W. A. Julian, U.S. treasurer, whose name appears on all dollar bills. Julian is Ohio's favorite son, and all Buckeye Democratic delegates have pledged to vote for him in the first convention balloting on the presidential nomination. Among those delegates are PAC chairman Jack Kroll and railroad union chief A. F. Whitney who has quite a political league of his own. . . .

There were more Congressmen at Petrillo's free Washington concert the other day than ever appeared at any labor function in history. Some 200 of them, including 70 Senators (and one ex-senator by name of Harry Truman) attended. Messrs. Taft and Hartley did not go. . . . Paul Hoffman, who will spend those Marshall millions in Europe this year, flew to the recent Milwaukee conference of the AFL's national board to get it to name some labor advisers. But the AFL chiefs refused because similar posts were offered to CIO men. The AFLers told Hoffman they'd not sit with the CIO on the ERP strategy council so long as the CIO stays in the World Federation of Trade Unions, of which Russia is a member. . . .

At least two important labor men will be delegates to the Republican convention. One is John Lewis' West Virginia lawyer, Charles Townsend. The other is Elmer Meinz, head of the Minnesota AFL paper workers, a Stassen man. . . . At least \$65,000 was spent by the AFL's political league when it mailed out some 5,000,000 league membership books which the labor politicians hope will bring them a return of \$5,000,000. . . . There will not be a Communist Party presidential candidate. . . .

Any member of the CIO brewery workers who fails to vote in a public election can be brought up on charges and pitched out of the union. . . . The Combies now are making a special play for Spanish-speaking workers. Wonder why? . . . The Southern CIO reports it has picked up 100,000 in the past year despite the Taft-Hartley law. . . .

New Frontiers item — The AFL and CIO each acquired a new union last week. To Bill Green came the 28,000-member American Federation of Grain Millers, which has unionized the grain belt. This makes the 195th national union to get an AFL charter. Meanwhile, the CIO handed out its 40th charter to the American Radio Assn., covering 3,500 radio operators on merchant ships. . . .