

# The Porcupine Advance

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## An Inequitable Assessment

The pros and cons of the assessment appeal cases before Judge Dentis at the moment are for the judge to decide and not this newspaper. But there are some pertinent points which have been brought out which many people do not understand and which we hope to clarify.

In the first place the assessment of the Town of Timmins was being done on an otary basis. That is, the town was divided into two parts. The part assessed first was the section where the claims had the most development in the past ten years. The town official's claim that the enabling-by-law 1077, was passed to enable the assessment department to assess the land in two years. The by-law also allowed the Town to levy taxes on the land a soon as the assessment roll was revised.

The appeals before the court at present declare that the assessment is inequitable because the Town was levying the tax on part of the town and not on the other. The appellants declare that the Town should have waited until the complete assessment roll was revised.

In view of the by-law and the fact that the Town council and the assessor felt that if there were appeals, the revision would be done in the next year and the tax levied, there is a year's delay in the assessment. The town council and the assessor have been paying taxes under the new section before the B section taxpayers. This is unfair.

The Town officials state that such was not necessarily their intention. They felt that if revisions were made they would be made on the B section first and the A section second, therefore picking up that year's lag which had transpired in the first assessment.

The town officials claim that the appellant's land lies in an area which has improved in the past ten years to the point where the old assessment was ridiculous. They claim that the lands have been made more valuable because they have been brought closer to town. Instead of having buildings on three sides of the appellant's property, these properties are now enclosed by streets and buildings, thus enhancing their value.

The wide variance between the assessments on the vacant lands and those with buildings is difficult for even the expert to understand. How the town assessor decided that a house or building should be assessed as high as lands without buildings is one for the judge.

The assessment ordered revised by the judge will cost a great deal in time and money. We must wait and see what the assessment brings.

## The First Noel

With Christmas buying and bundling of presents we are able to pass over a few fundamental facts which are pretty important. We forget the reason behind Christmas. We forget the Prince of Peace and the Angel message and the Three-Wise Men.

It is so easy to forget about a baby that was born 2000 years ago, even though he revolutionized world thought and action. Many consider that wars have been fought in His holy name and that the world would therefore be better without religion. This is blindness which may be cured.

The story of the Christ child is ever new and ever refreshing. No matter how many times the people, the common people, hear the story, we feel that surge of strength within us and determine that our lives must be better and follow the pattern that has been given us.

We have been assured of that "break" that "second chance" to live the life and be assured of salvation. "Seventy times seven" chances to get back on the path leading us to the manger where the Christ Child lays, showing us that we may be "born again."

It is hope of salvation and freedom from the burden of our sins which keeps us sane and with the willingness to carry on. Life is no "bowl of cherries." We often feel that we have been mistreated, slighted and kicked all over by the fates which brought us here. But that fades into the past when we think of Bethlehem and the Christmas story.

Like the evergreen which we use to decorate at Christmas time the story unfolds as ever green, ever new. The surge of good will among men is not something to be lightly shrugged off nor is the matter of giving presents. Commercialized or not, the giving of presents and the exchange of greeting cards is a wonderful aid to that feeling of goodwill.

Look to all the countries where Christmas has been "commercialized to the hilt," and you will find countries, like Britain, United States and Canada, willing to pour out their abundance on their less fortunate neighbors. The vast number of Santa Funds, sponsored by every type of organization, the staggering numbers of presents which are sent abroad to help the children of the world realize that everything is not lost but that the world still honors the Prince of Peace despite the numbers who have cursed his name.

It is fitting for us at this time and not ridiculous nor is it contrary to religious teaching to think of the outpouring of gifts as Christ Child at this time with an outpouring of gifts when we re-something Christ inspired. It is fitting that we should honor the child who came to earth to give us a "second chance" when He came to earth.

## The Financial Post Says--

**FURNACE IN ATTIC** — Oil-fired furnace that heats from the attic for use where cellar space is not available is offered by Massachusetts firm, reports The Financial Post. Unit measuring 6 ft. x 3 ft. weight 480 lbs. hangs from ceiling on four steel eye-bolt hangers. A blower draws air in past two filters, forces it through the heating unit. Warm air is pushed into room by a fan.

**GOVERNMENTS DON'T GIVE** — Calling baby bonuses a government Christmas gift, exasperates The Financial Post. It says: "A government gift indeed!" "The person who supplied the money for this Christmas gift is the tax payer. Santa Claus who foots the bill is Junior's electric train or his mother's negligence."

"Many allowance like all other government money comes from one source only, the taxpayer. All that Ottawa does is to collect it in taxes, and after deducting a sizeable percentage of overhead to pay an army of collectors, clerks, bookkeepers, auditors and other evil servants, returns what's left to the taxpayer."

"So far as the average citizen is concerned, there are no such things as government gifts. Cheques from the quarter simply represent a return of money contributed by the people at large. Unlike private industry, a government does not create new wealth. Before it can give anything it must first take away. It is a sort of Indian giver in reverse."

**SMALL CITIES HAPPIER** — Those Canadian cities whose sole aim seems to be to grow bigger and bigger might well consider the case of Edinburgh, states The Financial Post. The Scottish capital is content with its present modest proportions. It is quite willing to let much larger Glasgow get the lion's share of new industry and new population. Edinburgh prefers to mature gradually, to retain its beauty and its spaciousness.

In this day and age of bustle, grime and congestion there is a lesson to be offered in the contentment of Edinburgh. Canada will be happier, sounder and more genuinely prosperous tomorrow if we have more cities like Charlottetown, Fredericton, Quebec, Guelph, Brandon and Victoria and fewer of the million and over.

# In The Days When The Porcupine Was Young

By G. A. Macdonald

## No. 81. Old-Time Christmas Times

No reasonable man or woman could live very long in the Porcupine area without believing in Santa Claus. From the earliest days of the camp the spirit has been very evident here.

The special Porcupine Christmas spirit seemed to show itself first in 1909, the first Christmas after the gold rush into the area. Most of the prospectors left the Camp for the Christmas season, but there were twenty or thirty who for one reason or another were forced to remain at Porcupine City.

Was that 1909 Christmas a dull and dreary one for those unfortunate? Ask Layton Ostrasser! He was one who could not leave, as he had the Gibson and Stirling store to look after. Mr. Ostrasser remembers that 1909 Christmas all through the years. "That was a regular Christmas!" he chuckled.

Starting a day or two before Christmas, without formality or announcement, the Gibson and Stirling store accepted as Christmas headquarters — yes, home — for everybody. On Christmas Day there was a regular Christmas dinner — turkey, and everything — for everybody. There was even a Christmas tree in the store with presents for everybody. Everybody else saw to that! There was round after round of Christmas carols, and of some songs that were not Christmas carols. Everybody had a happy time.

The greeting given those who had been away for Christmas, on their return was: "Say, boy, you missed it here! It was great."

That gallant Christmas spirit, has remained with Golden City or Porcupine, as it did with Porcupine City, the original first town of Porcupine. And it spread to South Porcupine, D. M. S. H. M. Acher, Mattamang Heights, Monks, Timmins, and all the other communities that developed in the Camp. Any old resident of any of the communities of Porcupine can tell you of the happy Christmas times in these places.

There was, however, one unfortunate matter in observing Christmas in this Camp in the early days. That was the habit that practically everybody seemed to have of leaving their Christmas shopping to the very last minute. For weeks before Christmas, The Porcupine Advance kept begging its readers to change this bad habit. "Shop Early!" The Advance pleaded, urged, cajoled.

But all the effort seemed in vain. After all the pleading and urging and argument, people simply persisted in leaving all their Christmas shopping to the last minute. It was most discouraging and disappointing for the editor to see crowds of his readers at this last-minute purchasing, when he was out doing his own shopping.

But if the people did put off arrangements to the last minute, they certainly made a wonderful job of it when they did start. Some Christmas events here might fairly be termed as classics.

Of course the children came in for special thought in all Christmas observances. Hughie Mulheron, the genial "mine host" of the Goldfields Hotel (then owned by the Hollinger) every year had a happy sleighride party for the children of the town. The youngsters were driven over every road in the Camp, but that did not make a very long ride in those days as the route was usually covered two or three times. After the sleighride, there was a motion picture entertainment for the guests of "Mine Host." About that event, the girls said it was "lovely!" and the boys loudly proclaimed it as well!

Starting with only about twenty children the number grew in a few years to nearly 600. Asked early in December of 1917 how he expected to get horses and sleighs enough for the occasion, Mr. Mulheron answered: "If the livery, merchants, mines and lumber companies cannot spare enough, we'll make our own sleighs, and we'll get Jack Dalton to bring in enough horses from the West. He'll do it too!" In any event, the sleighride party was successfully carried through that year as usual.

It was a few years after that when Leo Maricchi started to entertain the Children's Aid youngsters each Christmas time at the Empire Hotel. First, the youngsters were treated to a sumptuous dinner. "Everythin' from soup to nuts!" was one lad's apt and literal description of one of those dinners. Community singing delighted the youngsters, especially when Leo himself did the lead. Usually "Gene Colombo" was there to delight the youngsters with his violin playing, and often Peter Bardesson would have the youngsters standing up to cheer his accordion playing. But, of course, the outstanding occasion was the party when Leo dispelled all shyness on the part of the children by giving a lively step dance.

In later years other hotel men were thoughtful and generous in their entertainment of the Children's Aid children at Christmas time. Mr. and Mrs. F. Lacroix, of the Lady Laurier hotel, more than once gave the youngsters a delightful party at Christmas time, while to this day, youngsters of years gone by, recall happy memories of the wonderful parties given them by Thos. Tremblay, of the Alcoma hotel.

Typical of the Porcupine Christmas spirit is the story of the Timmins young lady who taught the school in a small community between here and Porcupine Junction. The young lady and

the clerk in J. P. McLaughlin's store were having great difficulty in meeting the shopping situation. Eventually, the young lady explained quite frankly that she wished to get presents for all her pupils, but, while she knew exactly what she wanted, the cost was prohibitive. Some of the children would enjoy a merry Christmas at their homes, but others came from struggling families, where clothing and boots were prime needs.

The clerk felt unequal to the problem, and called the proprietor, J. P. McLaughlin, who was always sympathetic and persuasive, and soon had the young lady telling all the difficulties of the case.

"No wonder you're puzzled," J. P. said. "Now my suggestion is that you make out a full list of what you would really like to give, and with that as a guide, I'm sure that you and I together can scheme out a plan that will not be too bad."

It took some persuasion, but J. P. had his way with him, and eventually he got that list. "We'll call this the 'Right List,'" he said.

The young lady had some items for the other list, and, with a few suggestions from J. P., the other list was also completed, though the teacher was not happy about it. J. P. tallied the latter list. "It comes a \$16.25," he said, "but as it is Christmas time we'll knock off the quarter." He added that he would send the goods down to her school address that evening. The young lady paid the bill, and departed feeling that the best possible had been done.

The big parcel was duly received at the school the next day, in lots of time for the school party, but when the young lady opened the big parcel, she found that none of the articles she had ordered were enclosed. Instead, the parcel contained everything which she had longed to give her school children.

The young lady was worried. It was too late to change the presents, but it was going to be a burden on her to pay the difference in cost between the two lists.

There was a ray of hope for her, however, enclosed in the parcel. In an envelope, there was a bill, "For Goods for School Children, \$16.00. Received payment with thanks." Also in that envelope there was a pencilled note: "If you are going to teach your pupils to believe in Santa Claus, you must believe in him yourself! Merry Christmas to you and your pupils!"

Her first call when she came home for Christmas was at J. P. McLaughlin's store, but when she started to tell J. P. that he had used the wrong list, his answer was a positive: "Young lady, it was the 'Right List' that I filled. Please, don't say a word more about it!"

## Israel's Six Months Of Achievement

Military Phase Past, New State Launches Program of Agricultural Resettlement  
by Kenneth Bilby

TEL AVIV — Israel has just rounded out its first half-year of statehood with a victorious war behind it and with a formidable program of agricultural resettlement as its next goal.

The government and people of Israel feel, with much justification, that the war has been decided. Almost imperceptibly the states main effort is shifting today from battle to internal development. The Negev and Galilee already have become the scene of a far-reaching resettlement program.

Already trucks loaded with building material are flowing south. For the first time since May 14 the neglected Negev desert region is beginning to sprout new colonies. Within the next six months scores of settlements will dot the desert and some much farther south than the present outpost around Bir Asluj, sixteen miles below Beer-sheba.

The Israeli 75,000-man army has not begun to demobilize because two unbroken Arab armies — those of Iraq and Trans Jordan — still pose a potential threat to Israeli borders. There may be more battle flurries but the possibility of destroying the new state has been removed, in the opinion of Israeli leaders.

Best indication of the new trend is a government shift which has occurred within recent days. Levi Eshkol (formerly Skolnik), Assistant Defense Minister, was one of Premier David Ben-Gurion's military stalwarts, has been shifted to the Jewish Agency Executive, where he will assume complete control of the agricultural resettlement program.

Mr. Eshkol is a military man with a long experience in the kibbutzim, or settlements. The fact that Mr. Ben-Gurion has released him, plus other lesser officials, provides the best testimony of the urgency with which the government views land development.

Ben Locker, chairman of the Agency Executive, estimated that \$200,000,000 in agency funds will be required in the coming year to keep the settlement program going and to create new industries, with their attendant job opportunities for tens of thousands of immigrants. It also will be necessary to restore a proper balance to Israel's economy.

"Most of our experts tell us," Mr. Locker said, "that we must have 20 to 25 percent of our population in ag-

ricultural pursuits to obtain a balanced economy. We have about 15 percent now, so there must be a shift toward the land."

In any review of the state's achievements in the first six months, the army's role must be predominant. It grew with astonishing speed. It organized virtually overnight, and it fought far better than most people had suspected it would. It has become a military power to be reckoned with in any assessment of Middle Eastern affairs.

Though less publicized and less spectacular, some solid gains have been registered internally by the state. In the words of acting United Nations mediator Dr. Ralph B. Bunche it has become a "vibrant reality."

The government itself is developing along Western lines. The judicial system with magistrate courts, district courts and a seven-man supreme court in Jerusalem, is well established. The Cabinet of thirteen ministers is governing under the watchful eye of the thirty-seven member State Council.

A police force of 2,000 men has been formed out of the remnants of the mandatory force. A total of 1,300 new policemen have been trained and placed on duty.

The government has set up a civil service, with 5,000 employees, excluding the police and public school teachers. The civil service commission is studying the problems of gradings and salaries and is attempting to weed out incompetent and corrupt employees inherited from the mandate era.

THE FINANCE MINISTER has stabilized the value of the new Israeli pound, of which 24,000,000 have been placed in circulation. The first coins with a provisional design, are nearly ready for issue. Income taxes have been collected at the rate of \$69,000,000 annually. The mandatory government collected only \$38,000,000 more from the entire Arab and Jewish population of Palestine.

Air and telegraphic communications have been established with all major countries. A 2,000-kilometer (1,240-mile) road network has been given much neglected maintenance and repair work on a regular schedule. This on-going achievement in this respect has been the construction of a new two-way paved highway sixty

kilometers (thirty-seven miles) long, which links Israel to Jerusalem through a corridor in Arab Palestine.

Despite its solid achievement, the new state is by no means perfect, and some of its worst enemies are those visitors who proclaim to the world that it is a flawless creation. It is no such thing and responsible government officials frankly admit it.

The cost of living, for example, has not been effectively controlled. Prices are out of proportion to needs, and a black market has established sinister roots. The plight of some salaried government officials is desperate.

In the aftermath of the brutal assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte, the late U.N. mediator, terrorism has been temporarily squelched. But the most sanguine Israeli does not believe it has been eradicated for good. The mere fact that a nationwide manhunt in a state as small as Israel has failed to unearth the assassins is evidence that terrorists' sympathizers still exist.

Perhaps the acid test of Israel's durability will come after the peace settlement and after the first national election, now scheduled to take place between Jan. 7 and Jan. 14. The conduct of elections without supervision or interference will provide a searching spotlight on the depth of democratic roots in Israel.

When the election law has been adapted the State Council will vote itself out of existence. It will be supplanted by a Constituent Assembly, which will adopt a constitution and which in turn will be succeeded by a permanent Parliament. Because of Israel's democracy the government is determined that it will not be an exact duplicate of any in existence.

"We will attempt to incorporate the best features of every democratic legislative body in the world," one official explained.

An encouraging augury of Israeli feelings is that section of the election law adopted this week by the State Council. It extends the franchise to every Christian, Moslem and Jew residing within territory held by Israeli arms. There is only one requirement for the vote — a declared intent on the part of the voter to become a citizen of the new state.

## Inside Labour

by Victor Riesel

**HEARD ON THIS BEAT:** This is grim news but true and it won't do any good to look the other way. Jobs are beginning to disappear. Top executives of the nation's biggest manufacturing outfits have told me in the past few days they fear they'll have to lay off thousands in the next six months. Stuff is just not selling in the shiny new stores — which opened or re-furnished so brightly right after the war. Little cities in Connecticut's industrial belt are so alarmed over hundreds of jobs they're calling emergency parleys to see what they can do for their people. . . . Looks like the time's here for Mr. Truman to sit down with business labor leaders before this thing starts snowballing.

There have been high strategy conferences in the East in the past few days between labor leaders, and the Congressmen (also governors) they helped to elect. Suddenly this group no longer is counting on President Truman's automatically helping them and they're organizing to fight for control of Congress.

John Lewis' new plans must be as grandiose as his well rehearsed Shakespearean thunder — for his coal-diggers union now own Washington real estate worth over \$2,000,000 including a headquarters, and two office buildings, one of which, recently purchased, houses his strange District 50. What's up? . . . Although Mr. Truman planned to kill off the spy-probing House Un-American Affairs Committee in January, it is now certain to get its full budget. The Committee's Rep. McDowell tells me that the stuff in the Chambers' pumpkin is "far more shocking than anything that's been made public from them yet." His group is keeping the data a close secret.

I guess this is what you call a police state: Those anti-capitalist pro-Communists who run the CIO's electrical Workers (UE) union at a big Westinghouse plant in Wilmerding, near Pittsburgh, have called on the capitalist police for protection.

Seems that the leftists are being booted so vigorously by the membership each meeting that they need police to guard the union hall now. The anti-Communist members have been receiving guidance from civic-minded men who don't belong to the union.

So now whenever an outsider slips quietly into the meetings to advise the non-Communist membership the lefties point him out to the police who politely refuse him admittance.

Watch for a new kind of strike — the "safety walkout" which will hit the steel industry because of Phil Murray's dismay at discovering, while driving about Pittsburgh, that there are areas where big mill fumes kill off cows and vegetation.

So strongly does Murray feel about the safety of his men that he has written into the steel contracts the most explicit clauses giving them the right to strike if they believe their lives are involved.

Just a few weeks before the tragic Donora (20 miles from Pittsburgh) smog killed people there, the steel workers struck the local plant and the company agreed to eliminate fumes inside the mill. There's a strike on now in a big company where a defective train is being used. It mangled a man last week.

What Phil Murray fears most, is the use of flourine in steel making. U.S. Steel and hundreds of the big companies are gladly co-operating with the union. Where they don't the steelmakers will strike.

Murray, incidentally, will go to Washington this week and meet with his CIO vice-presidents behind closed doors to work out their demands on the Truman administration. . . . Some labor men are a little weary over hearing the President tell them he feels wonderful but has no real plans yet.

Brogue-tongued, cane-carrying Mike Quill head of the CIO Transport Workers Union, is no prude or ascetic. He loves a lusty story and can mix with the boys in any pub.

But last week Mike got all his New York leaders to pledge not to take a drink for 30 days or so. He wanted such a perfect battle against the now-ousting Communist leadership at the union convention that he was taking no chances on the leftists getting some of his boys drunk. Now, having won all points, he plans the biggest blowout for all the abstainers.

When the FBI began checking the background of Walter Reuther's brilliant brother Victor, rumors started that he was to be the first labor man to be appointed a U.S. ambassador. However, this investigation was just a routine check-up on Victor Reuther who is spending some time in England watching their automobile production methods preparatory to advising them on how to get a bigger turnout.

Trouble with the labor drive for ambassadorships is that no top flight union leader will give up his presidency to go abroad for a while. Only high labor man available is the machinists' Harvey Brown who retires shortly from his job as president of the machinists.

The whole move began after Eric Johnston proposed such appointments in his latest book "We're All in It."

However, the labor people expect Secretary of State Marshall to resign and be replaced by Averill Harriman who has promised them such appointments. Can you imagine John Lewis ambassador to the court of St. James?

Angered by Phil Murray's convention assault on their unions, the Communies are spreading anti-Catholic rumors, openly attacking the Assn. of Catholic Trade Unionists and maligning Murray's devoutness. . . . An auto union local in Toledo, O., whose meetings hadn't been going too well, put a nursery near their meeting hall and began calling sessions on Saturday afternoons, instead. Now the crowd turns out wives and all. At the same time, in the next door nursery, the kids watch free movies while a baby sitter passes out the noise quieting ammunition — ice cream and milk. . . . Union attendance is up 50 percent.

Ex-Communist Party leader Earl Browder has begun to run meetings of his own of former party members who are still loyal to him — talks to them in New York's hotel Capitol. . . . If the Post Master General will follow Congressman Kersten's report next week he should learn something startling about part of his Alaskan staff.

You get a view of how tough things are in Hollywood from the paid up membership list of the Screen Extras Guild. There are not only 3,814 on the roster. Once the producers used that many in one spectacle scene alone — Ben Hur, where they are stung!

Being called a spy by federal authorities was just a minor inconvenience for a chap called Steve Nelson.

He knows we've got sort of fellows about such things. Few in Washington excite themselves over disappearing State papers and atomic secrets. . . . So Steve, alias Steve Mesarosh, alias Louis Evans and alias enough other tags to fill a news-magazine's masthead, took a few days off some time ago, went to sneer at federal officials, and hurriedly returned to his grimy little office in downtown Pittsburgh. In the Bakewell Bldg., should anybody want to know exactly.

And then back to his work in the center of that intricate mechanism which pumps life — in the form of coal, oil, aluminum, steel and electric power — into the guts of the plants which these United States need for business life and self protection.

And a this very moment Steve Nelson, director of the Western Pennsylvania Communist Party, is operating freely out of the Bakewell Bldg., spreading his network of underground cells through the country's most heavily concentrated industrialized sector.

To infiltrate this area with special agents and cells has been Steve Nelson-Mesarosh-Evan's special assignment for the past 90 days.

Before that his skill was well exploited, according to testimony before a Congressional Committee which flatly charged him with being a pro-Soviet bag-man who received money from somebody from the Soviet Consulate.

This testimony asserts he met an atomic scientist, got a formula, rendezvoused with Soviet agent Peter Ivanov of San Francisco, "and transferred something to Ivanov." Later he received the money.

Then he returned to his less cloak-and-dagger Communist work — which is directing today, unhampered, unmolested and unwatched, decent sort of fellows aren't we?

About 90 days ago Steve-boy was dispatched to Western Pennsylvania. Although this man has long been a heavy concentration point for the Communist apparatus never has it had a Commie agent of Nelson's skill and stature. He needs that skill.

His job is to get up cells in John Lewis' coal diggers' union, to revive the Commie cells in the aluminum centers, to start revolts against Phil Murray's leadership in the steel plants, to seep into the ranks of 100,000 oil workers only a handful of whom belong to unions, and especially to whip into shape the Communist cadres in the great midwest power plants and the huge electrical machinery factories.

Until recently the power field cells were directed by Roy "Horseface" Hudson, Party agent who was shifted to the Pacific coast strike.

And this Nelson-Mesarosh chap had one more A-priority assignment — to whip the midwestern Slavic outfits back into line despite their resentment at the Cominorm's treatment of Brother Broz (Tito) over in Europe. This was not just a collector's P.M. for the Communists. Some of the Slav outfits are the party's secret weapon in the Pittsburgh area — and have considerable influence among the miners and steelworkers.

Besides which — the Pittsburgh sector is the one spot from which a wartime U.S. can be kicked square in the belly.

Paging Comrade Nelson!