

# The Porcupine Advance

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## In The Days When The Porcupine Was Young

By G. A. Macdonald

### No. 120. Everything Was Different Then

Some years ago there was a local gentleman who frequently wrote letters to The Porcupine Advance. Those letters were always thoughtful and tipped with an odd humour that added to their interest. They were always welcomed at the office. It was quite evident that the writer of those letters kept posted on all current affairs. For this reason, it was at first surprising when one letter started out by stating that the writer never read anything in a newspaper except the editorials. The writer went on to explain that he never troubled to read the news, because the news was always the same from year to year and from century to century. Every item of news, he claimed, had been written before. There were no new kinds of murders, or burglaries, or concerts, or marriages, or foreshots, or what-have-you. "Change the names, the places, and the dates," the writer claimed, "and you will find any item has been written up before a score or a hundred times."

At the time, The Advance, while admitting that there was some basis for the letter-writer's theory, suggested that there were some cases where the gentleman would need to go back some hundreds of years to duplicate current news. Examples that may have been quoted were the birth of quintuplets near North Bay, and the abdication of a British sovereign to marry a divorced commoner. The chief point against the letter writer's theory, however, was the fact that most news had a twist that made it different. As a matter of exactly the same, or two accidents that there were never two crimes that did not make them to some extent different in detail.

Even social events, after all, differed widely, in more than the names, dates, and places. In addition to the necessity for a record of events as they occur, the differences in the various items of news of the day deserved as detailed mention as might be practical.

In the early days of the Porcupine Camp, there were many items of real news, even considering the opinion of that humorous letter-writer. One murder could not have been written up by changing the dates, names and places in a previous killing. The few murders here all had their odd twists to make them different. For example, one gentleman who was hanged some twenty-five years ago, was convicted of killing one of his common-law wives in Timmins because she refused to keep another of his common-law wives, so that he could live in peace at Rouyn with a third common-law wife. There are not many kinds of that type of murder on record.

As for burglaries, they too were different in Timmins. For example, there is the case of the fellow convicted of breaking into a room and stealing money and a watch. After conviction, he broke out of jail, stealing money, diamond rings and other valuables from some of his fellow prisoners.

But you may say, a charge of obtaining money under false pretences would be the same in Timmins as in any other place. That would be a case where all that would be necessary would be to change the names, places and dates? That idea shows that you do not know Timmins. This is proven by a case of obtaining money under false pretences in Timmins some thirty years ago.

The accused was a humble labourer who lived in Moneta. According to reports at the time, the man secured several hundred dollars from a number of trusting women, before Constable Norman Burke gathered enough information about his alleged fraud to bring him to trial. Constable Burke found that the man had been selling a form of ribbon garter that would, according to the Moneta man, do almost anything that was required of it. In each garter, the Moneta man placed a paper on which was written a prayer in the Italian language. This prayer, according to the garter peddler, was all powerful under the proper circumstances, and with the proper amount of money paid him. One lady told Constable Burke that the garter had been guaranteed to ward off disease, but it didn't, and she was refused a refund. Another lady said that she was told that if she wore that garter she would not have any more children. When she asked for her money back, for breach of contract, she was simply told she had worn it on the wrong leg, and to adjust matters she must pay more money. Still another lady had been promised a baby if she wore the garter, but apparently this was another case of the wrong leg, or the wrong garter, or the wrong prayer. From the information gathered by Constable Burke some ladies had paid as much as \$100.00 for the garter to assure a large family, while others had paid up to \$150.00 for a guarantee that they would have no family at all.

When the case came to trial, however, the Moneta man must have been wearing that powerful garter himself, or maybe two or three of the ribbon article, not to mention a number of prayers. In this case, the prayers seemed to be answered, for the case against the garter peddler was dismissed. While the evidence for the defence was such as would have had little weight in a court of law under ordinary circumstances, the evidence for the Crown was so conflicting and so uncertain that the magistrate felt he had to give the accused the benefit of the doubt. "I don't know who to believe," commented the magistrate. "Neither do I," responded J. E. Cook, who acted for the prosecution. The real basis of the defence was to the effect that only smaller amounts of money than those claimed had been paid over, but for reading the scriptures to the ladies concerned. Dismissal of the case seemed to be the only fair thing under all the circumstances. In any event, it must be admitted that this was not a case where only the dates, places and names had been changed in a case of fraud.

Even in the ordinary incidents and accidents of the early days there were twists that specially made them news. For instance, there was the instance of the patient at the Cairns hospital who escaped through an open window during the first few minutes he had been left alone for many hours. This patient was so seriously ill with the prevalent flu that no hope was held out for his recovery. Though his case seemed hopeless, every possible attention had been given him, though he seemed close to the apathy of approaching death. Escaping, clad only in a hospital nightshirt, with the temperature around thirty below, the patient made his way to the Mat-

before he was rescued. Hustled tagami river, and was in the water back to the hospital there was no hope at all of his recovery, but he fell into a deep sleep, and in the morning he was quite evidently well on the way to recovery. Dr. H. H. Moore, the medical man in charge of this patient, explained that the cold trip to the river and the plunge into the icy water had broken the man's fever, and thus made his recovery possible. The doctor, however, said such treatment was so drastic that it could not be ventured in most cases. But anyway, the item about this patient must be set down as news, even to a humorist, or especially to a humorist.

Also, an item about so common a thing as a birth was worthy of being classed as real news, not duplicated by other names, places or dates. This item was published in The Porcupine Advance in February of 1918, and told of the birth of a son to Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Stewart, Jr., of Iroquois Falls. So far, only a change of dates, names and places was required to put the item in the very common and ordinary class. But a comment added to the birth notice put the item in a class by itself. It was noted that the child's parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents were all living and all in good health. The great-great-grandfather resided at Ottawa, and was quoted as saying: "I am only 103 years old!"

Even concerts in the early days were not just routine affairs that might have all been written the same, with a change in names, places and dates. One good example of this truth was the concert at which Dr. J. A. McInnis presided in 1919. An excellent programme had been arranged by the band, but when the concert commenced it was found that not a single one of the assisting artists was present. The good doctor took it all in his stride. "I'm calling for volunteers," he said, and he named artists in the audience. The response was so notable as to be a matter of real news. Gifted vocalists like A. W. Snow, Jas. Geils, W. Ramsay filled in a programme that was a genuine delight to music lovers.

But someone may suggest that reference had been missed here to motor car accidents. Well, here's one in 1918 that certainly was different. A motorist was convicted of running into a baby carriage, with the baby still in the carriage. That's not too ordinary, but there are more twists to come. The motorist was fined \$50.00 and costs. "I won't pay!" he told the magistrate. "I think you will!" Magistrate Atkinson said, as he waved the man down from the stand. At first, the man steadily refused to pay, preferring even to go to jail. But the magistrate was more interested in the money being paid, so the car was seized and sold by public auction. The fine was paid.

### Rev. Richard D. Jones Heard by Kiwanians

(Continued from Page One)

his by pointing out that in all industries workers had to co-operate in friendly way to secure the best results. At the other end of the question, there was certain to be loss and unnecessary cost if the executives were selected on the basis of prejudice, instead of on merit. "The churches, democracy, the industrialists, the labour unions, the service clubs, and all others are against prejudice, just as they are against sin and cancer, but prejudice, like sin and cancer, continue with us," Rev. Mr. Jones said.

"What can be done about it?" he asked. His own answer was that the facts should be faced. "Every race or ethnological group had its own freedom in evidence. But no race, or creed or color had any monopoly on ability or integrity. If all groups had equal opportunity and education, it would be found that all would display the same level of heart and head. Prejudice was fed too often on mass judgments, but individuals should be judged on their merits, and real acquaintance would soon lead to respect and goodwill.

Rev. Mr. Jones complimented Timmins Kiwanian Club on the number of national and ethnological groups represented by its membership roll. "You are working together and doing good work for your community, the nation and the world, because you know each other without prejudice," he said.

The thoughtful and well-chosen words of Kiwanian Jack Weinstein in extending the thanks of the club to the guest speaker, added to the impression left on all present by the convincing address.

Visitors for the day, introduced by Nick Basciano, were, in addition to the guest speaker, Sol Shankman and Jack Miner, of Timmins, Fred J. Brown, of New Liskeard Kiwanian, and D. R. Millar, of Haileybury.

Eleven United States Communists stood in a New York court room last Friday and heard a stern judge, Harold Medina, pass sentence on them for conspiring to advocate overthrow

## Inside Labour

by Victor Riesel

Once when my social existence was slightly more esoteric, I sat around with John L. Lewis and nostalgically he told me, as he smiled that sudden beatific grin of his, that he liked wild west movies.

Knowing well the gentleman's affinity for casting himself in rockwren roles, I could see behind his momentary whimsy a vision of "Hopalong" Lewis holding the mountain pass, single handed, against whole tribes of roaring war-painted Apaches.

Some years later, in San Francisco, I listened again to John L. (this time at a safe distance across a banquet hall) and once more was presented with the vision of a lone figure fighting hordes of secret police for justice and decency. Again he grinned as he told us that the White House had wired his Alexandria home with microphones and had even ordered the FBI to plant a secret-gadget truck outside the house—a vehicle equipped with a new fangled wireless receiver which could pick up conversations he had in his living room or as he walked the street.

Lewis told us that he believed Harry Truman was trying to frame him into a federal pen because Old Trueheart spoke for the working class of the world. Nothing less.

Some days ago, John L. (for Laurelton, I suppose) sounded off again behind the closed doors of Federal Conciliator Cy Ching's Washington offices on the third floor of the U. S. Dept. of Labor building. And Lewis disclaimed as he always does when he's in trouble—whether he's Hopalong or Hamlet, he's always the man the world wants to crush because he's such a mighty, mighty labour leader.

In long sonorous speeches, hurled across the table to which the likable grizzly-bearish Ching had brought the industrialists in a wearying effort to settle the coal strike, Old John sneered at them as "economic underling" with no influence. They sat there, grinning and enjoyed it, as you always do at a Lewis performance. For, the more difficulty he's in, the greater the histrionics.

What Lewis said, in effect, was that all of American industry had ganged up on him to crush his United Mine Workers.

To put it bluntly the reason for Lewis' new Wagnerian trumpeting against all U. S. industry, finance and Wall Street, is that he's really in a personal crisis. He's worked himself into a senseless strike. His miners are pathetically broke and going more and more into debt to keep from going hungry and thinly clad this winter.

He knows he could settle today, get more money for his welfare fund, a shorter work week for his coal diggers and send them back to work—if he would only stop being stubborn and give up his demand to control production of American coal. But he insists on the inclusion of a clause saying that the miners need work only when they "are willing and able." Which means that Lewis can shut down the fields anytime he wants—and the operators just won't have that.

Because his coal diggers are going penniless to satisfy his whims, he again has recreated an ogre and is holding the imaginary pass against imaginary Apaches.

Then to prove that he's really the worrywart of American labour, he embarrasses Phil Murray by publicly asking the AFL to donate \$2,250,000 a week (plus his \$250,000) to the steel strikers. This was supposed to heroize him among his own people. But it didn't.

There have been sharp protests from the miners—and for the first time in years they're talking back to him. On his desk right now is the following typical telegram from the miners' local union in St. Michaels, Cambria County, Pa.:

"We believe a kitty should be raised to alleviate poverty in the mining fields first. The policy of advocating bread for every other Johnny except Johnny Miner can have no other effect than to demoralize the digger. If you visit the coal fields, the economic conditions will be self-evident that charity begins at home.

"Signed by the officers."

This wire, one of many reportedly sent him, reflects the resentment in the coal fields against his ubiquitous grandstanding. It is known that the Steelworkers Union needs no money now. During the closed strategy session of CIO chiefs in Pittsburgh last Wednesday, leaders of the powerful Amalgamated Clothing Workers (men's garments) and of the auto workers offered Murray their treasuries, totalling some \$10,000,000. Add this to his own \$7,000,000 to \$8,000,000 and you know Phil Murray and his followers aren't exactly broke.

No, Old Hopalong didn't fool anyone. He tried to exploit the steel strike by giving the impression that he, personally, Laurelton Lewis was going to back it up. This was supposed to frighten the steel companies, who own coal pits of their own, into settling with Lewis.

If the old boy wants to help the working people of this nation, let him put the coal diggers back to work and guarantee coal in the steel mills, so the industrialists may know they have fuel with which cooperate.

Then we'll have peace, Sir Laurelton.

HEARD OF THIS BEAT:

Once when a columnist insulted President Truman's wife and daughter in print, the little chief executive almost punched the newsman after a press conference. Secret service men hustled between them, and the incident went unnoticed. That was one of the few moments in which Mr. Truman revealed how tough he can get when riled. Now he's that irritated again—and only the fact that word was flashed to him from New York late this past week that the steel strike might be over in five or six days kept him from sounding off at both sides. But on the same day he did go to an off-the-record meeting of 200 businessmen and called some of the industrialists "stupid!"

When word came that there might be steel peace, his negotiators were working on a formula which would have the steel industry grant Phil Murray's union the 10-cent pension and welfare package, with the CIO not having to chip in a penny. BUT in return for this non-contributory system, the union would have to share in any jump in welfare-pension payments from now on.

In other words, the industrialists want a ceiling on just how many millions of dollars they'll have to shell out as the years go by. They recall that John L. Lewis started by asking for a nickel a ton coal tax for his welfare fund—and now has hiked his demands to 30 cents.

John Lewis may be responsible for actual hunger in the coal fields within 30 days. Clerks in hundreds of mine patch stores owned by the Union Supply Co., which caters to the miners and has given them vast amounts of credit, report that "the coal diggers have forgotten what cash means." So heavy is this credit load that the Union Supply Co. now contemplates cutting off all but cash sales and that will mean actual depression days kind of aching empty stomachs. But the \$1,000-a-week John L. (plus expenses, of course, of course) isn't upset by the thought. He'll eat regularly.

## A Bit O' This and That

- Pawnbrokers prefer people with no redeeming qualities.
- Sing and the world sings with you; groan and you're a nuisance to the community.
- One of the troubles with motoring is that drivers don't decrease accidents as fast as accidents decrease drivers.
- Soon the latest thing in fall clothes will be a married woman. Ask the hubby who has to wait.
- A California woman identified a robber who got her husband's weekly pay—before she did.
- "Eight billion germs live on a dollar bill." Yes, but germs don't have to pay taxes, and they don't buy things they don't need at prices they can't afford.
- In the good old days photographers used to take people in tintype. Now gasoline does it.
- Mothers should teach their sons to cook so that they need not go to work without breakfast when they marry.
- Offer the bride put initials on her linens—maybe to make her mark in the social world.
- Consumers are showing more resistance to rising meat prices. It takes a stout fellow to stand up to a tough slice of round steak posing in porterc-house prices.
- It doesn't count when the rubber you get in bridge comes from peeking into the hand of another player.
- Feathers on hats are coming back, style report says. Why we recommend the lovely plumage of starlings and sparrows?
- The fellow who is a stickler for law often proves a trial to his friends.
- Western scientists have stuck upon a chemical that will dissolve fog, but they don't recommend it for those whose minds are continually in a haze.

## Russian Atomic Bomb Stories

Russian atomic bomb stories are a dime a dozen; range from reports that Russia is ready to drop atomic bombs on the U.S. to accounts of an accidental explosion which killed all the Russian and German scientists on the job. It is recommended that some dependable information be awaited.

Military outlook is, naturally, more pleasant for the Russians in the event of a war if they have atomic bombs than if they have not. Some U.S. Army authorities have argued that it might be wise to drop a lot of atomic bombs on Russia before they were ready to return the compliment, but the common sense and human decency of the people of the United States made this nothing but a theory, however correct as a piece of military technique.

Broadly speaking, the outlook would seem to be that, provided the free nations go on with their business of organizing adequate defence against a Russian attack, such an attack will not take place, and that the ability to make atomic bombs will be more likely to persuade the Russians that they are not in danger than to cause them to make war.

Great danger to peace comes from the constant irritation created in the free nations by Communist propaganda. Sane men dislike to see the life of nations threatened by fanatic movements. If the Russians really want peace, all that they have to do is stop supporting Communist movements in other countries. It is as possible for free nations to have a long period of peace with Russia under the present Tsar as it was to have peace with Russia under his predecessors.

## Their Annual Fling

The ancient Britons used to get goose pimples on their blue-painted hides on the night of Oct. 31 when the spirits of the wicked walked the land. On Oct. 31, 1949, the not-so-wicked spirits of little boys will be loosed again for one night of wildness in a year of reasonably well-mannered behaviour.

Hallowe'en is the night when tradition-bound parents are obliged to let their offspring blow off a little steam.

Boys and girls, ordered every morning to wash behind their ears, will have a chance to smear their whole faces with burnt cork. Little girls, constantly admonished to keep their clothes clean, will run about in the trousers father wears to stoke the furnace.

Latter-day goblins, taught to say "please" and "thank you" at the slightest provocation, will thump on doors with the demanding cry, "shell out" and then scurry off verandahs, their loot clutched under their arms.

Polite children who wouldn't dream of walking on the grass will scale your back fence, smear your window with soap, and just for good measure, put your garbage cans on your roof.

Once the vigil of All Saints' Day, eve of a day devoted to all saints, known and unknown, the night has little left of its Christian significance. Only the supernatural remains, evidenced in the horrible, unhuman masks that peer from the darkness. Thus the pagan spirit of the Druids has come into its own again, moderated and subdued by centuries of Christian culture.

The chiefs of police will have their say about vandalism, and parents will dutifully scold the few guilty of excesses, but most adults will be happy, one night a year, to let the kids blow off their Hallowe'en steam.

### TIME OF THE MAD ATOM

By Virginia Brasier  
This is the age  
Of the half-read page.  
And the quick hash  
And the mad dash.  
The bright night  
With the nerves tight.  
The plane hop  
And the brief stop.  
The lamp tan  
In a short span.  
The Big Shot  
In a good spot.  
And the brain strain  
And the heart pain.  
And the cat naps  
Till the spring snaps—  
And the fun's done!

'GREENER PASTURE



White in The Akron Beacon-Journal