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NOTES and COMMENTS

Paring Knife Needed

Indications are that the government will shortly study the civil service situation with a view to reducing the number of governmental employees. The average wage earner in Canada will breathe a fervent vote of thanks for that decision, says the Kitchener News-Record.

In December, 1946, the total employed by the government was 173,960 and in November, 1947, it had dropped to 151,792 with the war well in the background. However, on Jan. 31 of this year the total had increased to 154,999. Put in simple language, in 1946 one out of every 70 people in Canada was employed by the government and in 1947 one out of every 85. From then on the improvement ceased, there being a government employee for every 84 people in Canada at the start of this year.

This means, briefly, that one out of every 84 people is definitely not a producer, and it is producers who create export trade, which is one-third of the trade volume of Canada.

It is known that the tax division has been increased because it was undermanned in wartime, and the defence department has an increased staff, but war departments and especially the Department of Veterans Affairs, have been reduced in size.

Judging by the figures there is ample scope for the committee to do substantial paring and with the election over the political side will not be so embarrassing.

157 Jobless Get Insurance

Despite the current lay-offs in the textile industry in the town of Lindsay, Mr. H. C. Brown, of the National Employment Bureau, there, states that his office is not too dissatisfied with the employment situation in Lindsay.

Mr. Brown states that the number of insurance claimants last week in Lindsay was 157 for the county, and is largely made up of female labour. He said that the "Knitters", Horn Bros. and National Textiles had laid off virtually all of their female help for the time being, but that with the present construction work, the male labour situation is, at present, good.

Unless there is some deferential between persons being laid off annually at some season of the year and those who never get a lay-off Unemployment Insurance will continue to be unfair to the steady, lower wage earner. Naturally those high paid employees are going to be promptly out of work the moment they are not needed, whereas an employee on more moderate pay will be carried through a slack season.

Firms that carry their employees all year round for a period of say five years without a break, should be given a lower insurance rate. This matter has been brought to the attention of the government but so far no action on the matter has been taken.

The Tax Rate Goes Up

Municipalities have now all struck their tax rate in this district for 1949, and in every one the mill rate is increased over 1948. Reeves and councillors do not like to increase taxes, because they feel that it decreases their chance of re-election, and if they have no wish to be returned, they still like to hold down the tax rate, feeling it is a sign of good management and leadership on their part. All this is very good, but it can all be wrong.

Councils cannot maintain a stationary tax rate when they are forced to pay higher salaries, increased school costs, higher rates per hour for labor, increased hospital costs, supply increased services to indigents. A municipality is just like a householder, and what householder is running the home today at the same cost paid in say 1940.

All a council can do, is to paddle along, rejecting as much as possible, demands for free service, and to strike as good a bargain as possible on those services they cannot escape. A council controls only about one third of their actual expenditures, the remainder is expended under compulsion. When a school board, for instance, bounces salaries sky-high from what they used to be, they pass on a request to the municipal council to provide them with the money, and council must insert a mill rate on the tax bill to take care of the request. There is no argument about it. The law says the demand shall be provided.

The county tax rate is mounting, and is likely to go still higher. The council again just pays the county demand. No argument. Only control is for the reeves and deputy reeves to demand less expenditure when they are in county council. Few do this, and few of them would have the ability to stall the county council, if any number of the reeves were favorable to mounting expenditures. Many of them vote for increased expenditures in county council that they would not favor in their own municipalities.

Then, of course, there are increased salaries for local officials which cannot well be avoided in these times of increased living costs. Road maintenance is more, and roads have to be kept up better. School buses must go through, and the council is required to keep all roads open, not just the main roads.

The tax payers have demanded free school buses and they got the buses, but not free. Anyone with half a mind, should have known the buses would not roll along free, and if those who use them expected them for nothing, they will be sadly disillusioned.

These are only a few of the reasons for increased taxes, plus one other we mention. The provincial government is offering more and more in the way of grants, but each grant is dependent on the municipality stepping up a service or increasing its own costs in order to gain an extra dollar from the government. This "bait" is grabbed by too many municipalities in the hope of getting something with the other fellow's money, and is proving harmful to general taxation, by inducing municipalities into expenditures they cannot afford. An instance of this is in the health dept. where the government offers half the cost of a public health unit but the other half will cost the municipalities twice or three times what the municipality is paying for health service today. Take school costs — here the government increased the grants and demanded a standard to attain those grants that is making the common ratepayers pay two and three times as much in school taxes as he did before the government increased school costs. All in all, the provincial government is largely responsible for the increase in your tax bill, notwithstanding they are paying more in grants to municipalities than ever before.

Streamlining Our Civil Service

Ottawa's Plans to Cut Red Tape, Speed Work Long Overdue

No startling or immediate purge can be expected to follow the government announcement last week that there is to be a reduction in civil service staff.

It's likely that the over-all reduction in numbers employed in government "housekeeping" will be fairly small, but what the taxpayer can reasonably expect is a much improved and modernized government and administrative machine.

This is something the Civil Service Commission has been working on quietly and diplomatically since mid-1946. The Government's announcement and the Commission's promise that with government mandate in hand it will get "much tougher" mean that the Commission's efficiency drive—which only quite recently got into high gear—is being stepped up.

What is this efficiency drive?

Briefly, it's aimed at cutting much of the traditional red tape with which civil service functions have in the past been near-strangled.

It's aimed at streamlining pro-

cedures, introducing mechanization wherever possible, revamping office layouts and form design.

The ultimate aim is to get every department of government as well equipped to run its business as any well-organized commercial undertaking, to get backlogs of government business wiped off the books and current business handled currently and not, as has been the case for so long, badly in arrears.

To achieve this the Commission recently set up an Organization and Methods Division. Staffing it are specialists in the fields of engineering, accounting, business administration and office management recruited from business and industry for the most part, and from within the civil service.

At present, the Commission has 15 of these specialists at work in various departments of government. It would like to get another 10 and is seeking approval for this addition to the Division's staff.

So far, these specialists have taken a close and detailed look at the operations of 19 government departments. They're presently engaged on another 12 such efficiency projects and others are on the way.

As a result of these efforts, the Commission claims that more than \$500,000 a year is currently being saved in government administra-

Is Romance Dead in Stouffville?

(The Richmond Hill Liberal)

Can it be that tradition and sentiment are dying in our respected neighbouring municipality?

Are the flames of yesteryear turning to dust and ashes?

Are the immortal words of Charles Kingsley — "Young blood must have its day, lass . . ." nothing but black marks made by printer's ink on a piece of paper?

Perish the thought!

And yet there must be something in the idea, for press reports from that town say that no longer will Stouffvillians look with favor on the practice of wedding cars racing through the main streets dragging tin cans behind them, said cans scattering as they travel.

Says the Stouffville Tribune: "Today it could be a warning to the groom of what he may expect to be fed from, but to the village of Stouffville it can mean a general nuisance." The Tribune goes on to say that a citizen has suggested that a remedy for the tin can nuisance would be to buy a goat or two, and that the village constable has been asked to warn touring parties that they may be expected to return and clean up.

So romance — or at least one of its venerable demonstrations — perishes in Stouffville. Here's Niagara Falls issuing special certificates to visiting honeymooners — Stouffville threatening them with a clean-up job.

Come on, Stouffville — have a heart! The innocent victims of your ire are going to spend the rest of their married lives cleaning up tin cans, literally and metaphorically. Give them a break for once — while there's some fun in having tin cans tied to them. Just think what an opportunity you are giving to some poor husband to wisecrack in the years to come, when sweetie lays down the law about those empties which she has been trying to get him to dispose of for a couple of weeks: "Huh, had to clean up tin cans after you the day we were married. Been doing nothing else ever since."

And just look at the commercial opportunities you are missing. Sure, follow that citizen's suggestion. Buy a goat. Think of the wonderful possibilities for advertising Stouffville. Just imagine what a smart copy-writer could do for you. "Come to Stouffville for your honeymoon. We provide the goat."

On second thoughts perhaps you'd better not. There's always the odd chance that when the bloom has faded from the rose the blushing bride of today might make pointed remarks about acquiring a couple of goats at the same time.

Anyway, let the poor suckers have their fun for a few minutes. And when we come to visit you we'll look enviously at the growing piles of tin cans on your streets and realize that romance has not perished from the earth, at least as far as Stouffville is concerned.



EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

by Don Graham

Here are six ways to improve your relationships with other people through conversation:

1. Think before you speak. Result: you'll express yourself more clearly and to the point. And you'll avoid blunders.

2. Be a good listener. Conversation should be like a game in which the ball is tossed back and forth among the players. No one should hog the ball.

3. Be tactful. Remember, contradictions arouse resentment.

4. Draw out the other fellow. It's the only way to get to know him. Let your attitude reflect appreciation; kindness and personal interest.

5. Relax. Smile. Tension ruins conversation.

6. Comb your mind for news, views, stories or information that are unusual. Present your subject in an original way. If you find yourself starting to say something trite and commonplace—don't!

The modern life insurance agent listens to you, in order to fully understand your financial needs. Then, drawing on his experience and knowledge of life insurance policies, he suggests a plan which will meet those needs most satisfactorily.

tion expenses against a total cost to date of the Organization and Methods program of \$26,000 — or \$24 savings for each dollar spent.

And one project suggests the possibility of an additional \$3 millions a year saving for the Federal Treasury through improved collection method.

But perhaps more important than the actual immediate financial saving involved as a result of the new methods laid down by these specialists is that technical experts in various departments, hitherto bogged down in what used to be an inevitable welter of paper work, are now released to their proper duties, can now devote all but a fraction of their time to the jobs for which they were primarily hired. (It used to be, in many cases, that the technical job got the fraction of time.)

This, in turn, has called a halt to wasteful expansion in staffing of technical services, for all the while the operation was such that it bit deeply into the technical experts' time, their real work piled up and the call would go out periodically for more technical help.

Over-all staff reductions have been slight, for it is still the Commission's aim wherever possible to place elsewhere the individual proven redundant in any one department. At the same time there have been quite a few cases of temporary employees. Getting out of their own volition once they saw their private honeymoon in the service coming to an end as a result of the specialists' investigation of their functions. Reduction is also being effected through retirements for which no replacement will be sought under the new setup.

A towering, talking figure of Paul Bunyan, legendary north woods hero-giant, will be the central theme of the Chicago and North Western Railway exhibit at the Railroad Fair in Chicago this summer. He'll be 23 feet high.

Canadian mills produced 115 million yards of rayon fabrics in 1948, an all-time record.

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