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NOTES and COMMENTS

No Vatican Envoy Church Group Says

The board of evangelism and social service of the United Church of Canada today declared itself "unalterably opposed" to appointment by Canada of an envoy to the Vatican. The statement says that such a step would provoke serious religious dissension in Canada and be a cause of national disunity.

"We do not believe that the present serious situation of international disunity would be in any way overcome by such an appointment," the statement continues. "Neither do we accept the view that the Roman Catholic Church can be recognized as a formidable ally in the defence of democratic and religious liberty."

Toothpicks

Time was when great-grandpaw chopped on a carved ivory toothpick under his walrus moustache, says the Montreal Star.

You won't find many of these around anymore, except maybe in an antique shop or somebody's curio cabinet. But the art of wielding one still flourishes and the timber industry caters seriously to this long-lasting demand.

One of the delegates to the current Canadian Lumbermen's Association convention—Paul Lemieux, of Quebec—says tooth picks are trickier to make than you'd think.

You don't just use any old log, or the odds and ends of other wooden articles. Those tiny sticks sitting in a jar on the restaurant counter must be white birch. Mostly likely, they've been cut from a 26-inch log, which had to be carefully smoothed and shaped before it was processed.

"Why," he said in an interview, "on a 10-inch log we have up to 50 per cent waste. There's no hit-and-miss in making toothpicks."

The thought of estimating how many his company put out a year for corn-on-the-cob-eating Canadians staggered the general manager of one of Quebec's largest firms.

"Let's see," he mused, "say there are 700 to a box, multiply that by a gross and well—all I can say is millions and millions."

Municipal Spending

All across Canada municipal taxpayers are receiving bad news. Expenditures are going up and so are tax rates. In the last 10 years as a recent survey in the Financial Post revealed, municipal expenditures have jumped almost 60 per cent with a 40 per cent gain since 1945 alone. And after a substantial period of steady decline, municipal debt is on the way up too, thus also adding to the burden of the taxpayer.

Members of municipal councils—who are supposed to protest and watch the interest of municipal taxpayers—should watch these trends slowly. This is not the time to see how much money they can spend or what new projects they can start. There are few bargains indeed offered the municipal shopper in the present market.

Canadians will have to pay more unemployment insurance as a result of a change in the regulations. The benefits are to be extended to employees earning up to \$4,800 instead of \$3,120. This change is expected to put an additional 100,000 unemployed in the pay class, it will also buoy up revenue of the government.

It is also an attempt to gear the scheme to the peculiarities of the Canadian climate which, in normal years, results in a larger number of people being without work in winter than in summer. The Canadian scheme, originally based on the schemes in operation in the United States and the United Kingdom, where employment is not subject to seasonal variations, is now to be altered to meet a special Canadian condition.

Nothing was done to give a fairer deal to persons who over the years have had steady employment but without the fancy high wages of those around cities on seasonal employment who exact top wages but who annually draw unemployment money. The lower wage persons who never draw insurance are being bled to pay for the part-time worker. It's unjust and unfair, and calls for a better deal from Ottawa.

World's Richest Man

Various personalities in business, or among the Indian princes have been described as the world's richest men, but the distinction appears to belong to a man few people outside his own little country ever heard of. He is Sheik Sir Ahmad al-Jabir as-Subah, ruler of the Arab principality of Kuwait, at the tip of the Persian Gulf. It is a narrow strip of land about 200 miles long, has a population of 80,000, of whom 60,000 reside in the capital city, Kuwait.

The whole country is nothing, but sand—on the surface at any rate—and for centuries the only trade was in horses, the building of dhows for the Gulf ports, and pearl fishing. The people were very poor, including the Sheik himself. There was no water supply for the city, and water was brought in by the dhows from 50 miles up the coast, and sold at one rupee per skin.

All that was changed when, soon after the beginning of this century, British drillers discovered rich oilfields. A British company was formed and the Sheik of that day granted it exclusive rights in return for which he was to receive five shillings for every barrel taken out of the ground. The oil riches of Kuwait seem inexhaustible, for last year's production was 1,120,000 tons. That has been going on for decades, and the rulers income at present-day value of the pound amounts to 14,000,000 a year, or about \$15,000,000. The Sheik hasn't to do a thing to get that money; just has it paid to his account. He is not required, as Henry Ford or other "richest men" have done, to "plow" his profits into the business for development. It's all his. The natives have made money also; many of them have luxurious cars.

He must have a stupendous savings account over the years, but fortunately he is an educated, generous ruler. There are blocks of model houses, schools and hospitals in the capital, and paved streets where formerly there was only sand. He still lives in a modest house and lives thriftily because he believes that what Allah gave, Allah may some day take away. At the present time he is planning a \$1,000,000 water scheme. He is an absolute ruler, although there is a consultative cabinet, and he depends a good deal on the British Resident for advice.

There are several Arab countries in the Gulf of Persia, and they voluntarily placed themselves under the protection of Great Britain because the Royal Navy had suppressed piracy and British officials suppressed slavery. When the late kaiser proposed to build a railroad from Berlin to Bagdad to capture the trade of the East, Kuwait was to have been the terminal on the Persian Gulf. However, the first World War put an end to that ambition.



OTTAWA LETTER

by

Jack Smith, M.P.
North York

The throne speech debate is still progressing slowly with the House taking time out every day or so to deal with important matters as they develop.

The Supreme Court ruling upholding rental control will mean the probable extension of existing regulations for another year or sooner the housing situation will be so improved as to make control unnecessary.

Hon. C. D. Howe, Minister of Trade and Commerce, returned to the House Friday after a six week trip to Europe during which time he visited many countries in an effort to improve trade relations. The Minister is very optimistic and says the over-all outlook for the future is good. He noted a very great improvement in general conditions in Europe.

Voting Age

A private bill has been introduced in the House which would reduce the eligible voting age from twenty-one to eighteen. Mr. Argue, the C.C.F. Member sponsoring the Bill, contends it is time we took into account superior education and training now given Canadian youth and reduced the voting age. He adds a further argument that at eighteen Canadians are considered sufficiently mature to serve in the Armed Forces.

Patent Office

Canada's Patent Office is a busy place. In 1949 it received from corporations and individuals 12,972 applications for patents.

About Divorce

Resolutions on the Order Paper for consideration this session include one by Col. D. A. Croll of

Toronto asking the House to take into consideration the advisability of setting up a special committee to consider amendments to Canada's divorce laws, and enlarging grounds for divorce to include desertion of more than three years, gross cruelty, incurable mental disease after five years, and legal presumption of death.

Postal Revenue

One of the interesting features of Canada's economic development during the past fifteen years has been the substantial increase in business of Canada's Post Office. From 1934 gross revenue has increased year by year without interruption to \$95,957,468.91 last year which is an all-time high record. The net surplus or profit on operations for the past year was \$2,975,781.37.

Pen Population

The annual report of the Commissioner of Penitentiaries shows the penitentiary population in Canada for 1949 to be an all-time high of 4225, and this figure includes 87 females. In 1930 there were 3187 in our Canadian penitentiaries. The total of 4225 includes 309 young convicts under 21 years of age. 3736 were of Canadian nationality, 173 were born in the British Isles and 316 were foreign born. Meals alone for our pen population last year cost the taxpayers of Canada \$659,461.20.

Postal Employees

As at the end of the past year there were approximately 42,000 Canadians employed in various capacities in Canada's postal service.

PREMIER FROST IS 'COMPLIMENTED'

As one who has been associated with committees since 1933, as a member of Mimico Council, a writer of briefs for chairmen of committees of York County Council on matters pertaining to the metropolitan area and TTC matters, and more recently as chairman of the housing committee for Mimico, 1947-48, I compliment Mr. Frost for his ultimatum to the various councils in metropolitan Toronto "either to agree on a satisfactory plan of merging services by January 1, 1951, or have some one else do it for you."

It is simply amazing when you consider the ridiculous situation prevailing throughout the Toronto

metropolitan area, not only today but for many years, that adults will stubbornly persist against any form of unification of services on the ridiculous plea of loss of autonomy. The five townships adjacent to Toronto, with large urban population equal to and larger than many cities throughout Ontario, have been the greatest squealers, obviously for selfish reasons. As townships they enjoy privileges and annual financial grants under a provincial statute which would cease if they should incorporate into a city or become part of Toronto. It would be much more becoming if the Reeves of the aforesaid townships, instead of abusing Mr. Frost, congratulated themselves on having got away with the privilege, the correction of this abuse

THE OLD HOME TOWN By STANLEY



being long overdue.

The general trend in Canada and throughout the world is to reduce governments, not add to them. I do not think complete amalgamation of the twelve suburban municipalities at one fell swoop is the best plan for Toronto or the suburbs. However, I most strongly advocate an immediate unification of such services as police, fire, education, transportation and housing. The latter is most urgent and should be done immediately.

John P. O'Donnell,
MMimico, Ont.

MARKHAM TOWNSHIP BUILDING EXPANSION

Building permits issued in Markham for the first two months of the year have more than doubled figures for the comparable period in 1949, Building Inspector Ross Norton reports.

January and February last year saw \$90,750 worth of permits issued. The figure this year was \$198,900.

Building permits issued during February amounted to \$82,900 as compared to \$47,300 in February last year.



EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

by Don Graham

Have you ever felt that you had reached the "end of your rope"?

Most of us have this experience at least once in a lifetime—perhaps after working long at a seemingly impossible task, or finding ourselves in a serious predicament. So it is a good thing to remember that we have within ourselves extra reserves which can carry us through many a crisis.

There is plenty of evidence to prove this fact. Countless stories of heroism reveal the human capacity to endure unbelievable stress, hardship and pain. More than one victim of a disaster at sea, struggling in icy water, felt sure that he wouldn't survive for five minutes. Yet many hours later he was still hanging on and thus lived to be rescued.

Such endurance may be demonstrated not only in connection with physical trials, but also those which are mental and emotional. And if you can keep hanging on, perhaps for even just a little while longer, the success or relief you seek will be yours!

In short, there is a whole world of truth in the old saying: "It's always darkest just before the dawn".

No family need endure hardship in the event that its breadwinner dies. Life insurance puts within reach of every father the means to provide for all their needs, as well as for his own retirement income.

WE ARE KEEPING OUR PROMISE

Two months ago when coal shortages forced us to reduce passenger train services, Canadian National promised that all these trains would be put back into normal service as soon as conditions justified it. Now we are keeping our word.

Full CNR Train Service Restored

As from Wednesday midnight, MARCH 8th, all trains in Canada that stopped running because of the coal shortage go back on their normal schedules.

To you, the public who gave us your understanding co-operation during this trying period, we extend our grateful thanks and say to you that the Canadian National will, as over many years, provide you with fast, reliable, up-to-date transportation.

Al Gordon
President



CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS