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Alaskan, northern B.C. futures merged

IT is with great pleasure that we extend heartiest congratulations to Alaska, the newest and brightest star in the United States constellation. Saturday saw the official admission of the largest state of the union, (undoubtedly a big blow to Texas), when President Eisenhower signed the proclamation which changed the make-up of Old Glory.

The ceremonies both in Washington and Alaskan centres marked the end of a long and determined fight by our northern neighbors for recognition as the 49th state, but at the same time were something of an anti-climax. The victory was won last June when the U.S. Senate approved Alaska's admission and later when the Alaskans themselves voted overwhelmingly to stand on their own feet.

The steps Alaska has taken are crucial ones and no one knows better than the men who are charged with administering the policies and laws of the new state that the task ahead of them is of stupendous proportions. Like northern British Columbia the potential wealth of Alaska is still to be brought to complete fruition. Alaska, also like northern B.C. is handicapped by lack of transportation to open up vast terrains, rich in resources yet to be developed.

We have much in common, northern B.C. and Alaska. Apart from our own problems of isolation and distance from our nations' capitals we have communication and supply problems and also the need for outside capital to help develop our resources.

However, if we can attract capital, sell ourselves to the outside world as a section of the country in which life can be just as attractive as anywhere else and back up our claims by producing thriving, optimistic, go-ahead communities, there is no reason why Alaska and northern B.C. cannot progress side by side. Co-operation between the two of us and between our two senior governments is essential for this and it is imperative that we do not relax our vigilance in the direction of Washington and Ottawa.

Foremost of proposed joint projects between Alaska and northern B.C. is the proposed marine highway linking Haines with Prince Rupert. When that program is successfully completed we must look for still other schemes on which we can co-operate which will not only prove of benefit to both of us but serve as stepping stones to futures beyond the dreams of the Klondike days.

Another hollow victory

IT must have been with wry reflection on the state of their personal finances that members of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union heard their leaders describe terms of settlement of the strike against the International Nickel Company as "a great victory." Theirs was the kind of win enjoyed by the inveterate gambler who puts $100 into a slot machine to collect a $50 jackpot.

The only bright feature of this strike settlement was that the by then impoverished employees of the plants at Sudbury and Port Colborne, Ontario were able to return to their jobs before Christmas arrived; otherwise it would have been a sad and bitter Christmas for their families. The period of idleness while the union leaders stubbornly refused to come to terms with the employers had cost the workers an average personal loss of $1,000. That was the measurement of their "great victory."

The ill-timed strike dragged on for 87 days. Over and above the inadequate strike pay and welfare benefits which the strikers drew—out of what were in reality their own funds—each man lost on average $10 a day. As a result many families exhausted their savings to meet current expenses; other workers, unprepared for a long break in the flow of weekly pay cheques, finally returned to work heavily burdened with debt.

Here was one more illustration of the argument that no one wins a prolonged strike. The smelter workers' victory amounted to a 6 per cent pay increase spread over three years: 1 per cent in the first year, 2 per cent in the second and 3 per cent in the third. Thus in the three-year life of the contract the workers cannot hope to regain more than half the pay loss incurred while they were on strike. What kind of victory was that?

—The Victoria Colonist.

INTERPRETING THE NEWS

Time will tell if Castro against tyranny

By JOSEPH MacSWEEN
Canadian Press Staff Writer

Swashbuckling Fidel Castro has often said he has no dictatorial aims—that he wants to kill tyranny in Cuba once and for all.

The impetuous young rebel leader's words have the ring of honesty but of course only time will tell for certain whether the taste of power will change him.

Cuba's political history is full of such violence that one can hardly tell the revolutions from the counter-revolutions. Actually, when Castro's forces overthrew President Fulgencio Batista they were repeating a drama that took place 25 years ago.

★ ★ ★

Batista reached power by toppling a dictator; then he ruled with an iron hand, though sometimes from behind the scenes.

Is there a danger that Castro will do the same?

A striking, bearded figure, the 32-year-old Castro is said to be ambitious but he also has shown qualities of intellect and integrity not always found in Latin American politics.

Although born to considerable wealth, Castro has always taken keen interest in the poor. He found time to collect three degrees despite his revolutionary activities, which started at an early age in defiance of his father. As a lawyer, he became known for taking low-fee cases, defending humble folk.

★ ★ ★

From time to time Castro has made statements about his plans for Cuba when Batista was deposed. There may be changes in these in view of events but, regarding dictatorship, Castro well knows that six Latin American dictators have been thrown from power in four years. The trend is clearly running against dictators.

Castro, instead, has promised to establish the foundations of a genuine representative government by setting up a provisional regime nominated by a convention of delegates from various civic and professional organizations.

The provisional government is to be instructed to conduct "truly honest" general elections within 12 months and Castro has said he doesn't wish to run for the presidency.

For one thing, says Castro, Cuba's constitution would bar him from the presidency, because of his youth. This doesn't sound like an insurrectionist speaking.

★ ★ ★

At times Castro maintained that neither his political aims nor his economic programs are understood in Cuba and elsewhere. There is talk of extending government ownership to certain public utilities, some of them owned in the United States, but Castro has denied that there are any plans for expropriation or nationalization of foreign investments.

Castro will probably run into opposition from Conservative interests regarding his land reform plans. He also intends to create a career civil service, beyond the reach of politics, and to initiate a campaign against illiteracy.

Castro speaks of industrialization as essential to his program. This would include expanded facilities for processing sugar, the island's main crop, a greatly expanded canning industry and consumer factories for the production of light metal, leather and paper and textile goods.

All aboard

By G. E. MORTIMORE

Every holiday, the newspapers admonish people to drive with care. These warnings have saved many lives, and sold tons of tea.

Year by year, the warnings are more grisly. A Vancouver newspaper treated its readers to a pre-Christmas picture of 32 corpses slumped on the road—the year's traffic victims gathered in one place by some editorial ghoul.

A Victoria newspaper ran a story edged in black, telling how the doctors and nurses were waiting for me down at the emergency ward, with plasma.

It seems that the doctors and nurses are convinced that I am going to drive over a cliff sooner or later. It is only a question of time.

So they are standing by. I suspect them of being a trifle smug—of drawing a morbid satisfaction from the knowledge that sooner or later I am going to be hauled into their surgery, with skull splintered like a filbert in a nutcracker.

However, they are going to make an attempt to save me.

Other newspapers are so liberally sprinkled with caskets and tombstones that they begin to look like undertakers' catalogues.

The warnings are effective though. They have spoiled my appetite for Christmas and New Yea's dinner. I'm afraid to drive. I'm afraid to walk, in case I'm run over.

I'm afraid to stay home, in case the Christmas tree catches fire, or I choke on a turkey bone. The New Year promises to get off to a macabre start. I don't think I can face it. I'm going to remain back here in 1958.

Impossible notion

From The Ottawa Journal

We have not always gone bail for Canadian complaints against treatment of this country by the U.S.; we have felt that some of these complaints were exaggerated and others invalid.

But a case has just arisen which, we think, gives genuine cause for complaint and indeed, for action.

It concerns a claim made by the Attorney-General of the U.S. that a Canadian subsidiary of a U.S. company cannot use a Canadian patent to manufacture goods if these goods will restrict import into Canada of similar goods from the U.S.

This proposition is impossible. For its acceptance by Canada would mean that we were accepting U.S. law to regulate the operations of companies doing business in Canada; that we would be placing Washington's authority higher than Ottawa's in the regulation of companies doing business within Canada's boundaries.

This is something far different from the thing complained about when the U.S. puts up quotas against our oil or zinc or lead; doing such things the U.S. is at least exercising its legal right. But what the Attorney-General of the U.S. is saying in this patent matter is that the U.S. may exend its legal right to Canada; that Washington's writ should run outside the U.S. border.

The Attorney-General of the U.S. must, we think, be disabused of this quaint notion.

Profits

From The Fort Erie Letter-Review

Profits are what built Canada into a great industrial nation. Orders for new plant and equipment come out of profits. New orders in turn provide employment. And most of the spending by government, the source of the funds to provide social security for Canadian citizens, comes out of profits. Industries that, because of excessive taxation or unreasonable wage demands, or undue restrictions and regulations, become unprofitable are unable to contribute to the revenues needed by governments.

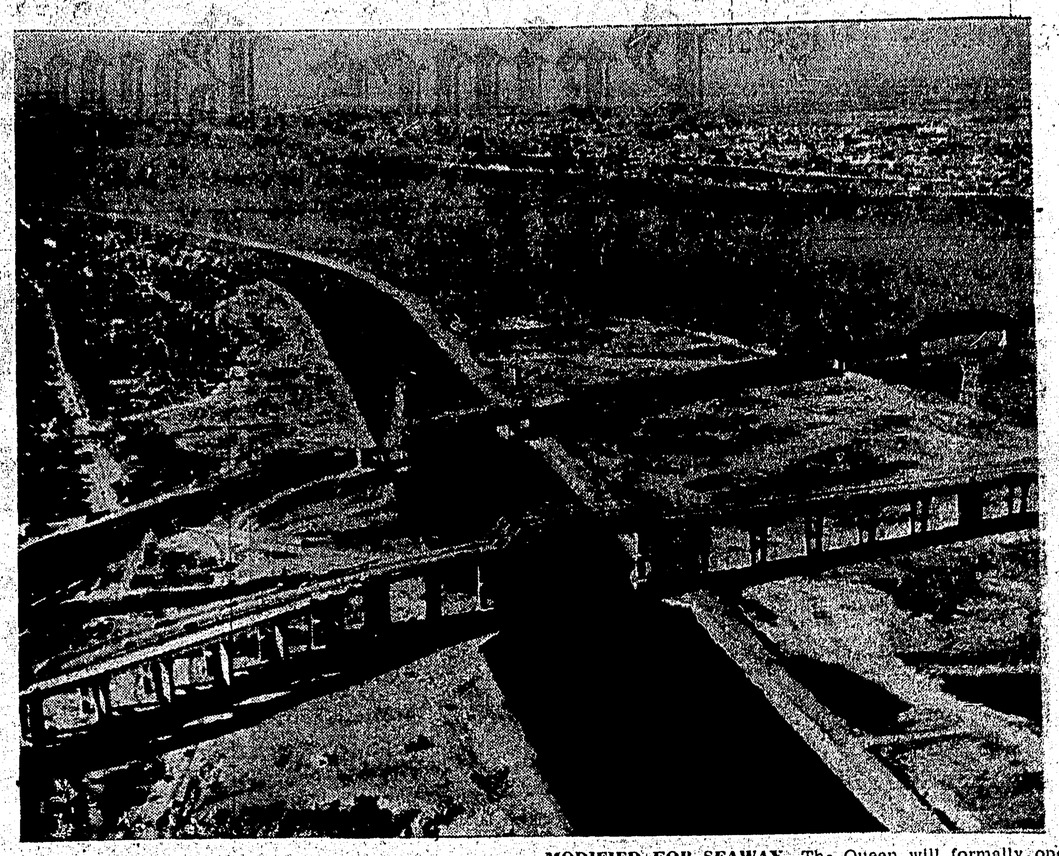
Interference

From The Regina Leader-Post

There's been too much interference with our railways. Had the railways been free over the last quarter of a century to work out their own salvation, the railway problem undoubtedly would not have reached its present magnitude. This being so, one approach surely is to end this interference with the railways and to provide their competent personnel with the necessary scope to improve the efficiency of the operations.

ITALIAN WHEAT

Italy's 1958 wheat crop is estimated at 360,000,000 bushels; about 50,000,000 bushels higher than domestic needs.



MODIFIED FOR SEAWAY—The Queen will formally open the St. Lawrence Seaway next June, likely meeting President Eisenhower on the new high-level bridge near Cornwall, Ont., for a "hands-across-the-border" ceremony. Here are two of the four bridges which span the St. Lawrence Seaway channel in the Montreal area and which were modified to provide a minimum overhead clearance of 120 feet. Picture, taken this summer, shows the Honore Mercier bridge (bottom) and the Caughnawanga Canadian Pacific Railway bridge. Seaway channel has minimum width of 200 feet and depth of 27 7feet. —CP photo.

Ancient art of walking

From The Fredericton Gleaner

While automobiles are certainly a convenience and sometimes even a necessity in getting to work, one often wonders if driving to and from work is not overdone in this day and age.

Ownership of a car does not mean that a person's dignity or social status is lowered if he is still occasionally seen using his feet as a means of locomotion, and, when the person's place of employment is not too far from his home, he is well advised to walk this distance, at least some of the time.

Jet age

From the Ottawa Journal

Things will have come to a pretty pass when it takes longer to get from downtown to a Canadian airport than it takes to fly from that airport to Britain on a jet.

From The Vancouver Province

A good snowfall is a biting reminder of how far the average man has separated himself from his pioneer forebears. The idea of doing without his car is so frightful that he takes a chance, and ends up stuck in a ditch or stranded at the bottom of a hill. He then has to walk — appalling thought — to the nearest bus.

Consolation

From The Melita (Man.) New Era

There's one consolation about an old-fashioned winter with lots of snow. Whether we like it or not we could be laying up insurance for the future. It is insurance that rivers, creeks, dug-out and sloughs are sure to be brimfull when our long-awaited spring comes around.

Education for success

From The Michigan Times

The Little Red Schoolhouse taught little about how our economic system operates, and it didn't matter much. Business was the specialty of businessmen, and if they understood it no one else needed to.

Today, when many decisions which affect the economy are made in politics, every voter needs some economic education so that he can determine what candidates make sense on the subjects of taxes, business regulation, labor, and related subjects.

Wrong guesses, based on prejudice or ignorance, can bring on government-made hard times. They can weaken the economy in the cold war. And they can even put the thoughtless voter right out of a job. . . .

Will your child, sometime in his school years, learn what makes our economy tick?

If your school doesn't have such a course, you and other parents should insist that it adopt one. Your child's future and your country's prosperity will depend upon what he knows.

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