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Up in smoke

THE centennial year is over but this fall another scheduled attraction is a series of bonfires on August 2 to celebrate the extinction of the provincial direct debt. One doubts that as Premier Bennett says "all eyes of the free world will be on British Columbia" when the fires are lit, if only because most of the free world have other things to look at and much of it will never hear or let alone see these "mortgage" flames.

No doubt it is an auspicious occasion, although whether it warrants such extrovert display of triumph may be a matter of opinion. It should be the ordinary business of any good government to be prudent housekeepers without expecting special plaudits for doing what it is elected to do. Nevertheless the Socred regime at James Bay has some right to be pleased at wiping out in seven years some $190,000,000 of debt. This is an achievement. The real credit goes, of course, as happily Mr. Bennett admitted, to the people of B.C. who pay the taxes.

The pleasure is not wholly unalloyed, however. While cleaning the slate of direct debt the government has increased the indirect debt until its now stands around the half-billion-dollar figure. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this, although it would be more helpful if detailed statements of the crown agencies comprising the indirect liability were made public, but it does mean that despite the bonfires a guaranteed obligation will still exist.

A government can choose the lines of its financial policies and it need not apologize when it does something to save millions in interest and increase its borrowing credit thereby. Where it may be faulted is if it tries to gloss over a contingent liability as though it were not there. In the present instance it is very much there even if the impact is soft and theoretically problematical.

The bonfires will set free some $25,000,000 yearly no longer required to sustain the "mortgage" going up in smoke. What will be done with this handsome bonus? One would like to hope the municipalities could share in it, for they are the poor relation of governance whose rate-payers at the moment are having to fork out heavily for measures introduced by the "mortgage" burners. The Victoria Colonist.

Let's take our own advice

For almost the entire postwar period Canada has been very free with advice to her business partners, especially the United Kingdom. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer was battling a dollar crisis, Canada would say, in effect, "What do you expect if you insist on establishing a welfare state instead of living within your income?" When Britain's shortage of dollars caused trade troubles, Canadians were quick to exhort British businessmen to get in there and SELL.

Now it looks as though we should take some of our own advice.

True, our balance-of-payment problem is a little unlike Britain's, because we are able to find Americans willing to lend or invest dollars here; our problem is that we're not sure we like all the consequences of that lending and investing, even though it makes it possible for us to live so far above our income now.

But our need to sell more goods abroad is just as acute as Britain's ever was. We have to sell more goods, and more varieties at the rate we're used to. And as we have so often remarked to others, the only way to sell more goods is to get out and work—find out who might buy our goods, learn what their preferences are, and change our ways where necessary to make a sale.

Judging from the remarks of a Montreal garment distributor quoted in last week's Post, we're not being particularly aggressive in trying to sell Canadian clothing to the expanding European market. Similar stories about other branches of Canadian business reach the ear of the traveler. There's certainly no widespread impression that Canadians are beating the bushes for more trade.

In the meantime competition is increasing. Canada, once third among world traders, now ranks fourth after the U.S., U.K. and West Germany, while Russia has moved up into the sixth place after France. And Russia, it should be noted, is boosting its sales in many cases with the very products that have made up the bulk of Canada's trade.

—The Financial Post.

INTERPRETING THE NEWS

Nehru speech comes close to calling Reds liars

By JOSEPH MacSWEEN
Canadian Press Staff Writer

India's Prime Minister Nehru, while pleading for the "language of restraint," has come close to calling the rulers of Communist China liars on the question of Tibet.

Nothing could be more bitingly polite than the words of Nehru when he referred to "responsible people" in Red China in saying:

"They have used he language of the cold war, regardless of truth and propriety. This is peculiarly distressing in a great nation with thousands of years of culture behind it, noted for its restrained and polite behavior."

In categorically denying Red Chinese charges against India regarding Tibet and its fugitive Dalai Lama, the Indian neutralist leader reflected continuing Asian outrage at the Tibetan affair.

HISTORIC TURN

Not since taking power in China have the Communists come under such critical scrutiny in the eyes of Asia's millions. The key appears to be that the Chinese managed to mutilate two things at once: The modern Asian dream of self-determination; and an age-old Asian religion.

The Communists lost face in still another, much surprising, way. Tibet showed it is possible for even a tiny country—admittedly helped by extremely forbidding terrain—to raise serious resistance against mighty Red China. And the fighting spread in border areas of China itself, exposing discontent there.

The Dalai Lama, by making clear that he left Tibet voluntarily and not under duress as Peiping claimed, furher discredited Red China before millions who believe he is a living god incapable of deceit.

Denunciation of Chinese action has been heard in such countries as India, Malaya, Ceylon, Indonesia, Japan, Burma, Viet Nam and Thailand.

POPULAR FEELINGS

As was to be expected, popular expressions—parades and demonstrations—ran well ahead of official government comment in so-called uncommitted countries. No one is talking about attacking Red China, a country of 600,000,000 population, but typical is the comment of Nehru:

"We have every desire to maintain friendship between India and China. At the same time we have every sympathy for the people of Tibet and we are greatly distressed at their hapless plight."

As has happened so often in the West, the Tibetan uprising was compared to the Hungarian revolt of 1956 by Dr. Ismail Bin Dato Abdul Rahman, minister of external affairs for Malaya, who added:

"As upholders of the United Nations charter, we must deplore the failure to allow the Tibetan people to exercise self-determination."

From Burma came a religious comment by U Dhammi Tha Ya, president of the National Buddhist Association, who condemned the "brutalities and ruthless killings" to which Tibet's Buddhist population had been condemned.

Too much

Nuclear power stations, once started, will produce like mad, day and night, and what, asks a German writer, is to be done with the night-power produced when the plants are closed and the workers asleep?

Our offhand idea was that it might be used to reduce the size of the ice-cap and give North America warmer weather. Before that, however, the benefits of power will be extended to many human endeavors to make life easier.

Still, it seems probable that some day there will be more power than we know what to do with and as many speeches in the Commons about power sales as there are about surplus wheat.

—The Ottawa Journal.

Dim thoughts

From the Kitchener-Waterloo Record

Imagination is something that sits up late with a woman when her husband is late coming home.

Program feeders

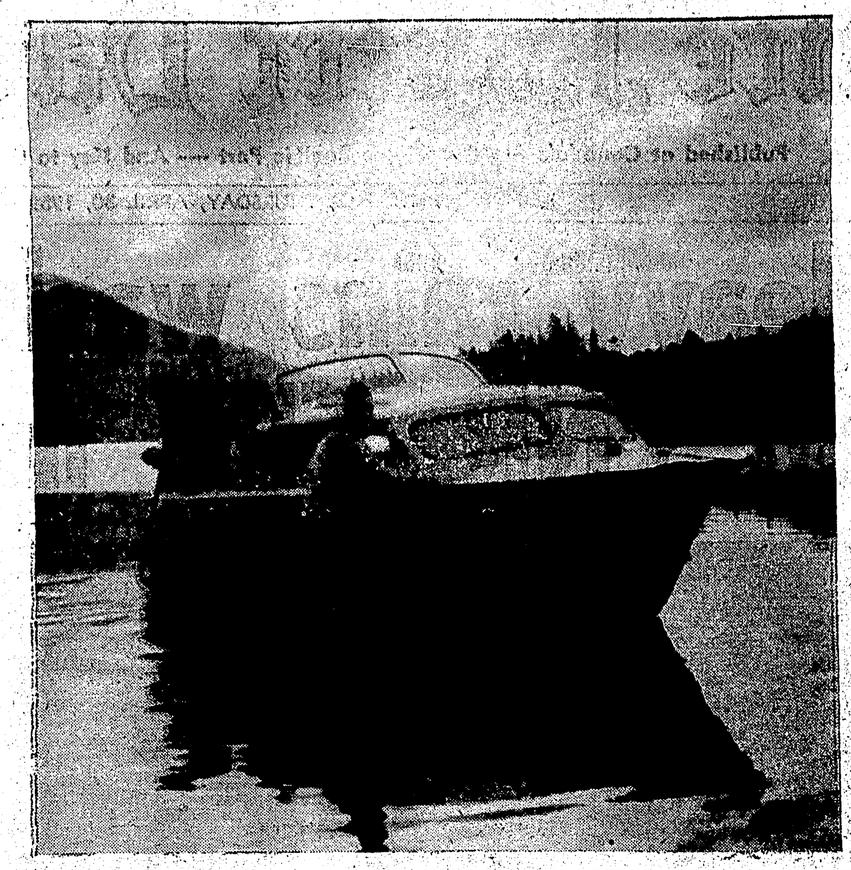
From the Hamilton Spectator

The appealing power of suggestion in the television vehicle has placed a responsibility on those who feed programs.

TB remains a menace

From the Peterboro Examiner

So successful has been our national fight against tuberculosis that now the danger arises of over-confidence. Modern drugs and treatment have tamed a killer and so made people less aware of its potential misery.



FISHING IS NEXT on the agenda for the Charles R. Roberts family, now that their cruiser has been relaunched after a new paint job. Mr. Roberts and his son Ronald are shown just after the relaunching.
—Photo by Gladys Baldwin.

All Aboard

By G. E. Mortimore

Ice-cold beer from the liquor store? This is the dream conjured up by a reader, who believes it is little short of cruelty to offer an American tourist lukewarm beer on a hot day.

He thinks each liquor store should have a cooling room in which chilled beer is kept.

Englishmen, generally like tepid beer. And Canadians waver between the two.

But if we are to suit the tastes of Americans, whom we invite here by the thousands, we should try to have their kind of goods available.

Incidentally, the tourist promoters have missed a good bet for years. They have done good work in luring Americans here. But they have neglected one of their best markets—the hundreds of thousands of people on the Lower Mainland, only a few miles away.

The average Vancouverite derives his notion of Victoria from the standard cartoons, whose humor all runs to the same formula, containing the same tired cliches about old gentlemen with waterfall mustaches, sipping tea, eating crumpets, riding bicycles and tripping over their scarves.

I wonder why so many people parody the appearance of what they imagine to be the English ruling class, stranded in a strange environment? Why don't they also poke fun at the little Londoners who ran confectionery shops, Geordies who worked in garages, Yorkshire textile hands?

Why don't they ridicule Irish tinkers, Welsh goat-herds or Cockney barrow boys? Their motives would make an interesting study. How many of the fun-makers, I wonder, came from the "ruling class" themselves, and how many wished they had?

Those class distinctions are vanishing now, but they have left a legacy of malice for another generation.

Anyway, the Vancouverite's ideas of Victoria are drawn largely from what he hears from professional and amateur parodists. He sees a Victoria that never existed, and never will.

Victoria's tourist promoters have not only assented to these caricatures, but have helped to spread them. This distorted picture of the town may help bring in American tourists. I'm sure it does.

But I believe it actually repels visitors from the Lower Mainland, who think of Victoria as a limp, quaint place haunted by gulls and gentlewomen—a place where no red-blooded Canadian could have fun.

Victoria tourist people should have dispelled this gloomy picture. They should have set up another image of Victoria for Vancouver consumption: a dissipated, pleasure loving, bibulous town where painters, horse-players and beatniks, flourishing tankards, dance and throw flowers in the streets go to sleep with their heads on flower-beds, and wake up to set out on another mad round of pleasure at the race-track, the swimming pool and casino.

At the same time, the tourist people should set out to make these dreams come true, and attract the trade of those hundreds of thousands from the Mainland who have never visited Victoria.

Is it too late to soft-pedal "Victoria, City of Gardens," and play up "Victoria, City of Beer Gardens"

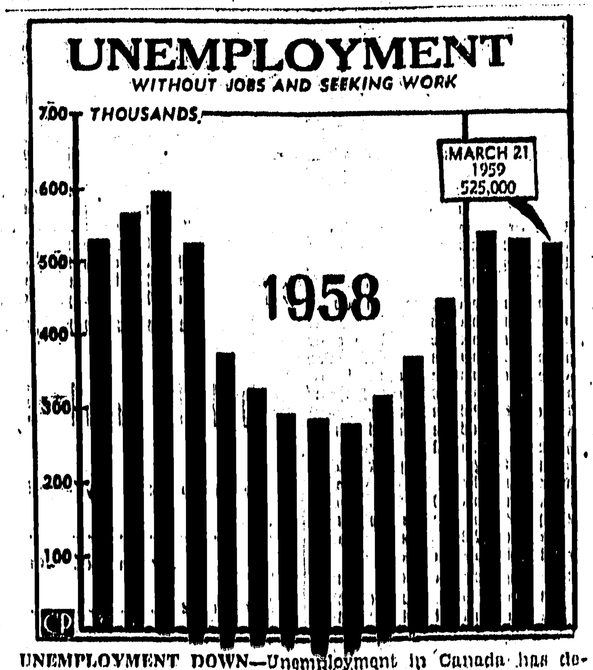
By women's toil

From the London Free Press

Red China may be making extraordinary progress in her economic leap forward but unlike progress in the Western world, it is achieved in Asia by the blood, sweat and tears of the people. Peiping radio announces that last year 73 million women played vital roles in "tilling the fields, ruunning fishing boats and helping in water conservation.

Getting an idea should be like sitting down on a pin; it should make you jump up and do something.

—E. L. Simpson.



UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN—Unemployment in Canada has declined for the second straight month. The number of persons without jobs and seeking work dropped to 525,000 at March 21 from 537,000 a month earlier. This graph, based on government figures released in Ottawa, traces unemployment figures through 1958 and for the first three months of this year. The post-war high was 507,000 in March, 1958. —CP Newsmap.

The Tommy

From The Veteran's Advocate

All the reviewers of Montgomery's Memoirs last year were so intent on discussing points of strategic or tactical controversy they neglected to quote a remarkable tribute he pays to the British soldier.

Monty may not gain immortality for literary reasons, but his tribute to the British private soldier is one from a man who often had to send him to his death. His words thus have a special ring beneath their simple honesty.

Thieves feed on disorder

From the Springhill Record

Vandalism is still another type of salt which is now being rubbed into Springhill's wounds. This vandalism has found its targets in vacant homes left in the wake of the families who found it necessary to leave Springhill after the No. 2 mine bump.

Unfair

From The Edmonton Journal

Married women who quit their jobs just long enough to collect unemployment insurance are deserving of criticism. Many persons are said to believe that, having made contributions to the fund, they have a vested interest in it and are entitled to benefits at some time in their lives regardless of other circumstances. Unemployment insurance has the sole purpose of giving a worker some income when he is out of a job and genuinely seeking another. A person who pays premiums on accident or fire policies hardly expects to collect unless he should have an accident or a fire—and not one by deliberate intent.

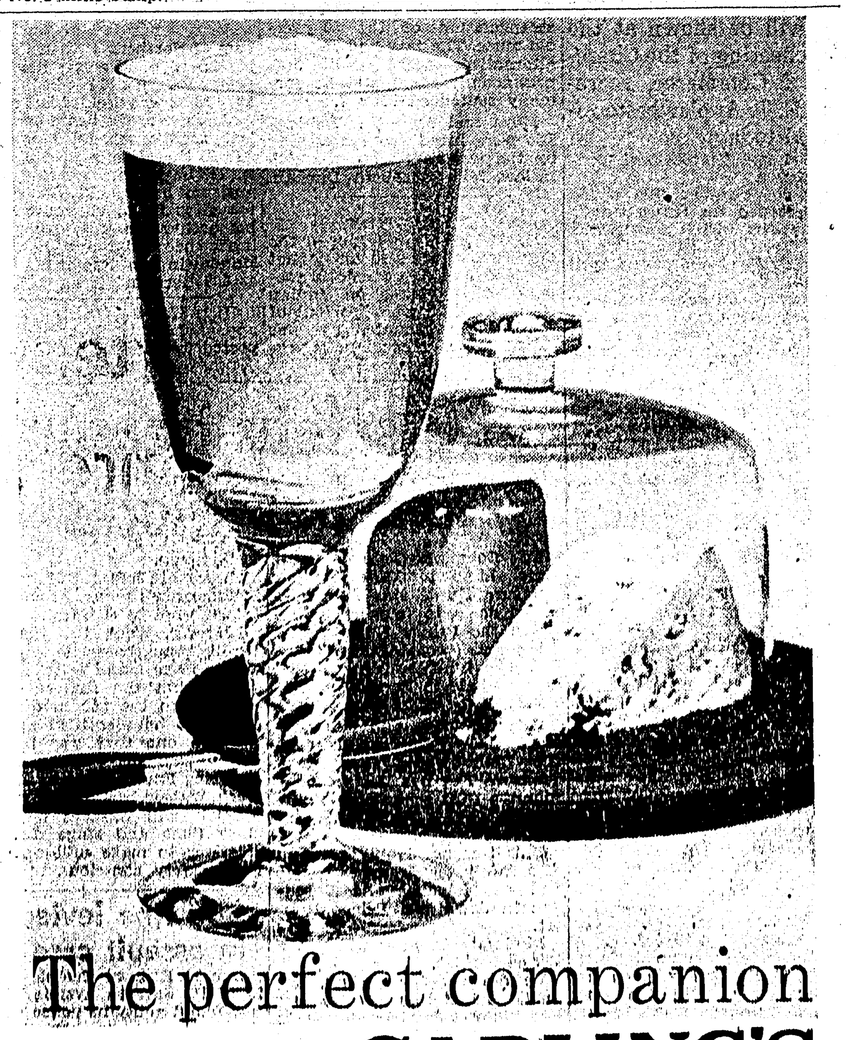
No magic carpet

From The Ottawa Journal

The automobile manufacturers and their dealers tell us these days that we shall "live better by far . . . with a new car." None shall accuse the automobile people of weak neutrality when it comes to speaking the advantages of their product. Yet aware as we are of the complications the automobile brings, on balance the manufacturers and dealers must be said to be right. The problems which the auto causes are nothing to the problem we should have without it.

Perhaps we have been seduced by their rhetoric, but who can deny the advertising men's song for a car: "It is the young man's wings, and the old man's limbs . . . the housewife's shortest distance between home and store . . . the doctor's motor of mercy . . . the sportsman's trail to fish and game . . . the merchant's messenger."

Until the dealers are offering magic carpets, we shall continue to look at their automobiles.



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