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Disaster service for villages needed

The disastrous fire which has almost written a final chapter to the history of Port Essington points up the vulnerability to fire of the outlying villages in the Skeena and Nass River areas. With more than 20 buildings destroyed and 50 persons homeless there seems little point in rebuilding the village, most of which was a collection of empty buildings, a ghostly reminder of what was once the major port of the north coast.

However, there are still many villages and considerable population exposed to the constant threat of fire and little or no means of fighting it. Communications between Greenville, Aiyansh or Kitkatla are practically non-existent once the fishermen and their fishing boat radio telephones move away from the villages.

With six men and 70 women and children left in Port Essington, the blaze yesterday gained an insurmountable start before anyone outside the village was even aware of the fire. Once it was spotted, any help was far too late for anything to be done, except control the flames.

It may sound somewhat like locking the barn door after the horse has been stolen but some means of co-ordinated fire prevention and firefighting services should be organized immediately. A move was started earlier this year to train Native villagers in firefighting, but their knowledge is of little use if they haven't the equipment, or if there is no one at home.

Presumably the onus is on the Department of Indian Affairs, but there is no reason why it cannot be made a joint effort between Air Sea Rescue, the Forestry Service and Civil Defence. The federal government should organize such a service and set up a fund for such emergencies so that equipment and funds are available when they are needed.

First consideration for most of the villages however, would appear to be a more speedy and efficient means of communication. From what can be gathered the first word of the Port Essington fire, was reported from Haysport, across the Skeena River. The day of the smoke signal has gone and every village should be provided with a modern sending and receiving radio installation with several persons fully trained to operate it. Port Simpson has such a radio and no time should be lost in providing the other villages with this service. More firefighting equipment, a co - ordinated disaster service and better communications are three projects the federal government should attend to immediately.

Uniform sentencing

A panel of magistrates and newspapermen at the third biennial Canadian Congress of Corrections recently agreed that uniformity of sentencing is not possible because of the many factors that may influence a magistrate's decision. In contrast, it is interesting to note that Attorney-General Bonner, while granting that "there s no blueprint" for magistrates to follow, has called for greater uniformity of sentencing in British Columbia.

There is no such thing as instant justice to compare with instant coffee", said one magistrate at the congress in Toronto. . . . Every individual is different and varying factors affect a magistrate's decision, even though the crimes may be the same." Another asked if justice would be done if identical fines for impaired driving were levied against a wealthy culprit and a poor fruit truck driver, and their vehicles were impounded.

This is a good point, and a worrisome one — for to punish the two men equally the magistrate would have to set such a high penalty for the rich as to exceed by far the limits of the law, or such a low penalty for the poor as to provide practically no deterrent. Clearly in justice it is advantageous to be rich, but for practical purposes some measure of uniformity in sentencing seems essential.

Mr. Bonner probably had more in mind the dissimilarity of sentences imposed in various districts for similar offences. When the "standard" penalty for an offence in one district is high and in another low, there is unreasonable inequity of justice and besides that, an invitation to law-breakers to centre their activities where the potential results are less painful. Here too there is a case for uniformity.

— The Victoria Colonist

Pity the poor capitalist

No many Canadians spend time worrying about the poor capitalists. Indeed it requires argument to convince people that capitalists, too, feel a need of understanding and grave a greater sense of security.

Their case is being promoted by Mr. Trevor F. Moore, a vice-president of Imperial Oil, who, in addressing the B.C. Bond Dealers' Association, gave his talk the title of "The Care and Culture of Capital".

Mr. Moore said that the Canadian attitude toward capital s typical of attitudes in a peasant society towards the local money lender. Capital, he felt, was being abused by high taxes. He was concerned also that there should be some limit to the pouring out of social capital on programs such as housing; desirable as such projects were the diversion of too much capital to relatively unproductive ends was one reason for the present Canadian capital investment problem.

This heart-cry for the capitalist deserves attention quite as much as those sent forth by Mr. Jodoin for labor and Dr. Hannam for the farmer, the labor and farm briefs centainly being more familiar to Ottawa thus far.

Mr. Jodoin says the laborer is worthy of his modern hire and Dr. Hannam suggests that food production is the noblest work of man and now Mr. Moore says our governors must become aware that their well-being "depends ultimately upon whether they and their communities become more proficient in the care and nuture of capital."

Governments have their maternal arms pretty full now. They have social security programs, the problems of the unemployed and the anxieties of industry in a competitive world. But when the capitalists cry out for care and nuture can they be denied? Not any more than any other Canadians.

It is assumed, of course, that capitalists, like unionists, will heed the warning that there is only so much of the good things of life to go around and that they must be shared with some degree of equality. — The Ottawa Journal

New Party freedom

It is a curiously controlled and smothered life which the New Party paints for Canadians in the draft program which will be presented to the party's founding convention in Ottawa at the end of next month. The stated purpose of this program is to "achieve a fully free and just society in which all citizens participate, and all share equitably in its fruits", but the methods by which it proposes to achieve this ideal would seem to deny the very freedom which is promised.

The whole economy, according to the program, is to be planned by government. The cabinet would be the ultimate authority, but a committee of ministers of the major economic departments, headed by a minister of planning, would act for the cabinet in developing the plans and co-ordinating the programs of all departments and agences. These plans would be put into effect by what the program describes as "radically new uses" of the national budget and the Bank of Canada, and by such new bodies as an investment board.

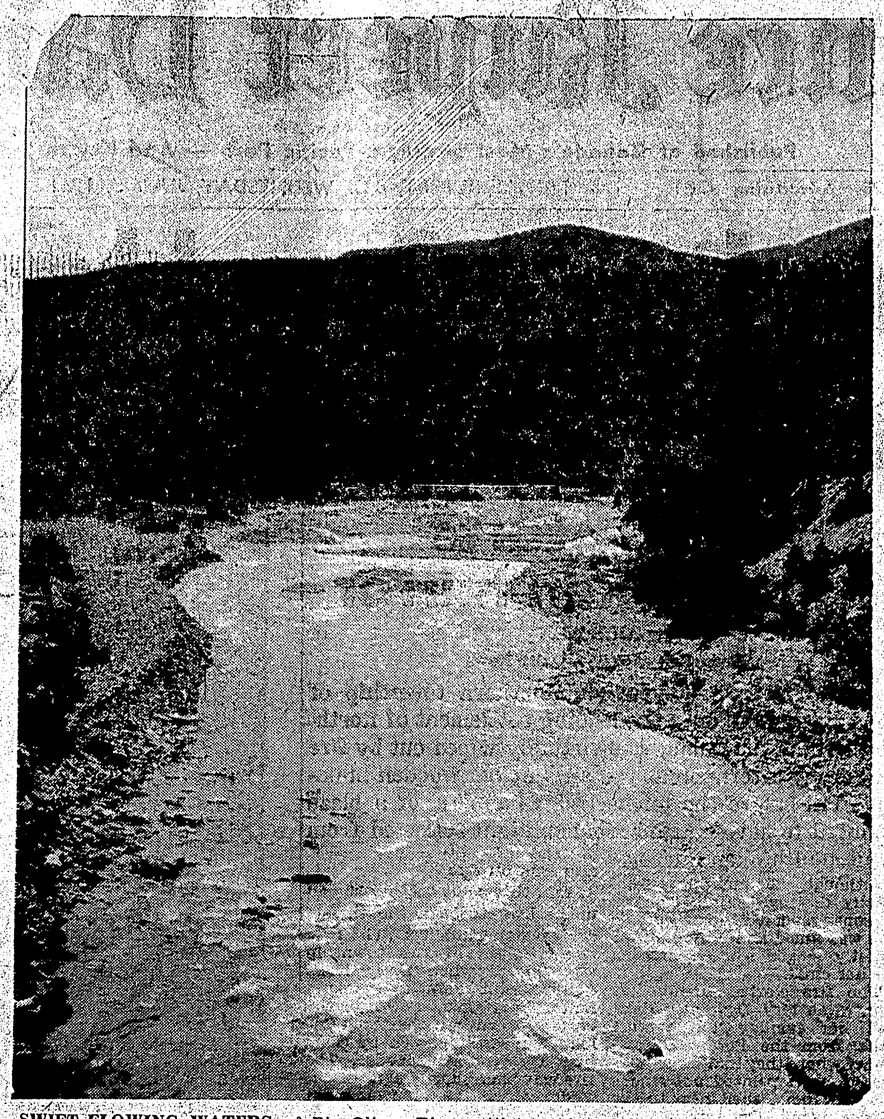
The investment board would have the power to direct capital, both public and private. It would say what projects should be developed, whether public or private, and when and where. Its twin, a proposed Canadian Development Fund, would mobilize the private savings of Canadians, including the funds of insurance, trust and similar companies, for the use of the investment board. Corporations, either domestic or foreign, would no longer be permitted to control their full investment reserves. Duplication of activities, as defined by government, would not be permitted.

The stated purpose of the New Party's taxation policy would be to "divert funds from private to public investment." It would do this by increasing the corporation tax, reducing depreciation and depletion allowances, limiting the deductions allowed for advertising and sales promotion, taxing capital gains, increasing succession duties, abolishing the special privileges now granted to recipients of corporation dividends, taxing expense accounts.

Industry would be told where to set up new industries and where to abandon them. Workers would be guaranteed jobs — how, the program does not precisely state — but if it involved moving or re-training, the decision as to where and what and for whom would lie with the government. There would be a contributory pension scheme, but it would have government-set maximums. Even the leisure hours of Canadians would encounter government controls. The New Party proposes to set up centres to give opportunity for "worthwhile use of the nation's increasing leisure time."

In the midst of all these controls it is difficult to see where the "free" society which the New Party promises would find room to flourish. There would be no room for inflation because the government would always be in the position of knowing best and having the power to enforce its decisions. Canadians, it seems, would only be free to do as they were told.

— The Toronto Globe and Mail



SWIFT-FLOWING WATERS of Big Oliver River, with promise of deep dark pools further upstream, provide inviting view for local anglers. Big Oliver, about 25 miles east of Terrace, is one of many fishermen's paradises that abound in Skeena Dstrict and give area reputation of possessing abundance of scenic grandeur. — Photo by J. R. Wrathall

All Aboard with G. E. Mortimore

The British Columbia government does not like to build new liquor stores.

Alert Bay and Bella Coola, among many sizeable B.C. communities, have been crying for liquor stores for many years.

A new liquor store in a suburban shopping centre in Victoria stands unoccupied, because some churchmen organized a petition against it.

There is no indication when the Victoria liquor store wll open. Probably it never will.

The people of Alert Bay, growing desperate after long negotiations, offered to build their own liquor store and rent the building to the government, the liquor control board to buy the building in five years.

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Attorney - General Robert Bonner seemed to think this was a fairly good idea, but he wanted to change it somewhat. He said he would send plans and specifications for an alternative lease-purchase agreement.

This was last January. The plans have not yet arrived. Repeated wires and letters from the Alert Bay village council and the intervention of Dan Campbell, MLA have brought no results.

Now a delegatoin of Alert Bay people is going to Victoria to talk it over with the attorney-general.

Meanwhile, the bootleggers of Alert Bay continue to do a brisk trade. This seaside town is the only place I know where the waves go "tinkle" as well as "splash," because of the number of broken bottles on the beach.

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The other day I was in a car bustling along through a cloud of dust on the road that leads from Bella Coola to Williams Lake.

We want the government to do one of two things for us," a Bella Coola businessman said. "They should damp this road with oil or blacktop, or let us have a liquor store so we can damp ourselves down and forget about the dust."

In fact, Bella Coola wants a liquor store. So do a number of other places. Thousands of people are tired of having to get their case of beer or bottle of whisky sent in by freight from 50 or 100 miles away.

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The government has reason to be careful. Liquor is a dangerous kind of merchandise. The bluenose prohibitionists (though not numerous) are a solid phalanx of vote-killers who can hurt the career of a politician.

However, the prohibitionists probably are out-numbered by the ordinary people. If they took a fair vote on a liquor store in most towns and villages, the answer would probably be "Yes."

The government allows itself a monopoly of the bottled liquor business. It is not showing itself to be efficient as a liquor merchant. The government is failing to supply the goods to the customers.

If the government cannot deliver the goods, then it should hand over the liquor stores to private enterprise.

Why the delay?

From La Presse, Montreal

The Liberals last January pledged themselves during their national rally that their party would give the country a truly Canadian flag, and two months later, the Conservatives fell into step.

It is difficult not to take the pledges of these two great parties as being deeply significant. And yet when both of them have pronounced themselves so categorically on the question, it is even more difficult to explain why there is this delay in giving the country what the big majority of its citizens want.

gems of thought

What adds to the confusion in this space age is that prophecy gets to be history before it becomes current news.—Herbert Bayard Swope, Jr.

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There are moments when at the touch of memory the past comes forth like a pageant and the present is prophetic. — Mary Baker Eddy.

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We never know enough about the infinitely complex circumstances of any past event to prophesy the future by analogy.—G. M. Trevelyan.

The Packsack of Gregory Clark

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Now, remember, the function of each summer cottage is to provide food for gosip for all the neighboring cottages. It need not be anything sensational. It may merely be the way you burn your garbage in the incinerator, or the way you tie your boat up to the wharf. One of the handiest and most familiar subjects is how you let your children race around in the outboard, and if there are children old enough, water-skiing can be so timed, either right after lunch, when everybody else wants to lie down for a little siesta, or just at dusk, when no person in his right mind would go skittering and whopping around in circles over the darkling water.

If you are elderly, the problem becomes a little more acute. It must be your past that the neighbors have to dig up; and a hint dropped here and there, suggesting some of the less reputable experiences of your past life, might help the neighbors pass a pleasant evening on their verandahs.

At any rate, don't distress yourself about the fact that you are gossiping about the neighbors. You can be sure they are gossiping about you.

All's fair and even steven, on summer verandahs.

Short sermons

To be businesslike the Receiver General of Canada should offer to give us our money back if we're not satisfied.

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Discretion is at its best when it comes early enough in life.

Letterbox

PLEADS FOR CIVIC BAND

The Editor,
The Daily News:

Having looked over the issue of the July 3rd edition of the Daily News and failed to see any photograph of the Civic Band I wish to express my disappointment.

I have been interested in the revival of the band since the late Peter Lien was the bandmaster, and I have been following the stages of the band's progress since and, like many other citizens, have enjoyed some splendid concerts performed by the band. I am deeply concerned by so much indifference to such a cultural asset as the Civic Band.

It is splendid to have visiting bands playing in Prince Rupert but for goodness sake, let us back up our own Civic Band.

Fellow Citizens! It could happen that we could lose our band again.

Don't let such a thing happen to us. We are a big enough city to have three good bands and a symphony orchestra besides. I am not playing in the band, I wish I were, but I am very proud of the boys in the band and I want to urge you Prince Rupert citizens to give our musical people a chance. Believe me, the encouragement those boys, for all their work, have had so far, well, you could put it in your eye.

Yours for more cultural life,
August Wallin.
Prince Rupert.

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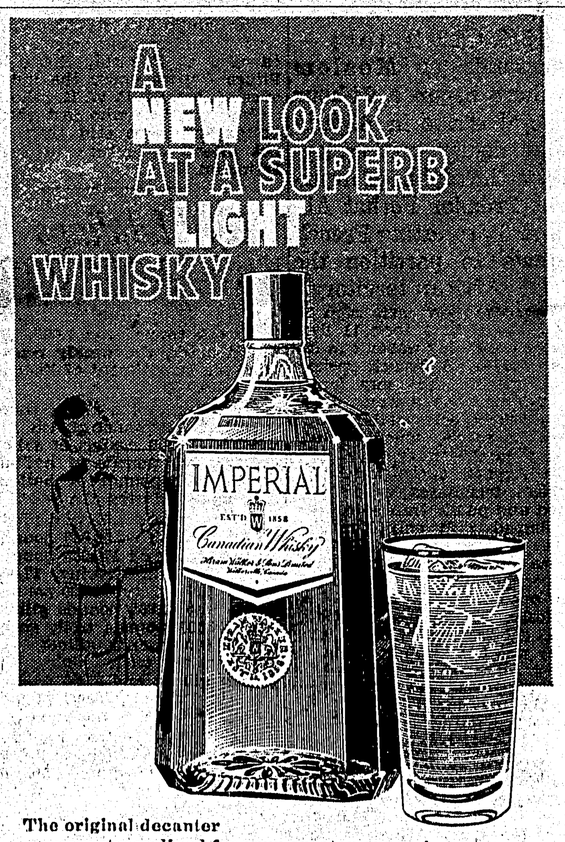

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