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Friends on the Stage

A COMMENT heard after the Alaska Music Trail concert last night was that extra enjoyment is added to a performance when the artists appear to be personal friends of the audience rather than somewhat strange and distant figures on the stage.

Whether by accident or design, it so happens that in each of the concerts this season there has been one performer who, assuming the role of spokesman, has offered the listeners a little talk in addition to music. In each case he has injected it with humor and in each case the audience has, to use the colloquialism, eaten it up.

In a larger city this added fillip probably never would be attempted. It is not that the people there are any less susceptible to amusement. Collectively, however, they are more formidable. As a general rule there is a faint implication that the artist is there on sufferance and that he is, by advance judgment, poor until he proves beyond all doubt that he is good.

While this is clearly unreasonable, it is nevertheless an attitude that entertainers on a major circuit must accept as an unalterable part of the business.

It is no wonder, therefore, that musicians of established ability will often put aside a busy schedule to join those on the Alaska Music Trail. In front of northern audiences they can, as they have admitted, relax. They have a welcome up here which no one is in the least ashamed to show, and the result is that without any question they give a better performance. Besides polished professional talent, their concerts have spontaneous warmth, and if there is a more essential ingredient to good music, it is yet to be found.

The reception given last night to Greta Menzel and her accompanist Thomas Mayer, may be listed as another reason why Prince Rupert will continue to have the best in musical entertainment.

PNTA Sets Example

ALTHOUGH a considerable amount of lip service is paid to the "great northwest," it is probable that many of those offering their verbal tribute have only a vague idea of what they are talking about.

The reason is that this part of the continent is only now emerging from an economic wilderness. Once a country known to the world mainly for its spectacular gold strikes, it has become in the past decade a favorite subject of those who try to map the course of industrial development.

Of all those interested in its progress, perhaps no group has been more loyal and enthusiastic than the Pacific Northwest Trade Association, the formation of which coincided almost exactly with the region's entry into continental prominence.

In 1942, John Hart, then B.C. premier, invited a group of Vancouver and Seattle businessmen to join him on a trip to the northern end of the provincial highway system. His purpose was to win support for a highway project that would push northwest across the mountains and link up with the Alaska Highway, then under construction.

Although the opening of the Alcan route to Alaska would answer a need that had been felt for years, there was strong opinion in B.C. and Washington that a shorter route to Alaska was also feasible. Surveys showed that access to the Alcan road via central B.C. would save 570 miles compared with the route through Alberta.

Despite the fact that the proposed highway, subsequently named after Mr. Hart and formally dedicated last July, did not materialize at the time, the men from the south were impressed by what they saw and later the same year founded the PNTA.

As an international organization which has successfully matured, the PNTA provides a lesson in the folly of trying to stand alone. At a recent meeting one Canadian manufacturer complained it was impossible to sell anything but raw and semi-finished products to the U.S. The outcome was a resolution, backed to the hilt by U.S. members, opposing higher tariffs.

At this moment there are problems in sight affecting both northern B.C. and southeastern Alaska. Before any hasty decisions are made, it is to be hoped that the example set by the PNTA will be considered. The likelihood is that there are solutions which will benefit both parties a great deal, instead of one slightly.

As I See It



by Elmore Philpott

I ASKED my night school class to give their one sentence explanations of the overwhelming Eisenhower victory in the U.S. elections. In a minute people called out these:

It was "time for a change." Ike got the women's vote, people were sick of Korea, too much corruption in government, too high taxes, and so on.

But one woman said "too many speeches by President Truman which lost votes for Stevenson." I think there was a good deal of truth in that one. It is always easy to be wise after the event. But it does seem to me that Stevenson would have had a slightly better chance had Mr. Truman kept completely out of the picture, and left the spotlight on the two men who were actually running.

MY OWN explanation is oversimplified, perhaps. It seems to me that Ike was personally the most likeable candidate of this century. Over half the people of the U.S. loved Roosevelt, but another fraction hated him, and hated his whole family. Nobody hates Ike, as yet. All the world knew that the Democrats really had only one thing against Ike—that is that he was not running on the Democratic ticket.

Apart from Eisenhower's immense personal popularity it is now clear that Stevenson was made to carry a load which was just too heavy for any candidate to bear. To understand the nature of the load you have to go way back to Roosevelt's first victory.

That smiling adventurer was not only a political experimenter and a true liberal—willing to try anything which might work—but he was also a machine politician. He took over a coalition of southern Reactionaries and northern bosses. He grafted on to the older Democratic party two new wings. He brought in organized labor, in a way it had never been brought in before. But he enlisted a whole army of New Dealers—all sorts and varieties of what Canadians call progressives or even leftists, but whom the Americans call "liberals."

You might say that Roosevelt, who was a giant in political stature, had feet of clay. Maybe he was realistic enough to know that he had to have feet of clay, to stand at all, in the actual world. Anyway his feet of clay were the old party machine bosses, and the party heelers generally. Roosevelt knew human nature well enough to accept the fact that most people are in politics for what they get out of it. Some get prestige, power, office. But contractors get contracts and millions of people get jobs.

Roosevelt turned a blind eye—deliberately as Nelson did at the famous naval battle—to this uglier side of politics. Indeed he was not above slick tricks himself in politics, for all the grandeur and nobility of most of his major efforts. Take for instance his attempt to "pack" the Supreme Court.

TRUMAN was not only half a machine politician, like Roosevelt. He was pretty well a 100 per cent machine made and machine minded politician himself. I think he will go down in history as a brave president, with an amazing courage to make snap decisions which turned out to be right. One was when he accepted the Communist challenge in Korea. Another was when he fired MacArthur.

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Higher Production in Canada Forecast as Bright Future

By The Canadian Press

Canada's record national production is exceeding all estimates this year, but trade forecasters predict even bigger and better things next year.

The 1953 gross national product—sum total of all goods and services produced—is expected to exceed this year's output, now estimated at a peak \$22,750,000,000. The original government forecast for 1952, made early this year, was \$22,500,000,000.

Capital investment—at a peak \$5,200,000,000 in 1952—is expected to go even higher in 1953.

Consumer spending, strong now after sagging in the first half of 1952, is likely to make new gains.

And 1953 exports to the United States, Canada's top customer, are expected to be buoyant, offsetting a less reassuring outlook for sales to other parts of the world.

Summing it all up, says Dr. O. J. Firestone, the trade department's economic adviser, "prospects for 1953 are for a continuation of a high level of economic activity and a gross national product exceeding that of 1952."

Dr. Firestone did some crystal-gazing when he spoke before the Montreal Institute of Investment Analysts recently. He mixed optimism with caution and with a touch of unpleasant realism—somewhere along the line, Canada's spectacular postwar expansion may lose momentum.

FIRST SIGN

The first sign, he says, will be on contractors' drawing boards. And some of those drawing boards are not so busy as they once were.

"... New large-scale resources development and industrial projects are not being planned on the same scale that we have become accustomed to in recent years," he notes.

"True, there are some major projects in the offing, such as the St. Lawrence seaway and the Bersimis River hydro project in eastern Quebec announced recently.

"Then, there will be new developments that we do not know about today. The point I want to make is that we cannot assume a continuous expansion of our economy at the rapid rate of the postwar years—at some future date the expansion may slow down.

"An advance indication of this slowing down—even ahead of anticipated capital expenditures which includes large outlays for projects already under way—might be a falling off in project planning."

Meanwhile, the more im-

mediate future looked generally bright. There might be some sag in the economy, but this likely would be overcome by a general bulge—the same kind of bulge that kept employment at peak or near peak levels through the postwar years, brought national income to the highest level in history and made the Canadian dollar the strongest in the world."

ray ...

Reflects and Reminisces

Truman promised Eisenhower he'd do his best to elect him. Instead, he did his best not to. And the unpleasant part of it is that the outgoing and incoming presidents must meet and shake hands—heartily and with smiles, of course.

The program director, at the Fourth Estate Frolic in Vancouver last week, asked the general question:

"Can we laugh at ourselves? Millions find it impossible. But the fellow who can is singularly fortunate."

CULTURED TASTE

We only discovered the other day that mice like to eat flowers, although that cannot be new to the seasoned householder. Local folk revel in floral riches both within and without. Blooms are made for beauty, not breakfast.

An Ontario paper takes a crack at what it calls "the growing tendency to regard pedestrians as trespassers on pavements." The day is coming when someone who goes on legs instead of wheels will make a test case. With the increasing rules and regulations, forbidding and permitting, allowing and denying, where do the fellows on foot come in? Rights? Where are they and what are they?

THAT CRAVING

British grocers clamor for more cheese. Overseas the ration is an once a week. That's no ration. It's barely a temptation! And somehow, Britain has always seemed to regard Canada as the "cheesiest" land left on earth.

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