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Telephone Question

SINCE LAST DECEMBER when the voters of Prince Rupert recorded themselves by plebiscite as being in favor of proceeding with the financing of a new automatic telephone system at an estimated cost of \$550,000, a good deal of thinking has been going on pro and con. It may be that some minds have been wavering on the subject on which the Daily News has already from time to time suggested it might be wise to proceed cautiously. Last week a letter was published in this paper from Ernest Love, formerly superintendent of utilities here and now operating the telephone system at Stewart, expressing the opinion that, by repair and extension, the existing telephone system, at a cost of within \$100,000, could be put in shape to take care of all new demands for service for many years to come. Furthermore, the present congestion and inadequacy could thereby be relieved at least one year earlier than the proposed new plant could start to operate.

The question to carefully consider, therefore, is whether the project involving an outlay of \$500,000 or more is absolutely necessary or whether the present telephone plant can be put in such shape as to meet the requirements for some time to come.

The majority of the city council is convinced in favor of the new automatic system and is endeavouring to speed the steps with the Department of Municipal Affairs at Victoria whereby the necessary money bylaw to finance it may be placed before the taxpayers.

On the other hand, there is Mr. Love, who is a telephone expert and knows the local system well, putting forth a view contrary to that of the majority of the council.

As the Daily News has pointed out already in discussing the telephone situation, the city is faced with the spending of a large amount of money on the rehabilitation of its sadly deteriorated schools. The vital water supply system is admittedly in a perilous state of disrepair. The sewer system is in an odoriferously bad condition. The deplorable condition of the streets all over the city is the subject of loud and vociferous protest.

In view of all this, it is not surprising that there should be the question developing in the public mind as to whether a large portion of the city's credit should be risked on the installation of the automatic telephone system at this time, even though the city fathers do contend that the new system would be fully self-liquidating if not on the basis of the present rates at least by means of an increase in rates which seem to be in the air—popular or unpopular as it might be.

If all things were equal, it is certainly questionable if the ratepayers would be as enthusiastic about a fully modern telephone system as they would be about such things as better schools, an assured water supply, an efficient and adequate sewer system or decent city streets and sidewalks and other lesser things.

The city council might be well advised to have a competent survey made by a really disinterested telephone engineer.

DEATH ENDS MONOPOLY
YARMOUTH, Isle Of Wight
A pair of swans settled nearby 40 years ago and fiercely drove off other swans. They recently flew together into high-tension cables and were killed. Within four hours strange swans were

staking claims on the ideal nesting ground so long forbidden them.
LONDON. —The King has approved the appointment of the Queen as commander-in-chief of the Women's Royal Army Corps.

LETTERBOX

CRONJE'S SURRENDER

Editor, Daily News:

The recent account of the surrender of General Cronje of the Boer Army reminds one of many incidents of the retreat and surrender of the famous General. The retreat started from Magersfontein where Cronje and his commandos beat off with terrible loss the attacks of the Highland Brigade under General Wauchope and it was only when General French came along with a cavalry brigade and threatened Cronje's rear that the latter called it a day and moved quietly along the Vaal River followed by French to Paardeberg where Cronje made a brief but heroic stand before surrendering to Lord Roberts. It was with the cavalry at the time we received orders to follow the line of retreat to cope with isolated bodies of Boers who, detaching themselves from the main army, indulged in sniping tactics. We were employed in what might be called "mopping up" in keeping them away from the main army. One could follow the course of Cronje's retreat along the river by various articles of equipment lying about. Many of these were Bibles. The Boers were a very religious race and we could sometimes hear them singing hymns as we endeavored to creep nearer at night. I intended to get some Bibles for souvenirs. There were plenty lying around but they were covered with vermin so I gave up the attempt. We became lousy ourselves. I thought we would surely have to emulate Lady Godiva of literary fame but the fierce rays of the sun prevented us from riding totally bareback. There were also large flies with venomous bite. So we had to "read our shirts" for protection sake. It was a weird sight to see lines of infantry stripped naked, along the river (under cover of a guard, of course) indulging in the intellectual pastime of "reading their shirts." No amount of individual cleanliness would keep the vermin away. Anyone who was in the World War and trenches will understand what "reading a shirt" means. It was only when we reached a small house or "dorp" and obtained insect powder and ointment that there was some relief from the microscopic pests.

After the surrender, capture of Bloemfontein and relief of Ladysmith, the war became guerrilla warfare. The Boer War is ancient history now but, when I see a Bible, my thoughts return to Cronje's retreat from Magersfontein to his surrender at Paardeberg. One could only recount many incidents, some amusing, some not so amusing "but that's another story" as Kipling says.

HUSSAR.



MITCHUM CLEANS UP—Movie hero Robert Mitchum is shown sweeping his cell in the Los Angeles county jail. He is serving his 60-day prison term for conspiring to possess marijuana. The film player said after his first 24 hours behind bars that he is "beginning to like it."

Better English

By D. C. WILLIAMS

1. What is wrong with this sentence? "Jones is well posted on the subject."
2. What is the correct pronunciation of "colander"?
3. Which one of these words is misspelled? Begger, beguilement, begonia.
4. What does the word "predominant" mean?
5. What is a word beginning with pro that means "extraordinary in bulk, quantity, or degree"?

ANSWERS

1. Say, "Jones is well informed on the subject."
2. Pronounce kul-an-der, u as in up, accent first syllable.
3. Beggar.
4. Prevailing. "Almost everyone has a predominant inclination, to which his other desires and affections submit." —Hume.
5. Prodigious.

ROYAL SYMPATHY

FARNHAM, Surrey, Eng. — Michael McHale, who has the same arterial trouble as the King, received a letter of sympathy from the Queen.

Reminiscences and Reflections

By W.J.

Because of slides, there has been a short delay in the arrival of wheat at Vancouver. About 2,500 cars, carrying four million bushels are now being delivered to the waiting elevators and ships. But what do Vancouver elevators know about waiting? We happen to know about a plant in Prince Rupert that has been doing nothing but wait for the past nine years without even seeing a pound of grain.

In 1867, Seward, United States Secretary of State, bought Alaska from Russia for seven million. He didn't figure that eighty-two years later, Yankees would be flying around the earth in four days, and from an international standpoint, Alaska would be North America's most important corner. Or did he?

Toronto's three big dailies circulate in Brampton and an effort is being made to bar their sale in that town in order to protect Brampton's two small weeklies. That's getting off on the wrong foot. Inability to successfully compete is no valid excuse to deny to others the right to offer competition.

Morning mist at Prince Rupert can also be called morning fog but it does not seem to have the latter's staying qualities.

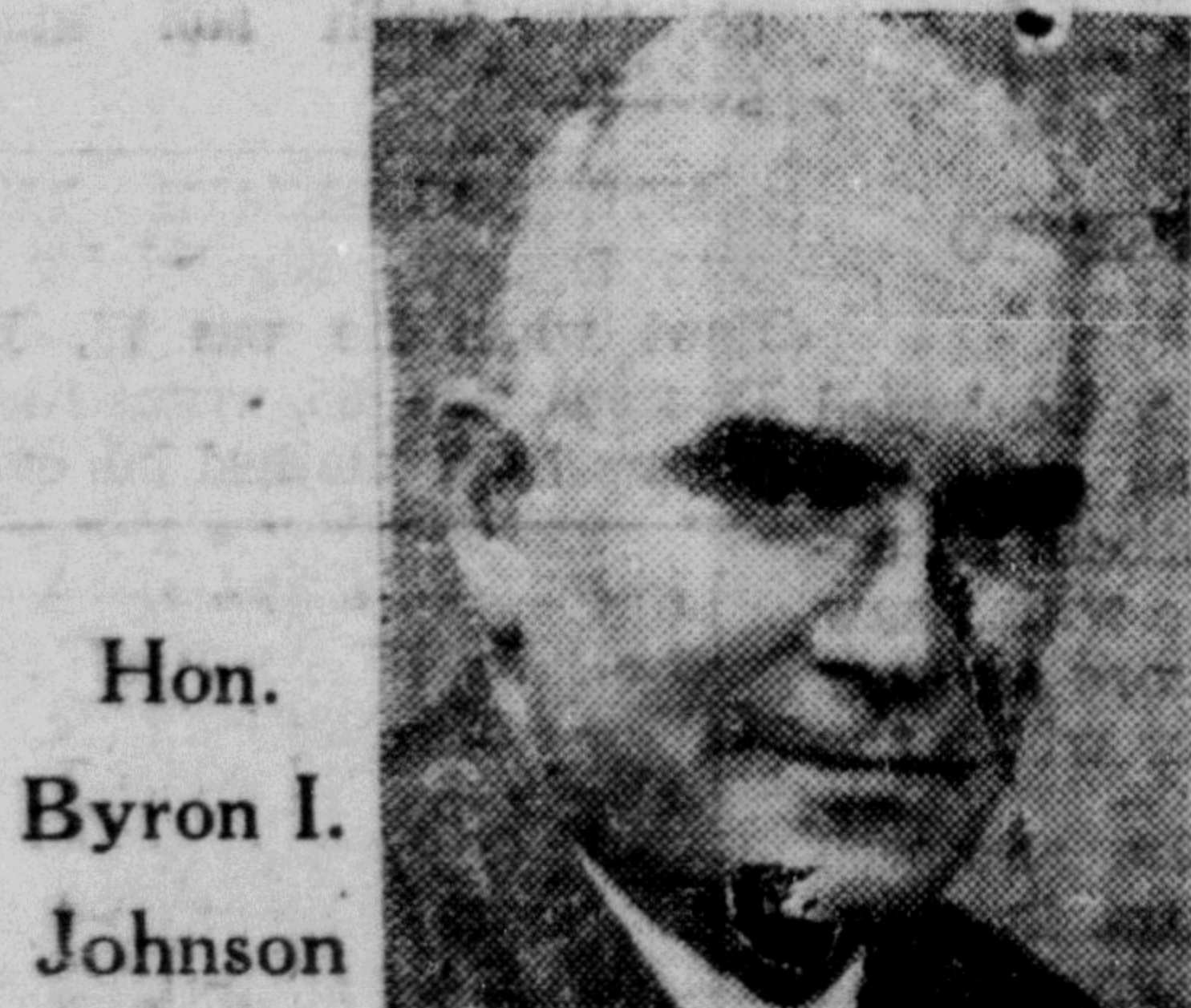
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Hon. Byron I. Johnson

Subject B.C.'s Future

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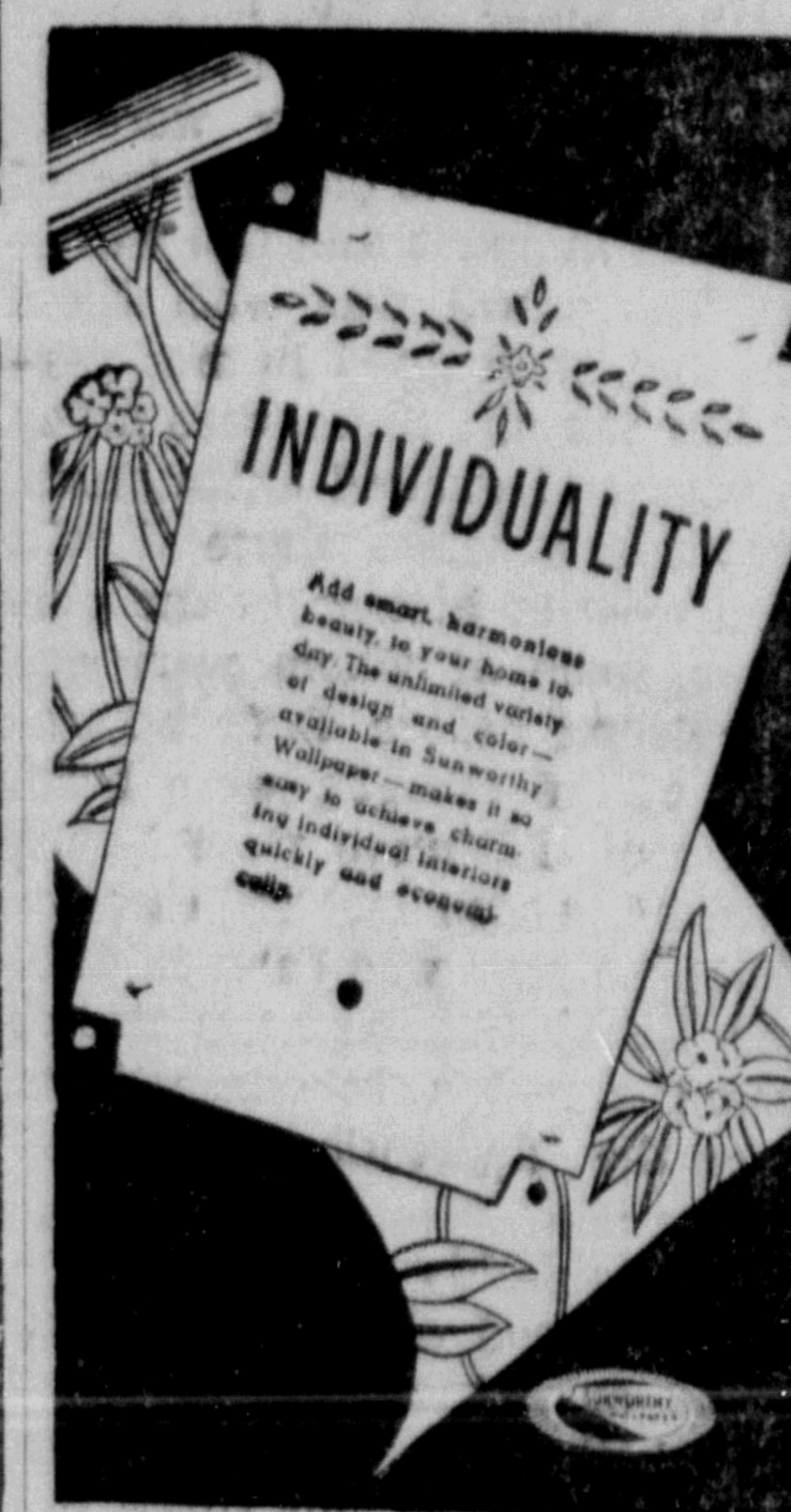
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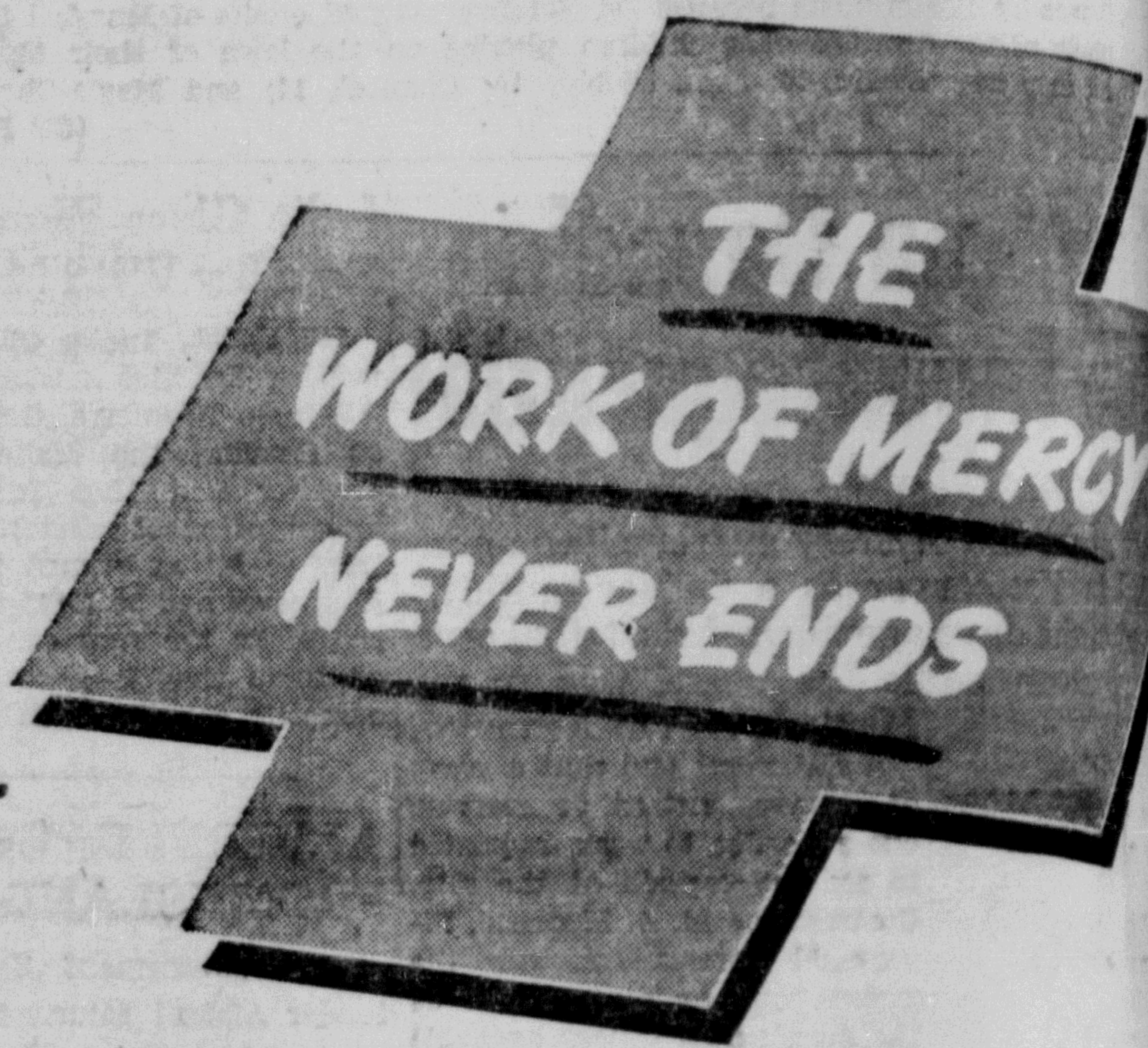
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