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### Building Problems

CANADIANS are clamoring for more new homes and builders can sell more if only they can keep costs down, says Dr. O. J. Firestone, economic advisor to the Trade Department and Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. He realizes that it is not easy to keep costs down, especially when labor is scarce for higher wages and prices of materials are rising. But the building industry has to understand "basic facts."

Even with plentiful materials and more liberal financing, the building industry must be able to sell a house at a price that the majority of Canadians can afford to pay if the industry wants to stay busy and lumber dealers want to sell large quantities of lumber in the domestic market.

It is pretty important to remember that there is only competition among business men in one industry but also competition between different kinds of commodities for the consumer. And if we have faith in competition, then we should do our utmost to make it work for our benefit.

With Canadians earning more and saving more than they did before the Second World War, the Canadian standard of living is rising and with it comes a big demand for Canadian lumber.

In fact, Canadians, says Dr. Firestone, could maintain a still higher standard of living and more leisure if they chose to work the same hours they worked before the war. Instead the trend is towards less work and more leisure and the "non-material pursuit of life."

Even so, the average income of a working person in 1951 amounted to \$2,980, almost three times the average \$1,058 earned in 1939.

On the business side, corporation profits quadrupled to \$2,500,000,000 in 1951 from \$658,000,000 in 1939. Capital expenditures by business skyrocketed to \$2,000,000,000 from \$400,000,000.

All this has meant a great wave of prosperity for Canadians. But business men have to face up to the fact that periods of great buoyancy are usually followed by some slackening.

On the strength of the current wave of prosperity, the market for lumber in Canada is growing. Half a century ago Canada absorbed about one-quarter of her lumber production, exporting the rest three-quarters. By 1951, she was absorbing almost one-half her production.

But the lumber industry, as any other business, must remain competitive. Otherwise Canada may see greater use of substitute materials such as steel and light metals in home and furniture production.

### Regina Calm Over Disease

REGINA (CP)—The foot-and-mouth disease outbreak that has thrown a scare into many parts of Canada has stirred up scarcely a visible ripple on the surface of this bustling capital, on the edge of the quarantined livestock area.

The business and civil life of the 76,000 population of the "Queen City of the Prairies" appears hardly to have been touched by the impact of the outbreak with the series of embargoes arising from it.

Some business men say, though, there may be a delayed effect later on. But it's too early now to forecast that with any accuracy, they say. It will depend on such factors as how long the various embargoes last and on whether the infection is cleaned up without spreading out beyond the quarantine zone.

At the moment, officials of the health of animals division say they seem to have it stopped, with the last herd of infected livestock put under the gun yesterday. But they are keeping their fingers crossed.

Meanwhile, merchants report trade is holding up without any apparent drop. Among the merchants hit have been a few in the flour and feed business whose main trade has been selling feed to growers in the area where the herds have been slaughtered.

On the "entertainment side, the theatres are going strong, with no drop in patronage. Tommy Trinder, the British comedian, was wowing full audiences a few days ago with topical cracks about the epidemic. The community opera group is going right ahead with plans for a presentation of Gounod's "Faust."

Main reason for the lack of severity of the foot-and-mouth effect on Regina is that this is a wheat, rather than a cow town, centre of Saskatchewan's huge grain commerce. A big item of business is the distribution of farm implements through here. It's grain money, rather than cattle money, that turns the wheels of Regina's economy.

Alex Aitken, secretary of Regina's Chamber of Commerce, said yesterday it's not likely there will be much of a kick-back here from the disease outbreak for some time, if at all.

"The big problem," he said, "will be in the future, depending on what develops. If the outbreak is contained in the area where they now are holding it, things won't be serious."

A bank manager expressed the same view. He thought there might be some financial difficulties among the herdsmen who have had their cattle killed to control the outbreak.

"But we can carry them along until they get their herds re-established again," he said. "They're all good credit risks. One thing makes it easier, of course, is that the area has never been so prosperous. If it were not for that, matters might be tough."



A PREVIEWED APRIL SHOWER—By Bob Chambers in the Halifax Chronicle-Herald

### Regina Calm Over Disease

### As I See It

by  
Elmore Philpott

—the top men in the "company town" were really throwing themselves into the job of making this a quite different place from the old idea of "company town."

If you had to write the whole Powell River story of 1952 in one sentence you could say: Here is a company town trying its darndest not to act like one—indeed, not to be one.

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THE AVERAGE man who works in a paper plant is probably better off than he could be in any other B.C. job which calls for about the same qualifications. The recent peak world demand for newsprint has meant that the paper making people have been sure of year round jobs. Compared with a logger or sawmill employee the papermaker has all the best of it. His year-round pay is "in the bag."

Here, too, the layout of the country means that the worker can get from the plant to his own home in a very few minutes. I spotted one chap in a red jersey coming off afternoon shift. Less than fifteen minutes later, miles away, I saw the same man digging in his garden, outside the company town limits. He had a fine new modern bungalow which an upper income professional man would be glad to live in, if it were in a big city.

I found that that home, and many more like it, had been built mostly by the men themselves in off-work hours. They have an adaptation here of the old Ontario "barn raising" plan. Some groups of friends work together over the weekends, helping to build their own homes. Often you will see a crude shack side by side with a new home. The family had made the shack serve till the new one was ready.

At the present rate, you will soon see a whole community of neat, good homes. All these are outside the original "company town."

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THEY make over a thousand tons of newsprint every day at Powell River. They are part of what has become the most important manufacturing industry in the whole Canadian economy.

SCENTED NECKLACES  
Cheap pearls made from her-ring scales, which develop a pleasant scent, have been invented in Norway.

### Powell River

POWELL RIVER: I have been working for Canadian newspapers since 1922.

Last year, during my trip to India, the daily print of my column reached the astonishing total of more than 700,000, at times, almost three quarters of a million copies per day. All of which goes to show that in thirty years I have helped to use up a fabulous amount of newsprint. (No wonder I favor reforestation. I don't want to help cheat my own grandchildren.)

Yet not till I visited this giant among the world's paper towns had I ever set foot in the plants where they produce the paper itself.

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HAS ANYBODY ever written a good novel on life in a "company town"? It seems to me that a good writer could turn out a humdinger about this place. Here in the foreground are not only all the makings for human drama. But in the background is the bigger story—the saga of the woods.

You would find plenty of strong meat in your story. You would find that harsh, intimidating management methods of several decades ago have left scars not fully forgotten even to this day. (That was before the time of the new management.) But the whole recent trend of your story would be that year by year human relations had improved.

You would find here plenty of tough mechanical problems still to lick—how to get rid of the smell of burning sulphur when sulphur is an absolute essential in the process—how to offset that ear-piercing discord that is a by-product of the paper making. But you would find that in all these matters, and above all in the field of human relations

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### Seals Ride Skeena Ice

Motorists along the Skeena River Highway report hundreds of fat seals riding the ice floes and apparently preying on the salmon of which they are one of the most notorious enemies.

Suggestions are made that this might be a good time for bounty hunters to make a haul and, at the same time, for the Department of Fisheries to take some action. Five dollars a nose is the seal bounty.

Estimates vary as to the damage that the seals do to the salmon but it is known that it is large, the marine animals not actually devouring the fish whole but taking a bit out of them which soon causes their death without having fulfilled their life function.

Suggestions range from dropping depth charges from helicopters to shooting the offenders from the shore.

Fisheries Department officials in this area usually keep a pretty watchful eye on the hair seals and arrange for their organized destruction when conditions are favorable for a substantial kill.

### Lessons For Railwaymen

VANCOUVER—About 250 Vancouver employees of the Canadian National Railways are back in school this week but, in place of the traditional three R's, they are concerned with only one—rules.

The students at the special rules instruction classes are the employees who are responsible for the daily operation of trains. They include engineers, firemen, conductors, trainmen, signalmen, yard switchmen, sectionmen and operators of snow plows and other rail equipment.

During the classes the rule instructor, Lorne M. Thomson of Vancouver, covers the entire uniform code of operating rules and explains how it contributes to the safe operation of trains.

All the men have already passed an examination in the new code of rules since its adoption last September, but they are required to attend classes periodically to keep them up to scratch.

After conducting classes here, Mr. Thomson, whose territory covers all of B.C. and Alberta as far as Edmonton, will go on a swing around the province holding classes at all divisional points in the interior and on Vancouver Island. During his 2½-month tour he will meet every CNR operating man in British Columbia. Prince Rupert will be among the places visited.

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### Protecting Ourselves Out?

SAFE fears are voiced by the Victoria Times regarding the immediate future of the major Columbia lumber industry. And any serious slump, it warns, would soon be felt by the whole of the coast province.

Anger stems from the huge and high-priced government contract which will end next year. For some time this contract has virtually provided a floor for the industry, keeping prices of lumber both in the domestic and export markets above the price levels prevailing in the United States. This contract "prodigally negotiated by the Atlee government" will not be renewed, says the Victoria paper, and when it ends two slumps are likely to happen—"a reduction in British Columbia lumber and a reduction in prices."

Under the circumstances one would suppose all interests concerned would be proceeding with caution. Instead labor unions both in lumber and building are proposing another increase in wages and, according to the Times, the whole B.C. economy, including the provincial government, is to be operating on the tacit assumption that the boom can go on forever, that there is no risk of slipping ourselves out of world markets.

For a basically exporting province like British Columbia, warns the Times, that situation is dangerous for any part of Canada. Approximately a quarter of our total production goes to find a market beyond our boundaries, in the United States, Great Britain or elsewhere. We must export in order to finance our imports. Our standard of living, our prosperity, our jobs and tomorrow are absolutely dependent on a healthy export trade.