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Old at 65?

MUCH of the difficulty in making adequate provision for old-age pensioners arises from the unsupported belief that an employee's efficiency deteriorates rapidly after the age of 60 or so. In other words, there are more people getting along in years who have to be taken care of by the government than is necessary. Moreover, many of them on the help are probably just as unhappy about the situation as the taxpayers.

While it is beyond dispute that physical powers decline as age advances, there is no proof to be found anywhere that mental faculties follow the same course. In fact, the latest scientific evidence suggests just the reverse. The saying that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks seems to contain less truth all the time.

After extensive study, the Institute of Psychological Research at Columbia University has concluded that intellectual power does not change from about 20 to beyond 60. In experiments on teaching industrial skills it was found that, if anything, the older people had a slight edge because of the experience they could bring to bear on the subject. Their only handicap was their own doubt about their learning capacities.

With industrial equipment becoming more and more automatic, there is less reason why the physical limitations of age should be a consideration. Some companies are recognizing this, much to their profit. In one plant of Detroit's Chrysler Corporation there is a division where the workers' average age is 66, and some of them are over 80. To conserve the wealth of intelligence among its scientists, the General Electric Company has a policy of hiring those who are "over-age" back on contract—after retirement.

A waste of human ability is the greatest waste of all. It will increase the country's productiveness and thereby help employment as a whole if Canadians change "retirement at 65" to read "retirement at discretion."

Ray REFLECTS and REMINISCES

When you pick up a paper today, before you throw it aside, you will have read scandal stuff—yet true. But if you'll keep on looking, you'll invariably come across these little stories of the value of just plain ordinary people—the back page heroes.

THINKING IT OVER

A Vancouver paper gives notice that no time should be wasted when turning in a wedding report. Three days is the limit, else no story. The bigger the household, the longer does it take to find the final word. Some homes love to struggle with printers ink, writing the same stuff over and over and over again.

WHO SAW IT FIRST?

Canada keeps pushing ahead for an All-Canadian Seaway, quite regardless of the already obvious United States policy. But after all, the St. Lawrence River was discovered long before the Erie Canal.

All that keeps some of the boys from going to university, remarks a contemporary is their low marks in high school.

The Sydney Morning Herald, oldest newspaper in Australia.

will soon have a new home. It will be one of the world's largest and finest. Incidentally this is commencing to resemble competition for the "afternoon sheets," which had begun to feel a bit consequential.

It is dangerous to expect children to outgrow habits of misusing sound. It sounds mighty cute to hear Junior say "wabbit" for rabbit" when he's three years old; it's tragic when he's six feet tall and applying for a job.

"The Marker" monthly publication at the Royal Military College in Kingston announces 96 per cent of the cadets favor a return to the 1876 scarlet uniform with pillbox cap. And not forgetting the saucy little swag-stick, either.

A PRICELESS GIFT

Los Angeles' health officer, Dr. R. O. Gilbert, estimates that Americans are using between three and four million dollars worth of sleeping a year. Fellow physicians say his reckoning is far too low. One, in Santa Barbara declares: "It is costing us more than three billion a year to get some of the 'synthetic' value of sleep that good health, good conscience and peace of mind receive as nature's gift."

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As I See It



by
Elmore Philpott

Eyes South

THERE is one sidelight which has emerged as a result of the reactions to our Prime Minister's statement about accepting the government of China.

That is, the right wing elements in Canada which used to take the leadership from Britain now tend to fall in behind the U.S.A.

Britain long since recognized the real government of China. The U.S.A. refuses to do so. The Congress of the U.S.A. has tied the hands of John Foster Dulles in advance of the Geneva meeting. He has been made to promise that he will not even discuss the recognition of Red China at Geneva.

Yet some Canadian Conservatives eagerly jump in behind—not Britain—but the right-wing Senators of the U.S.A.

MY OWN guess is that the Conservatives in Canada will commit political suicide if they abandon the traditional position of attachment to Britain, and affix their real loyalties to the U.S.A.

There will always be in Canada a place for a party whose main interest is to keep Canada as a loyal and vital member of that strange world cluster of nations which comprise the British Commonwealth. That was the role which the Conservative party traditionally filled in Canada. Moreover, that fierce loyalty to the British connection was the main political asset of the Conservative party. In the last few years that fact no longer applies.

The U.S.A. has emerged as the greatest single power of all time. The U.S.A. has also become the core and centre of what conservatism there is left in the world—standing in fact far to the right of the British conservative government, headed by Sir Winston Churchill. More and more the thoughts of the top right wingers in Canada turn to Washington and not to London.

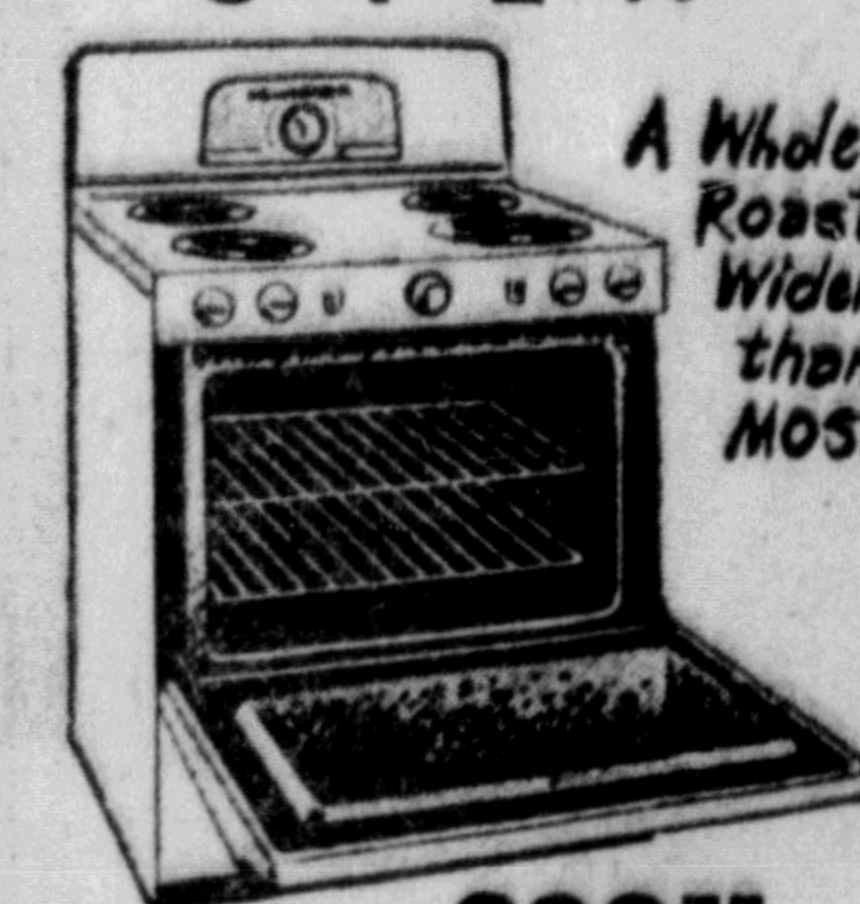
THERE IS no reason to believe that British recognition of China would have been very much delayed, had the Conservatives been in power, rather than Labor, when it was granted.

The Tories might have been a bit more hard-boiled than the Laborites, in working out the details of such recognition. But the whole British nation had taken to heart the lesson learned at the time of the Russian revolution—that the longer you wait to face the facts of such changes, the greater the international problems you create.

THERE IS another factor which tends to dampen down the loyalty which some Canadian right-wingers tend to feel for the right-wing in British politics.

The British Conservatives have (See PHILPOTT Page 6)

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OTTAWA DIARY

By Norman M. MacLeod

There are encouraging signs that the down trend in the economy of the past few months has pretty well spent its force and that an upturn is close at hand. Here are some of the portents upon which government economists now are building a cautious optimism:

The rise in unemployment has tapered off until it now is bare-

ly more than perceptible. Some industries are re-employing workers laid off at the depths of the slump. In a few parts of the country the construction industry already is starting its spring expansion.

Railway car-loadings, which in the early months of the year were down almost 10 per cent from 1953, now are running less than five per cent below 1953 figures. That is an obvious recovery from the low point in the economy.

Department store sales are commencing to run slightly ahead of last year. While bargain prices are an admitted factor in the higher volume of business, retailers now are reporting that the public appears to be once more in a buying mood. Confidence now is high that the advent of spring weather will result in a brisk buying demand for a wide range of merchandise.

There are other important factors in the brightening outlook at the moment. One is the certainty now that government expenditures are going to maintain their recent levels over the balance of the year. Another is the definite prospect that development, engineering, and business expansion expenditures are going to run a little ahead of the comparative totals of 1953.

Finally, there is that fact that the so-called "period of correction" through which the economy has been passing has brought about some helpful price adjustments. Prices now are more closely related to consumers' willingness to pay than they were at the peak of the boom, when disturbing signs of a "buyers' strike" were becoming apparent.

According to the yardstick of Ottawa economists, conditions have levelled off by an approximate 10 per cent from the peak of the boom. That's not enough to cause a depression,—but it's dangerously close to the critical point. Any further extension of the down swing would be serious.

The question now is the extent of the recovery movement, which may be expected. Government experts frankly don't expect the peak prosperity of last year to be repeated. But they believe that the leveling-off point will be only slightly lower,—five per cent as a maximum. By all normal standards that will rank as a really good year.

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