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International Angles

WHILE international attention is being directed at the moment to the St. Lawrence seaway, there is another proposed hydro-electric development on the west coast which promises completely to overshadow the eastern project as a matter of concern to Canada and the U.S.A.

Recent comments on the Frobisher plan to utilize waters of northern B.C. and the Yukon as power for a giant chemical and metallurgical industry suggest it will be impossible to keep this entirely a Canadian matter. Although it was originally anticipated an effort would be made to create a Canadian sea port inside the Alaska panhandle near Tulsequah, where the plant probably will be located, there is evidence now that other ocean outlets are being sought.

A scheme to gain access to the sea by means of corridors across Alaskan territory appears to have stronger backing than that of the B.C. & Yukon Chamber of Mines which proposed it. Governor Heintzleman of Alaska is said to have expressed interest after being approached on a high level. It is understood he will make recommendations when he attends a conference in Washington later this month.

Elaborating on the subject, the Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle reports having information that Canadian engineers consider it would be impractical even to locate the industry at Tulsequah, let alone make any attempt to develop a port there. One reason given is that the Taku River valley is narrow and subject to floods which might endanger a townsite (although so far the Cominco settlement there seems to have managed all right). Another is that it is too distant from headwaters and that a site on the Taiya River far to the north (where the Aluminum Company of America is hoping to start a similar project) would be preferable.

Another complication is that, while the federal government believes the water must be protected for Canadian use, Premier Bennett has said that B.C. will co-operate with the company, Canadian or American, which can best do the job. His remarks are based on the claim that, while the Dominion government makes the international agreements, B.C. has control of the water. By co-operation, the Premier evidently means that if a U.S. company developed the project, B.C. would get a share of the power for sale to other industries.

It makes a very tricky problem, particularly since care must be taken that a U.S. company using Canadian power would not undersell Canadian products. In view of the many angles involved, it would be well to go slowly . . . although it is to be hoped we are spared anything so leisurely as the negotiations on the St. Lawrence seaway.

Ray REFLECTS and REMINISCES

Plenty of strangers notice the Second Avenue stairway leading up by the rock wall next the Bank of Commerce, and wonder, naturally enough, where or what it is supposed to lead to. There was once a day when the Prince Rupert Club, and subsequently the Moose Lodge crowned this rocky and central site. It was a pleasure to hold membership in either.

SO HANDY!

From the elevated lawns and wide, roomy windows, views in all directions were little less than splendid. The hallways, the open fireplace, the comfortable seating and numerous other advantages all helped one feel at home. Old timers cannot but miss it today. Such comforts are not easily replaced.

Vancouver people continue to deplore what they call the number of accidental deaths from the effects of gas. Others are not without different impressions. They could mention losses, but there was nothing like an accident about it.

I find that in fifty years I have had only four barbers, comments Gregory Clark, the correspondent. Two of them died, one retired and the fourth I have now had for a year. The great majority fix on one barber. I can't say why, but I believe it to be a fact.

It isn't everyone who gets a bullet through his heart and goes on living the better part of a lifetime. There died in Ontario about a week back Maj.-General Jas. H. Elmsley, aged 75. During the Boer War he was shot in the heart, carried by a soldier friend, on horseback to the nearest first aid station, served through the First World War, commanded the force to Siberia, subsequently commanding in Winnipeg, Ottawa and Toronto. The general made it a full day.

Following the holiday, Federal parliament has resumed and perhaps it is not unfitting to mention it, even if briefly. For one thing, the question of increased remuneration remains alive. It is known the majority of our members have other sources of income through professional or business connection. This, it would seem, would make the situation debateable.

As I See It

by Elmore Philpott

Those Happy Bells

OTTAWA: The rain is coming down in solid layers, as the train leaves Vancouver for Ottawa.

We chuckle to think that the reason Vancouver folks live longer and get more out of life than their fellow citizens further east is that they breathe the purest air of any big city in Canada. Is it not washed at least once daily?

There is deep, soft snow near the top of the Rockies and mean, stubborn snow east of Fort William. Our train is four hours late at Ottawa.

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THE SUN is shining so brightly in Ottawa that we can hardly believe it is below zero.

The Sunday morning church bells are ringing as the taxi speeds us the few blocks to our apartment. It suddenly strikes me that one profound difference between eastern Canadian cities and those in the west is that the east has it all over us when it comes to bells. Apart altogether from the magnificent bells in the Peace Tower of the parliament building, bells ring out from all directions here in the capital of Canada—especially on Sunday.

But if it is true that the east is far ahead of the west in this matter of bells in churches, it is even more true that the whole of Europe is ahead of almost all North America in this same field.

When Britain wanted to pick a signal that everyone in the land would be sure to hear in the event of invasion, she picked the church bells. Those bells never were called upon to sound out that call to arms—but they did have the great honor of pealing out in joyful unison when the Nazi war beast was finally overcome, and mankind got still another chance to set its world house in order.

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THE AUTOMOBILE put the horse-drawn vehicle out of business. That meant that the horse-drawn sleigh went out, along with the horse and buggy.

Youngsters born now are pretty lucky — and notwithstanding atom bombs, and all that, this is the finest time there ever was for a baby to come into this world.

But the youngsters of today will never know some of the simple, homely joys of my father's boyhood or mine.

Every street in winter of 1900 was full of horse-drawn sleighs. And every sleigh was equipped with sleighbells. There were rich bells and poor bells, proud bells and humble bells. Some were silver and tinkled like beautiful chimes. Others were hoarse-throated and called out as coarse as crows. But the overwhelming, combined effect was of cheerfulness. I never heard a single gloomy sleighbell.

Even to this day, kids catch some of the contagious fun from the song, "Oh, What Fun It Is To Ride in a One-Horse Open Sleigh." It was fun, all the way from a one-horse cutter to a sleighriding party in which an immense sleigh carried a happy party.

Those happy sleighbells helped out a song in your heart.

IWA, Operators Meeting Today

VANCOUVER (CP) — International Woodworkers of America (CIO-CCL) and lumber operators involved in the three-month Southern Interior strike of woodworkers are scheduled to meet here today.

George Mitchell, IWA district secretary, said Southern Interior Lumber Manufacturers' Association would set the time of the meeting.

Government-sponsored inquiry into the dispute is scheduled to get underway Jan. 20 under chairmanship of Judge A. E. Lord but place of the hearing has not been announced.

COMMISSIONER O'Connor (centre), of the Chicago Police Department is treated to a demonstration of a "magnetic rake" that was presented to him on behalf of the Chicago police force. The donor is Robert M. Arnold (right), who heads a Marengo, Ill., firm that makes magnetic devices. With them is Lt. John B. Ascher (left), crime detection laboratory director. The rake will be used in the recovery of guns and other metal objects from water. It can lift hundreds of pounds, and penetrate silt and sand.

VICTORIA REPORT

. . by J. K. Nesbitt

VICTORIA.—It was said here last week that it's extremely difficult to chart the political future from the result of a by-election.

It was recalled that the Coalition government, fresh in office in 1941, was defeated by the CCF in Salmon Arm in 1942, and in Revelstoke in 1943, and yet, in 1945 and 1949 the Coalition almost wiped the CCF from the legislature.

The upset of Social Credit Mr. Gunderson by Liberal Mr. Gregory still has the political historians scurrying into the past searching for other interesting political contests, seeing if there might not be a pattern that would help us see the political future in B.C. at this moment. But there's no pattern!

Let's go back to the start of party politics in B.C. in 1903. In June of that year the McBride Conservative government was sworn in. Among the ministers were Attorney-General A. E. McPhillips and Provincial Secretary A. S. Goodeve.

The McBride government went to the people in October of 1903. McPhillips and Goodeve were defeated! Worse than that, McBride's four Victoria supporters in the House—McPhillips, Joseph Hunter, Harry Dallas Helmcken and Wm. Hayward—were knocked out by four Liberals—R. L. Drury, Richard Hall, J. D. McNiven and W. G. Cameron. Goodeve, in Rossland, was beaten by the new Liberal leader, J. A. Macdonald.

Close Victory

The Conservatives were bewildered, the Liberals jubilant. It was a bare scrape-through for McBride. The Conservatives had 22 members, the Liberals 17; there were two Socialists, one Labor.

But, in the 1907 general election, what happened? Out went the four Liberals in Victoria—Messrs. Drury, Hall, Cameron and McNiven—and in went four Conservatives—the great Dick McBride himself, Frederick Davey, H. F. W. Behnsen and H. B. Thomson.

Two years later there was another general election. The Liberals had it this time! That's what the Liberals said. It would be easy! The result: the four Conservatives stayed in—beating Liberals A. L. Morley, John Oliver, R. L. Drury and W. K. Houston.

And then the 1912 election! In again went Conservatives McBride, Thomson, Davey and Behnsen, defeating Liberals Harlan Carey Brewster and Elliott. Why the Liberals ran only two that year is not known.

And now it is March of 1916. McBride had left the premier's office—for London, as B.C. agent-general. He saw the handwriting on the wall. W. J. Bowser became premier. He shuffled the cabinet. He appointed Charles Tisdall minister of public works; Lorne Campbell, minister of mines, and A. C. Flumerfelt minister of finance.

In those days—and until the 20s—when an MLA was appointed to the cabinet he had to go back to the people to have his cabinet appointed approved, or otherwise.

Ministers Beaten

So, in March of 1916, to the people went Public Works Minister Tisdall in Vancouver, Finance Minister Flumerfelt in Victoria; Mines Minister Campbell in Rossland. Tisdall and Flumerfelt were beaten by Liberals; Campbell squeaked in by nine votes.

Yes, that time defeat of cabinet ministers showed the Conservative jig was up. In the late autumn of 1916, in a general election, the Conservatives were snowed under by the Liberals. Victoria's four seats went Liberal—Harlan Carey Brewster (who became premier), George Bell, Henry C. Hall and John Hart.

The Conservative rout—for the time being—was complete. In 1912 the Conservatives elected 40 members; in 1916 they were reduced to nine—the Liberals had 37.

And so it was that the defeat of cabinet ministers McPhillips and Goodeve back in 1903 meant nothing until 13 years later.

Now let us look at some of the by-election flip-flops that shook the politicians of the day.

In 1922 there was a by-election in Cranbrook. Liberal Dr. J. H. King had resigned to go into federal politics. The Liberals were sure of holding Cranbrook. But, glory be! Conservative Noel Wallinger won.

But in 1924 back went the Liberals, though Premier Oliver was beaten in Victoria, had to

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OTTAWA DIARY

By Norman M. Mac

OTTAWA—Economists in the federal trade department are really hopeful of steps now being taken to bring about convertibility of the dollar with foreign currencies. The main stumbling block at the moment appears to be France's economic troubles. But even Trade Minister Rt. Hon. C. D. Howe has told the Commons not to be too pessimistic about some real progress in the field.

It was in a more or less obscure passage in a recent issue of the department's weekly publication, "Foreign Trade," that the trouble with the French franc was emphasized. The article, prepared here on the basis of reports flowing in from Federal Government Trade Commissioners around the world, dealt with the steady improvement that has been noticed this year in the credit position of European importing firms. The article said Nthat as a market for goods Europe had shown a "generally favorable trend" during the past six months.

This has largely been a case of the Continent pulling itself up by its own bootstraps. United States economic aid has been tapering off, and most countries have shown that they are able to get along with less American help, and have improved the stability of their own national affairs. This has meant that some governments have been able to ease their restrictions on dollar imports and have been able to relax embargoes and quotas on trade with their neighbors.

"Currency convertibility is gaining proponents in Europe, bringing nearer the day when discriminating exchange relations, as a barrier to trade, may disappear," the publication said. "The inability of France to overcome domestic financial instability and increase her rate of exports is the main hindrance to more unhampered trade with Europe. A dash to exchange freedom without the franc is not practicable. But in the meantime trade liberalization is gaining ground and various European countries have relaxed restrictions on dollar imports."

Of course, because of historic racial and cultural ties, and because of geography, France is counted as one of Canada's good friends in the trading world, both as a source for goods that Canada can't get as easily elsewhere, and as a market for Canadian exports. Last year Canada sold France $48,264,000 worth of goods, up $2,000,000 from the previous year. The big item in our sales, naturally, was wheat, accounting for nearly one-quarter of the total. Canadian imports from France, however, were down last year to only $19,117,000 compared with $23,974,000 in 1951.

And in the first six months of 1953, Canadian exports to France fell to about half what they were in the same period of 1952, while our imports from France have risen from $9,393,000 in the first half of 1952 to $11,324,000 in the same period last year.

Although the drop in Canadian exports to France isn't something anyone on this side relishes, the increase in purchases from France is promising. If these imports continue to grow, Canada will be able to play some role in bringing about a better balance of trade in this di for France.

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