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Northern Line Pays

IF ANYONE remains unimpressed by the possibilities of this neck of the woods, in its literal sense, there is occasion for thought in the report that last year the line between Red Pass Junction and Prince Rupert was the most profitable stretch of track on the entire CNR system.

A total of almost 44,000 revenue carloads was handled on the Smithers division, to give the division its all-time record in freight traffic movement.

If account is taken of the relatively small population of this area, the wide separation of its centres, and the work stoppages in the forest and fishing industries during 1952, the performance assumes remarkable significance. Whereas more heavily developed areas can provide fairly continuous two-way traffic, the Smithers division in many respects is still a one-way operation. Last year approximately 5,000 eastbound freight cars were moved off the division empty.

Traffic from the Columbia Cellulose Company is doing much to reduce this tendency; and as our Alaskan, and possibly Oriental, trade develops, the trend will be cut down still further. But the important point remains that, even under present conditions, the commerce of this part of the province is more than holding its own with that of the rest of Canada.

With our scope for development, the business that will be done here about five years from now should be something for the text-books on Canadian economics.

A Fast Game of Treachery

DISCOVERY in Montreal of another network of Soviet espionage should remind those among us who are cultivating the friendship of Communists that they are playing a fast game for which the main qualifications are trickery, treachery and a certain native knack for common stealing.

If they are willing to assume these qualities—and to the true Communist they are admirable ones—they may eventually be indoctrinated in the finer points of the underground, underhand technique. Broadly speaking, this means selling out their own country as rapidly and as ruinously as possible.

In doing so, the eager—or scared—disciple never questions the wisdom of the one who gives the orders. A good current example of this blind obedience is demonstrated by those now beating the Communist drums of anti-Semitic propaganda for the Rosenbergs, who are awaiting possible execution in the U.S. for espionage.

Although the masters at Moscow are at present waging a bloody campaign against Jews, and dropping them through the hangman's trapdoor with far less ceremony, it would never do to speculate on this strange contradiction. Stalin is all-seeing and all-powerful, so beat out the drums!

To attract prey into the fold, a successful ruse has been to portray Communists as champions of the underdog. By causing industrial unrest and fomenting strikes, it is surprising how many underdogs can be created. A man deprived of his wages in this way is very susceptible to such persuasion.

At the same time, the faithful Communist never reflects too long on the U.S.S.R.'s attitude towards the underdog. Russia's attack on Finland, for example, probably had some reasonable explanation by which it could be shown that Finland was the bully that provoked the fight.

Nor is it healthy to wonder why there are so many refugees escaping from Communist control into western Europe, or why there are so many Chinese prisoners-of-war unwilling to be repatriated. A little investigation would probably prove they are all lousy capitalists, so why worry?

As long as the young revolutionary does not ask too many questions, and is indifferent to a knife in the back, he will find it a great game.

"My presence shall go with thee."—Exod. 33:14

Former Officer Spent Too Much

OTTAWA (C)—The auditor-general reported to parliament that an army officer got a \$29,000 house for his use in Regina although he was only authorized to spend half that sum.
Waterson Seller, in his annual report to parliament, reported the case involved a project for improvement of the house acquir-

ed for use of the area commandant. The officer wasn't named. However, an army spokesman said the area commandant in Regina at that time was Brig. Alan Connely, 44, of Calgary, who was retired last fall on the grounds that there was no further army employment for him.



BUGGSY, AN ANGORA RABBIT, and Omar, 18-year-old saddle horse, are stablemates at a Victoria riding club. Buggsy was found on a nearby highway and put in Omar's stall. They now are the best of friends. Omar's next-door neighbor, Allegro, is a bit puzzled by the friendship.

Report From . . .

Parliament Hill

By GEORGE M. MURRAY, M.P., Cariboo

There will be no election this spring. It may come in the fall of 1953 but there are many who now say that the spring of 1954 will be chosen.

Easterners do not want a fall election. The B.C. government will likely go in May. At Ottawa, they do not wish to have a repetition of the 1949 show when the B.C. provincial and federal appeals came almost together.

My bill to incorporate the Peace River Transmission Company went through second reading with the whole House approving. This company is to take over local pipelines in the Peace River country for transmission of fuel to Dawson Creek, Fort St. John and other points on both sides of the B.C.-Alberta line.

The British Columbia railway problems caught the spotlight when the B.C. Minister of Railways gave out a statement that the government was seriously considering building the Peace River rail outlet to the Pacific through the Monkman Pass.

This at once caused a storm of protest throughout the north. Nothing like it was heard since the late Premier John Oliver of British Columbia, 25 years ago or more, expressed approval of a Monkman Pass route. It was in 1930 that I was present at Grande Prairie when the Canadian Pacific Railway sent a crew of engineers through the Monkman Pass under the leadership of Alex Monkman, discoverer of the pass. Hopes were high that a Pacific outlet might be built as a result of the survey. Nothing happened.

This battle of the passes, as far as the Peace River country is concerned, has been going on since 1874. The Peace River Pass came very nearly being the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway. There are reams of material here at Ottawa, from the most distinguished engineers of the Confederation period, who favored the Peace River Pass as the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway main line.

At that time, there was some support for the Yellowhead Pass which was later occupied by the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern Railways (now incorporated in the CNR system). The Kicking Horse Pass was finally determined by the government of Canada under the Liberal Prime Minister, Alexander Mackenzie.

Decision to use it was largely political. The government had exact information on the Kicking Horse Pass. The government of British Columbia, which came into the union in 1871, threatened to pull out of Confederation if Canada did not complete the promised railway to the coast. The Mackenzie government gave order to fire away with construction of the Kicking Horse Pass route, rather than risk the disruption of the new nation which had been formed in 1867.

Whenever the railway men are in a tight corner with respect to the Pacific coast outlet for the Peace River, the battle of the passes seems to be re-

As I See It



by
Elmore
Philpott

Urges Thatcher Budget

IF FINANCE MINISTER

Abbott wants to bring down a budget which the whole country will approve he could not do better than to start with the recommendations made by the CCF MP for Moose Jaw.

Let us ignore the fact that Ross Thatcher is a bit of a contradiction in his own party. He is the kind of contradiction that every party should be glad to include—and the CCF should be proud of him. For the same qualities which have made him such an outstanding business success apply to his public attitudes. Not long ago Mr. Thatcher showed where the government could save \$375 million per year without cutting essential service. He has also made admirable suggestions for the forthcoming budget.

HERE ARE the tax reductions suggested by Ross Thatcher in the House of Commons on December 10:

Cut sales tax by 2 percent.
Cut personal income taxes 10 percent.
Cut corporation taxes, as possible.

I cannot go along with Mr. Thatcher in his previous recommendation against the universal old age pensions without means test, although I have a deep respect for his courage in saying it is foolish to give such grants to people who do not need them. I think he misses the point. They are simply compulsory savings, organized for all. But you have to admire the man who gets right down to such practical details as when he asks "why do we need one barber shop for the House of Commons and another for Senators?"

AS I HOPE the Minister of Finance will read this column, as usual, I add my personal recommendation to the proposed "Thatcher budget."

In addition to a 2 per cent cut in sales tax and a 10 per cent cut in income tax, plus reduction in corporation taxes, I would put at the very top of the list abolition of the nuisance stamp tax of cheques. This surely is one of the least necessary, most unproductive taxes of all and one that causes the most annoyance, and expense to business.

A good accountant tells me that it costs business much more than the face value of the stamps. When people do what I always did—that is, add three cents to the value of the cheque and omit putting on the stamp—many business firms must make two separate entries on their books—one for the cheque and another for the three cents for the stamp! Don't ask me why—I just know some do. What are we, a nation of bookkeepers? Surely the time has come to wipe out this nuisance tax forever.

BUT WE need extra expenditures in some fields even more than we need tax cuts. I think Mr. Abbott could give us both.

The government should give long overdue justice to the War Veterans Allowance men. They need the rate urged by the Canadian Legion, namely \$60 per month for single men and \$120 for married couples. The double means test should be abolished—once the man has been given the WVA he should not be subject to month by month inquisition. I would bet a month's salary that it costs the government more to administer this double means test than the treasury would lose by abolishing it altogether.

OTTAWA DIARY

By Norman M. MacLeod

For a good many years, now, there have been sporadic complaints on Parliament Hill over the practice of appointing judges to handle conciliation and arbitration boards which aren't properly in the realm of judicial bodies.

The other day, one of Canada's top judicial figures let it be known that he didn't like the practice either. And at the time he made his personal pronouncement on the subject, he was serving as chairman of just such a board.

In almost any part of the country, and at any level of the judicial structure from police court magistrate to the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, judges have about all they can do to handle the work of their courts. Yet time and time again, judges are "borrowed" from the courts by one government or another to serve as chairman of primarily administrative bodies.

The other day, the President of the Exchequer Court, Hon. J. T. Thorson, had something to say about this practice.

At that time, he was handling a "case"—though legally it really wasn't that—in the Exchequer Court courtroom. It was a hearing by the Copyright Appeal Board, of which he is the chairman. The discussion was about

how much Canadian radio stations should pay to CAPAC, the Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada, for performing rights in 1953.

The same question was discussed in 1952. After Judge Thorson and his fellow board-members handed down their decision CAPAC and the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, representing most of the private radio stations, decided to take the matter to the courts to decide some matters connected with it. The case is still before the courts and therefore sub judice.

But the interesting thing is that the court to which CAPAC and CAB took their case after Judge Thorson handed down his

decision was Judge Thorson's own Exchequer Court. Of course, Judge Thorson himself is not able to sit in on the case or hear the appeal if the one.

That's the very thing Judge Thorson complained of the other day. Because he is used on administrative boards they are not permitted in their own courtroom cases that may flow from boards to their courts. And means that the whole staff of their courts is weakened.

The very man who strengthens a court on a particular question is barred from sitting on it because he is on a board long before the case ever reached his court.

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