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Northern Route Best

ALTHOUGH Works Minister P. A. Gagliardi apparently gave it scant attention, the most significant part of his announced plans for Highway 16 was that construction of a link between Prince George and McBride was contemplated.

Unless the B.C. government had some definite plans in that direction, it is doubtful that Mr. Gagliardi would have mentioned it at all. The subject is far too controversial to permit even half a promise which is not backed up. Now, however, the door is partially opened and it would take the devil's own strength to close it again.

The fact is, of course, that the provincial government cannot avoid having such plans. In view of the proposal to build a dam on the Columbia River at Mica Creek, which would flood the Big Bend highway for approximately 80 miles, B.C. faces a situation in which its only trans-provincial highway will be the most southerly route.

Although it would be possible to cut a road higher up the slopes of Columbia Valley, engineers regard it as a difficult undertaking. Ice and rock slide conditions present a constant hazard, and reconnaissance reports indicate that at least three miles of snow sheds would be necessary.

The comparatively simple alternative is to join Prince George and McBride. By this one act, B.C. would have not only a second trans-provincial highway but a much-needed development of its central, and ultimately its northern, area.

Under the circumstances, it is impossible to avoid giving the proposition some real thought. While it may be conceded that the power interests constructing the dam at Mica Creek will have to pay for the road they flood, the case for a northern route is not changed. The present Big Bend highway is a somewhat treacherous gravel road, so that its replacement value cannot come close to what would be necessary for constructing and maintaining a good highway far up the mountain sides. Such an undertaking might cost almost as much as the power project itself.

The wisest course would be to settle with the power interests on fair terms and apply the credit towards construction of a road that is feasible—the one between Prince George and McBride.

Ray REFLECTS and REMINISCES

Gibraltar is due for a look-see from the Queen and Duke, somewhere around May 10. This will be little more than another month away and ooh are reported well and happy. It is a privilege to be able to return a salute that cannot but have in it a great deal of significance.

Dollars are banked by those who are not forever depositing their quarters on easy chairs, comments an eastern daily.

An Ontario Labor leader says when your neighbor loses his job, it's a recession: when you lose yours, it's a depression. And when about everybody is out of work and your in-laws move in to occupy all vacant rooms, one can hardly say there's a panic, but it may soon be that.

We never inhaled cigarette smoke that reached the lungs, and haven't had a puff of any description for a year. And the situation is going to stay that way.

A shoe salesman is asking again why, in trying on a new shoe he will always find the foot which has a sock with a hole in it. And holes are so common.

TAKE THIS INSTEAD!

The old time medicine man did not die. He's still living, and vigorous at that. How many of us realize that some ten million Americans pay out \$500,000,000 a

year for "health foods," "health aids" and "diet supplements." None of all this is actually needed. But other things are. The food faddist, however, is not.

The Japanese fishermen, feeling the effect of being struck by material that should not have touched them were still in hospital in Japan yesterday, and far from well. Their plight can be said to be serious.

Paper Firm's Counsel Claims Charges Illegal

VANCOUVER (CP)—Ten of Canada's largest paper companies Thursday opened a battle to have charges brought against them under the federal Combines Act thrown out under the statute of limitations.

G. K. Guild, counsel for Pacific Mills Ltd., one of the firms charged with conspiring to eliminate fair competition, argued during the third day of the preliminary hearing that the charges are illegal. He contended that the companies are accused of conspiring together to fix competitive prices between 1934 and 1951. The statute of limitations, he said, says no action shall be brought to recovery a penalty after two years.

As I See It



by
Elmore
Philbott

Egypt Seethes

THERE IS a real warning to the west in the strange situation now shaping up in Egypt.

The masses in Cairo are actually campaigning against the return of "freedom" for party politics. The idea of western style democracy is associated in the minds of the impoverished people, with graft, corruption, deception, and sell-outs to foreign powers.

CERTAIN young officers in the Egyptian army had come to the conclusion that there must be a revolution—that the decadent fat-boy king must go, and that the corrupt political parties must also go.

They staged their coup with almost ridiculous ease — they won absolute power. They jailed hundreds of people whom, they feared, might become dangerous to the new regime. But when they started in to administer the affairs of the country, their drive slowed down, and finally came to a complete halt.

Apart from getting the British out of Suez, the revolutionaries had no clear-cut program. And even the successful completion of the campaign to get the foreign armies out of the Suez canal zone would have no effect in raising the standard of living of the masses. Indeed, the first effect of the expulsion of British armies from the Suez would have the opposite effect — it would deprive scores of thousands of Egyptians of their livelihoods.

THE REVOLUTIONARY junta did proclaim a sort of half-baked land reform program. In theory, a good many of the landless peasants got some title or claim to land on which they had formerly worked for landlords. But there were no arrangements for credits which would have enabled the tenants to get by during the period they were planting and tending their crops, and before they were able to get any cash return for those crops.

So the whole land reform program has also bogged down.

IF DEMOCRACY is to meet and beat the challenge of Communism in all these countries democracy must evolve simple but drastic program of social change to apply in such countries as Egypt.

What Egypt has, in fact, is what exists in less turbulent form in many other countries in that part of the world — a potential revolutionary situation, but without any organization or tools to make that revolution effective.

The situation is in fact made-to-order for exploitation by the Communists. For the Communists know exactly how they would proceed in any such situation.

AN AMERICAN business man wrote the most sensible words about the situation which exists in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

It was to the effect that the only way the west could beat out Russia in all that part of the world was for the west actually to organize and canalize the revolutions which are surely coming.

Our choice, he wrote is to "lead it, or lose it." What is happening in Egypt is a striking example of what he meant.

Venezuela was discovered by Christopher Columbus on his third western voyage in 1498.

OTTAWA DIARY

By Norman M. MacLeod

The issue which is the subject of greatest pessimism in Parliament Hill circles these days is the railway labor dispute. A board of conciliation with Mr. Justice R. L. Kellock as its eminent head has been in session since mid-January on the demands of the 160,000 non-operating employees for "fringe benefits" said to add \$60,000,000 to the railways' annual operating costs. The failure of the board to agree on a recommendation in the length of time it has been sitting is regarded by parliament as an ominous portent.

There are reports, furthermore, from Montreal that railway management has concluded that the time has arrived to make a firm stand against any further labor aggression. The economic situation of the transportation industry is said to necessitate a holiday from rising costs if railways are to hold their own against competitive carriers—notably the highway trucks.

So far there has been nothing to indicate that railway workers are disposed to be any less intransigent than railway management. The employees contend that they showed major restraint and co-operation when, instead of seeking higher pay, they offered to settle for a boost in so-called "fringe" benefits now enjoyed on a limited scale. Specifically they asked an increase in holidays with pay, in allowable time off for sickness without pay deduction, and in overtime pay for Sunday work.

Just how far the workers and management are apart in their views on these concessions is indicated by the contrasting price tags they put on them. Management has said that it would cost the railways \$60,000,000 annually to implement the proposals. The workers contend it would cost a scant \$15,000,000.

But irrespective of costs, the railway managements are credited with holding the confirmed view that it is imperative to

hold the wage line at the present time if the railway industry is to be able to function effectively in the nation's economy. Management points out that since the last wage adjustment the cost of living has levelled off rather than increased. Management also makes another strong point: the employees with whom it now is negotiating are not the people who actually run the trains; they are the far more numerous non-operating group—the clerks, ticket-sellers, ledger-keepers, and paper-workers generally. But over the years these groups have graded themselves up very considerably in comparison with the actual operating personnel. In the view of management, the margin of pay separating the two classes has become at least as narrow as can be defended.

Thus the situation is occasioning anxiety and pessimism. It is too replete with the possibilities of a repetition of the 1950 strike to be comfortable.

— DAILY NEWS LETTERBOX —

CONFUSING

The Editor,
The Daily News:

I have waded through the maze of confusion by which Mr. C. W. Reeves says he hopes to offer certain suggestions, however nebulous.

May I be permitted to make the suggestion that Mr. Reeves himself is only groping blindly? His diatribe is not only infantile but reveals an astounding lack of observation in his offer that taxes are fines and that we toss them out of the window in exchange for Utopia.

If we are not prepared to share according to our means in the cost of operating the administrative and social functions of our country and government, why then should we have a voice in its operation?

Naturally, we all squabble about our duties, even about our privileges for we are inherently selfish and greedy. These traits would become all the more obvious and lead to chaos with galloping rapidity should our responsibility to society be removed.

And to suggest that "our concern should not be what man goes to Ottawa as M.P., but to know those who go will introduce a money system..." is nothing short of throwing our franchise out the window where it will crash with a much heavier thud than the taxes.

Is that Social Credit, the medicine for our ills?

LARRY STANWOOD.

THE DRYDOCK UNDER THE HAMMER?

The Editor,
The Daily News:

To the pioneers who struggled to carve a city out of the wilds of muskeg and rock. The news of selling the drydock came as an undesired shock.

How can this natural gate of the Pacific fulfill its function of transportation if it is deprived of its facilities, for shipping reparations?

After a generation of pioneering, in the development of Canada's last west, is Ottawa going to fall down in the enterprise. On a minor affair on the great test?

The great enterprise to link east-west, with a northern railway required the vision of men who could see beyond their times. The potentialities of this Dominion.

The job is far from being complete. It requires perseverance in the task. Fairness and an equitable valuation is what the Rupert people ask.

This matter transcends mere adverse ledgers. It concerns the north Pacific's trade possibilities. Now on the eve of great development, and Rupert is the logical spot for shipping facilities.

Now that Kitimat with its gigantic plant is ready to start operation, it is not logical disposing of the drydock. Needed for its ocean fleet in eventual reparations.

The CNR provides transportation. For Alaska through this port. The Johnson Act will go over board. Rupert becomes the shipping hub of the north.

We fail to see anywhere in the world, such a potential spot needing facilities. To accommodate shipping and this port is essential for developing economic possibilities.

From Rupert to the Peace Pass, lies dormant an Empire of wealth. Out of reach of any possible development Without a new railroad belt.

If the drydock fails to pay its way, in catering to the needs of transportation, it is the fault of Ottawa, for it lacked vision, foresight, in its obligations.

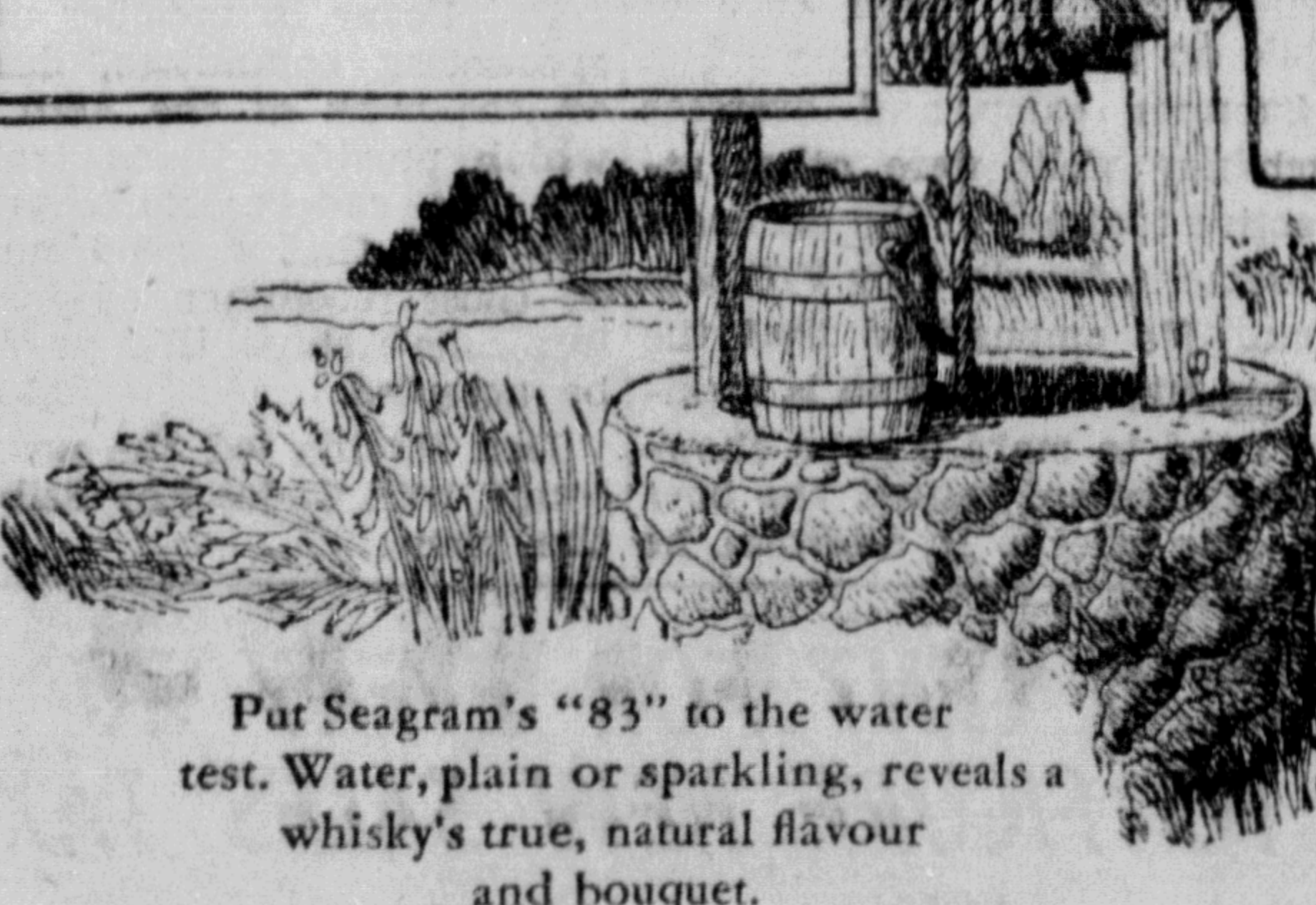
The CNR is big enough. To find a suitable way out, and spare us the humiliation Of seeing the drydock taken away.

Let us say that the drydock was built here to stay and whatever the decision may be, That it will never be taken away.

In the name of the pioneers Who came here and staked their whole, We beseech OTTAWA to keep faith With the great Laurier's goal.

V. BASSO-BERT.

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Bill Passes Senate

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U. S. Senate Thursday passed a bill to grant statehood to Hawaii and Alaska but the measure may languish in the House, Republican leaders there are receptive to Hawaii but not to Alaska.

The Senate passed the combined bill 57-28 after battling down moves to:

1. Grant the two territories commonwealth status, like Puerto Rico's, instead of full-fledged statehood.
2. Require a referendum in each territory to let the voters choose between commonwealth status and statehood.

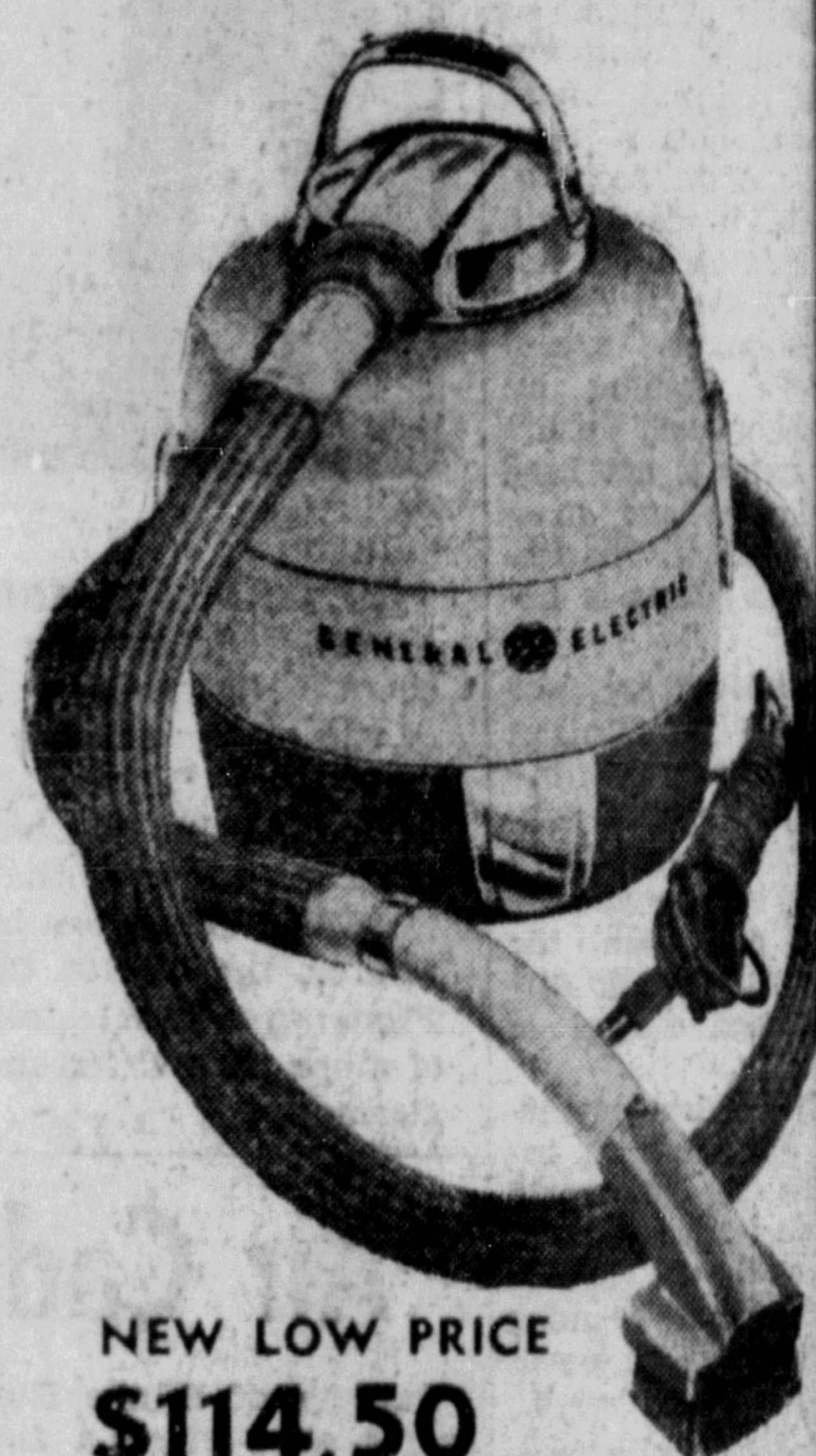
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