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Inadequate Salaries

MOST people who have any close knowledge of the responsibilities of a member of Parliament will not object to higher salaries for these public servants.

The present indemnity of \$4,000 per session, plus \$2,000 tax free expenses, is modest when measured against the total of \$15,000 for members of the U.S. Congress who have approximately similar duties and expenses.

Greater financial reward, or less financial sacrifice, may attract a higher calibre of men and women to Parliament.

But this unique service was never intended to be either a profitable or permanent profession. Rather, it is, or should be, regarded as a position of honor and of service. As such, no salary scale can be fitted to it with any preciseness.

For the conscientious and hardworking member, the financial return will always be incidental and inadequate.

For the one who regards the office merely as an opportunity to move around at the public expense, and as a probable means of enhancing his actual or probable income, the remuneration is too high.

As for members of the Senate, unless there is a drastic change in the present system of appointments and operation, they should not be included in any salary boost.

Being a Canadian MP, we are frequently told, now is a fulltime job, although many members seem to have combined it quite well with other occupations.

No one can represent a constituency properly unless he spends at least as much time in that constituency as on Capital Hill.

For the private member, that should be easily possible. If MPs did that they would earn the country's thanks as well as the boost in pay.

Report From

PARLIAMENT

By E. T. APPLEWHAITE, MP Skeena

Our federal public building at Smithers is evidently gradually becoming an operating concern. I note with satisfaction that steps have been taken to establish a position of fireman-laborer, seasonal, to assist with the heating, etc., there. Talking of heating, I gather from the weather maps that the interior sections of Skeena have had some pretty cold spells. We have had some really bitter weather down here.

I have taken up with the Minister of Fisheries, the matter of better protection against foreign and illegal crab fishing in our waters, which subject is a very sound representation was made by the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-Operative. Mr. Sinclair has assured me of the department's desire to co-operate as fully as possible. He agreed with my suggestion that as much as possible be made of airplane patrols. It seems to me that the very knowledge that a plane might at any minute appear out of nowhere and sit down beside a vessel fishing illegally, would be a very great deterrent to those who might be tempted to take chances.

It was with regret that I learned from the Post Office Department that the Evelyn Post Office was permanently closed. However, as we could not find anyone willing to undertake the duties of postmaster there, I suppose there was nothing else to be done. Residents of Evelyn will now use the Smithers post office.

Congratulations are certainly due to the Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce for their success in obtaining local inspection of deep-sea ships for insect

Insurance Assets Rise

TORONTO (CP)—An increase in total assets of nearly \$1,750,000 during 1953 was the largest ever made in a single year by National Life Assurance Company, president Robert Pennell reported Tuesday at the company's 55th annual meeting.

Total assets were \$29,421,990 compared with \$27,711,632 in '52, the president said. The gain in net business in force in 1953 was 14 per cent greater than that of any previous year.

As I See It



by
Elmore
Philboit

MP's Pay Raise

WHEN members of parliament debate raising their own pay they know they are handling political dynamite. Hence the speeches in the House on this matter were surrounded by a sense of tension and drama.

The MPs know that there are few people who ever get the chance to set the scale of their own pay. But the MPs also know that in this case they are compelled to act. Year by year, by their own votes, they must say whether they think their own pay is fair, too low or too high.

There were many fine speeches made on this debate. But I thought the best, to date, were made by two Liberals and two CCF MPs.

The whole House has long accorded respect to the veteran Vancouver member, Angus MacInnes. In the last parliament there were frequent predictions that Angus was about to retire. He had undergone a severe operation. Yet now he stands in his place in the front row of the CCF, paler than he used to be, but more rugged and healthier looking than for years past.

Mr. MacInnes touched on his own hard life as an orphaned farm boy, and then for his long years as a hard working street railwayman, working long hours for meager pay. He said, with quiet but convincing candor that he had had a softer life as an MP than he had ever had before. But he based his main case against increases in the MP's pay on the ground, that this would further tend to separate the MP from the people he represents. The whole House knew that Angus told the truth when he said that the vast majority of Canadians have a harder time making ends meet than do the MPs, even at present scales of pay.

BUT TWO MINERS made the really clinching speeches. One was a Liberal, Jim Byrne from East Kootenay. The other was CCF, Clarry Gillis, the veteran coal miner from Cape Breton.

Jim Byrne told the unvarnished truth when he said that a man with a young family just could not "get by" on the present indemnity. He spoke in dignified but candid fashion with the practical problem a young MP has: Does he close up his real home-town home and move his family bag and baggage to Ottawa? Or does he keep up two homes? Jim (a long-time union official) declared that any self-respecting trade union would be ashamed to pay its officials or the scale the MP's have received.

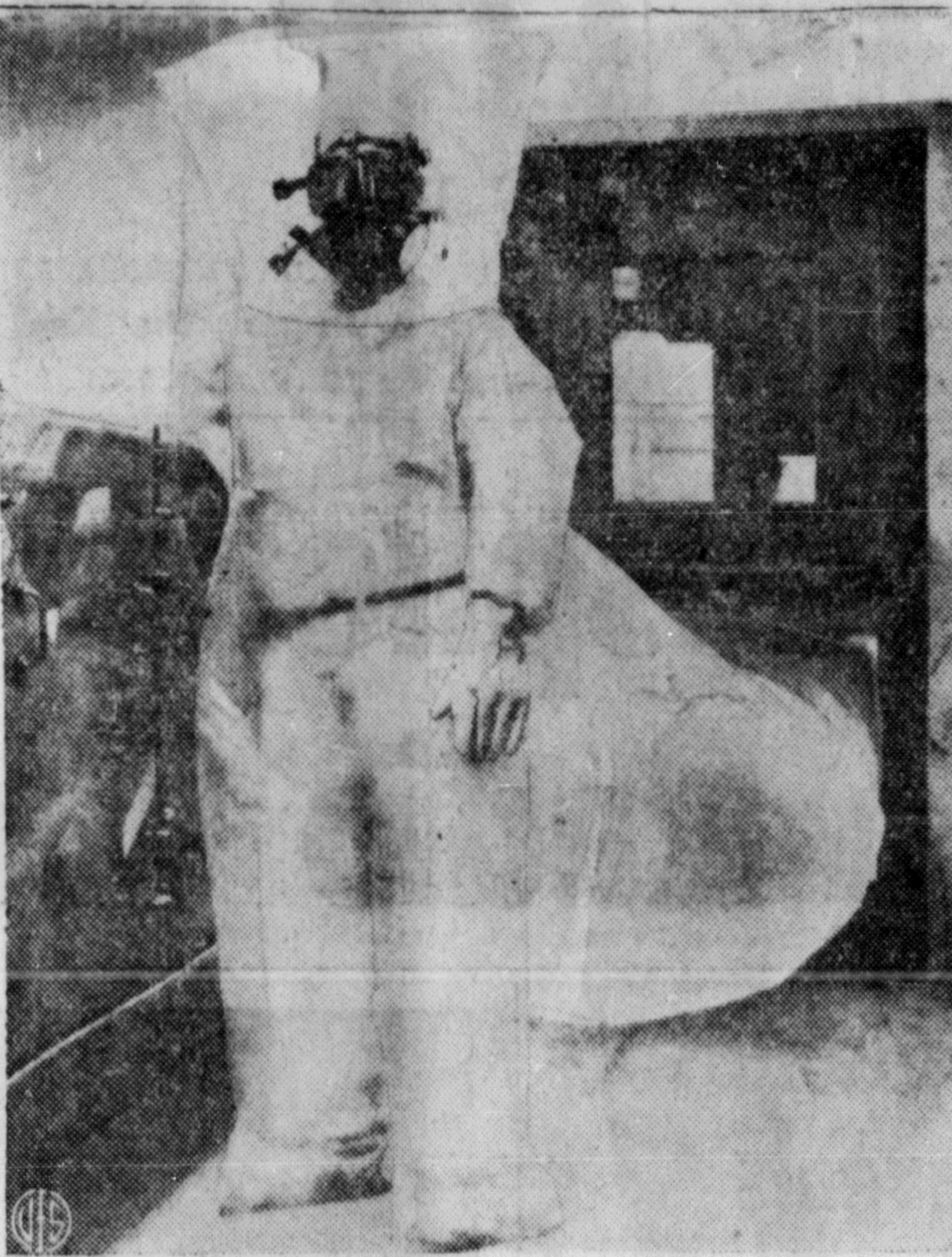
I DON'T THINK this old parliament ever heard a more down-to-earth, or convincing speech than that made by Clarence Gillis.

It was the kind of "big brother" speech you might imagine a man making, say in a private party caucus if he were about to retire. The Cape Breton coal miner told how he had first come to parliament, not of his own wish, and how he had never yet been able to pay his way, as an MP, on the pay scale now in force.

The real argument for the increase came of course from the Prime Minister. It was clear and simple. Unless the MP's pay is raised into line with the cost of spending almost a full year in Ottawa no MP would long be able to hold the job unless he had income from other sources.

BA Oil Workers In B.C. Plan Strike Action

VANCOUVER (CP)—Ninety British American Oil Company employees on the Lower Mainland have voted for strike action to back up pay demands but no strike deadline has been set. The government-supervised ballot, called after the company turned down a majority recommendation for a 5½-per-cent pay boost, was tabulated at Vancouver. Workers are members of the Oil Workers' International Union.



THE "SPACE CADETS" of our young set probably will want their parents to buy this latest type of atomic suit, now in vogue at the huge plutonium-producing plant at Richland, Wash., operated by General Electric for the Atomic Energy Commission. The plastic, balloon-like attire provides a protective barrier against radiation in "hot" areas and permits a man to determine the extent of contamination and do clean-up and maintenance work in such areas. The "train" in the rear is a flexible plastic tunnel leading from suit to entrance port in the wall. It provides air and serves as an entrance and exit passage. An air mask is used only if the suit becomes torn or punctured.

Ray REFLECTS and REMINISCES

Outside press comment on the proposed sale of the Prince Rupert drydock has a sameness. Why on earth, it seems to ask, should the railway not want to continue being the proud possessor of a splendid plant like the drydock and shipyard, situated as it is in one of the most prosperous and promising parts of Canada?

Ever feel curious about the sort of folk that helped start Prince Rupert? To suggest, not so many are left would not be entirely correct, yet nevertheless, the number may be said to be growing steadily fewer. Many hundreds have long since passed on, while others though still on earth are not in Rupert. All were young in spirit and outlook, and some day we'll have to do our best to try and remember.

Parliament voted on the salary increases Tuesday and the result was as expected. Who ever imagined members would neglect obtaining more money when the chance came their way? Of course ten thousand is an improvement on six. So is sixty substantially better than forty a month as a pension for those not in the house.

SCREEN FLASHES

Films scheduled for showing at the Capitol Theatre this month are as follows:

Feb. 4 to 6, The Cruel Sea—Jack Hawkins; midnight, Feb. 7, White Goddess—John Hall, Melissa McClure; Home at Seven—Ralph Richardson, Jack Hawkins; Feb. 8 to 10, Sangaree—Arlene Dahl, Fernando Lamas. Feb. 11 to 13, Return to Paradise—Gary Cooper, Roberta Haynes; midnight, Feb. 14, Big Frame—Mark Stevens, Jean Kent, Beware My Lovely—Ida Lupino, Robert Ryan; Feb. 15 to 17, Roar of the Crowd—Howard Duff, Helene Stanley; The Marksmen—Wayne Morris. Feb. 18 to 20, Kiss Me Kate—Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel; midnight, Feb. 21, Johnny Holiday—William Bendix, Hoagy Carmichael; Devil's Playground—Hopalong Cassidy; Feb. 22 to 24, Great Sioux Uprising—Jeff Chandler, Faith Domergue. Feb. 25 to 27, Peter Pan—all cartoon feature; midnight, Feb. 28, "M" (adult entertainment)—David Wayne, Howard De Silva; Invasion U.S.A.—Gerald Mohr, Peggy Castle.

We're willing to gamble the winter will be six weeks longer. No groundhog could see anything that looked like his shadow on Feb. 2.

At Least Year Needed to Restart Oil Refinery

By DONALD B. SCHWIND

ABADAN, Iran (CP)—The mammoth Abadan refinery has been largely idle since 1952. Today there is hope that a solution to the Iranian oil dispute is near—but even with a settlement it will take a year or two to get Abadan back into full production.

The refinery, operated by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., was taken over by the regime of former premier Mohammed Mossadegh.

Fearing a possible attempt to fire the giant refinery as a desperate protest against the return of foreign participation, the Abadan military governor, Soor Esrafil, recently redoubled his force of secret agents in and around key installations.

According to officials of the National Iranian Oil Co., Esrafil's first act after taking over Abadan two months ago was to "rush the area's Communist Tudeh party. About a dozen have been sent to Khargh prison island."

Reports of the coming oil negotiations have brought to the surface what seems to have been a dormant liking for the British, despite the abuse heaped on Britain and all its works during the Mossadegh regime. Company officials—pleading not to be quoted—smiled with satisfaction as they expressed the hope of a meeting one or another of the Britons who worked with or over them before oil nationalization. The plant, formerly employed 50,000. At nationalization the Iranian government was committed to keeping employees, regardless of whether they were needed.

Thus, with production slashed to perhaps five per cent, the refinery has been shouldering the full payroll, plus maintenance costs—to the tune of \$1,500,000 a month. Most of the production staff is idle.

The catalytic cracker has been untouched by the Iranians since it shut down. One tower has a section torn away. Valves and fittings are rust-caked.

VICTORIA REPORT

By J. K. M.

VICTORIA—The Liberals may have only five members in the Legislature, but those five are showing they're going to make themselves heard at the session of the House opening Feb. 16.

Indeed, it seems that at this moment the Liberals have stolen the ball of opposition away from the CCF. The CCF is strangely silent. They're in a difficult position, of course: In their opposition to the government they must join the Liberals. And, at this moment the Liberals have grabbed the initiative and intend to hang on to it. They're going to play for the headlines, hoping to keep before the public eye, so that when the next election rolls around the Liberals won't be forgotten.

The Liberal win in the November by-election was a potent shot in the arm to the Liberals. Their sagging spirits have been bucked up no end. They now see a ray of hope.

The five Liberal MLAs—leader Arthur Laing; P. A. Gibbs of Oak Bay; A. Bruce Brown of Prince Rupert; Gordon Gibson of Lillooet and George Gregory of Victoria held a pre-session meeting in Victoria, to plan their legislative strategy. Judging by what they did, they're going to do plenty of talking this session.

For instance, they're going to hammer away for economy. They issued, after their meeting, a press statement calling upon the government "to reduce public expenditure," and they said they would "prefer their co-operation to this effect."

"We suggest a thorough and vigorous inspection of every government department, with the strictest economy in view," said the five Liberal MLAs. "We believe a reduction in the forthcoming budget is a practical possibility, and we think this additional purchasing power in the hands of individuals will be more effective in our economy than under government control."

However, Premier Bennett, who'll be Minister of Finance by the time the session opens, has said that the budget cannot be lower this year, that govern-

ment services are always expanding, and that costs money. No one, he says, wants the services cut, yet everyone howls for economy. Perhaps the Liberals, at the session, will tell the government where money can be saved. It's always easy for opposition to do that. It sounds good, too! The public is usually impressed by calls for government economy. But, when an opposition becomes the government, as always, sooner or later happens, they're usually just as spendy as the government.

The Liberals' attitude to the PGE is rather strange. It seems here they're opposing Premier Bennett merely for the sake of opposing. The Liberals have long said, like everyone else, that the PGE should be completed. Yet now comes an about-face. The Liberals say this about the PGE: "We are presently of the opinion that a first-class highway along the coast to Squamish would cost less than half as much as the rail extension contemplated; it would open up the magnificent Howe Sound country, give access by automobile to Garibaldi Park, and give faster and less expensive messenger and freight service to the Peace River country. We think, however, that no steps should be taken until a full enquiry has been held by a committee of the Legislature, when experts could be called and a decision made on all the facts in the best interests of the province as a whole."

One wonders why on earth the Liberals want the delaying action of an enquiry by a legislative committee. Surely there have been enough enquiries into the PGE.

The government must be commended on its decision to go ahead with the Squamish-North Vancouver extension of the PGE. In the past, governments said the PGE should be finished, but, as an excuse for doing nothing, had someone or other enquire into it, and then the findings were hidden away in a

Border Town Has Biggest Stamp Business

ST. STEPHEN, N.B. (CP)—This town on the New Brunswick-Maine border claims the biggest stamp business in Canada. Only two or three comparable firms in the United States have greater volume.

The company here which mails stamps by the millions, to collectors was founded 23 years ago by Ralph O. Garcelon, now 45, who started with a mediocre collection. The company seldom deals in rare stamps, but ships its offerings in huge quantities.

Last winter five tons of one grouping alone were mailed. More recently, rows of girls at neat desks assembled 100,000 packets of Czechoslovakian issues, 40 to a packet, for a total of 4,000,000 stamps in the single offering. In another period the quick-fingered girls slipped 5,000,000 Yugoslav stamps into 100,000 envelopes.

The company employs 60 or more workers in winter, its busiest time.

Mr. Garcelon became a stamp collector at the age of 10. Asked why stamps fascinate so many people, he said: "It's the attraction of something from foreign countries and the scenes of different ways of life. And there's the satisfaction that comes with completion of a project, getting in an album a complete set."

Mr. Garcelon is not impressed with Canadian issues in the last few years.

"In my opinion, Canadian stamps were among the most attractive issued anywhere up until about 1950. Since then Canada has put out quite a number which are far from attractive."

He considers British colonials, designed and printed in Britain, tops in stamps from an aesthetic standpoint.

A woman's true definition of a "bargain" is buying two things for the price of one, even though she does not wish it.

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