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Two Wise Moves

THE CIVIC CENTRE association has shown wisdom in setting a goal for the completion of the proposed indoor swimming pool and also in deciding to seek a larger grant from the city of Prince Rupert. Now that some \$2,000 or more has been accumulated in the special swimming pool fund there is sufficient to finance a preliminary investigation of plans and costs. A definite goal of starting to build in 1958 gives both the association, the Kinsmen club which runs the events from which the fund is raised and also the residents of Prince Rupert something concrete for which to work and a deadline by which to complete it. Nothing is so disheartening as a project that has no end in sight. Most people lose interest after awhile. Once the plans have been obtained, costs checked and a final estimate obtained, the association can take its chances with the ratepayers to see if this city of 10,881 persons is ready to support a year-round swimming pool and prepared to pass a money by-law to do it. All this takes time and careful planning and it is encouraging that a start has been made.

That in the nine-month fiscal year the Centre has again recorded a deficit, (although last year it had a surplus of just over \$100) only points up the necessity of increased city participation in the financing of the Civic Centre. The remarks of Dr. L. M. Greene regarding the shabbiness of the building and its run down condition likewise stresses the fact that improvements cannot be made unless the association dips into its ever-decreasing trust fund. Talk that the city would resent giving a definite grant instead of just covering the Centre's deficit because there might be a surplus, is sheer nonsense. There has to be a surplus if improvements are to be made both to the building and the Centre's program.

By only covering a deficit, the city is merely taking the easy way out and not shouldering its full responsibility. If the Centre was closed or burned down City Council would have a real problem on its hands. While the citizens would do without for awhile, the city would eventually be faced with the task of replacing the building around which most community revolves. If the recommendations of the Civic Centre Commission are carried out, and they gradually will be in some measure, a full program requires an athletics director, the hiring of which would boost the Centre's grant requirement up to at least \$12,000. Whether the city raises this by a per capita levy of \$1.25 or whether it does by an outright \$12,000 grant makes little difference. The time is ripe for it to be done before the Centre's sinking funds are gone. What if there is a surplus some years? Possibly some of the renovations and improvements long overdue at the Centre can then be carried out.

Absentee Membership

ABSENTEEISM in the Canadian house of commons is a \$10,000 a year crime for which there is no penalty between elections, and no certain one even then. It is high time that some of the flagrant offenders were weeded out. An absentee MP is not worth \$10,000 a year of the taxpayers' money; even some of the faithful aren't worth that much.

—Winnipeg Tribune.

What Does It Mean?

THESE warnings about "reading the small print" in the document would be more important if the reader could figure out what it means when he does read it.

—Ottawa Citizen.

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As I See It

by

Elmore Philpott

Daily News columnist Elmore Philpott is on a world tour. He will be the first Western Canadian newsmen to visit Red China and Russia. He left Hong Kong before the riots reported today.

• Elmore Visits Eastern 'Jewel'

HONG KONG—Everybody knows about the beauty of Hong Kong and how this fabulous gem of a city is located in the very jaws of the Chinese dragon.

You get a sharp reminder of these facts of life as soon as you ferry approaches Hong Kong Island. For the enormous Red Star of the new Chinese People's Republic stares at you from the tallest, newest skyscraper in Hong Kong.

Beneath that giant, ominous Red Star life goes on in this British colony much as it did for generations before the Second World War.

You soon learn—and there are thousand direct and indirect facts to support it—that the Chinese Communists have no intention of attempting the "liberation" of Hong Kong in the foreseeable future.

It is a convenience to them to have it here, and it is a matter of pride, and hard cash, for the British to maintain this jewel in the Orient.

FOR CANADIANS, by far the most significant development that I found here is the expansion of the rubber and canvas shoe industry.

In this industry, we see proof of the fact that the Asians have conquered the machine, or the machine has conquered the Asians—according to how you look at it.

But this is what it comes down to: Here in Hong Kong men, women and children are working at shoe-making machines just about as efficiently as the operators are working at them in Kitchener, Ont., or in the Eastern townships of Quebec. But here they are working far longer hours and for wages which are just a fraction of what the manufacturer must pay in Canada.

The result is inevitable. The shoe factories are putting out of business their competitors in Canada. In point of plain fact, they have already captured two-thirds of the rubber and canvas shoe market in Canada, with the result that several thousand Canadian workers have lost their jobs.

BUT THIS is the point—the Hong Kong shoe manufacturers are not unfairly dumping their goods in Canada. They are paying the full customs duty and by the way for some obscure reason do not qualify for the British preferential rates of duty.

In other words, they are legitimate manufacturers paying the going rate of wages, and conforming to local competitive conditions; and they are producing goods which Canadians want to buy at a price which is drastically lower than we Canadians can make the same goods for ourselves.

Here are the wages paid in shoe factories here:

A skilled workman gets \$6 to \$8 Hong Kong per day. The official rate of exchange was 70 Hong Kong dollars for one Canadian dollar. So the skilled shoe operator is working for less than one dollar per day in our Hong Kong daily.

But it is also a fact that most of the factories operate seven days a week on the 12-hour day.

It must be obvious to anyone who faces up to these facts that no competitive shoe manufacturer in Canada could meet the price of the products here.

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