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Municipal Challenge Ahead

THE Federation's brief submitted earlier this year to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects pointed up the magnitude of the tasks which are likely to confront Canadian municipalities during the next twenty-five years. The principal topics dealt with in this submission were discussed in some detail during sessions of the Federation's recently-concluded Hamilton Conference. Principal speakers at many of the sessions were the authors of particular sections of the brief dealing with such matters as finance and taxation, transit, traffic, housing, personnel, administrative organization, etc.

In the face of the indicated population growth the brief attempted to forecast the requirements of Canadian towns and cities during the next quarter century. It is possible, of course, to dispute some of the figures used. However, arguments of this kind are likely to involve only questions of degree and the central theme of continued urban growth coupled with an expansion of urban requirements can hardly be disputed unless the nation enters a period of economic decline.

Elsewhere in this issue a brief summary of this forecast of urban requirements during the next twenty-five years has been provided. If these basic social requirements of our urban communities are to be met it will require a fundamental revision of the basis of municipal financing. And this, of course, is a problem that is not likely to be resolved overnight. For a generation now municipal administrators have been pleading for an expanded revenue base capable of meeting in a more adequate fashion the responsibilities municipal governments are called upon to assume. It is possible that in reviewing the forecast of urban requirements for the years ahead many responsible municipal officials will come to the conclusion that little can be done until the municipalities are provided with more satisfactory sources of revenue. Such a conclusion, while easily reached, can lead to nothing but a philosophy of despair.

The fact is there is much to be done. The struggle to obtain a satisfactory municipal revenue base must be continued. At the same time there are many suggestions contained in the Federation's brief for strengthening and improving the structure and efficiency of local government. These are certainly worthy of consideration, and implementation if possible. Altogether, the brief is a stimulating document and provides a blueprint for charting municipal progress in the years ahead. It furnishes the basis for a sound program of municipal statesmanship of a higher order. In total it throws out a formidable challenge for the years ahead.

—The Listening Post.

Inflation

THE adjourned sittings of the federal transport board have resumed act[illegible] in whatever may be the fresh round in the now-perpetual argument over rail freight rates in Canada. The pattern remains the same. At its spring sittings the board granted an interim increase to transcontinental lines, with leave to plead this autumn on a final order. The request is the same. The railways want a 15 per cent increase, in response to high wage and other declared costs. The response of seven of the ten provinces is the same; they state that in their belief the rates are high enough. It is difficult to see, in fact, how they can be raised again without another round of inflation— the one thing that the administration at Ottawa has warned against and says it does not want.

—Victoria Daily Colonist.

As I See It

by

Elmore Philpott

'Little Things' in Orient Life

PEIPING, China—I am back "home" in the capital of China after my trip to Manchuria.

They turned the steam heat on here in the Hsinchaio Hotel last night, and this morning the warm sunlight is pouring through my immense window.

It seems like a good day to relax, and to forget the great affairs of state for awhile, to chat of the little things.

One thing is about the clothes of the people. The younger men and women almost all wear the standard garb—blue tunic, buttoned up to the throat (Stalin style) and blue or grey slacks.

The only concession the Chinese girls make to femininity is in the brightly colored hair ribbons they wear on their long, braided pigtails.

Most of the females of China are still smart enough to realize that "woman's crowning glory is her hair" so the western short hair habit has not caught on here, yet, thank goodness.

The old men, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme. They actually have their whole heads shaved off as bald as billiard balls. They look really distinguished that way, especially when they also grow the long, if rather wispy looking, chin whiskers.

But to get back to the clothes. One advantage of the tunic and slacks uniform is that when a cold snap sets in they pile on extra layers of underclothing—dark blue seems to be the favorite color, judging by what they sell in the shops.

Some of the old Chinese women still hobble around, plainly showing the effects of the binding of their feet in infancy. All these old girls wear trousers too, but they prefer the traditional Chinese style, wide at the hips, and very tight at the ankle. But the young women of China wear stove-pipe style slacks.

However this universal Chinese uniform comes in many grades. The ordinary workers wear mostly rough cotton, like our heavy denim. But the big shots in the Communist party—the cabinet ministers, and the new ruling class generally—wear beautifully tailored suits of good quality worsted.

It really seems to be a fact that the rickshaw is a thing of the past, for the carriage of human passengers, though some are still in use for carriage of goods.

The three-wheeled, bicycle-pulled pedicab is now in use by the hundreds of thousands. Bikes are now made in China in immense quantities. But good British models are on sale in the big state department stores at about $200 Canadian money. That is about four months pay for the Chinese skilled worker or school teacher. Of course, the Chinese bikes are very much cheaper.

But all the main Peiping streets are being widened and heavily paved for the soon-coming trackless electric trolleys, just like ours in Vancouver.

The price of just about everything important is fixed by law, and the government really seems to have succeeded in keeping the prices stable.

The technique for fixing the prices differs from our wartime practice. Here the various trade and business groups first consult amongst themselves and fix their own fair prices, no doubt with government (that is, Communist party) approval.

China is the most germ-conscious country I have ever seen. Literally hundreds of thousands of people wear the cotton nose and mouth masks such as our doctors and nurses wear in the surgical operating rooms. But here they wear them on the streets, or at work.

I saw a couple of hundred youngsters being piloted across the street the other day, up in Manchuria, or Northeast China. Every single boy and girl in the whole lot wore a mouth and nose mask.

Of course, the dust in this country really is mean, and no doubt carries disease in the big cities.

China is also the most flag-flyingest country I have ever seen. Literally millions of flags were in evidence around the national holiday on October.

The Chinese flag is plain red. There is a big golden star in the upper staff corner, fringed by four smaller golden stars, of the same five-pointed type.

Incidentally, although Russian influence is very strong in China, I have only seen one Soviet flag since I have been in this country—and that was being carried in the big parade where there were literally scores of thousands of the Chinese variety.

I reported prematurely and inaccurately in this series that Stalin's picture was not in evidence on China's national holiday.

When the decorations were complete, the following were all shown: Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Sun Yat-sen and—biggest of all—Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

The only other picture of Stalin I have seen in China was in a workers' sanitorium at the hot springs, just outside Anshan. There they had a big oil painting showing Stalin and Mao.

Up in Northeast China I made more inquiries about that "needle treatment" which the traditional school of Chinese doctors can and do puncture you with all shapes and sizes of needles for different ailments.

The needle that I saw being used on a child's polio case was literally as fine as a hair.

But for getting at infections or ailments in the abdomen, it seems they have some about eight inches long—and they can use them too, not only without injuring the patient but in many cases with amazingly good results.

LUXURY JEEP — An unusual auto on display at the Paris Motor Show is this Multipla, built by the Italian firm of Pinin-Farina, Milan. The open, seven-place vehicle called a "luxury jeep" by the designers, is intended for beach use, touring, camping, etc. Built on a Fiat 600 chassis, the Multipla has a gas-stretching four-cylinder engine developing 22 hp at 4,000 rpm.

FLYING FROGS — The East Asian flying frog has webs between its toes enabling it to soar from branch to branch.

TIME and PLACE

By P. E. RADLEY
Manager B.C. Project Alcan

ALUMINUM NEEDS ELECTRIC POWER

It has been suggested that I say something about the reasons why this town of Kitimat has come into existence. I will be brief. The production of Aluminum requires terrific amounts of electric power.

Today, Kitimat uses more than one half as much power as the whole province of British Columbia used before we came here. When I say the whole province of British Columbia I include the Cities of Vancouver and Victoria, I include all the paper mills in the province, I include all the other industries, and all the power used in every house in British Columbia. Within three years we expect that this Municipality of Kitimat and the industry within it will consume more than twice as much power as it does today.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

The production of aluminum in Canada requires adequate transportation facilities. We use in Canada less than one sixth of the aluminum which we produce in Canada. The remainder has to be shipped to customers in every corner of the free world. We require three and a half tons of raw materials to make one ton of aluminum. These raw materials have to be brought in, to enable this to be done economically it is necessary to have easy access to ocean transportation.

SEARCH FOR TOWNSITE

It requires men to produce aluminum. A plant must either be located close to a centre of population or a town must be built alongside the plant. In 1949 and 1950 the Aluminum Company had parties of engineers searching throughout the world for the best location to build an additional reduction plant. From British North Borneo to the Philipines, from New Zealand to Northern Quebec, from Venezuela to British Columbia the search went on. Finally in 1951 it was decided that British Columbia was the most promising location. Even here there were 35 possible sites or combination of sites where power might be developed and an aluminum plant built. These were narrowed down until it seemed that Kemano was the place where power could be developed in largest quantity and most satisfactorily. But at Kemano there wasn't room for a city of the size which was envisaged and so eyes were turned towards Kitimat, separated it is true by 50 miles of rugged country but in one of the most beautiful locations in the Northern British Columbia, surrounded but not enclosed by beautiful mountains, with a lovely river running through it, with adequate reasonably flat area for the construction of a town of up to 50,000 population within easy reach by means of a spur railway line of the Canadian National Railway system, and with the expectation that in due course a highway would be constructed to give access to the road system of this our province.

RAPID GROWTH

Once Kitimat had been chosen the building went on and as a result we have today the most modern town in the world, and I believe the fastest growing. Where else would you find a town where a bare 2½ years ago there were only 50 permanent houses, where there were no paved roads, where there were no permanent schools, no commercial facilities, no public buildings, no grass, no gardens, where else, I repeat, would you find a town such as that where today we have 220 miles of paved roads, where we have the most modern schools in British Columbia, where we have acres of grass and lawns, where we have beautiful gardens, where commercial facilities are already in existence or being built. I don't think there is anywhere in the world where you could equal this.

EXPANSION ASSURED

Today Kitimat largely depends on the aluminum industry to whom it owed its original existence. But we are opening up a new area in this region and in a district so highly favored by nature with natural resources it seems only reasonable and almost inevitable that before too long other industries will follow us into Kitimat and that we can look forward confidently to the day when this modern City of Kitimat will be the metropolis of Northern British Columbia.

On the occasion of the opening of this beautiful new building, I would like to congratulate Reeve Hallman, and I would like to congratulate and thank Councillors Cohoon, Cronk, Freeman, Gooding, Kreiler and Stickney upon the self sacrificing effort which they have put in over the past years to build up this town to the point where we see it today. I am proud to be a citizen of Kitimat.

OTTAWA DIARY

By NOR[illegible] M. Mac[illegible]

Parliament Hill students of current events never cease to wonder these days at the wide gap which may separate cause from effect in the highly complicated yet ultimately tightly interdependent modern post-war world.

For example, the prospect of Canadian ground troops in Western Europe being recalled from their stand-by mission doesn't look nearly as promising at the present moment as it did just a few weeks ago. And the reason for the change of outlook is the new project for Western European economic union.

At first glance, the project for a Western European customs community would seem to be entirely unrelated to the presence of Canadian ground troops in Germany. But by a process of chain reaction the two situations ultimately make direct contact.

For Canada's troops were only to be recalled from Germany after Britain had set the example by withdrawing most of her forces. But now Britain is keen upon the scheme for a Western European customs union. And as an inducement to Western Germany and France to support the customs union scheme, it is rumored that she will agree to leave the British troops on the continent for an indefinite time longer. That would mean that Canadian troops also would stay, since the government here is understood to be unwilling to undertake a unilateral withdrawal.

West Germany's Chancellor Adenauer is said authoritatively to attach major importance to the maintenance of British troops in Western Germany — and of Canadian and United States troops as well. At the same time, Adenauer is also reported to be the most difficult figure to convince of the desirability of the Western European customs union scheme. Consequently, a compromise or saw-off is looked upon by diplomatic experts as the logical way to handle the situation. Under its terms Britain would agree to leave her ground troops in Western Germany—which would mean that Canadian and United States ground troops would have to stay too—and Chancellor Adenauer would give his support to the project for Western European economic union.

In this picture Canada would be the innocent bystander who gets caught up in the play. In all studies of the project for a European free trade area which Parliament Hill economists have made so far indicate that the best that Canada can hope from the project is that her interests will not be seriously damaged. The prospect of any direct and considerable benefit is looked upon as somewhat remote. But against this negative outlook the maintenance of Canadian troops in Western Europe is costing a tidy sum—in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Government authorities here would like to get off the hook on that one, but the possibility now appears discouragingly slender.

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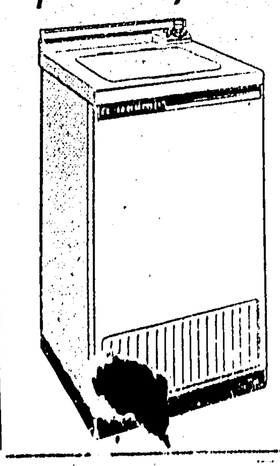

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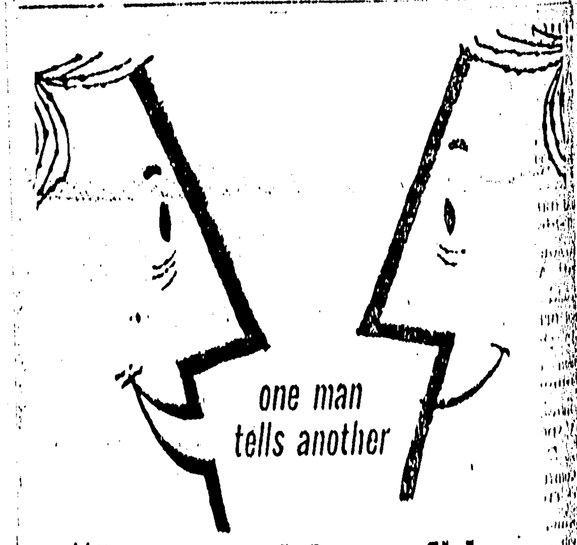

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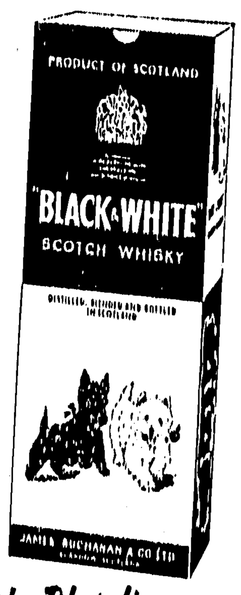

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