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Justify Northern Confidence

A POINT of anxiety in the election results as far as northern B.C. is concerned is that endorsement of the Social Credit party may also be taken as endorsement of the handling of the Cassiar-Stewart road. The danger of this happening is increased by the re-election of Robert Sommers, who was immediately responsible for the mess made of the project, and by the fact that northern B.C. itself voted so wholeheartedly for Social Credit. These circumstances may be regarded by the government as an indication that no one is alarmed about the lack of progress made on the road and that no one will notice if a few more expensive mistakes are made.

To judge from the election results, it seems possible that some of the voters who stand to gain most from construction of the road are either indifferent to or unaware of the scandalous manner in which it has been carried out. After visiting the project a year ago, consulting engineer E. A. Jamieson reported that culverts were being laid by guesswork and were of insufficient size to handle the water-flow; that bridges were too low for flood conditions; that clearing of the right-of-way was inadequate; that there was not enough provision for drainage; and that work in general was far slower and more costly than it should have been. He concluded by saying that in his 50 years of engineering he had "never encountered anything quite like this project."

For a venture which more than any other single thing will open up the north country, it has had a tragically mishandled start. It is now generally realized that much of the blame is attached to Mr. Sommers for failing to ask for competitive tenders. But it does not seem to be realized that until the road is completed, development of northern B.C. will be seriously handicapped. While talk of extending the PGE is all very well, the Cassiar-Stewart road will be of greater benefit to the north as it will provide more direct access to the sea and will help to open up route "A", the much-needed connection between central B.C. and the important Atlin area.

If he wishes to justify the confidence placed in his government by northern voters, Premier Bennett could do no better than to ensure construction of the Cassiar-Stewart road is placed in capable hands and pushed through to completion by the earliest possible date.

To those who supported the CCF, and particularly those who worked on my behalf throughout the campaign and on election day, all of whom were unrewarded, I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation.

George E. Hills

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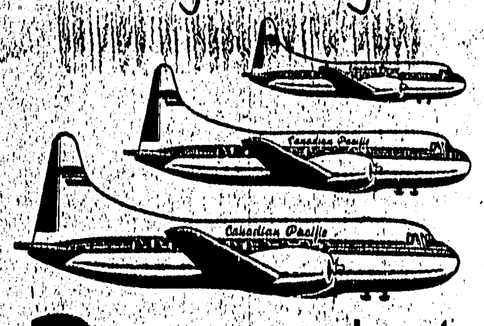

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As I See It

by Elmore Philpott

Tolstoi and Hitler

I AM eagerly waiting to see one new movie which has not yet arrived in these parts—that is the picturization of Tolstoi's masterly novel, War and Peace.

A good many experts and a vast number of other people who are not experts, think that Tolstoi's famous novel is the greatest such work of fiction ever written.

It has all the makings of a superb movie, insofar as the story itself goes. It could be as great a picture as Gone With the Wind provided they have actors as good as Clark Gable and Vivian Leigh.

TOLSTOI'S novel is hailed by most critics as being among the greatest novels of all time, notwithstanding the fact that Tolstoi ignores what is supposed to be the most fundamental rule of good novel writing.

He comments at great length on his own story as he goes along. Indeed he takes scores of pages to argue out his own theory of history.

That theory of history is that actions by individuals have little more effect on the rise and fall of nations than have floating corks on the course of a river. People are carried along on the tide. Tolstoi reasons, and no matter what leaders or little people do, the total course of history runs just about the same.

I CANNOT fully agree with Tolstoi's theory myself, for it seems to me that good or bad individuals do have an immense influence on the course of history.

For instance, take Hitler and Germany. The fact that that evil genius bobbed up just how and when he did was one of the great misfortunes of modern times.

Germany might have been a "problem" under any leader at the end of the First World War. But Hitler had the precise combination of bad qualities plus personal genius, to lead Germany and the whole world to the ruin for which he was so largely personally responsible.

Had he had less ability he would never have amounted to much. But the fact is that he was a near-genius in his handling of crowds and in many other things.

Also, contrary to what some of the German generals are trying to say now, Hitler was personally responsible for many of Nazi Germany's earlier great military and political successes.

The generals are quite right in showing that in the end Hitler's stubborness was responsible for much of the compounding catastrophe which overtook Germany. It is true that he ordered his armies to stay where they were and die, rather than fall back. Hence such setbacks as Stalingrad were turned into gigantic catastrophe for Germany.

But what the German military apologists now forget is that the same qualities of Hitler were responsible for many of the most dazzling early successes by the Fuhrer.

Time after time he gambled in his coups against the allies—and almost always against the advice of the military professionals.

But of course it was the very fact that Hitler had scored so many dazzling early successes that led to his own ruination and the ruination of Germany in the end.

The madman had convinced himself of his own infallibility.

WAS Hitler insane? I think the answer is clearly, yes.

But like many insane people he was in some ways extremely clever and able.

The main source of Hitler's success is that he literally had no scruples whatever.

He would literally do anything which he thought would further his ends.

So far as I know, there was no earlier leader in all history who so completely lacked the inner inhibitions which hold most humans back from doing evil things.

Stock Credit Too High Says Bank

OTTAWA (CP) — The Bank of Canada may suggest to the stock exchange today that too much credit is being employed in stock deals, hindering federal anti-inflationary moves.

Informants said James E. Coyne, bank governor, will confer with Toronto and Montreal exchange chieftains in secret talks to deal with the stock credit problem.

The entire affair has been shrouded in secrecy, giving rise to rumors that the minimum cash required to buy stock—50 per cent of the price—is to be boosted. In the United States the minimum was raised to 70 per cent last year.

INCREASING CONCERN

Federal financial officials said there is increasing federal concern over the rising use of credit to finance stock deals, but that the central bank will make no immediate demands that stock margins be boosted.

However, the central bank influences general monetary policy and could drop some hints which in turn may influence stock exchange decisions.

The central bank has been following a tight-money policy to fight inflation. Its lending rate on loans to chartered banks was increased last month to a record 3¼ per cent, the fifth rise since the low of 1½ per cent a year ago.

Federal concern over expanding stock exchange credit is based on two aspects: It tends to increase the country's money supply and it encourages increased industrial expansion at a time when some goods are scarce and prices are rising.

"NATIVITY" BABE BORN

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) — The child who will play the baby Christ in Santa Monica's annual Nativity play in December was born Thursday night—to the actress who plays the Madonna in the play. Amenda Webb, wife of television actor Brad Johnson, gave birth to a daughter, Julie, in North Glendale Hospital, and arrangements were made for Julie to appear with her mother in the Christmas presentation.

FUR COATS

Nine of every 10 fur coats sold in the United States are made in a five-block area in New York City.

OTTAWA DIARY

By NORMAN M. MacLEOD

The pattern of trade statistics is beginning to change noticeably. Whereas a few months ago most indices were running as high as 10 per cent over a year ago, the increase now is settling down to an average figure of a little better than 5 per cent.

Does this mean that the tempo of the boom is beginning to slow down? At first glance that might seem to be the obvious inference. But Parliament Hill economists are quick to point out that often there is a considerable difference between appearance and reality. And they cite the current pattern in statistics as a case in point.

For all that is happening, government economists emphasize, is that current statistics are running into an era of greater competition than was the case a few months ago. Comparison now is with the weeks and the months of last year when the economy had gathered momentum and was approaching its peak velocity. From now on, therefore, it will be more difficult for the present year to report gains over 1955.

Consequently, the fact that department store sales may be gaining only 5 per cent weekly now whereas earlier in the year they were gaining 8 per cent and 10 per cent means nothing in terms of recession, but rather the opposite. It means that they are still exceeding comfortably a steadily heightening base of comparison. The same thing is generally true of all other phases in the economy.

The truth is that the late Summer and early Fall months of the present year have been perhaps the most remarkable in the nation's history for freedom from economic slowdown. Usually there is a perceptible dip in the business barometer in the late Summer when industrial plants close down for stocktaking and holidays. This situation was intensified this year by the fact that most of the automotive plants closed earlier than usual for model changeovers.

But for once the holiday period in industry, even when accentuated by the curtailment in automotive production, failed to pull down the general level of industrial activity over the nation as a whole. Persons who were temporarily idle didn't come into the employment market generally, nor did they curtail their scale of spending to any noticeable degree.

The result was that employment has remained consistently tight. Now that the universities and high schools are re-opened and student labor has traded its sweat shirts for text books, the employment picture is tighter than ever.

And the prospect is that it will remain that way for the foreseeable future. Expansion of the use of natural resources is still the order of the day, and while that situation exists, government economists see no prospect of any slowdown.

PLAYS IN MOSCOW

MOSCOW (AP) — The London Philharmonic Orchestra opened a two-week tour of the Soviet Union Thursday night with a performance before a sellout crowd at Moscow's Conservatory of Music. Conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, the British orchestra is to play nine concerts in Moscow and four in Leningrad.

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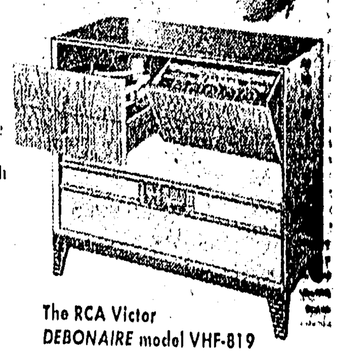

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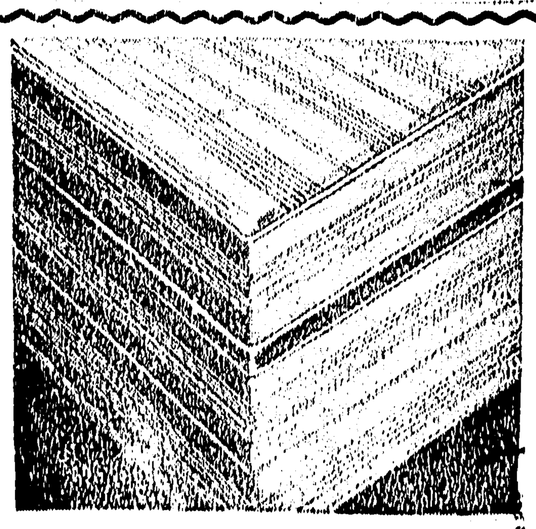

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