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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Douglas Seen Top Salesman

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IT'S BEEN a most interesting week with 10 Canadian provincial premiers and many other personalities present in Charlottetown during Old Home Week but, to me at least, the most interesting personality was Saskatchewan's Premier Tommy Douglas.

I talked with him long enough to renew a former acquaintance and ask him what appeal he proposes to make to people like our P.E.I. farmers, as the first national leader of the New Democratic Party. The answers were frank and honest. This man is proposing to do elsewhere "what we have done in Saskatchewan".

The federal election date is still a matter of conjecture. Most people think it will come next year but even now I find myself wondering just what impact the Tommy Douglas personality will have on the Canadian electorate. Most people agree that the Diefenbaker personality, projected through the nation's TV screens, played a large part in his phenomenal success in 1958.

TO ME, Douglas has more personality to project. I think it's warmer and more friendly. Canada's newest party has chosen a super salesman. We talked of several things. I'll list two of them.

"We propose", he suggested, "to do federally what we've done already in Saskatchewan" as he talked of encouraging greater development of co-operative effort among farmers. "Seven out of 10 of our farmers belong to a co-operative", he observed. "We have more than 300 co-ops for the use of farm machinery."

When I told him P.E.I. farmers insist co-operative machinery groups won't work, he said, "they don't all work in our province either but 300 of them are working effectively."

Farmers Produce Gasoline

SASKATCHEWAN farmers control their own gasoline production from the oil wells "which we farm out to them on a percentage basis", he explained, with the refining plant built by government-backed bonds down through the distribution to bulk storage and to retail outlets. The price to farmers has been dropped and in addition they receive dividend rebates, he told me.

While coal production has dropped just about everywhere else, "we have increased production 30 percent and we use millions of tons each year in thermal power plants built in the center of the coal fields", he said.

"We couldn't get people to burn coal for fuel so we sell it as electric current", he explained.

ELECTRIC CURRENT is supplied to farmers scattered so thinly that they average in some places one farmer to one and one-half miles. Farmers two miles apart are supplied in some cases, Mr. Douglas said.

Our rural electrification program, by contrast, supplies current where there are a minimum of three users to the mile. But several other factors enter into the picture. Saskatchewan farms are much larger and people necessarily live further apart. And, I was told yesterday, the service charge is considerably larger in Saskatchewan than it is here.

Mr. Douglas created Canada's first department of co-operative development back in 1944. He holds the portfolio himself at the present time.

IF I seem enthusiastic, I'm only passing on some of what the newest national political leader told me, as we chatted informally here this week. I'm not a convert to his party, but I'll be watching with interest what its total will be when the votes are counted on election night.

Our premier, Walter Shaw spoke at least partly in fun when he said "you're so darn persuasive", as he greeted Mr. Douglas at the airport last Sunday, but the combination of his persuasiveness and the impact of his sparkling personality add up to one of the most interesting facets of the next federal election campaign

#### Caps Help Identify Cattle

RINGSIDE SPECTATORS at the cattle show this year are able to find easily the name of the animal shown without any difficulty. For the first time at any Canadian show, we are told, the showmen are wearing caps with the number of the animals they are showing in the particular class.

A spectator can enter the Coliseum at any time during the day and immediately learn the identity of the animals in the ring by comparing the cap number with the fair catalogue. The idea was brought here from the Eastern United States exhibition at Springfield, Mass., by I.W. Roper, livestock director who told me "I've sold it to the Royal Winter Fair too". The paper caps were supplied, he told me, by Mr and Mrs. Gil Henry.

Previously the showmen carried numbers on their backs but a spectator had to know the number of the section being contested before he could identify the contestants.

#### An Outstanding Success

I WANT to add my word of praise to those responsible for making the visit of the provincial premiers here such an outstanding success. Credit for the usefulness of their conference - and all of them stressed that it was useful - must go to the ten premiers and their advisers. But the credit for the arrangements, for the hospitality and the smooth operation of the public functions must go to our own people.

I realize it's dangerous to single out individuals for praise, for so many contribute to the success of an undertaking of this size. But I noticed the easy informality our own Premier Shaw displayed at all times, and I also admired the way my old friend, Mayor Walthen Gaudet, performed at the civic reception here Sunday night. Mr. Gaudet and

his charming wife did their best to make everyone feel welcome. And their best added up to an impressive performance..

I'm going to mention one more person and then stop. Wendall MacKay, the premier's executive assistant, a man with an often difficult and self-effacing role, made a large contribution to keeping things running smoothly.

#### And Now Comes Vacation

AND NOW that vacation time has arrived, it's as good a time as any to thank the many people who have helped make this column possible on weeks when material and ideas were scarce.

Many of you helped greatly by bringing in ideas to me. Others wrote and some of you phoned.

I want you to know that your interest is appreciated, and it's particularly nice to know so many of you are interested in this effort to dig up a few items each week that we hope will be interesting to readers.

And now vacation, and that means no column for two weeks. See you again on September 8.