

A Pettifogging Stall

After more than four weeks of pressure in and out of the Commons in favor of a boost in the flat-rate \$75-a-month old age pension, the Pearson government has come up with another of its confusing formulas, guaranteeing, as it says, a total monthly pension of \$105 without a means test or a needs test, but based on how much income the pensioners have from other sources. This "income-test" implies that the increase won't be on a flat-rate basis; but our aged people will have to wait until next fall, when Parliament reassembles after the summer holidays, to find out what it does mean.

Opposition critics maintain that it's just a new name for the old discredited means test, while government spokesmen claim that it is not going to be as bad as all that. But it remains an enigma so far as the public is concerned, and does nothing whatever to ease the burden on needy folk at the present time.

It has been intimated that the supplementary payments, when they are eventually made, will cost \$225 million at the start, but since they will be applicable only to those who receive no benefits from the Canada Pension Plan, they will disappear in time. On this basis Stanley Knowles, NDP, has pointed out that the peak payments in the first year would mean an average increase of less than \$15 a month—perhaps as low as \$11—for each pensioner. He has also pointed out that the surplus in the old age pension fund at the end of last March was almost \$217 million; and he quoted the finance department as estimating that it would be \$445 million by the end of the current fiscal year. The government could thus institute a flat-rate pension of \$100 a month immediately and would have a surplus left over.

But that, of course, would never do. That would be to concede that the opposition was right, and the government wrong, on an issue of sharp controversy in the last federal election campaign. The Liberal votes lost on this score are still, apparently, a source of resentment in high quarters. Basically the issue involves separating this old age pension boost from the provisions of the Canada Assistance Plan altogether, but the government stubbornly refuses to concede this point. It prefers to deal in ambiguities, playing a cat-and-mouse game with our pensioners in the process, and hoping that by stalling for time, something else in the way of an alibi will turn up.

The Hamilton Spectator, an independent paper, sums the situation up in this manner: "Whatever the reasons behind the Liberals' stall, the facts are their failure to give these needy old folk an increased monthly income in times of a national economic boom for almost every one else will live to haunt them. Their insistence on running their own show in their own good time is the type of pettiness the public is growing accustomed to expect from them. It is very reminding of the days when a powerful Liberal majority ran roughshod over Parliament and indicates that while the power in numbers has gone, the arrogance remains."

Peking Holding Back

In the peculiar jargon of Communism, Peking has indicated that it plans no major new involvement in Viet Nam despite the escalated American war effort. This is how a statement in the Peking People's Daily is being interpreted in Hong Kong, and it is important news indeed, if it can be depended upon. For the greatest hazard involved in recent American bombing operations has been the possibility of bringing Red China directly into the conflict.

Learning heavily on Mao Tse-tung for inspiration, the Peking paper

stressed the virtues of self-reliance, of "regeneration through one's own efforts." In the past, it said, the Vietnamese people have relied "mainly on their own strength, on their people's war." And the implication is that on this basis they must continue.

This word on Viet Nam came as China continued its purge of anti-Maoist elements and in the wake of reports that visits by foreign tourists this summer have been cancelled. Some observers have speculated that tourists are being banned because of troop movements within China; but experts find little or no evidence that the Chinese war machine is being cranked up. All indications are that China's continuing internal political difficulties are the reason for the tourist ban.

Vice-Premier and Culture Minister Lu Ting-yi is the latest official to be toppled in the sweeping purge that is under way. He was head of the propaganda department of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, and quite a big shot. His downfall was made public in a manner typically Chinese—by making known the name of his successor without any reference to Mr. Lu himself.

Meanwhile the People's Daily article on Viet Nam, issued by the official New China News Agency, sought to forestall Soviet criticism of China for China's lack of effort in the war area. According to Peking, the "Khrushchev revisionists" by attacking the policy of self-reliance are in fact "opposing the revolution." Soviet aid, it declared, is but "sugar-coated poison" destined to give the Soviets a free hand in sabotaging the revolutionary struggle of the people.

These are melodious sounds to Western ears, but perhaps it would be better not to be too complacent about them. Peking may indeed be holding back for the reasons given, but there is no guarantee that it will not abruptly switch to a more aggressive policy, as it did in the Korean war with results that nearly proved disastrous to Western hopes.

Of Major Concern?

State Secretary Judy LaMarsh announced the other day, to a no-doubt breathless House, that the introduction of trial color television programs in Canada will begin Sept. 1, a month earlier than originally planned. "Rescheduled," you might call it, though not in the way the Island phase of our causeway project was dealt with under this heading! The change, Miss LaMarsh said, had been requested by broadcasting authorities and would allow color TV to be brought in with the advent of the fall television programs.

No doubt this will be a nice thing to have; but does it deserve the priority it is to be given on the national agenda at this time? It will involve vast public and private expenditures for programming, for transmission and for receivers—and what of the need for curbing inflation? How, we wonder, can Finance Minister Sharp reconcile it with the budgetary sermon he delivered on this theme not so long ago? By what reasoning does a matter of this kind take precedence over the needs for education, for housing, for adequate old age pensions, not to speak of the essentials of a medicare program and the ironing out of regional inequalities?

"In the TV industry itself," comments the Fredericton Gleaner on this point, "we have a lopsided progress, in which the technical side has far outstripped the aesthetic and artistic. With the revelations we have recently had of the utter chaos that at present prevails in both management and production circles of the CBC, together with the feud between them, the mind boggles at the thought of viewing what they are likely to produce in the near future in technicolor."

But not the bureaucratic mind! Not the governmental mind! It's to be color television or bust! come the fall. The broadcasting authorities have requested it in the name of progress, and who are we to question the wisdom of the timing? Mere taxpayers, who ought to know by now that our place is in the bleachers and that our views on such matters are too puerile to be given second thought.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Everyone wants to know how to figure out the stock market. Here's a sure tip from a recognized authority, Manuel F. Cohen, chairman of the U.S. securities and exchange commission, gave it out in an interview and didn't charge a cent for it. "The market has gone up in the past and it has gone down in the past. I think it will continue to move up and down from time to time in the future."



LONG HOT SUMMER

WORLD WHEAT PROBLEMS

Plagued By Many Uncertain Hazards

National Geographic Society

Wheat is being seeded or harvested somewhere in the world every month of the year. The planting of wheat is relatively simple; so is harvesting. But the problems that occur between sowing and reaping plague farmers from North America to New Zealand.

Frost and drought are constant threats. Hessian flies may infest young plants, grasshoppers chew up a healthy stand. A bewildering variety of diseases and fungi attack wheat—black stem rust, stinking smut, take-all foot rot, to name a few.

Because of the hazards, the Great Plains of North America are known as "next year country." A North Dakota wheat grower said, "A farmer in this country just has to hope for the best."

WINTER CROP DAMAGED Drought and late frosts this year in Kansas have seriously damaged the all-important winter wheat crop. The U.S. department of Agriculture recently estimated that the 1966 winter wheat harvest would be five per cent less than last year's yield. The nation's entire wheat crop in 1966 is expected to total 1,235,000,000 bushels, a drop of seven per cent from 1965, but still slightly above the 1960-64 average.

World wheat production was also high in 1965: it filled a near-record nine-billion-bushels. Wheat is probably cultivated over a wider range than any other crop. It grows at 10,000 feet in the highlands of Ethiopia and below sea level in the Imperial Valley of California. Wheat thrives within the Arctic Circle and in the tropics. The grain does best, however, in temperate regions where annual rainfall is between 12 and 35 inches.

In some parts of the world, primitive peoples still scratch the soil with wooden tools and harvest wheat with sickles. In the United States and Canada, however, wheat production is so mechanized that only three man-hours are required per acre, compared with 50 hours a century ago.

ORIGIN A MYSTERY Wheat is a grass of the genus Triticum, but its precise origin remains a mystery. It probably was one of the first cereal crops grown by man. Archeologists have found carbonized grains of wheat in the pre-historic lake dwellings of Switzerland and in Turkish ruins 6,000 years old.

Wheat production evolved very slowly until the 19th century, when great improvements in seed, machinery, and culture were made. Kansas, now the

leading wheat state, did not even produce enough for its own needs until 1873 when the superior Russian "Turkey red" variety was introduced.

Today, several thousand varieties of wheat are grown around the world. They are bred for resistance to diseases, high yield, proper maturity, and good milling and baking qualities.

Many hybrid wheats have been created, but, unlike corn, none has been commercially significant. Instead, wheat breeders select strains that

combine the good properties of the parents. It is a painstaking process that requires from 12 to 15 years just to create one acceptable new variety. And the job never ends.

"New races of rust can be established faster than we now can produce wheat varieties, which resist the rust," explained a Canadian plant scientist. But wheat breeders, like farmers, are optimists who try to stay one jump ahead of disease and insects.

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Difficult Swallowing

By Dr. Theodore R. Van Dellen A middle-aged man sought medical advice because of difficulty in swallowing. Questioning revealed that for a year he had been unable to eat such foods as hard rolls, meat, and raw celery and carrots. He voluntarily restricted himself to a soft diet and lately encountered trouble swallowing bland foods and liquids. What was wrong? Within two days the cause of his distress became obvious: he had an obstruction of the esophagus (gullet) which proved to be a malignant lesion.

No one knows the origin of this type of tumor. Irritation is suspected and some authorities believe that the precursor is the drinking of strong liquors, in much the same way as smoking is blamed for lung cancer. More than 20 years ago, one physician indicated that liquor drinkers exhibited an increasing disposition to the development of esophageal cancer, and in Curacao in the Dutch West Indies, this form of cancer is the most common malignancy found among the inhabitants. The condition is not common in the United States; vital statistics for 1965 estimated 5,400 deaths, or 1.8 per cent of the 300,000 cancer casualties.

X-ray examination demonstrates the obstruction. Usually, when barium is swallowed, it drops readily into the stomach but when the tube is partially blocked the material remains in the esophagus and seeps slowly through the barrier. Because less than half of all obstructions are not malignant, it is wise to make certain before undergoing surgery. The esophagoscope can be passed and a piece of the tumor is removed and sent to the laboratory for biopsy. When cancer cells are found, the best treatment is surgery, although in some cases X-ray treatments have been used successfully.

Cancer is curable when treated early; it never cures itself and invariably destroys if allowed the right of way.

CRANKY MAN L. M. writes: Would age have anything to do with a man of 42 being cross and irritable? REPLY No. If this type of personality is not natural to him he may be ill, overtired, worried, or up to his neck in responsibilities. Persistent irritability is a signal to have a thorough physical examination and take stock of the situations of life.

BLEEDING GROWTH P. J. K. writes: For 10 years I have had keratitis over both eyes. The lesions bleed. This problem was taken care of surgically when it involved my face and left hand. Could the procedure be used on my ears? REPLY Yes, or with radium. These blemishes should be removed if they bleed.

DIVERTICULOSIS A. B. writes: When a person has diverticulosis, does it show up in an X-ray? REPLY This is the only way to diagnose the condition. The barium enema is preferred because the material gets into the small sacs and look like clusters of grapes when viewed on the film.

CAN BE PAINLESS P. I. W. writes: Is it possible to have arteriosclerosis of the legs without pain? REPLY Yes. Pain occurs only when the arterial wall becomes so thickened that the flow of blood is impeded at least 85 per cent. This condition can be likened to rusty pipes; water may flow through for many years before blockage occurs.

TODAY'S HEALTH HINT—See the physician if sunburn is severe. (NOTE: All correspondence to Dr. Van Dellen should be addressed to: Dr. Theodore Van Dellen, c/o Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Illinois.)

PROVIDE HOSPITAL AID OTTAWA (CP)—Canada will send 10 pre-packaged hospitals to South Viet Nam for civilian use, the external aid office announced Friday. Each \$70,000 unit contains 200 beds, with equipment and medical supplies. The hospitals are capable of self-supporting operation for seven days. When tied into the provincial hospital system by the South Vietnamese government, they will function continuously.

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DANGER IS UNIQUE L. A. N. writes: Nicaragua, is the world's only fresh water home of swordfish and man-eating sharks.

NOTES BY THE WAY

Two Irishmen had landed in the United States and had taken a room in a seaside hotel. To their surprise, they were attacked by mosquitoes, an insect new to them. That night as they turned out the light and crawled under the sheets, two fire-flies flitted in the window. "It's no use," one groaned to the other, "they've come back with lanterns lookin' for us."—Montreal Star.

You may soon overhear this man speaking to girls: "I'm sorry I can't recall your name, but your knees are familiar."—Guelph Mercury.

Thant's Retirement Likely

By Arch MacKenzie Canadian Press Staff Writer U Thant is only the third secretary-general the United Nations has had—and the first non-European—and he may also be the first to retire after one five-year term next November. It is becoming increasingly plain that Thant's opposition to the American position in Viet Nam is the reason for his anticipated decision. U.S. President Johnson does not heed much of Thant's advice but the United States and other major powers and even the Soviet Union seem to be agreed that Thant should stay on. Good men are hard to find, and perhaps especially now when the UN seems to be back in the doldrums as a world force for peace and understanding after the brief triumph in settling the Indian-Pakistani war.

TRAVELLED WIDELY In any event, Thant has been travelling extensively, including calls in recent months on President de Gaulle of France, who, while no great admirer of the UN, sees eye to eye with Thant on a number of things. Thant also is heading for Moscow this summer—his fourth visit there—and will complete visits to all the big UN powers in the last six months, including Canada. The manner in which he was received last in Washington is symbolic of the somewhat strained relations that persist with the U.S. That was before Thant expressed "deep regret" at the U.S. decision to step up bombing in North Viet Nam—in a war which Thant has called "one of the most barbarous in history." DID NOT TALK Johnson, as is his habit at times, in mid-June suddenly invited all UN heads of missions to a White House reception and carried Thant to Washington for the event by special jet plane and limousine. But the president, mindful of Thant's persistent message that a stop to the bombing of North Viet Nam is the first essential for peace in Viet Nam, did not talk to him personally but left the job to State Secretary Dean Rusk—a conversation which Thant described later as "very informal and, if I may say so, casual." Thant's views on admitting Communist China to the UN—or at least making that possible even if China refuses to join the UN—also runs contrary to the continued U.S. policy. The betting in Washington is against the Burmese state-mag's accepting a second term as matters now stand.

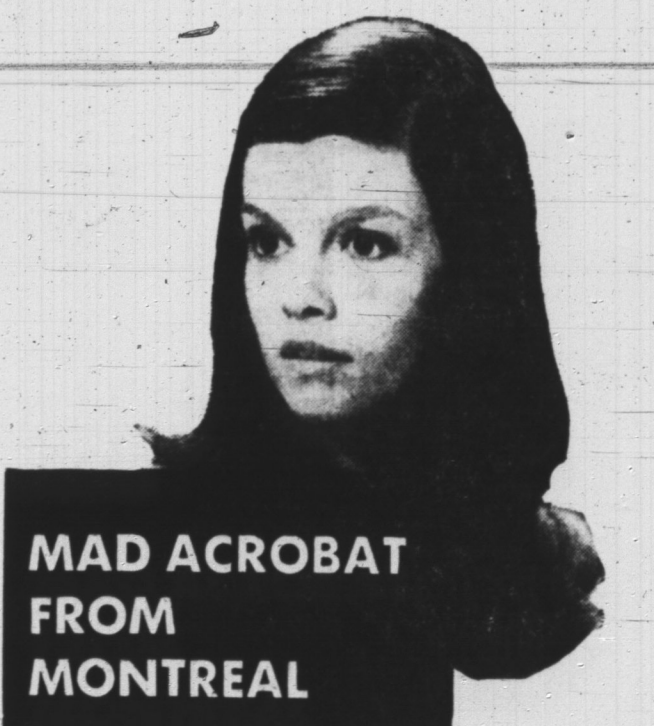
Sensible Decision

Montreal Star The first Canadian heavy water installation being under construction on Cape Breton Island, conventionally the last place in all Canada to be selected as a site for the second would be Cape Breton Island. That sort of situation is a breach of a kind of natural law of public administration: all parts of the country should have roughly equal reason to entertain friendly thoughts about government. But if it was an unexpected decision, it was also commendable. The economy of the Maritime provinces needs stimulating, very seriously, and here is a project which may well form the nucleus of considerable development because of the availability of electric power. It was also logical in another way, it seems: the Cape Breton water is unusually rich, for some unstated reason, in deuterium, the form of hydrogen which must be concentrated to make heavy water. In a roundabout way, this is of interest to the Canadian uranium miners and designers of nuclear reactors. Sale of installations of Canadian design will be to some extent, naturally, dependent on availability of supplies of heavy water. The projects now on foot will produce a substantial surplus above our own needs.

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MAD ACROBAT FROM MONTREAL



The face most likely to succeed in French films this year is that of Canada's Genevieve Bujold. With a successful background in French-Canadian theatre and television, Genevieve plays a beautiful mad acrobat in the star-studded French film, The King of Hearts.

Just Put in the Plug

Gone are the days when the skillet occupied more space in the cupboard than it did on the stove. Now it is one of the most used household appliances. Food Editor Margo Oliver gives some of her electric skillet recipes including Polynesian Pork Chops.

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