

THE GUARDIAN

Authorized as Second Class Mail Post Office Department, Ottawa. The Island Guardian Publishing Co. President and Associate Editor, Ian A. Burnett, Associate Editor, Frank Walker. CIRCULATION "Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew" "The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink". CHARLOTTETOWN, FRIDAY, JAN. 23, 1953

The Farmers' Problem

There are other issues besides the Currie Report requiring the urgent attention of Parliament. One, as yet largely unappreciated, concerns the growing gap between farm income and farm expenditures for productive material and wages. An Ottawa correspondent in the Vancouver Province cites some arresting figures in this connection, based on Dominion Bureau of Census figures.

Canada's farm population dropped by more than 320,000, over 10 per cent in 10 years 1941 to 1951, to a total of 2,827,732. Non-farm rural population in the same 10 years rose by more than 700,000, or over 37 per cent to 2,553,444. Big city and town population in the same period rose by 32.7 per cent to a record 8,628,253.

Thus far, mechanization of farms plus use of scientific methods of cultivation and livestock has more than met not only food requirements of non-farm rural and city populations but produced huge surpluses for exports. Much of Canada's current prosperity rests on maintenance of this position. But now threats are arising by growing disparity between prices paid to the remaining farm population and the prices they must pay industrial firms and their workers for the materials used in production, and especially in competition for farm workers.

The most serious component of farm costs today is increase in farm wages which rose from an index of 110.3 in 1939 to 471.9 in August, 1952, based on 1935-1939 average as 100. The index number of manufacturing employment payrolls, also based on 1935-1939 average as 100, rose by October, 1951 to 367.5 for durable and 372.6 for non durable industries while as of October, 1952, payrolls of non-durable goods have risen to an index of 646.4 and non-durable to 397.2 while weekly wages in these industries had risen to \$61.80 and \$52.50 respectively. No farmer can compete with those manufacturing wages which are chiefly responsible for the drift from the farm to the cities.

The same source, D. B. S. figures, show that by October, 1952, the monthly index of Canadian farm prices of agricultural products had dropped to 243.5, the lowest level since April, 1948. The index is also based on 1935-39 averages as 100. Since the beginning of World War II, when this index stood at the low of 96.8 in 1940, it has climbed thus: 1941, 110.2; 1944, 172.4; 1948, 252.6. But during 1952 this index has been steadily declining month by month. The average for the nine months, January to September, 1952, was 250.5 and in October, the monthly index hit the low noted above of 243.5. But in the interim, the price index of commodities and services the farmer must pay for in production, also based on 1935-39 average prices as 100, and measured quarterly each year, rose thus: 1939, 99.3; August, 1949, 206.5; August 1950, 218.6; August 1951, 237.8; August, 1952, 243.4.

Thus what the farmer has to pay for his production has now levelled with what he has to pay for the mechanics and wages of production but his actual receipts are perhaps slightly more since the index of what he has to pay includes prices of feed and seed, much of which he produces himself. In other words, the farmer is working now on a basis of a net loss, if he has to buy feed and seed.

These facts and figures add up to the reason why more price support for farm products is likely to be demanded. Certainly it will be difficult to disprove the argument that the current stabilization of the cost of living has been at the expense of the farm population.

Barking Up The Wrong Tree

In a foreword to the December number of the Canadian Army Journal, a publication which is distributed throughout the army, Lieutenant General G. G. Simonds, Chief of the General Staff, writes as follows:

"In recent weeks and months the Army has been the target of unremitting attacks from many sources. . . . We must expect and welcome constructive criticism. No one of us would claim that the Canadian Army is perfect and the expansion of the last two years has accentuated faults and weaknesses. . . . I charge every soldier to apply himself in all those matters where we clearly need improvement but not to be discour-

aged or depressed by criticisms which are neither founded on truth nor justified in the light of our positive achievements."

The Winnipeg Free Press (Liberal) regards this as a remarkable statement, apparently designed as a counter to the Currie report. It suggests, "without wishing to discourage General Simonds, whose devotion to duty is well known," that grandiloquence of this sort is out of place.

"There is no need," concludes the Free Press, "to defend the Canadian Army. No one has attacked it. No one will attack it. Indeed the Canadian people are very proud of it. They were proud of it in World War I and in World War II. They are proud of it today.

"The Canadian Army needs no defence, what it needs is a good administration. It is the administration not the army which is at fault. It is bad administration that Mr. Currie and Mr. Sellar have reported—not bad soldiers. General Simonds' trouble, and it is not an uncommon one among persons of exalted position, is that he is mistaking the administration for the army. The two are completely different and, instead of addressing emotional appeals to the army, General Simonds would be more usefully employed rooting out the thoroughly bad administration which Mr. Currie and Mr. Sellar have so clearly exposed."

EDITORIAL NOTES

The International Federation of Agricultural Producers reports that world agricultural production in 1952 was two per cent greater than in 1951. Most of the increase, however, was in non-food products, such as fibres and rubber.

No one can say that efficiency is neglected at the Prince Edward Island Hospital. Yesterday it was reported that the maternity section was caring for four sets of twins, making optimum use of hospital space and time.

The last outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Britain, reported in early November, brought the total to 582 during the epidemic which ran for a year, and involved a slaughter of 78,095 animals at a cost to the British Government of £2,736,309.

The British Eighth Army captured Tripoli this date, 1943, thus securing the best North African port between Tunis and Alexandria and the junction of three railway lines. Five days earlier they had captured Taurga, assuring water supplies, and continued following up Rommel's retreat—the longest in military history.

If there is one petition to Parliament that will get general support it is the request of Walter Callow to have the Walter Callow Veterans' and Invalids' Welfare League incorporated on a national basis. The bed-ridden warrior plans to provide buses for crippled veterans and others throughout this country and the United States.

In Fredericton, N. B., the R.C.M.P. are giving Boy Scouts instruction in the handling of firearms, the .22 rifle being the weapon used at the range. This is certainly a sensible approach. The youth who has been taught a proper respect for firearms and the safety rules for their use is not going to get into trouble because he did not know it was loaded, or did not know it would carry so far.

A great many good cases could be made for the lifting of sales tax. A particularly strong one is the request of the Canadian Library Association for the lifting of the 10 per cent levy on books. The Government is in the anomalous position of encouraging the spread of education and information on the one hand and taxing it on the other. It might be added that the newsprint in the daily paper is subject to a similar impost.

Though British farms produce around 675 million dozens of eggs per year, eggs are relatively scarce, and have acquired, as a representative of the Canadian Government in London has said, "a greater importance in the United Kingdom than perhaps in any other country in the world." Britain also imports eggs from a large number of countries, of which Canada, unfortunately, is not one.

Canadian Army recruiting authorities might well consider the popularity of killed regiments in the British Army. Three Scottish regiments head the list of direct British regular army enlistments from civil life into the infantry, according to the latest monthly figures on recruitment issued by the War Office. The regiment which attracted the most recruits in the period covered was the "Blackwatch" (Royal Highlanders) which was followed by the Highland Light Infantry, with the Cameron Highlanders third.

To Extend A Helping Hand



PUBLIC FORUM This column is open to the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinion of correspondents.

SUMMERSIDE WATER SYSTEM

Sir.—A recent issue of your paper carries an article in which it is stated that the Town Council, at its dyking session, intend to take under consideration the holding of a plebiscite on February 3rd, the date of the civic election, for the purpose of determining whether or not the ratepayers wish to abolish the water and sewage commission, and have their duties assumed by the Town Council.

Without discussing the legality of such an action, just at present, it surely must be admitted that the present Council, of which three members will be retiring in a few days, are not justified, and should not undertake any such action. Referring to your remarks, as to why the Water and Sewerage Act was passed, calling for the setting up of a commission of three to be elected by the ratepayers, I certainly disagree that it was done at the request of bondholders or for their protection. I doubt if any debenture holder ever thought of, or heard of any such suggestion. If one reads the act, it must be clear the commission were thereby authorized to install a water and sewerage system in the town and manage the operation of same. The only stipulation relative to the debenture issue was that the commission and the "Act" incorporating same, must continue in force while any debentures are outstanding. It does not say that or make any provision for the duties of the commission to be taken over by the Town Council at such a time when all debentures are retired.

It is clear that before the Council could undertake such action, fresh legislation would be imperative, abrogating the present Water and Sewerage Act and so amending the Town of Summerside Incorporation Act that it would contain all the powers and provisions now contained in the Water and Sewerage Act of incorporation. Insofar as the holding of a plebiscite is concerned, with only a few days notice, I object on the ground that the ratepayers will not have time to gain such information that will enable them to come to a considered decision.

Public meetings should be held, permitting free discussion and giving the people solid reasons pro and con on the question. The writer has never heard anyone, apart from Council members, suggest that commission. In my opinion, all municipal or government owned utilities should be operated by a commission and mostly are. The history of our Water Commission shows the names of many of our most efficient citizens as members throughout the years, and in managing its affairs have been managed as carefully and efficiently as any municipal department of our town.

There are many desirable points in favor of an elected commission, responsible to the citizens for their acts, thereby providing an independent check on this important utility, the management of which is solely in the hands of the commission whose members have the same qualifications as Council members and are an elected body. It has come to my attention that one of the reasons the Council wish to abolish the commission and take over the duties of this body, is that they wish to raise the water rates, which the commission have several times refused to do, considering present rates ample. If rates in other centres are checked, it will be found that our rates are as high and in some instances higher. From the standpoint of health and sanitation every consideration should be given to and every effort made to supply water and sewerage facilities to all sections of our town, giving special attention to our labouring men, etc., even at times when the extension of such lines could be profitable. The day of outside privies and

Old Charlottetown

(And F. E. L.)

MAILS DELAYED

"The mail couriers, after repeated attempts, from the 23rd of March up to the 2nd inst., effected a passage to Cape Tormentine on the day last mentioned. The day following they had got part of the way across on their return, but, from the state of the ice, were forced to put back, and to remain at Cape Tormentine until the morning of the 7th, on which day they managed to re-cross the Strait, and arrived here on the morning of the 8th, with one English, 3 Halifax, and 2 Cumberland mails. This is the longest delay that has occurred since the western winter route has been established."

—Royal Gazette, April 10, 1832.

The Age-Old Story

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. . . . From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which had the palsy; and he healed them. . . . unsanitary wells is done, and prevention of sickness is now the motto. Insofar as providing water and sewerage facilities to our citizens is concerned, the cost to the town of Summerside is not too great. If economics must be involved, there are many other fields to explore, and let this health and sanitary as well as fire protection utility continue to be operated by a commission; and may our citizens continue to see that competent men are elected to manage its affairs. The taking over of the duties of the Commission by the Town Council gives no assurance to the citizens as to future efficient management of the water and sewerage system. This question requires and deserves careful consideration from a legal as well as a business standpoint, before hasty steps are taken. In any event a council should not vote on such a question at its dyking session with three of its members definitely retiring. In fairness to all and without prejudice, I am, Sir, etc. A FORMER WATER COMMISSIONER, Summerside.

The Poet's Corner

BROWN

On any road, outside of town, How beautiful the color brown, In seeds of apples, cut in halves, And satin coats of Jersey calves. In Autumn weeds and Summer dust, In fence-rails stained with lichen rust. In weathered wood of barn and shed, And crispy crust of country-bread. On any road, past a city, How often met with, but how pretty The color brown in sun-burned legs Of little boys and thrushes' eggs. In hazelnuts and cat-tails, too, In every old field, plowed and new, In cones of pines and fir and spruce And small-girl's pig tails, coming loose.

—Elizabeth-Ellen Long in the Christian Science Monitor.

How to attract good luck

You can improve your luck, says A. H. Z. Carr . . . first by knowing how to invite good luck, then by being alert enough to recognize it. In February Reader's Digest, he analyzes the "lucky" opportunities that helped men like Winston Churchill win success, and shows how everyone's life is studded with chance situations, any one of which may prove to be a turning point in his fortune. Learn how you can court that lucky break. Get your February Reader's Digest today: 44 articles of lasting interest, condensed from leading magazines, current books.

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Noies By The Way

Premier Bennett has resumed his health and welfare minister, Eric Martin, from political harkari. On Monday Mr. Martin hinted the government planned to set up compulsory hospital districts with taxing powers similar to school districts. On Tuesday Premier Bennett quickly assured British Columbians no new taxes are planned by the government to pay for hospital services. Said the Premier: "There is no thought of a new tax for hospitals." Apparently Mr. Martin is too new to politics.—Vancouver Province.

You would think that the only hazardous feature of a barber shop would be the shave, performed with the old straight edge razor. That this is not so, was proven in a Port William shop last week. The barber's customer was one of those young lads who are continuously filled with energy and good spirits. As the barber turned towards the shelf to get his clippers, the boy obeyed an impulse, violent public reaction when the foot rest clipped the barber and broke his ankle.—Port William Times-Journal.

Like the Ottawa telephone directory now in use, the new 1953 book which is due to be delivered in mid-February will keep the "Macs" and the "Mc's" apart. About five pages will separate the last of the "Macs" (McWilliams) from the first of the "Mc's" (McAdam). The reason is, of course, that the list is alphabetical, but the directory's compilers, such strict application of the alphabetical order rule no doubt seems entirely sensible. But to those who are called on to phone "Macs" or "Mc's" and who rarely know or remember which way their names are spelled, it is a nuisance.—Ottawa Citizen.

The hovering hummingbird consumes about the same amount of energy as does a modern helicopter, weight for weight, according to Dr. Oliver Pearson, Assistant Professor of Zoology at the University of California, in an article in The Scientific American. The hummingbird uses up 726 British thermal units of energy per hour, he calculated. The helicopter uses 750 BTU per hour. The hummingbird lives at a faster rate than any other animal, Dr. Pearson said. The bird eats most of the day and is able to avert starvation during the night only because he has the ability to hibernate then. No other bird can hibernate at night, Dr. Pearson reported.—New York Times.

Often unkind things are said about Toronto. It is called hogtown. It is said to be narrow and bigoted. The provincial capital is itself accused of being very provincial, even parochial, in its attitude. Toronto, of course, has changed much with the years but it never was quite as bad as some thought it. The other day a little item came over the wires telling of the death of Mr. Frederick Hubbard, former chairman of the Toronto Transportation Commission. That wouldn't mean much to those who didn't know him. The item didn't mention one of the salient facts about his career. Mr. Hubbard was colored. His color was no barrier to appointment to one of the principal positions in Toronto. Nor was it a barrier to his father, who, earlier in the century, sat on the Ontario Board of Control.—Windsor Star.

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