

A Matter of Sovereignty

THE AGREEMENT MADE formal ten days ago between France and Quebec is an acceptable cultural arrangement which may be of great benefit to the province. It is described as an "entente . . . on a program for exchange and co-operation in the field of education," and since education is by the BNA Act a matter for provincial jurisdiction, it has a constitutional basis.

But one important fact must not be lost sight of in setting up the new joint commission between the European nation and the Canadian province. And that is that the agreement would have no standing in international law if it had not first been sanctioned by the Canadian government.

This is a point which Quebec has not given much prominence. No doubt as a part of the new sense of French nationalism within the province, the entente has taken on something of the aura of an agreement between sovereign states. Such is not possible under our constitution or international law. The full control of foreign relations, of agreements and commitments, even when only in the cultural field, must reside in the federal government. If this were not so, Canada would cease to be

a nation and appear merely as a geographical conglomeration of small sovereign states. There can be only one official face which Canada presents to all other countries, and it can be shown only through an act of the Canadian government.

Quebec's new arrangement with France comes within this category, although Ottawa had to act with alacrity to complete its understanding with Paris before the Quebec entente was formalized. The question arises: What if Ottawa chose to refuse, for one reason or another, its co-operation in legitimizing such an agreement? In the current condition of turmoil affecting Quebec, such a refusal of that province could have disturbing repercussions.

The fact remains, however, that Canada's sovereignty, as displayed in our relations with other nations, must remain wholly vested in Canada's government. There must be no whittling of that power by any province or the fabric of our nationhood will suffer. The principle has been upheld in the case of the Franco-Quebec entente. There should be no misunderstanding by any province as to federal policy in any future case. Only Canada's government can speak for Canada.

Action on Sewage

MORE THAN A DECADE AGO, when Alderman J. D. Hunter was chairman of the city health committee, Victoria took initial steps to reduce the pollution of shore waters by sewage discharged into the sea.

At that time the city installed a mechanical device called a comminuter at the main outfall. It speeded diffusion of sewage and accelerated the neutralizing action of salt water on the discharge. But it was recognized as a start only in the attack on the pollution problem.

The next significant action awaits the advice of experts. At the moment the city, with others, is in the process of selecting consultants of international repute on the subject. Major developments will be deferred until the local and regional situation has been studied and recommendations have been presented.

This is a reasonable course. Sewer improvements, whatever they may be, generally involve extremely heavy expense. Extension of the main outfalls, proposed in the capital budget, itself is a major item in that budget.

'Exorbitant' Rates?

CANADIAN INSURANCE COMPANIES, according to Alberta Highways Minister Gordon Taylor, have been getting together for years to set exorbitant car insurance rates.

If Mr. Taylor has any proof of this statement he should lay it before the federal department of justice Combines Act administrators. If he has no proof then he should refrain from making such provocative remarks.

Mere claims that auto insurance premiums are "exorbitant" do not prove a case for lower rates. They do not answer the inescapable fact that car insurance costs are related to accident damage claims.

The greatest expense in car insurance is providing full protection against one's own carelessness or recklessness on the road. The public liability and property damage insurance which all cars are required to have in most jurisdictions these days is provided at a reasonable rate, except in cases where the vehicle is to be driven by a person with a bad driving record or by young persons of unknown driving habits.

Insuring against accidents which

are solely the fault of the insured is the aspect which is becoming more expensive and there is little reason why it should not be.

The person who wraps his car around a telephone pole or a tree as a result of his own careless driving can hardly expect someone else to pay the damages. If he is insured against this contingency he will be spared the immediate cost but can expect to find it reflected in a higher premium in ensuing years.

Many people claim that car insurance costs could be lowered if the business were taken over by the government. But is it really a function of government to insure automobiles? And if so, then why not buildings and boats?

Government has a responsibility to see that auto insurance is sold on freely competitive terms and that the general public is protected, through mandatory PL and PD insurance, from financial loss due to the carelessness or lawlessness of some drivers.

There is no reason why government should subsidize, through low-cost insurance, the personal financial losses of persons who are responsible for causing accidents.



—Herman, Victoria Daily Times.
"Psst! . . . Mr. Bennett . . . behind you . . . again . . . !"

FROM OTTAWA

Bogus Clause in the Pension Bill

By MAURICE WESTERN

THE House of Commons, in a moment of solemn farce, has given its approval at the committee stage to clause 115 of the Canada Pension Plan which presumes to do what Parliament cannot do; namely to impose legislative fetters on Parliaments of the future.



Western

No one—not even Miss LaMarsh—attempted to defend the clause on constitutional grounds and Mr. Stanley Knowles, an undoubted friend of the Canada Pension Plan, opposed it as "silly." There is no evidence that the committee regarded this as a serious objection.

The origins of this pretentious clause are to be found in the negotiations with the provinces on the pension plan. As frequently noted on this page, there is an obvious danger that the scheme, even if actuarially sound at the outset, may be rendered unsound in the future if pensions become, as in the past, the sport of politics. Mr. Roberts of Ontario, was particularly anxious that safeguards be inserted to prevent unilateral changes in provisions of the act, particularly in regard to benefits and contributions.

There is one way in which future Parliaments may be bound; by amendment of the constitution. This was a point given much emphasis by the Liberals (who have now, apparently, forgotten it) during the discussion of the Bill of Rights. But although the present bill attempts, in the words of Mr. Knowles, to bootleg a kind of constitutional provision into an ordinary statute, it is not—and in the circumstances cannot be—a constitutional enactment. In a constitutional sense, it is pure window-dressing.

population of all the included provinces, has signified the consent of such province hereto."

Presumptions
Here there are three presumptions. The first is that this Parliament has a right to read its own intentions into the acts of future Parliaments. The second is that a proclamation of the governor in council, based upon an enactment of a future Parliament, shall have no effect unless conditions imposed by this Parliament have been duly met. The third sets a specific condition: alterations will have no effect unless two-thirds of the included provinces of the included population have given their assent.

This seems, remarkably, to have satisfied Mr. Roberts. For, after quoting the agreement, he said: "In effect this gives the people of Ontario, through their government, a clear right to be consulted in the future and to decide upon the implications and desirability of any change that may be proposed. It provides an effective veto over changes of substance with which we may not agree." Obviously, it does nothing of the kind.

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Rosy Outlook

Miss LaMarsh is, of course, entitled to her opinion that no future Parliament would be so irresponsible as to act in a manner inconsistent with this bogus clause. The plan, in her view, will fill us all with such a sense of well-being that no one in his right mind would dream of tinkering with it. This is the light in which legislation commonly appears to sponsoring ministers.

Others evidently have had their doubts. One of them was Mr. Roberts, whose mind is now being set at ease by the sham veto incorporated in clause 115.

FROM LONDON By EDWARD CRANKSHAW

Abortive Moscow Meeting

THE abortive international conference of Communists ended in Moscow on Friday with a small sigh of relief.

The only lively things about it had been the off-stage noises: outside Russia, the fulminations of the Chinese and Albanians, and inside, the violent clash between Asian students and Russian police in front of the American Embassy on Thursday.

The anti-American demonstration, which turned into an ugly anti-Russian riot when Soviet mounted police started riding down their Asian guests, was clearly instigated by Peking to coincide with the conference meeting in complete secrecy in another part of the city—to embarrass the Russians and to bring to the surface in Moscow itself differences which Premier Alexei N. Kosygin and his colleagues are vainly trying to damp down.

Some of the abuse shouted by Korean and Vietnamese students at the Soviet police and the military, who later advanced on them in a solid phalanx, was taken straight from the Chinese press. For the first time in Russia—though by no means for the first time in China—the great quarrel, translated into racial terms, was brought out of conference rooms and editorial offices and into the gutter.

Insisting on Quarrel

At the same time the Chinese press was insisting that the quarrel could not be mended. The "irreconcilable debate" between true Marxists and Revisionists, said the Chinese Communist paper People's Daily on Thursday, will never end "as long as there are still those who believe in Khrushchev revisionism, who follow it and disseminate it—until the day when it is swept right away."

The Albanian newspaper Zeri I Popullit, as usual, went further and was more specific. Accusing the Russians of weakening the Viet Cong rebels in South Viet Nam by trying to force North Viet Nam to negotiate with the Americans at a moment when the Viet Cong were said to be on the edge of final victory, it concluded: "By their manoeuvres the Soviet Revisionists are seeking . . . to help American imperialism to change the situation in its favor."

Russians Harassed

It was against this background that the conference found it expedient to demand the instant withdrawal of U.S. forces from Viet Nam. The Russians must be very harassed indeed. Already China is shouting about the bloody intervention of Soviet police in the service of America, beating down revolutionary students.

The conference itself was scarcely the shadow of what it should have been. As originally planned for December, it was to be a critical period in Nikita Khrushchev's conflict with Mao Tse-tung. Representatives of 26 parties were to assemble in Moscow to prepare the way for a grand conference of all the parties which would end either in China's submission or in the Chinese being drummed out of the Communist movement.

China's response was to declare that the day this conference opened would be the day on which the Soviet Communist Party dug its own grave. Many pro-Soviet parties objected to the conference for a variety of reasons—always ostensibly, because of the risk of irrevocably splitting the Communist bloc.

Some believed in this excuse; others knew that the irrevocable split had taken place, but preferred in their own national interest to preserve the confusion and the resultant flexibility (favoring their individual independence) of the status quo.

Fence-Mending Failure
After Khrushchev's fall the conference was postponed while his successors tried to mend fences with the Chinese. It is believed that Mao Tse-tung told Kosygin in Peking that China would attend the conference only if the Russians formally repudiated the whole of Khrushchev's anti-Chinese line and apologized for it.

This was not on. Although some of Khrushchev's colleagues may have objected to his forcing tactics, all of them must have agreed on the necessity of resisting the over-weening Chinese challenge to the Soviet position.

Had the conference been cancelled, this would have been seen as capitulation to Chinese pressure. There had to be a meeting of some kind. But, until the last moment, not even the Russians knew how many parties would attend—seven of the original invitees refused, including Rumania, on Russia's own doorstep.

Representation was on a low level, and all pretense that it was a drafting conference for the major conference to come, was given up. The meeting was transformed into a discussion of ways and means of achieving Communist unity.
(London Observer Service)

UNITY NOT YET

Harmony in Churches

By CECIL NORTHCOTT
from London

THE Vatican decision to join in a "working group" with the World Council of Churches to study the principles and methods of collaboration is the most important move made since the Reformation to get the Roman and non-Roman Churches on speaking terms again.

The establishment of the group — six Roman Catholics and eight non-Romans — is not for the purpose of discussing the unity of the churches, but for devising ways and means in which the separated churches can co-operate in many different spheres of practical action.

The new plan is the logical outcome of the creation by Pope John XXIII of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, within the organization of the Vatican itself, and of the contacts which that secretariat has been able to make during the last five years with the non-Roman churches.

Behind the decision stands the modest figure of Msgr. J. G. M. Willebrands, the Dutch Jesuit, who, under the direction of Cardinal Bea, has travelled the world on the mission of reconciliation and friendship between the churches which Pope John promulgated when he called the Vatican Council.

Reciprocal Courtesy

Willebrands has placed his "observers" at a score of non-Roman Catholic church conferences, always at the invitation of the organizers, who have given unprecedented privileges to them. In return the planners of the Vatican Council gave seats of honor to the 40 "observers" from the non-Roman churches at the Council. They sat in St. Peter's within easy speaking distance from the presidents, and were given every facility for understanding and reporting on the life and work of the council.

This two-way traffic between the separated sections of the Christian faith was aided by another Dutchman, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, who now, on the eve of retirement, sees some result from his patient diplomacy. With the heavy weight of more than 200 churches of the Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches in his Council, Visser 't Hooft has had to be wary of his step, for there is still much suspicion about the basic intentions of the new Vatican policy towards the "separated brethren."

Behind these two Dutchmen towers the impressive figure of 81-year-old Cardinal Bea, who has successfully withstood his more conservative colleagues of the Roman Curia, and remains loyal to the vision and policy of Pope John.

Key to Future

Cardinal Bea regards the "working group" link with the World Council of Churches as a key to the future because the World Council is able to hold together such a diffuse collection of churchmen and church traditions. It makes the dialogue between Rome and non-Romans all the easier to handle, and as a recognition of this the Vatican agreed to six Romans as opposed to eight non-Romans.

Another immense advantage of the new procedure is the fact that Asian, African and Latin American churches can be brought into the discussion. It will not be a Western dialogue, but will be fully representative of world Christianity. Up to now only Rome has been able to speak in truly world terms, but in this new encounter there will be a territorial, if not a numerical parity.

Topics for the "working group" touch on practically every field of the Christian church's responsibilities. Problems such as religious liberty, mixed marriages and proselytism are old ones which may have new light thrown on them as the churches look at ways of collaborating in philanthropic, social, international and missionary affairs. At least, that is the hope of the men behind this exciting move in the history of the Christian faith.
(London Observer Service)

Letters

Thanks

Please thank the people who read about the request for used cards to send to Taiwan, Bolivia and India, in the Times and who kindly brought or mailed them to our home.

And thanks, too, to those who have contributed toward the book postage of these and to the helpers who sort, box and mail the cards all through the year.
MRS. H. A. AROULD.

30 Howe.

Credit to Architect

The opening of the McPherson Playhouse has enriched Victoria immeasurably. Great credit is due Mayor Wilson, the council, and project co-ordinator Roderick Clack for their vision and initiative. May I add a further credit line for architect Alan Hodgson, whose skill and taste has given us such a delightful blending of old and new.
DEREK FRENCH.

918 Esquimalt.

Prospecting Discouraged

For many years the mining industry in British Columbia has supported the concept of multiple use of the resources of the province. Proof of this can be found in the proceedings of B.C. Natural Resources Conferences over the past 15 years.

It is ironic that the Department of Recreation and Conservation, a product of these conferences, is now in the forefront of those apparently wishing to restrict and prevent effective multiple use through proposed new park legislation. The principal accomplishment of the new Park Act seems certain to be discouragement of prospecting and mine development in large areas of B.C. where chances of finding new mines are quite good.

It is difficult indeed to reconcile this multiple use of our natural resources for the greatest benefit to the people of B.C.
C. H. MITCHELL,
Secretary-Treasurer,
Mining Association of B.C.

DENNIS THE MENACE



YOU'D CRY, TOO, IF YOUR ONLY MOTHER CALLED YA A 'SHRIMP!'

Looking Back

From The Times of March 10, 1890.

However did we manage before street cars, wondered a correspondent. "We didn't," replied one woman who overheard his remark. The ladies of Victoria were said to have sought recreation with an energy that is indefatigable. Crowds of them journeyed all over the city on the electric street cars. The great distributing points are where Fort Street merges into Cadboro Bay Road and half-way between the Parliament Building and the outer wharf.
(London Observer Service)