



Orders of the Day

The Publication of the Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia

Volume 21, Number 9

November 2015



Lest we forget

Photo source: John Yanyshyn / Visions West Photography

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Her Honour

The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

Orders of the Day is published regularly throughout the year, and is circulated to Association members, all MLAs now serving in Legislature, other interested individuals and organizations.

Material for the newsletter is always welcome and should be sent in written form to:

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Association Membership (former MLAs) dues are \$60.00 per year. Annual subscription rate is \$40.00 for those who are not Association Members.
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The Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia is strictly non-partisan, regardless of members' past or present political affiliation. Founded in 1987, the Association was formally established by an Act of the British Columbia Legislature on February 10, 1998.

Orders of the Day was conceived, named and produced in its early stages by Bob McClelland, former MLA and cabinet minister, following his retirement from office. Hugh Curtis ably helmed this publication up through May 2014.

Thank You and Miscellany

Moved. We received word that **John Reynolds**, former MP, MLA and Member of our Association, has relocated to Ontario as of October 2015.

Dues, Subscriptions and Donations

James Sawyer, Port Alberni

From the Editor's Desk

BC Youth Parliament alumni on the world stage

Could membership in the BC Youth Parliament be good for your career? BC Speaker, the Hon. Linda Reid thinks so.

As you know the BC Youth Parliament is being supported by the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund which currently exceeds \$10,000. It will provide opportunities for wider participation in the BC Youth Parliament's annual sessions in the Parliament Buildings by helping to defray travel and accommodation expenses for two youth who live outside the Greater Victoria area.

Madam Speaker called the other day to remind us that the BC Youth Parliament has some exceedingly successful alumni who have achieved great things on the world stage this year.

Last January, McKinsey & Company - the single largest private partnership in the world governed by partners spread across Europe, the Americas, Asia Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa - endorsed Dominic Barton to serve a third term as managing director, their "first among equals." Barton was in the BC Youth Parliament from 1978 to 1981.



He will lead McKinsey's work on "Generation," a McKinsey social initiative that pioneers new ways to build skills and job readiness for one million unemployed young people.



Russ Brown, a conservative judge from Alberta, was named to the Supreme Court of Canada in July. Justice Brown was a member of the BC Youth Parliament from 1982 to 1985.

Now, in his early 50s, Justice Brown could have a quarter-century of influence on the court. Some see him as a future chief justice when Alberta-born Beverley McLachlin reaches the mandatory retirement age of 75 in four years.

With a doctorate in juridical science from the University of Toronto, Justice Brown was associate dean of the University of Alberta law school when the government appointed him to the Court of Queen's Bench in 2013. Just 13 months later, he was promoted again to Alberta's top court, the Court of Appeal.

Some election surprises ... weren't surprises at all

By Paul Ramsey

The 2015 federal election was certainly full of surprises, and the stunning rise of the Liberals from third place to majority government was not the only shock. The lengthy 78-day campaign may have given the Conservatives time to use their superior finances, but it also gave Justin Trudeau time to show voters that he could go head-to-head with his political rivals and demonstrate that he was "ready."



It's always a bad sign when the catch phrase of your attack ad – "just not ready" – is turned around and used by your opponent as validation of the leader.

Some of the surprises were really not that surprising. The revelations at the Mike Duffy trial did not so much shock as confirm that the involvement of the Prime Minister's Office in the Duffy pay-off was far more extensive than Mr. Harper cared to admit. And the shaky state of the Canadian economy was a surprise only to those who had not been tracking the impact of cratering oil prices and sluggish exports on economic activity – not to mention on their own investments!

But other events were truly shocking. Who knew that an obscure piece of clothing – the niqab – would provide the biggest wedge issue of the campaign? A grand total of two Muslim women wished to wear it when they recited their citizenship oath – as the law allows. Somehow that desire was raised to the level of an existential threat to Canadian identity and security.

And the huge impact of that issue was remarkable. Both the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois gained seats in Quebec largely by exploiting the issue. And, caught on the "wrong" side of this wedge issue, the NDP saw the Quebec Orange Crush of 2011 turn into an Orange Crush in 2015.

Phrases we had never heard much or cared for were tossed around wildly in a demeaning battle over cultural identity. What, exactly, is an "old stock" Canadian; how many generations of settlement in Canada are required until one qualifies for being well-aged? And does the cringe-inducing category of "barbaric cultural practices" include only criminal code violations or does it extend to, say, NHL hockey fights?

On a more positive note, not only did younger voters and First Nations communities say they were concerned about campaign issues, it appears they actually participated in voting to a far greater extent than in past elections. Voter turnout – nearly 70 per cent – was at a level not seen for decades.

One of the really surprising policy debates was over government deficits and debt. First the NDP came out strongly for balancing federal budgets from year one after the election. Perhaps they had no choice but to take that stance, but, nevertheless, on fiscal issues it moved them closer to the Conservatives than voters expected.

But, the real shock was the Liberal election promise to run deficits and increase debt. For a couple of decades in Canada, deficits were a political no-no at both federal and provincial levels. When governments ran deficits they had to have clear excuses and apologize for doing so. So, to hear Justin Trudeau embracing and promoting deficits and poo-h-pooing Conservative and NDP concerns about increasing debt was beyond surprising.

This was supposed to be the third rail of fiscal policy: Run deficits and the electorate would punish you. But, as in the last Ontario election, voters seemed quite sanguine about returning to budgets written in red ink. By adopting a freer-spending "stimulative" approach, the Liberals clearly differentiated their platform from the other parties' and rode to victory.

Now, maybe the Liberal commitment to deficit spending will prove to be less than radical; how Mr. Trudeau will actually govern remains to be seen. And may be that fiscal policy was simply a non-issue for most voters.

After all, the main issue, the "ballot question" of the 2015 election, was whether Canada wanted a change. At the start of the campaign, many months ago, around two-thirds of voters said they somewhat or strongly wanted change.

And in spite of having all the advantages of being in government, of having greater financial resources, and of having a superior voter contact machine, the Conservatives could not alter that clear desire of the electorate. So, really, perhaps the election result was no surprise at all.

(Paul Ramsey is a former Prince George MLA and cabinet member who is currently enjoying retirement on the Saanich Peninsula.)

Remembering Nov. 11th: “It is as it should be.”

by Joan Sawicki
(MLA Burnaby-Willingdon, 1991-2001)



My most memorable November 11th has to be the first one after my election as MLA in October 1991. Part of my riding overlapped Svend Robinson's federal riding and he was quick to take me under his wing (on this and many other matters) as to what was expected of NDP elected officials on Remembrance Day.

First, we joined the service and wreath-laying in the upstairs of the Grimmer St. Legion, along with other VIPs. We then retired to a side room for drinks and sandwiches (processed meat-filled and triangle-shaped, with the crusts cut off). Then, it was down to the 'beverage room' where Svend advised me we would be making the rounds to every table, shaking hands and chatting with everyone.

Not surprising, as a new MLA, I felt pretty awkward doing this and, as the time passed and the beer flowed and the smoke haze deepened, it became more difficult to extricate myself from some of the tables. Fortunately, Svend was a master at 'moving along' and I tried to follow him as closely as I could.

Next stop was the Army Navy Air Force Vets Club, a block away and a welcome interlude of fresh air. Here, the process was repeated, with the added ritual of meeting up with Burnaby Council Burnaby Citizens Association (BCA) colleagues and eating a bowl of chili.

At about 1:30 p.m., it was back to the upstairs of the Legion, where furniture had been rearranged into four room-length rows of tables with chairs and Legion women served a sit-down lunch. One more walk-about to shake hands with anyone we had missed over the previous couple of hours - impossible for me to distinguish by this time - and we were done!

I arrived home exhausted, eyes burning, throat sore, reeking of stale beer and tobacco. I immediately hit the shower and hung all my clothes outside to air out.

I recall saying to my husband, Gary: "Well! I'm certainly not doing THAT again." But, of course, I did - the next year and each and every year thereafter for the whole decade I served as MLA.

Over that time, the routine never changed. The sandwiches and chili tasted exactly the same. Most veterans sat at the same tables each year - until they didn't. But, what did change was my attitude to this obligatory event. I eventually became comfortable doing

the table rounds and I found more efficient ways to extricate myself from constituents enthusiastic to have their MLA sit for a while. I also came to regard the routine on Remembrance Day as a way of honouring and paying tribute to those for whom that day had personal and often painful meaning.

I have no idea whether current NDP/BCA elected people still maintain the traditions of Remembrance Day activities to which I was introduced in 1991, but, if the Grimmer St. Legion and the nearby Army Navy Air Force club still exist, I suspect that they do - albeit amongst dwindling numbers of veterans and, blissfully, without the smoke-filled haze. In my view, that is as it should be. We owe them at least that.

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Anne's Remembrance Day Thoughts

Pacifist, sometime pacifist, earnest desirer for better management of the world than by wars - whatever one's position on that, why do we have people wanting us to shun November 11 remembrance ceremonies for those who served for Canada in the various wars we have joined?

It seems to me that there is no better time than Remembrance Day to re-energize for the battle to stop wars. Nobody can say they have not been touched by the extreme sorrow of a family or friend caught up in a world war, the Korean war, Afghanistan's battles, etc., etc. And it will be a cold day for everyone when there is not regret that we put people through such horrors.

Our Capital just last month initiated a memorial service for two soldiers killed on Canadian soil. All the military persons who put their lives at risk for the country deserve our deepest thanks. We owe them our most sincere attempts to find another way to settle national disputes, and not to just accept war as a given.

Remembrance Day always reminds me of that.

Anne Edwards

A voice like Vera Lynn

There were several Remembrance Day Ceremonies I remember well. All were at the Cenotaph at Victory Square in Vancouver.

In addition to the impressive march of the veterans, was a woman who sang "The White Cliffs of Dover." She had a voice like Vera Lynn. It was a moving experience, every time.

Yes, there is reason to pause and reflect on the veterans and fallen soldiers.

Russ Fraser

POWs carry young Gillian home

One of those "Remembrance" memories that always comes to mind for me is after the Second World War.

In the late 1940s there were still prisoners of war in England who had not yet been sent home. It was a cold November day with lots of snow and I was tobogganing with a friend. The lake was frozen and everyone including the POWs were out enjoying themselves. Unfortunately, I hit a tree while sliding down the slope and was immediately surrounded by these young men in their grey uniforms. They picked me up, found out where I lived and carried me home.

Imagine my mother's surprise to open the door and find four young POWs carrying her young daughter in their arms. She told me sometime later that the actions of those young men, far away from home, healed her mental wounds from the war.

I still get a bit emotional when I think about it.

Gillian Trumper

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Legislature celebrates Women's History Month

In October, Women's History Month, the Hon. Linda Reid, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, hosted a celebration of an exhibit titled Parliamentary Trailblazers in British Columbia.

This year's event highlighted the contributions of trailblazing women in British Columbia's justice system. It included the pioneering 'firsts' of various women in BC including Mabel French, Helen Gregory MacGill, Edith Paterson, Patricia Proudfoot, the Right Hon. Beverley McLachlin and the Hon. Shirley Bond.

Speakers included the Hon. Suzanne Anton, Minister of Justice, the Hon. Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, Minister Responsible for Labour and the first female Attorney General in BC, and Kathy Corrigan, MLA for Burnaby-Deer Lake.

Here are some of the trailblazers who broke through traditional barriers:



Mabel French, the first woman called to the BC bar: In 1910, Mabel French moved from the province of New Brunswick to Vancouver. A trained lawyer, she had earlier won a hard-fought battle in her home province to be allowed to practice law.

However, in 1911 the Law Society of British Columbia, to which all lawyers must belong to be eligible to practice in BC, refused to allow French to sit the examination for call and admission to the bar.

French's case eventually came before the Supreme Court of British Columbia, but was dismissed, as was her subsequent appeal in 1912. The Court of Appeal felt that a change to the eligibility of women for the legal profession must be made by the provincial Legislature.

In February 1912, Attorney General William J. Bowser introduced an Act to remove the Disability of Women so far as it relates to the Study and Practice of Law. The Act received royal assent on February 27, 1912. A month later, French was called to the BC bar, paving the way for women to practice law in British Columbia.



Patricia Proudfoot, the first woman appointed to the BC Supreme Court: Raised in the province of Saskatchewan, Patricia Proudfoot moved to Rutland for high school and, in 1946, enrolled at the University of British Columbia where she obtained a law degree.

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Proudfoot was the first female judge appointed to the Criminal Division of the Provincial Court and, in 1977, the first woman appointed to serve at the Supreme Court of British Columbia. In 1978, Proudfoot acted as Commissioner of the Royal Commission on the Incarceration of Female Offenders. She went on to serve from 1989-2002 at the BC Court of Appeal - the province's highest court.

In 2007, Proudfoot was awarded the Order of British Columbia, the highest provincial honour, for her contributions to the legal profession.



Helen Gregory MacGill, the first woman to become a judge in BC:

Born in Hamilton, Ontario, Helen Gregory MacGill earned two undergraduate degrees and a Master of Arts before gaining work as a journalist. She moved with her husband

and family to San Francisco, then Minnesota, and finally Vancouver.

In Vancouver, MacGill was a founding member of the Vancouver Women's Press Club and a campaigner for

women's rights and the suffrage movement. MacGill joined the University Women's Club where she served as chair of the Laws Committee. In 1912, she voiced her support for Mabel French's cause and the Act that would allow women to practice law in the province.

In 1917, MacGill was appointed as a Juvenile Court judge, the first woman to hold this position in British Columbia. In her 25 years with the court she became a noted expert on the rights of minors and is credited with helping to establish the family court system in British Columbia.



Honourable Shirley Bond, the first Female Attorney General in BC:

Minister Bond is a member of the 40th Parliament and currently serves as the Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and the Minister Responsible for Labour.

First elected to the Legislative Assembly in 2001, Minister Bond has held an extensive range of Cabinet positions. From 2011 to 2013, Minister Bond was the first woman to hold the position of Attorney General in British Columbia.



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Two grumpy old men meet at their favorite pub ...

By Brian Kieran

Felix says to Oscar: "Geez Oscar, you look like a train wreck."

Oscar: "With good reason Felix. The doc just told me I got that AAFV thing."

Felix: "Damn Oscar, that's a tough way to go. Look, drinks are on me today."



Yes, dear readers, the medical profession has come up with a new designer disease specifically minted for those of us who pace in front of the group mail box on the 27th of every month.

This affliction is called "age-associated financial vulnerability" or AAFV which gives it a medical gravitas that rivals other afflictions that have been branded as acronyms. It also reminds us that our ages and the thickness of our wallets are two of life's measurements that tend to go in opposite directions.

We all know that financial pressures mount as we age. Well, a report just published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, the scribblings of the American College of Physicians, states that doctors have been overlooking the

medical implications. The report claims that one of the most devastating problems of aging is the decline in a patient's ability to manage his or her financial affairs.

The authors of the report – wealthy middle-aged doctors no doubt – say it is their hope that by assigning a medical name to this sad state of financial affairs physicians will start thinking about this in all older people. This would place AAFV diagnosis in the same class of social geriatric medicine as the current testing of seniors on their cognitive ability to drive safely.

AAFV is described as "a pattern of risky behavior related to money that places an older adult at substantial risk for a considerable loss of resources that might result in dramatic changes in their quality of life and is inconsistent with choices the person made when they were younger."

Financial exploitation is the most common form of elder abuse and it can lead to depression, nursing home placement and increased mortality, the report's authors say.

Factors that can contribute to financial vulnerability among the elderly include cognitive or emotional decline; impairments in vision, hearing and mobility; serious progressive illness; and social isolation.

Meanwhile, as if to reinforce the grim news above, the credit firm Equifax reports that Canadians 65 and older increased their debt loads by almost five per cent in the second quarter of 2015, a much faster pace than the general population.

The average senior owed about \$15,000 at the end of June. That represents debt on top of home mortgages.

"We have been observing that this segment has been increasing debt for a while now," says Regina Malina, a senior director of insights at Equifax. She suspects a lot of that consumer debt stems from having to help adult children or other family members with their own financial hardships.

Seniors are having trouble paying off that new debt. The credit firm says seniors who are 90 days or more behind on their bills are deemed to be severely delinquent. By that measure, the delinquency rate for seniors rose this year for the first time since 2010. That rate increased by 2.4 per cent during the second quarter. It went down for all other demographic groups.

What's this all mean for vulnerable, cash-strapped seniors? We better start lobbying the new federal government for increased pensions. And, don't be surprised if your doctor starts checking your financial pulse. Managing life's daily challenges in our Golden Years has, officially, become a health risk.

(Re-printed from Betterthan50.com.)



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Thanksgiving says it all for Jim Hume

(Editor's Note: With Christmas fast approaching our resident columnist and association Honourary Life Member Jim Hume suggests that if we look back to Thanksgiving we might find it is the only annual celebration we really need.)



In 2005, I wrote a column for my newspaper suggesting Thanksgiving weekend should be more important in our lives than Christmas, Easter, Labour Day, family birthdays and wedding anniversaries. I wrote: "Thanksgiving should be all our grateful celebrations rolled into one."

A decade later I see no reason to change that thought.

For centuries Thanksgiving marked the festival of harvest, a celebration born when the first farmers on earth had their crops safely stored for winter. Ninety years ago and throughout my childhood to celebrate, schools, churches, chapels and display windows in stores would be decorated with sheaves of wheat, field crops, baskets of fruit and fresh baked "cottage" loaves – unsliced. Choirs and congregations would lift their voices across the land to sing "Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home; all is safely gathered in 'ere the winter's storms begin."

I understand some churches still maintain the old tradition but as the years rolled by Thanksgiving became more than a harvest prayer of gratitude for a good crop, although the farm roots remain with the turkey and all the trimmings, fresh baked bread and pumpkin pie. Today we offer a broader prayer, a thank you not just for the food and shelter most of us enjoy, but an expanded appreciation for the many other blessings harvested over the past year, and hopefully stored for remembering on any bleak days yet to come.

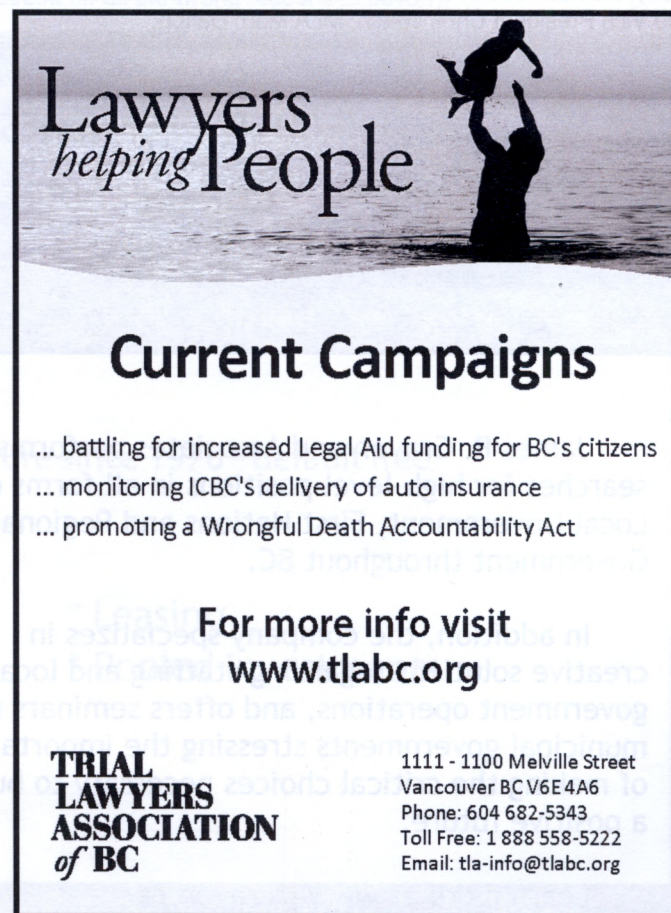
Ten years ago I wrote "I wander into Thanksgiving 2005 after a year of flirtations with health care and the health care system, thankful that I have no serious problems – yet! Just a creaky 80 plus wheel, squeaking a little as it rattles through "the Golden Age" and requiring a little high-tech fine-tuning now and then." The only change I would make today is that the 80-plus wheel continues to creak at 90-plus and I am genuinely thankful that it does.

I confess to daily grumbles about various aches and pains, about slower, shorter, strides and the need to gauge the length an afternoon walk by the number of benches available for brief recovery periods, but they are minor complaints. I am sincerely thankful that I can still go "walk about" even as "walk" comes closer to "shuffle" and walking stick or snowless ski-poles become welcome companions.

I'm thankful because I know I'm one of the fortunate ones. I may need to touch a handrail when walking up and down stairs; I may need something to push on when I stand after sitting in an easy chair; names sometimes take a minute or two to recall, but my problems are trivial when compared with others.

I admit to being impressed by modern technology but while appreciative of the many benefits and comforts it brings my way, I am thankful I grew up before its explosion changed the world for ever, but not always for the better. As another old survivor once wrote I am thankful that I grew up in an age when a stud was something that held a collar to a shirt, when a joint was what we roasted for Sunday dinner, and going all the way meant riding the street car to the end of the line. I can remember when a micro-chip was a small slice of fried potato offered with deep-fried fish, sprinkled with salt and vinegar, ideally served in a newspaper wrapper and enjoyed, as all life's pleasures should be, with sincere Thanksgiving.

(To read more of Jim Hume's columns visit The Old Islander at <http://jimhume.ca/>)



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Shamrocks share the Mann Cup with the House



Above:

At the Bar

Vice President Chris Welch, John Horgan, MLA, Leader of the Opposition, Head Coach Bob Heyes, President & Governor Jim Hartshorne, Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and Minister responsible for Translink

The Mann Cup, and its bearers the Victoria Shamrocks, celebrated victory with a House full of fans at the Legislature following the team's ninth cup win in September. They disposed of the Peterborough Lakers before a rambunctious sold-out crowd at The Q Centre. The Shamrocks last won the cup in 2005, also in six games over the Lakers and the victory avenges two straight national cup losses to the Six Nations Chiefs in 2013 and 2014. From left to right: Forward Rhys Duch, Head Coach Bob Heyes, President & Governor Jim Hartshorne, MLA Mable Elmore, Opposition Leader John Horgan, Sport Minister Peter Fassbender, MLA Marvin Hunt, Speaker Linda Reid, Assistant Coach Dave Lowdon, MLA Selina Robinson, Assistant Coach Jordan Sundher, MLA Carole James, General Manager and Vice President Chris Welch, MLA Marc Dalton.

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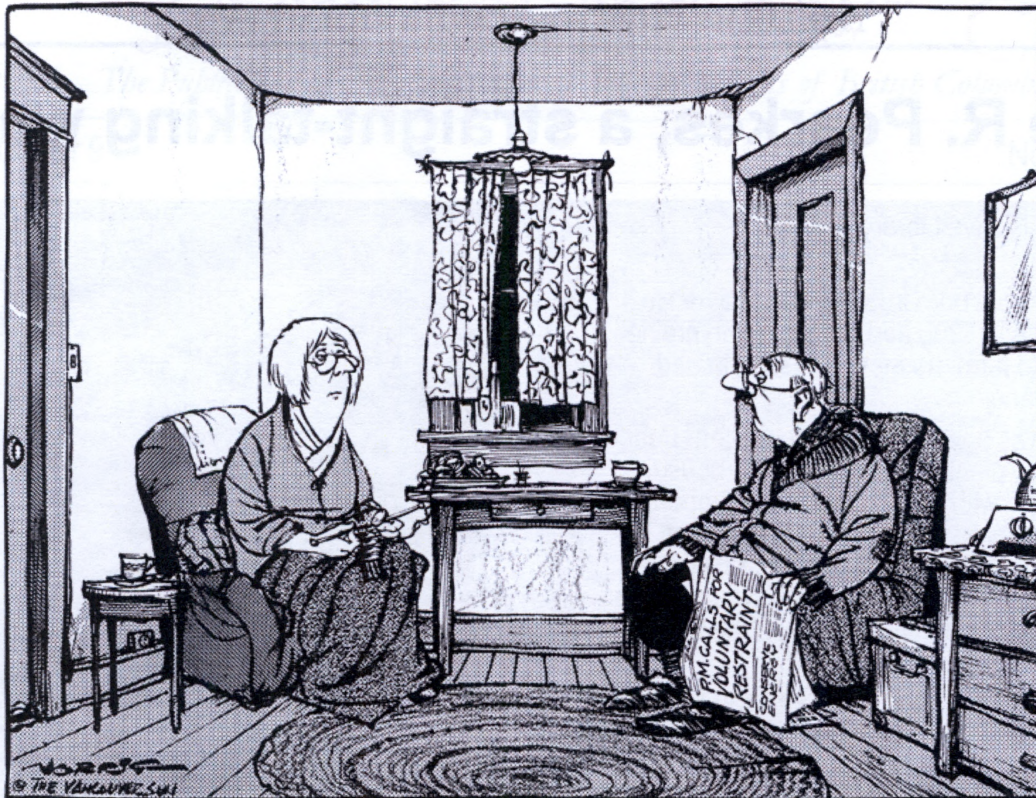
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Len Norris



"Gosh, we've been practising conservation and restraint for all the wrong reasons ... poverty."



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George R. Pearkes, a straight-talking war hero

By Peter Gourlay
Acting Director, Legislative Library

George Pearkes was born in 1888 in England. He emigrated to Canada in 1906 and moved to the prairies. After learning how to farm, he moved to Alberta and became a homesteader.

Homesteading was a very difficult occupation. Pearkes had to clear the land, plant crops, and build a house, mostly by himself and with very little outside support. After the land was cleared and a house built, he left his land to be maintained by his brother. In 1913 George joined the North West Mounted Police. He was stationed in the Yukon until 1915, when he left the NWMP to join the army.

Pearkes was assigned to the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, a Victoria unit. He saw extensive action through the Battle of the Somme, receiving steady promotions. George was popular with his men. He was of the same social class as most of his men, and he understood them and cared about their well-being.

At the Battle of Passchendaele he was badly wounded after going to the assistance of some of his men who had been wounded by shelling. For this act of heroism he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Pearkes served in the army between the wars, and started World War II as the commander of the 2nd Brigade, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada. Later he was promoted to commander of the 1st Canadian Division. At this time George was one of the most experienced and senior officers in the Canadian Army. His strenuous training regime transformed the division from a new volunteer force into an effective fighting unit.

Pearkes was strongly opposed to the Dieppe Raid, and in the end the units for the raid were drawn from the 2nd Canadian Division. He felt that such a large scale raid would probably end badly, and even if it did succeed it wouldn't accomplish much. In part due to this opposition he was relieved of his command a couple of weeks after Dieppe and sent back to Canada.

Pearkes was given command of the army in Western Canada. He held this position until he retired from the army in 1945. After his army career he moved directly in politics. He was elected as the MP for Nanaimo in 1945, and re-elected to island ridings up through the 1958 election. Pearkes served as the Minister of National Defence from 1957 to 1960.



In 1960 Pearkes resigned his seat to become the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. He held this position for an unusually long period of time, finally leaving in 1968. In 1967 he was made a Companion of the Order of Canada.

George Pearkes died in 1984, at the age of 96. Numerous buildings and streets are named after him, including the headquarters of the Department of National Defence in Ottawa.

(Peter Gourlay wrote this article originally for the BC Legislative Library's newsletter and kindly gave us permission to share it with OOTD readers.)

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