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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for May 18th, 2018

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/>

Electric Scotland News

I came across this account today which I haven't seen reported in any of the newspapers so I thought I'd include it here for you to read as it notes how SNP MP's are able to affect purely English laws while the same can't happen in Scotland.

The business of England

On Tuesday in the Commons we were asked to go into English Grand Committee to approve the Rating Bill that has been making its way through Parliament.

This is a modest measure, allowing higher rates to be charged on empty property, and allowing contiguous properties that can be properly considered as one property to be charged tax as one. The measure only applies to England.

Under the partial reforms England gained in the last Parliament, any Bill relating just to England can be debated in an English Grand Committee comprising all the MPs representing English seats, and has to be approved by a majority of English MPs on a vote. This procedure prevents the Union Parliament forcing a new law on England which England does not want.

This falls well short of the powers Scotland enjoys through its own Parliament. Not only can they prevent the UK Parliament passing a law on a devolved matter they do not like, but they can also propose and enact measures which the rest of the UK does not like. In England's case if we want a law but there is no majority in the UK Parliament for it we are prevented from passing it.

On Tuesday the SNP decided to make an issue out of this. They spoke with contradictory intention. They both argued that England should have its own Parliament to settle such matters, and objected strongly to English MPs having a veto over such legislation. They decided to force a debate on the Bill where English MPs saw no need to. The Bill met with general agreement – or lacked any English opponents.

The settlement of the English issue was only ever a partial and I trust temporary one. England should of course have the same right to propose as well as to block on devolved matters, as Scotland enjoys. The modest proposals so far incorporated in Standing Orders does something to address the unfairness in the lop sided devolution settlement Conservative governments inherited from Labour. The SNP did themselves harm by mocking a modest improvement to our constitutional arrangements.

So as you can see from the above the SNP is doing its best to anger the English but I suspect it might end up with a more devolved settlement for England which may well harm Scotland in the long term.

Here is the video introduction to this newsletter...

<https://youtu.be/LhpO7QgAqaw>

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

Note that this is a selection and more can be read in our ScotNews feed on our index page where we list news from the past 1-2 weeks. I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines. I might also add that in newspapers such as the Guardian, Scotsman, Courier, etc. you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish.

Food will be cheaper after Brexit - if we ignore special interests
Those who oppose dropping tariffs on food are simply defending special interests

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/food-will-be-cheaper-after-brexit-if-we-ignore-special-interests/>

Delusional EU chiefs need to wake up and see the warning lights
Some institutions are so intransigent, so inflexible and so bloody-minded that their inability to change, even when faced with immense pressure, elicits a grudging respect.

Read more at:

<http://www.cityam.com/285611/editors-notes-delusional-eu-chiefs-need-wake-up-and-see>

American democracy has faced worse threats than Donald Trump
The golden age of American politics was illiberal, undemocratic, and bloody.

Read more at:

<https://www.vox.com/2018/5/10/17147338/donald-trump-illiberal-undemocratic-elections-politics>

Brexit is a golden economic opportunity for Wales
Wales' 'Dragon economy' outperformed England, Scotland and Northern Ireland in Gross Value Added in 2016 and Cardiff is the UK's fastest growing capital city. Unemployment in Wales is lower than the rest of the UK.

Read more at:

<https://brexitcentral.com/brexit-golden-economic-opportunity-wales/>

The Place That Inspired A Thousand Paintings
The Canadian Rockies

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/storyworks/rocky-mountaineer-hidden-beauty/thousand-paintings-canadian-rockies>

High cost thwarts reform of NHS and social care
The challenges faced by the Scottish Government's flagship reform to integrate health and social services have been exposed in a report identifying multi-million pound financial pressures and shortfalls in services.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/revealed-high-cost-thwarts-reform-of-nhs-and-social-care-1-4738707>

2018 Governor General's Innovation Awards
The Office of the Secretary to the Governor General is pleased to announce the winners of the 2018 Governor General's Innovation Awards (GGIA). These awards recognize and celebrate outstanding Canadian individuals, teams and organizations whose exceptional and transformative work help shape our future and positively impact our quality of life.

Read more at:

<http://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=17102&lan=eng>

100 years of Scotland in pictures
A collection of more than 14,000 photographs capturing a century of life in Scotland is to go on public display.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-44108230>

Study into economic impact and potential of Robert Burns
The Scottish government-funded study is believed to be the first to look at the economic impact of such an icon.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-44106983>

Holyrood vote to refuse consent for Brexit Bill

Theresa May's key Brexit legislation has been rejected by the Scottish Parliament in an unprecedented vote that paves the way for a constitutional crisis.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/rejected-holyrood-vote-to-refuse-consent-for-brexit-bill-1-4739831>

More intellectual rigour and less virtue signalling needed by the SNP government

By Jim Sillars

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read_full=13543

Diabetes blood test could mean end to daily insulin jabs

Doctors in Edinburgh believe a simple blood test they have introduced could allow some Type 1 diabetes patients to come off insulin.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-44144678>

Disinformation is a weapon we should be aware of - not fall for

THERE HAS been quite a bit of coverage of defence issues in the media recently, ranging from the US/UK/France missile strikes on Syria via the Israeli-Iranian exchange of fire over the Golan Heights to the appearance of new and innovative military equipment at Russia's annual May Day parade in Moscow.

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkbusiness/articles.html?read_full=13544

Electric Canadian

Transactions of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers

I discovered a lot of volumes of these transaction which are very detailed and note that they are very popular downloads so assume civil engineers are enjoying the details given in these transactions.

I've added the 1938 volume and will add others each week. You can view these at

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/industrial/index.htm>

Some of the topics discussed include Abstracts of Current Literature, Aggregates at Edmonton, Agricultural Drainage, Agriculture and Engineering, Air Transportation, American Society of Mechanical Engineers - Conference at Toronto, Aviation Radio, Building Code for Canada, Canada Department of National Defence, Canadian Air Transportation, Correspondence, Drainage, The Saskatchewan Agreement, Saskatchewan Takes the Lead, Electrical Service, Engineering, Flood Control, Franklin Memorial, Gas Industry in Canada, Geology of Northern Ontario, Grand River Basins in Ontario, The Importance of Research and Development, International Engineering Congress Glasgow, Northern Wilds, Obituaries, Oxy-Acetylene Cutting Machines, Parking Survey in the Capital City, Power Plants, Railways, Refrigeration and Cold Storage, Safety in Industry, Self Preservation in the Northern Wilds, Ship Construction, Surface Run-Off, Industrial Preparedness in Canada for War, Water Conservation, World Power Conference, etc.

Videos of Canada

Did an update of our Videos of Canada as is usual some of them were no longer available on YouTube and so have replaced these ones.

You can view these at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/videos/index.htm>

Heroines of Canadian History

By W. S. Herrington (1910) (pdf)

You can read this book at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/heroinesofcanada.pdf>

Hearts of Gold Being Chronicles of Heroism in Canadian History

Published by the Ontario Women's Liberal Association (1915) (pdf)

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/heartsofgold.pdf>

Principal Grant of Queens University, Toronto

I added some books and articles about him which you can read at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/principal_gramt.htm

Canadian Botany

Created a page to hold information on this subject which you can find at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/botany/index.htm>

Conrad Black

Spite Over Justice

<http://www.conradblack.com/1391/spite-over-justice>

Why Donald J. Trump is truly a president like no other

<http://www.conradblack.com/1392/why-donald-j-trump-is-truly-a-president-like-no>

Trump: The Non-Proliferation President

<http://www.conradblack.com/1393/trump-the-non-proliferation-president>

Electric Scotland

Commonwealth of Australia

Historical Records of Australia published in 1914 in 19 volumes. Intending to put up 1 volume a week until complete.

Added Volume 8 - July, 1813 - December, 1815. In here we learn of Lachlan Macquarie and I have also added a book about him to the page.

You can get to this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/australia/commonwealth.htm>

Tracks of M'Kinlay and Party Across Australia

By John Davis, one of the Expedition, edited from Mr. Davis's Manuscript Journal with an Introductory view of the recent Australian Explorations of McDougall Stuart, Burke and Wills, Landsborough, etc. by William Westgarth (1863) (pdf)

You can read this at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/australia/Tracks_of_McKinlay_and_Party_Across_Australia.pdf

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in Section 2 of the June 2018 edition which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

The Very Reverend Principal Hugh Watt

Moderator of the Church of Scotland and you can read about him at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/men/watt_hugh.htm

Rev. Dr. Thomas Maxwell

President of the Scottish Church History Society and I added a wee bio of him at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/maxwell_thomas.htm

John Thomson, Photographer

Added this person to our Significant Scots section and included some of his photographs.

You can read about him at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/men/thomson_john2.htm

General Alexander Mackenzie Fraser

Found this article by chance on the Scottish Golf history web site which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/dtog/mackenzie-fraser.html>

Ultonian Hero Balads

Collected in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland. Arranged; Corrected Metrically and Orthographically; and Translated into English by Hector MacLeans, M.A.I. under the Auspices of the Islay Association (1892) (pdf)

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/gaelic/ultonian.pdf>

Reminiscences of Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada
Edited by George Rothwell Brown (1908) (pdf). A Scots decedent.

I really enjoyed reading this book and hope you do also and you can get to it at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/williamstewart.pdf>

And the Introduction to it is the story for this week for which see below...

The Story

Reading the Introduction in this book made me want to read more so thought I'd make this the story for this week.

Reminiscences of Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada

When one has reached the age of eighty-three years, and is rounding out with honor and dignity a career extending over three generations, marked not only by the picturesque adventures of youth, but by the signal services of a statesman to his country in maturity, it becomes at once his privilege and his duty to tell the story of his life. It is a rare combination—a story worth telling and the courage to tell it without prejudice. With the exception of General Grant, I do not believe a man has appeared in public life during the past half century, so well equipped to leave to posterity a record of great value as is William M. Stewart, of whose long span the twenty-nine years spent in the Senate of the United States, while perhaps the most important, were by no means the most interesting.

Here is a man, who, on the score of seniority, has the right to be heard. Were he an unschooled farmer he would have by virtue of his gray hair, a story of pregnant interest, rich with the experience and philosophy of life. But since he is one of the most brilliant and accomplished men of his time, and one whose influence has helped to shape the destinies of the Republic, his prerogative must be unquestioned. Endowed with a perfect physique, enduring health, and tremendous bodily strength, he has been able to defy the enemy which has overcome, one by one, all the associates of his generation, while preserving in full the power and force of his great intellectuality.

William M. Stewart took his seat in the United States Senate February 1, 1865, when Nevada, the State of his adoption, and which he made his own so completely that for years he held it in the hollow of his hand, was admitted into the Union. He was then about forty years of age. At that time he must have been a Hercules. At eighty-three he is as straight as a juniper, as hard as a blacksmith, as keen of eye as an eagle, and he has not lost one inch in height since that day, forty-three years ago, he stood before Hannibal Hamlin to take the oath of office, a commanding picture of magnificent manhood.

Born in a log cabin in a wilderness, of old Scots Colonial stock, at the age of ten he began the battle of life, and did a man's work, and, inured by privations and hardships, he laid the foundation of that superb animalism which, in later years, when a miner with pick and shovel in the gold diggings of California, was to make him a master of men in an environment in which the weakling went down, the average had no chance, and only the fittest could survive.

Personal bravery played a leading part in his success. The same audacity and courage with which he met the tribulations of the poor farm boy, conquered unruly bullies as a country schoolmaster, plodded his weary way toward education, and, penniless, and broken with fever, began the search for gold in an alien land, stood by him throughout life. On one occasion his entire fortune of half a million dollars was swept away in a flood. There could be nothing more typically American than the fortitude with which he faced this catastrophe. Before the debris of his mining plant had vanished in the boiling river, he had started, on foot, on a journey of three hundred miles across the Sierra Nevada range, while there raged one of the most appalling storms in the history of California. His course was beset by all the dangers of landslides and swollen streams. He reached San Francisco, where, his only security his good name and a flooded mine, he borrowed the money to start life anew. Then he retraced that perilous trail, returned to his camp, met all his obligations, and paid his men, before his enemies, who would have been glad to ruin him, had themselves recovered from the effects of the great disaster.

Senator Stewart has always been a man of restless energy. He inherited a splendid mind, and, even as a boy, he had a thirst for knowledge, a thirst which has never been slaked. At eighty-three he is the same serious student as at thirteen, when he left his father's roof to seek employment as a woodchopper, that he might earn the money to go to school. At twenty-two he was in Yale, and when, for the time being, he abandoned books to go to California in '49, encountering hardships no college boy of to-day would

undergo, he took his place as leader among his associates, not only because of the sinew of his mighty right arm, but because of his native shrewdness, intelligence, and education.

In the mad scramble for wealth in the treasure vaults of El Dorado, young Stewart was in the fore, and obtained his share. To-day he might be a money-hoarding, cold-blooded pirate of high finance, for in him the money-making instinct is highly developed. But the man is at heart a romantic adventurer; he plays the game of speculation for the game itself, and not for the spoils; his pleasure is not gold, but the getting of it. Probably no man in the United States has won and lost more fortunes than William M. Stewart. Had he been less of a Robinson Crusoe, to-day he might be a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, with a longer term of service to his credit than any man has had. In 1871 President Grant tendered him an appointment to that Bench, which he declined. He preferred the greater action and hazard which went with the toga of a Senator and the overalls of a miner. But had he accepted, his reputation as a lawyer could not have been increased, although he would have been an honor to that great tribunal. When he came to Washington he had to his fame not only success in the most notable litigations in the West, but the distinction of being the author of the mining laws of the land, laws which he framed so ably that they stand, even now, a monument to legal genius of which any man well might boast.

The years spent in the Golden West were golden years, indeed. Many years after his arrival in the promised land—years during which he carried his life in his hands with reckless abandon; years during which he fought Indians, battled with bandits, organized and enforced rude frontier justice, playing a man's part in a man's life—many years after he had planted his pick in Grizzly Ditch, Mark Twain and Bret Harte, called "pioneers," appeared upon the scene, and wrote the stories this blue-eyed, iron-fisted, fearless giant helped enact.

I seem to see him now, with a derringer in each hand, cowing the bully of the camp, a man who had sixteen notches in the handle of his "gun," and was generally reputed to be a stranger to fear. Many other men, since then, including one who had been a President of the United States, have quailed under the lightning flash from Stewart's eye. It is a mild blue eye when he is at peace with the world, an eye that makes children smile, and lift up their arms to him; but when his shaggy brows are in a frown,—well the slayer of those sixteen men laughed away the pistols with a jest, and said: "I like your kind; have a drink!"

Nevada joined the Sisterhood long before her rightful turn because Northern leaders saw that her votes would be required in the adoption of Constitutional amendments to be proposed when the War of Secession was at an end. William M. Stewart, politician as well as statesman, had been in the thick of Territorial disputes, and, when another Star was called to the Blue, he came to Washington, her first Senator, to pin it there.

It is possible that he did not find Washington, in 1865, materially different from California in 1850. As the bitter struggle for riches in the golden gullies had smelted out only men of might, and strength, and determination, so had the crisis in the Nation's affairs brought to the surface in the Capital the ablest minds of the time. Young Stewart, having taken his seat, found himself removed from an atmosphere of primitive contention, to a condition akin to it, a condition growing out of the war. In a short time, so well did he conduct himself, and with so fine a skill and comprehension did he enter into the spirit of his surroundings, he found himself in a conspicuous position, similar to that he had always occupied, whether on the farm, in the schoolroom, in the mining camp, or in the court-house.

Some of the greatest men the Republic has produced were his playfellows in the Senate, playfellows in a great game with Destiny, and when he coped with them, he found himself the peer of all, the superior of many. Vice-President Hamlin, Buckalew, Cowan, Foot, Rev-erdy Johnson, John P. Hale, John Sherman, Thomas A. Hendricks, Benjamin F. Wade, William Pitt Fessenden, these were the men grouped about him in that historic forum—the War Senate.

Throughout the closing days of the War, and during the frightful period of Reconstruction, Senator Stewart was the consistent friend of the South, although himself a strong Union man. Perhaps his most signal contribution in that period was the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, of which he is the author. Hardly less notable, later on, was his defeat of the Force Bill.

Now that he has come to write of his colleagues, all of whom have long since passed away, who will begrudge him consent to paint them as they were, not as new generations have been taught to regard them? If Andrew Johnson was a drunkard, and broke his pledged word at a critical time, is it not just the world should see him in his moral nakedness? If Charles Sumner was a vain, petulant, over-grown boy, an inconsequential busy-body clothed in pompous impotency, disgraced by his fellow Republicans for his discourtesy, even treachery, to the President of the United States, why should not his true character be laid bare, and the truth about him told, in the interest of history?

Senator Stewart has no apologies to make. He has told the truth as he has seen it, and he has told it not for the love of hitting every head in sight, but because it is his privilege to tell the truth, the honored privilege of honored age. A blow with a cudgel, here and there, where a good lick is richly deserved, but for the greater part of the journey—for the greater part of the book, from cover to cover,—smiles and good nature. Smiles and good nature.—The story of a successful life, a life of wide and enduring influence.

George Rothwell Brown.

Washington, D. C., March 27, 1908.

And that's it for this week and hope you have a great weekend.

Alastair