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Calendar Reform

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CALENDAR REFORM

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WHAT is a calendar? We speak of a university calendar, a teachers' calendar, meaning thereby a program or plan of procedure during a coming period of time. Ordinarily a calendar is understood to be an orderly arrangement of the units of time; or, to be more specific our calendar is the arrangement of the days of the year according to months and weeks. Our calendar is of Roman origin. The very word calendar comes from the Latin name for the first day of each month; and the names of our months are Latin.

When Julius Caesar became the uncrowned ruler of Rome, he instituted a number of necessary and beneficent reforms, one of which continues to attract our attention daily, and that is the calendar reform. Of course we now use the Gregorian calendar, but what is that but the calendar of Julius amended? To put an end to the confusion under the old Roman calendar, Caesar fixed the length of the year at $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, and decreed that every 4th year should have 366 days.

Since the exact length of the solar year is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 46 seconds, or not quite $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, this method of intercalation pushed the 1st of January farther and farther into the next year. The error amounts to one day in 128 years or 3 days in about 400 years.

When in 1582 under Pope Gregory XIII, the correction was made, the error had grown to ten days. It was decreed that in that year ten days be suppressed by calling October 5th the 15th day of October, that the Julian intercalation be continued, provided, however, that the century years (except those that are multiples of 400), be common years. Now this will correct the calendar for many centuries but the slight error that exists will grow and equal a day in nearly 4000 years; so as a further improvement, the century years divisible by 4000 are to be common years. Thus time is arranged for thousands of years ahead, and we might leave further calendar troubles to future races if any should still exist when this arrangement runs out.

How much better this is than the Julian calendar is plain, when you consider that in Greek Catholic countries, where the

Julian calendar was continued, the dates and the seasons do not exactly correspond, though this is not so pronounced as in the pre-Julian days. How simple the Gregorian calendar is can be shown by comparing it with the very intricate calendars of the Jews and of the Mohammedans. And yet many are dissatisfied with the Gregorian calendar.

REFORMS OF THE CALENDAR PROPOSED BY THE FRENCH REVOLUTION-ISTS

The dissatisfaction took concrete and vehement form during the early days of the French Revolution. This is not to be wondered at when one considers that a frenzy for change and the determination to consign to oblivion the old regime had seized the French. No better means could be found for breaking with the memories of the past, than a change of calendar; and where everything was to be new and improved, there was the chance of correcting flaws which had not escaped their notice.

The calendar reported by the commission was revolutionary indeed. Sept. 22, 1792, the day on which the republic had been proclaimed was the beginning of the new era, the first day of the year I. There were twelve months of 30 days each; this would give 360 days; the remaining 5 days of common years and 6 days of leap years were added to the last month. The months were divided into 4 groups; the fall, winter, spring and summer quarters; and the months were renamed to correspond to the season. Each month was divided into three parts of ten days each; each part was called a "decade" and the days were numbered: *Primidi*, *Duodi*, etc.

However, it was found to be a great inconvenience to have a calendar different from all the rest of the world, so, on Jan. 1, 1806, France returned to the use of the Gregorian calendar. Some time before this, they had discarded the 10 day period and returned to the 7 day week. In 1871, during the short rule of the Communards, an attempt was made to revive the revolutionary calendar; and since then a number of suggestions for calendar betterment have emanated from France.

Had the earth been so accommodating as to revolve about the sun once in exactly 364 days, a year of 13 months each with 4 seven-day weeks would fit admirably; or if for the sake of quarters, the 12 month arrangement were to be preferred, we might have 4 quarters each with 3 months (2 with 30 days, 1 with 31 days); there would be advantages and disadvantages in each scheme. However, all this is but an idle dream of what might

have been, for the solar year is made up of a number of days which is mixed, and the whole part is exactly divisible only by 5. Two points especially complained of in our calendar are: 1st, the inequality of the months, and 2nd, the disagreement of the days of the year and the days of the week. Another inconvenience (not inherent in the calendar, however) is the movable church holidays, i. e., Easter and the church festivals dependent on it.

FURTHER DESIRABLE REFORMS

So we may speak of the desirable reforms: the reform of the month, the reform of the week and Easter reform. It is by no means necessary that all the reforms be adopted at the same time, although that might be the more rational way.

France with its revolutionary calendar has blazed the way. We might reasonably expect something of calendar reform to emanate from our country because we are usually less conservative than people in the Old World, and less hampered by tradition. Indeed, in the last half of 1910 and the first half of 1911, a number of projects for the improvement of the calendar appeared in *Science*. A number of minds ran in similar channels, so some of the schemes differed only in minor details; hence it will suffice to outline three representative schemes.

SUGGESTED CHANGES

One contributor considered the shortness of February the chief objection to our calendar, and suggested the following: 5 months (January, June, July, August and December) with 31 days each, or 155 days; the remaining seven months to have 30 days each or 210 days; February to have 31 days in leap years.

T. C. Chamberlin proposed the following divisions of the year: (a) 4 quarters corresponding measurably to the seasons; (b) 12 months (of 28 days or 4 weeks) in groups of 3, terminated by a single closing week, all months to begin on a Monday; (c) 52 weeks of 7 days each, all beginning with Monday, 48 weeks in groups of 4; the 13th week called Easter week for Easter holidays, the 26th or Julian week for commencements, the 39th or Gregorian week for harvest home, fairs, etc., the 52nd or Christmas week for Christmas celebration; (d) the odd 365th day to be *dies non* as far as month and week are concerned placed at the end of the year as New Year day; likewise the 366th or Leap Day.

Cyril G. Hopkins suggested assigning to March, June, September and December 5 weeks of 7 days each and giving to each

of the remaining months 4 weeks of 7 days each. Every 5th year a leap week is to be added to December, to be omitted each 40th year save the tenth and each 20,000th year save the 10th, starting with the Christian era. Thus there would be no leap week in 1960, 2040, 2080, etc., but there would be one in 2000, 2400, 2800, etc., and again there would be no leap week in 20,000, 40,000, 60,000, etc., but there would be one in 200,000, 400,000, 600,000, etc. He further suggests, (what sounds strangely millennial in these days of trouble), that this reformed calendar be called Peace Calendar (marked P. C., to distinguish dates from O. S. and N. S.), and that its inauguration mark the beginning of permanent peace among civilized nations.

You will note that this calendar corrects better than the Gregorian; but it is not clear why the Leap Week should be added to a long month like December, except that this is the end of the year; custom would suggest adding one week to February, for it certainly would seem less peculiar to write Feb. 35th than Dec. 42.

Prof. Chamberlin says: "The several suggestions awaken the hope that a calendar can be contrived which will be much superior to the present one, and which at the same time will not encounter so much prejudice and human inertia as to be fatal to its adoption at an early date. It is, however, of the first importance, that the new calendar be so well matured before its adoption is seriously urged, that it will not itself need to be laid aside for something better by the time it has fairly come into use." Here we have the Scylla and Charybis of calendar reform, and the suggestions just given are good illustrations: the first does not go far enough, the other two probably go too far. If the improvement is slight, it might fairly be asked, Why make a change? If the proposed change is radical, the opposition to it will be hard to overcome. Few of the more strenuous reformers seem to realize how great is the mass of conservatism arrayed against them. Why not ask whether or not the advantages gained would be at all comparable to the trouble and inconvenience caused? Bear in mind the slowness with which the Gregorian calendar was adopted, and the fact that it is still resisted in Greek Catholic countries. Some who assert that a simplified calendar is not wanted should be reminded of the comfortable feeling of the public in the March of common years because the days of the month fall on the same week days as in February.

Some are opposed to the idea of a day outside of the week and month, although the reformers are usually agreed that it should be observed as a legal holiday. For some time through-

out the Roman Empire the odd day in leap years was treated as a literal (not merely legal) *dies non*, being regarded as part of the day preceding, i. e., they made one day 48 hours in length. What was done once in four years in imperial Rome is done daily by travelers crossing the international date line from West to East: they count the same date twice. The U. S. Senate has a very simple way for prolonging a day: when in protracted session, the coming of the next day is put off by turning the hands of the senate clock back.

If we dropped our fondness for Pagan week day names and simply numbered the days of the week as the ancient Hebrews, the Quakers and the French Revolutionists did, and as some Slavic people still do, and as many do with months (business letters call the 15th of March 3/15), we might have one week in 52 with an 8th day.

Again and again calendar reformers must be reminded that a small change even if free from objections may not have behind it the driving force necessary to secure its adoption, while in case of a great change, religious scruples, tradition and custom block the way.

CALENDAR CHANGES PROPOSED IN ENGLAND

In 1911 a reform project which had been agitated on the continent of Europe for fully a quarter of a century and which avoided both extremes came up for discussion in England. In that year Mr. Robert Pearce presented to Parliament a calendar reform bill. According to this the first day of the year, New Year's Day, was outside of the week and month; similarly Leap Day was placed between June and July. The 364 days left were divided into 4 quarters of 91 days, each quarter was sub-divided into 3 months of respectively 30, 30, 31 days. The 1st of January, always on Monday, gives 26 week days each month and 5 Sundays in the longer months. Every calendar date corresponds to a particular day of the week and the calendar is fixed. Here is this perpetual calendar:

	January April July October					February May August November					March June September December				
	Non week day before Jan. & July														
Monday	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	
Tuesday	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	
Wednesday	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	
Thursday	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	
Friday	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
Saturday	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
Sunday	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31

The same year a second bill was presented, this time by Sir Henry Dalziel. This differed from the Pearce bill in another division of the quarters. Each quarter consisted of 3 months with the first and second of 28 days and the third of 35 days; thus each month contained an exact number of weeks and began with a Sunday. The scheme given below shows that this gives a symmetrical and simple calendar; but the inequality of the months would certainly not be endorsed by the business world.

	January April July October				February May August November				March June September December			
Non week day before Jan. & July												
Sunday	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22 29
Monday	2	9	16	23	2	9	16	23	2	9	16	23 30
Tuesday	3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24 31
Wednesday	4	11	18	25	4	11	18	25	4	11	18	25 32
Thursday	5	12	19	26	5	12	19	26	5	12	19	26 33
Friday	6	13	20	27	6	13	20	27	6	13	20	27 34
Saturday	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28 35

Both of these schemes are based on the Gregorian calendar, so in their adoption no scientific point would be involved, and the convenience and feeling of the public alone would be concerned. An improvement of the Dalziel project would be to break with the Gregorian method, discard the *dies non*, and base it on Prof. Hopkins's scheme.

IS CALENDAR REFORM DESIRED?

But who wants the reform? Easter reform is favored by many but that could be had without making any other change. Up to the present, the question of reform is almost wholly academic; and the small circle of scientists bent on reform is not at all agreed as to the kind of change. In some parts of the world a calendar union is more necessary than a calendar improvement. A merchant in Cairo, Egypt, may have dealings with users of the Coptic, the Jewish, the Mohammedan, the Julian, and the Gregorian calendars; and such a person must find this condition of things unfortunate. In the United States we usually hear of no calendars but the Gregorian and the Jewish; the Jews, however, use their calendar only for determining their religious holidays, and that is strictly their own concern; for worldly or business matters, they use the calendar reformed by a Pope. This is both sensible and tolerant and conveys a hint that we might have a simplified calendar the world over for general use, and let churches for their holidays use what calendars they please. The calendar is a question of science, not of religion; for the day is long past when a priesthood was the repository of all learning

and science. Meanwhile the public at large is apathetic to a change; most people are satisfied with looking at wall and desk calendars furnished free by stationers, publishers, insurance and railway companies and other business concerns whose managers consider this a good means of advertising. Then why talk of calendar improvement at present? Because those favoring it hope that in the reconstruction which must follow this terrible war, one reform more or less would make little difference, and that therefore calendar reform has just now a better chance of success than in times of prolonged peace.

TEACHING COMMERCIAL GEOGRAPHY

By CHARLES A. DALY

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THERE have appeared in the *Journal of Geography* from time to time, excellent articles pertaining to Commercial Geography. In the following I intend to bring together the various phases of the subject. It is needless to state that no aspect of the work will be dealt with in an exhaustive manner, but I hope that parts of it may be suggestive to some of my fellow teachers. Then again it may be claimed that geography in most high schools is not given enough time to warrant the expenditure of labor and money necessary to carry on a course of this kind. My only reply to this is that it seems to me it should be, and I am hoping this article may have a little influence toward making the customary six months geography course, for a few students, a year or two year course for all, with a recognized place for the subject among high school departments.

I shall consider the discussion under two headings: (a) Equipment; (b) Teacher. The first will be divided into eight parts: 1. Textbook. 2. Laboratory. 3. Laboratory manual. 4. Maps, globes, and models. 5. Moving pictures, lantern slides, and opaque projection work. 6. Museum. 7. Library. 8. Visiting or field work.

THE TEXT BOOK

The text book is placed first. However, you will notice that it is but one of the eight topics of part (a), and it seems to me that its importance bears just about that relationship to the subject as a whole. It is a great pity that in many schools it is made the entire subject. We are living in a bookish age; our ideas and conclusions are too often little more than the ideas and conclusions of the authors of the books we read. The text book how-