THE GUARDIAN

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CIRCULATION
"Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew"

"The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink".

CHARLOTTETOWN TUESDAY, OCT. 27, 1953

Strike Postponed

Approval will be general at the decision of the local branch of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers to postpone strike action against the Island Telephone Company. The union has already received a favorable decision by arbitrators in their dispute. It was the opinion of the Public Utilities Commission that it still had the responsibility of deciding whether the increase recommended was warranted. That opinion has been confirmed by recent legislation.

That it would have been a mistake to strike against the company while the company was prevented by the supervisory commission from immediately granting the increase is obvious but it takes cool heads and good will sometimes to do the right thing even when its advantage can be demonstrated. The Electrical Workers have shown that they have a sense of responsibility. At the same time they make it quite clear that they reserve the right to strike should they be dissatisfied with conditions after the ruling of the Public Utilities Commission.

One feature of the law here seems to be unique. The question of wages and working conditions must be argued before the same authority as those of rates charged to the public by the various utilities. Probably nowhere else is there such a direct link between the two sides of public utility operation.

You Can't Win

From out of the Tennessee hills comes this remarkable story of a fool saved from his own folly. The New York Times reports that an exceedingly conscientious and pious farmer, looking for a wife, turned away from all the gentle-natured, complaisant maidens of the countryside and took the meanest and most contentious woman he could find.

Asked to explain his peculiar choice, the religious farmer said that life was running too smoothly for him and he felt that he needed to have some cross to bear, something that would act as a scourge to keep him humble and contrite. A shrewish wife, he thought would supply the deficiency.

But the farmer reckoned not with the stubborness of woman-kind. His wife learned his odd reason for marrying her and, greatly offended, decided to revenge herself upon her humbling mate. She accordingly became the most agreeable and dutiful of all wives.

"No man can use me for a pack horse to carry him into heaven," she declared.

Farmers And Bees

A group of apiarists in New York State are suing the Department of Agriculture for unstated damages because the department has been spraying the land with D. D. T. in a campaign against tent caterpillars and gypsy moths, the result being that their colonies of bees have been destroyed or weakened.

Nearly everyone likes honey and knows that it is manufactured by bees, but, says the St. Thomas Times-Journal, it is not sufficiently realized that honey bees play a vital part in food production. If these bees became extinct there would be very little beef or pork, and nearly all vegetables would disappear. Wind plays some part in the pollination of the fodder animals eat and in the growth of legumes, but the main source of pollination is the bee. Were it not for this, our diet would have to consist of the kind of food the people of China have where there are no bees—rice, millet, fish and fowl. Nature co-operates by making flowers colorful or perfumed, thereby attracting bees to the ovules.

Mayor Houde On Conscription

The Toronto Star sees it as a sign of increasing national unity that Mayor Camillien Houde of Montreal is ready to support conscription should it be needed in a fight against Communism. Compulsory military overseas service has long been one of the chief divisive issues between Quebec and the rest of the Dominion. Mayor Houde told the Canadian Club in London, Ontario, that in the event of a conflict with Communist nations, he was "prepared to wage a very long fight to help conscription in Quebec." This is taken as indicating progress in the improvement of relations between French-Canadian citizens and those of British descent.

Mayor Houde's willingness to support conscription, the Star points out, is limited in two respects. He would back it only "if needed": In this his view does not differ materially from that of the majority of English-speaking Canadians. He pledges himself to support such a policy only in a war against Communism.

Because of his outspoken opposition to national registration and conscription for service within Canada, Mayor Houde was interned during the last war. His new outlook is seen as representing a distinct reversal of thinking. An almost perennial mayor of Montreal for the last 25 years, and MP for Montreal Papineau in the last parliament, Mayor Houde must be regarded as a spokesman for Quebec French-Canadian opinion. In that sense, as the Star points to his pronouncement as significant.

EDITORIAL NOTES

New England fishermen have not yet realized that the regular supply of fresh fillets from this country is creating a new and very wide market for fish products. Thinking in terms of a small and rigid market they are anxious to exclude competition.

* * *

Lascelles Abercrombie, English poet and professor of English literature, died this date 1938. His poetry is complex and generally dramatic in form. It expresses a metaphysical sense of life, with something of the energy of life itself. "Deborah" is a tragedy of an attempt to shape life which fails. "Phoenix" expresses the shock of the actual world coming upon a group of romantics.

* * *

Charges that Canadian schools have included too many "frills" such as swimming pools are repudiated by the Canadian Education Association, backed by the result of a survey made by that organization. It was found that out of some thirty thousand elementary and secondary schools in Canada only 36 have swimming pools, one of them in a school for handicapped children.

* * *

There are many reasons given for the non-supply of goods or services. In this part of the world the explanation is apt to be that there is not sufficient demand for the article or service in question. It is otherwise at Paddington Station of the nationalized British railways, according to the Letter Review. There an attendant explained that waffles are no longer served because, "Too many people wanted them."

* * *

How a poet came to be is described by James Kirkup, the poet, speaking in a BBC programme. "I remember that as a child I wanted to be a great film star, then a ventriloquist, an actor, an explorer and a musician. None of these ambitions were realised. Then one evening I suddenly wrote a long piece of blank verse, and I decided to be a poet. It had so many advantages: I needed no expensive equipment, no private lessons, and I could do it sitting down."

* * *

Dr. Errol S. Notting, V.S., B.V.Sc., D.V.M., whose death occurred yesterday, was well and favourably known throughout the Province. For over 30 years he served with the Health of Animals Division, Department of Agriculture, retiring as senior officer two years ago. However his services were much in demand and he carried on a small private animal practice. He served in the First Great War and rose to the rank of major. His passing will be learned with deep regret and sympathy extended the family.

* * *

More emphasis on leadership training programs and membership training were the highlights of a fall planning conference of the Junior Chamber of Commerce held in Fredericton. It was also decided to break the Maritime region into geographical divisions to foster co-operation of neighboring groups. This appears a logical move for it is only through co-operation and sympathetic understanding of one another's problems that the Maritimes can fully take advantage of the claim that the "20th century belongs to Canada".

* * *

The lack of good roads to foster commercial communications is not peculiar to a young country like Canada. Only recently angry industrialists were prodding the government to get Britain's roads in order. The campaigners found a powerful new ally in the Duke of Edinburgh who stated at a London motor show: "Our roads are among the world's most congested and confused. Congested roads are not only a danger to life and limb—they are slowly stifling commercial communications." All this serves to point up the fact that planners of our main arteries should be men of vision and that construction should be such as to meet problems not immediately apparent in our own age.

Saying It With Flowers

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.

FREEDOM and CAPTIVITY

Sir,—Maybe this business of first oppressing children in class and then easing up on them bit by bit as recommended by a recent correspondent works. It doesn't necessarily follow that it is good for anyone other than the teacher.

In the fashion prescribed a child may well be prepared for a totalitarian state. First, complete subjugation. Then a doling out of little freedoms which belonged to him from the beginning, but having been forgotton are readily accepted as "gifts". The benevolent dictator hands out more rewards to those who show loyalty. And so it goes.

The wild little animal soon gets in the habit of captivity. Even when offered freedom he may stay around by choice. Pity the creature, with no fight left, should he have to return to an earlier environment and enter the struggle to exist.

As the human becomes an adult he is let out of the cage and must set his course. If he has the inclination, he can keep on a "safe" path through life, allowing himself to be caught and tamed, joining a submissive and colourless mass blindly following whatever voice of authority there be.

Please don't think I have anything against a teacher keeping a jump ahead of his class. But if more children read the Public Forum they would be a lot smarter than from reading comic books.

I am, Sir, etc.
"GASTRIC"

The Poet's Corner

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN

"Yes, sir, his looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
An old farmer.
Everything was all right, you know.
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all—
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked:
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful;
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their own ways.
While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, 'You look nice in here.'
Praise us up, you know.
And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—
And he'd talk so good to 'em — so close—
That's why I call him a farmer.
I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right, you understand,
It's just — well, I was a farmer—
And he was my neighbour, anybody's neighbour.
I guess even you young folks would a' liked him."

—Witter Bynner.

The Age Old Story

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

Notes By The Way

The way things are shaping up in Canada we've got to get more schools for less money.
—Farmer's Advocate

In the past husbands and wives have used the epitaphs to record private opinions of their marriage partner which they dared not express in life. Friends have recorded for posterity the failings of the departed, while others, lacking a sense of the English language, have created unconscious humour in epitaph form. One cannot regret the passing of such epitaphs as: "He was always so neat and clean: He served at sea in a submarine," which spring, no doubt, from a genuine desire to pay tribute to the virtue and courage of a departed relative, but which, in later years, are the subject of unfortunate ridicule.
—Hamilton Spectator

Alfons Seidenham of Munich is credited with having dreamed up a novel device to cut down drunken driving. The gadget consists of an alcohol meter attached to the dashboard of a car and wired into the electrical system. Before a driver is able to start his car, he must breathe into the meter. If his breath is so powerful with alcohol that the meter is violently activated, the car will not start. If the meter registers only a mild degree of alcohol, the car will start but the gadget will keep the car from going more than 35 miles an hour. The invention seems to be pretty good. But we wonder if it would be sharp enough to do its job in spite of chlorophyll pills, and the more ancient camouflage of cloves or the more desperate one of onions.
—Winnipeg Tribune

Maybe "Dominion" is out of fashion; maybe "Royal" is out of fashion. But is "Canadian?" The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation seems to think so. Except at starting-up time in the morning and shutting-down time at night, it now announces itself simply by "This is the C.B.C."—a set of initials which already stand for among other things, Canadian Bread Company and Canadian Business College and which could just as easily stand for Consolidated Broadcasters of Chicago.

The C. B. C.'s shyness about indentity might not be so irritating if the material between station-breaks were readily indentifiable as Canadian. But it seems inexcusable when the theme song of the show immediately preceding the national news—a show broadcast from the capital of Canada, no less—is "Take Me Back To Colorado."
—Hamilton Spectator

—There is something particularly heart-warming in a news item from Transcona telling how fellow-workers rallied to the aid of a C. N. R. shopman who was stricken with polio last July. Mike Gennick was building a new home for his wife and young daughter when afflicted. His friends not only raised the money to purchase materials but in their spare time completed the four-room home. The house-warming will have to be delayed, however, Mike as yet can only remain out of an iron lung for three minutes daily, but there is an encouraging report that he is steadily improving.
—Winnipeg Tribune

Old Charlottetown

(And P. E. I.)

NEWSPAPER ITEMS

From The Islander, Sept. 23, 1864:

We have not, for many years, been blessed with such a harvest as we are now gathering. It is computed that the yield of wheat and oats is at least one-fourth, if not one-fifth, in excess of last year, and the quantity sown was unusually large. The potato crop also promises well.

We are pleased to report that the Normal School notwithstanding the efforts in certain quarters to cast odium upon it, fully retains its popularity. The number of students preparing themselves for the office of teacher is 27, and there are upwards of 26 others attending Mr. Webster's department, besides 48 under Miss MacKinnon's care, making the total number of pupils in attendance about 100.

We are glad to learn that the smallpox patients at Long Creek are progressing favorably. McLean's house—converted into an hospital—being considered too close to the highway, a temporary building has been erected on the rear of MacConnell's farm. Every precaution has been taken, and no expense spared to prevent the spread of the disease, and we hope with success.

A branch of the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company has just been established in Charlottetown. Every information will be given to parties desirous of insuring, by G. W. DeBlois, Esq., agent, at his office, west end of Grafton Street.

It was rumored in town yesterday that a Confederate privateer was lying in the harbour of Pugwash, Nova Scotia. We are inclined to disbelieve the statement, as all sorts of rumours are constantly afloat relative to American affairs.

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The Passing Scene

By Observer

ME FIRST

A traffic expert says that the chief cause of road accidents is the "me first" attitude of drivers. Everybody wants the right of way and regards the highway as having been built for his personal convenience.

Here I recall a lecture on "Road Behaviour" to which I listened in a big American city some seven or eight years ago. The speaker, a well known psychologist, remarked that in his opinion "95 out of every 100 "normal" drivers would deliberately kill someone on the highway if they were sure that they themselves would suffer no harm and get away with it." The 5% "abnormal" drivers were the ones who exercised care and caution.

* * *

His reasoning was a bit subtle and complex, as psychological arguments are apt to be, but the gist of his thesis was that once a man (or woman) got behind a wheel he was almost certain to revert to savagery. When a questioner wanted to know what he would suggest as a remedy he replied (partly facetiously, no doubt): "Allow no one to drive except those who are in the fifty to sixty age group. Before fifty they are too young to be well mannered and after sixty they are too old." (Incidentally, another question brought out the information that the lecturer himself had just turned 50.)

To tell the truth I was a little suprised at the 50-60 reference, for it is pretty generally supposed that it is when he is in that general area a man may be expected to do unusually foolish things. Like smoking before breakfast, for example, or burning the candle at both ends.

* * *

There is no doubt that this "me first" attitude is responsible for a lot of trouble besides road accidents. Indeed, it would be difficult to think of anything more troublesome in the many relationships in which human beings are involved.

The fact of the matter is that there is a trace of selfishness in us all. Some have more of it than others and some, by various disciplinary measures, have been able to bring it more or less under control. But it is never entirely eradicated and it is likely to come to the fore at any moment.

Sometimes it becomes extraordinarily bold and masquerades under the guise of benevolence. It is amazing the many apparently benevolent contributions of one kind and another which are really made in the interests of self. The many plaques and other such advertisments of generosity which may be seen in various places provide evidence of that. In this connection two lines written by Pope are worth repeating:

"Who builds a Church to God and not to fame
Will never mark the marble with his name."

* * *

Unlike a lot of other traits, bias towards self does not have to be cultivated. It comes ready made in somewhat the same manner as freckles though, of course, it is much more democratic than the latter. I do not claim any great knowledge in child psychology, but I have had enough to do with children in a professional way to conclude that selfishness is one of their innate characteristics. It does not always do harm and sometimes it adds an extra touch of lovableness. Just the same, those kindly aunts and grandmothers who speak of some particular child as being "utterly unselfish" are more obviously charitable than realistic in their appraisal.

Children have more talents in the art of diplomacy than are generally recognized and the younger they are the more gifted in this respect they are likely to be. It is not at all difficult for a five year old to make self interest look like altruism, much to the confusion of his doting relatives. They can't help it, of course, any more than the relatively few can help having freckles.

* * *

In case any of my readers should be ready by now to put me down as a virtual child traducer, I hasten to suggest that selfishness is not, in itself, an undesirable trait. Indeed, without it a child would be sorely handicapped from the day fo birth. Self interest is akin to self preservation which is generally allowed to be the "first law of nature." And no less an authority than Shakespeare stated that "self-love is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting."

Self-confidence is another connecting link with self-interest, and who will say that self-confidence is not a good thing to possess? The plain fact is that in the world as it is, and as it is likely to remain for some little time yet, a certain measure of self interest is essential to good social integration. No one could contribute much to the general welfare who had no mind to look out for the things that concern himself. The Golden Rule itself, which almost everybody is willing to accept as a reasonable standard of conduct, is not anti-self. It simply combines self interest with the common good.

The trouble starts when self interest gets out of control and threatens the common good, when the "I" is glorified and the "We" is neglected. That is, essentially, the problem of human behaviour as it applies to social relationships, political questions, issues of war and peace, and everything else where two or more persons are concerned — including automobile traffic.

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