

THE GUARDIAN

Authorized as Second Class Mail Post Office Department, Ottawa. The Island Guardian Publishing Co. Editor and Managing Director, Ian A. Burnett, Associate Editor, Frank Walker. CIRCULATION "Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew" "The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink". CHARLOTTETOWN MONDAY, AUG. 17, 1953

A Basic World Problem

It is encouraging to note, on the assurance of Mrs. Raymond Sayre, president of the Associated Countrywomen of the World, in addressing the Association's annual convention at Toronto last week, that the world's food supply is now increasing faster than its population. Agricultural production is moving ahead at the rate of two per cent while population increase now is 1.4 per cent a year. However, Mrs. Sayre emphasized that this increased production is not evenly distributed and many of the world's 30,000,000 new babies born each year may soon face starvation.

Herein lies the tremendous importance of modern agricultural techniques. The United Nations organization is quoted as predicting that a 50 per cent increase in farm yields could be accomplished in two decades without a substantial increase in capital or the reorganization of the agricultural system. In this, as in other matters relating to farm economy, the members of the Associated Countrywomen of the World—with which our Women's Institutes across Canada are actively associated—have an important role to play in seeing that modern techniques are taught in their countries. If changes in traditions and habits are to be made, women must first see their value. Certainly this subject is one of outstanding importance at the present time. There can be no hope of world peace and stability until basic food requirements are met, and no greater responsibility rests upon the United Nations than of achieving this objective.

Big Responsibility

The Financial Post sounds the right note when it says that the very magnitude of the Liberal victory at the polls last week attests the magnitude of the responsibility Mr. St. Laurent and his associates now undertake. Part of that responsibility as good citizens and honorable men is to seize this new mandate as an occasion for soul-searching and self-examination.

After two decades of power what policies need to be reviewed and probably revised? What administrative cobwebs need sweeping out? In fairness to the citizens who have announced their trust in them, the Government is now able and should be willing to make a microscopic review of its operations with a view to efficiency and economy. In an operation of that size it would be incredible if real probing did not reveal some rot.

Mr. St. Laurent and his group are mostly firm believers in the parliamentary system. Had they been in opposition so long they doubtless would have appropriated the cry, "It's time for a change." Since there isn't to be a change, it is vital that they do all in their power to do those things now on our gigantic government engine which would offset the need there might be for a change. Self-righteousness, warns The Post, is at present the great Liberal peril. What they need and what Canada deserves of them is profound humility; a renewed and sharpened sense of moral responsibility to the people of this great land.

Strange Drug Sources

Far-off lands and the superstitions of primitive tribes still are important contributors to the medicines of modern science. Into the warehouses of huge pharmaceutical firms come not only basic chemicals to be compounded into today's exact prescriptions and drugs, but also tons of strange, exotic plant materials from the world around, the National Geographic Society says. One company reports it uses 140 different types of medicinal plants. Crude drugs arrive in paper-and-varnish containers from the Orient and in woven baskets from the tropics. Storage bins smell like apothecary shops of old.

The science that deals with the history, collection, identification, and use of drug plants is known as pharmacognosy. It is as old as medicine itself. Priest-doctors of Assyria knew the use of several hundred plant remedies. They treated wounds with sea kelp and goiter with burnt sponge, both rich in iodine used for the same purposes today. In the Middle Ages arose the so-called "doctrine of signatures," a belief that Nature gives clues to its plant remedies for man's ailments. Hepatica, for example, had liver-shaped leaves; therefore it was be-

lieved to be a liver remedy. The walnut was used as a brain medicine, bloodroot as a blood tonic.

Such homely potions, based more on superstition than on science, were widely used even a few generations ago. Herbs gathered as medicines were called "simples." As medical knowledge grew, many of these remedies were revealed as worthless. But others were found to have solid substance. Digitalis for heart disorders is made from the foxglove plant, which Welshmen used as far back as the 13th century. Opium from the poppy, henbane, peppermint, and castor oil were all known in ancient Egypt. Ephedrine, a drug used for treating colds, asthma, and hay fever, comes from a plant used in China for nearly 5,000 years.

Witch doctors, shamans, and other primitive medicine men, from the tribes of inner Africa to the American Indians, have given medicine many an important drug. The South American tribes that first chewed the bark of the cinchona tree when stricken with jungle fever, gave quinine to the world. Curare, the deadly native arrow poison, now is widely used as a muscle relaxer. North American Indians discovered the use of cascara, made from bark of the buckthorn tree. Wild parsnip, which they used, has been discovered to yield a drug active against pneumonia and meningitis. Another old Indian remedy was found several years ago to damage cancers in mice.

Medical scientists today take very seriously new reports of strange or primitive cures. No matter how fantastic they may seem, they are investigated in the hope that some might lead to important medical discoveries.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Seven modern German fishing-boats have been bought by the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo to help improve the state capital's food supply. The boats are equipped with Diesel motors, echo-sounding gear, echo fish-locators, and cold-storage space for 50 tons of fish.

Welcome visitors to Charlottetown this week are Supreme Chancellor Sheldon M. Roper and the members of the Grand Lodge of the Maritime Domain, Knights of Pythias, and the Grand Temple Pythian Sisters. Local Pythians are doing the honours as hosts but all our citizens will join in extending best wishes to both organizations for a successful convention.

Honore de Balzac, French novelist, died this date 1850. His early years were a struggle against poverty and failure and although he produced some 85 novels after he was thirty, he never managed to get clear of debt. He made many friends, however, amongst the literary great. His pallbearers were Dumas, Hugo, Baroche, and Sainte-Beuve. Hugo delivered the funeral oration. Balzac's genius flashed on all the little, unnoticed things the lurid light of his imagination.

Since its formation in 1945 by Mr. Thomas Johnston, then Secretary of State for Scotland, the Scots Ancestry Research Society has dealt with roughly 10,000 queries on Scottish ancestry. The inquiries have come from almost every country of the world—some from descendants of Scots who left their native shores more than 200 years ago. During 1952 the Society supplied "family trees" in 650 cases, and in addition, it dealt with more than 1,000 inquiries on a variety of subjects—surnames, clans, tartans and origins. The Society is a non-profit making organization. More than a quarter of the fees received is in dollars. It is known that there are more than 1,000,000 people of Scottish birth living out of Scotland and 20,000,000 of Scottish descent living overseas.

There is still room and work in Scotland for the expert in the ancient art of thatching roofs with reeds or straw. One of the few who still practise it, Mr. John Brough, of Queen Street, Freuchie, in the Scottish county of Fife, is finding that more people in Scotland are now expressing a preference for thatched roofs because they keep rooms cool in summer and are proof against frost, damp and rain in winter. Mr. Brough has been in the trade for nearly 50 years and has made and repaired thatched roofs for hundreds of agricultural workers' cottages all over Scotland. He uses reeds from the upper reaches of the river Tay. Each roof requires at least 400 bunches of thatch, which are held in place with tar twine. It takes a fortnight for one man to complete a roof. So enduring is thatch that this year Mr. Brough carried out only minor repairs to a roof at the Garelock which had been thatched in 1913.

Sentiments Attached



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.

LITERARY EXPRESSION

Sir,—Minor Saxon's letter in The Guardian entitled "Roots of Culture" defines literary self-expression thus: "The former (better English writers) produce our classical literature, the supreme artist in which, like the inspired musician, reaches a point in artistic utterance when he or she is no longer conscious of technique. When a Paderewski is in a fine musical passion his piano becomes an integral part of himself; and this perfect union becomes as it were a single living vehicle of self-expression." Upon reading a definite statement like that how can any one accuse me of advocating the imitation of models, at the sacrifice of originality and independence? None the less it induces in "A Former Teacher" a fit of ecstasies in which he exclaims "Imitation and still more imitation" and then there appears this choice doggerel couplet: "As if the pupil's whole vocation Were never-ending imitation. Without comment on the defunct subjunctive "were," I would use "A Former Teacher" to explain by what form of sense-juggling he would have "self-expression" to mean the "expression of others" or how self-expression will admit imitation of the expressions of others. We always understood self and others to be direct opposites. I am, Sir, etc. MINOR SAXON.

The Age Old Story

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men... for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Educational Problem

It is not altogether a new assertion which the professor of English at University of British Columbia makes—that 65 to 75 per cent of high school graduates who go to university cannot read, write or think properly. The educator in question, Prof. Stanley B. Read, evidently based his conclusions on the experience of UBC, for he further asserts that he often has to move back to Grade 8 floor in an effort to bring the fundamentals of freshmen up to university level. We would like to believe that the situation described by Prof. Read is peculiar to UBC, but we very much doubt such is the case. Other foremost educationists in Canada have, in the not too distant past, related experiences not greatly dissimilar from those confronting the Pacific Coast university. President Sidney Smith of University of Toronto, a year or two ago, expressed some quite candid comment on a problem not at all unlike the one which the UBC professor has seen fit to deplore. He was emphasizing the necessity that students coming to university be better prepared for its demands. From the revelations of Prof. Read the logical deduction seems to be a greater need for more serious purpose in the secondary schools, and a far higher standard of basic education in the public schools. That constitutes a dual goal which will have to be attained, if the universities are to be able to do the training job expected of them with the material they receive. It is not secret that the municipalities are having an increasingly difficult time to meet their bud-

New High In Longevity

Metropolitan Life Bulletin

In 1950 the average lifetime of the American people reached a new high of 68.4 years. This represented a gain of 21 years since 1900—an extraordinary record of progress in life conservation. During the prior half century—from 1850 to 1900—the increase in average lifetime in the U.S. was only seven years; before that the gains were even more gradual. (These figures are for the United States. Statistics for Canada will not differ greatly.) Our remarkable longevity record since the turn of the century is the result of many factors. The striking advances achieved in the medical and allied sciences have been made widely available throughout the country. At the same time, public health agencies, official and voluntary, have multiplied in number and broadened the scope of their activities. In addition, our health and general well-being have benefited greatly from the rapid rise of the standard of living. The effect of these advances is highlighted by the fact that the average American who now reaches age 25 has as many years of life before him as did the average newly born baby of 1900.

The most noteworthy feature is the high figure for the expectation of life at birth for white females—72.4 years. In this group, more than 70 years of life remain for children through age 4, more than 60 years for those through age 14, and more than 50 years for adults through age 25.

As a matter of fact, the average age at death—the attained age added to the expectation of life—is at least 75 years for all white females 21 years of age or older. The expectation of life at birth for white males corresponding to mortality conditions in 1950 is 66.6 years, or 5.8 years less than that for white females.

This disadvantage diminishes slowly with advance in age; the difference drops to five years at age 25, to four years at age 51, and to three years at age 60. The sex differences were appreciably smaller at the turn of the century—namely 2.1 years at birth and less than one year at age 60. Thus, during the past half century white females have not only had a longer average lifetime than white males, but they have made more rapid gains in longevity as well. The marked success achieved in controlling the diseases of childhood and early adult life is clearly reflected in the remarkably low mortality rates at these periods of life.

In 1950 the mortality among white males was less than 2 per 1,000 in the ages from 2 through 31 years; among white females the corresponding range was even wider—from ages 1 through 7. After infancy, a death rate as high as 10 per 1,000 was not reached until age 50 by white males and age 57 by white females.

Among non-whites the expectation of life at birth in 1950 was 59.2 years for males and 63.2 years for females. Their record falls far behind that for white persons, the difference amounting to as much as 9.2 years for females and to 7.4 years for males. The longevity among non-whites in 1950 was practically identical with that for the white population in 1937. The mortality rates among non-whites are appreciably higher than those for white persons throughout life, and particularly after childhood. The improvement in longevity during the past half century has increased greatly the chances of survival to middle and even to the threshold of old age. With the mortality conditions

gets for educational purposes, but whether or not this has anything to do with the problem exposed by Professor Read, we are not prepared to say.

The Poet's Corner

RESUCE

A child, looking for the first time At the sea, Stands quivering, his dark eyes filled with light. I had forgotten the nature of ecstasy, So busy learning what was black, or white. All that could make the world is in that look—The song of heavenly host when Christ was born, Some rare book Reveals its truths. And I, who, night and morn Have watched the plunging forth, the rolling back; Checked tides for sailing or for making shore, Stand rooted, near a clump of tamarack, Awake at last to what I waited for. Go, little world! One great compelling force Brings each tired wanderer back to his own course. —Pearl Strachan Hurd, in the New York Times.

Old Charlottetown

(And P. E. L.)

TOBACCO MANUFACTURE

"It gives us much pleasure to observe that a tobacco manufacture, upon a somewhat extensive scale, is immediately to be commenced in Charlottetown by Mr. Robert MacKinlay. This will form an important addition to our domestic manufactures, as it will be the means of rendering us, in a great measure, independent of other countries for our supplies of the manufactured article. A tobacco press and the other necessary implements for carrying on the business, together with 8 hds. of leaf tobacco, for a commencement, were landed from the Steamer yesterday, and preparations are already in progress for commencing operations. About ten or a dozen hands, we understand, will be employed immediately in the establishment. The encouragement of such an undertaking we consider well worthy the attention of the Legislature. So anxious are the Nova Scotians to encourage the domestic manufacture of this article in that Province, that unmanufactured tobacco is permitted to be imported free of Colonial duty, an example which, we trust, our Legislature will not be slow to follow." —Colonial Herald, July 6, 1844.

Notes By The Way

The millennium will be here when insurance companies base their rates on the theory that we're only as old as we feel.—(Hamilton Spectator.)

Senator Soaper defines a millionaire as a man who travels between his air-conditioned home and air-conditioned office in an air-conditioned car, then pays \$50 to go over to the steam room at the club and sweat.—(Hamilton Spectator.)

Old age is everybody's problem. And it is everybody's problem not only because everybody will one day be old. It is everybody's problem, because the burden of old age is becoming one of the greatest of national burdens. And it is growing all the time. The problem is an anxious one because the number of older people is enlarging in relation to the total population.—(Montreal Gazette.)

The Royal Canadian Navy has dropped the rank of stoker from its rolls. Considering that the last coal-burning vessels in the RCN were retired after the Second World War, the title has been obsolete since. The men who watch the gauges in the Navy's oil-burning engine-rooms now become "engineering mechanics" and engine-room artificers become "engineering artificers". This confirms a suspicion that many an ex-Navy man has harbored since 1945. Especially when he has to carry out the ashes on a cold winter morning, he wonders if the joys of life ashore are really worth it.—(Montreal Gazette.)

Canadians, who, for the most part, are fortunate enough to live in an area of the world which is normally free from major earthquake shocks, will read with horror and pity of the disaster which has this week overwhelmed the Greek islands. To those who have never gone through the terrifying experience of even a relatively mild earthquake there can be little real comprehension of the panic bred by the feeling that even death itself has lost its comforting stability. Man can accustom himself to the unstable motion of a ship at sea, to the sometimes erratic flight of an aircraft in the air, but when the solid earth itself ceases to be solid, when huge chasms yawn frighteningly across city streets, vomiting smoke, dust and flame, when the stoutest buildings crumble like card-mansions and a pall of dusty gloom hangs menacingly over ruined cities luridly lit only by spouting fire, then the boldest spirit quails.—Halifax Chronicle-Herald.

This is a little story of a dog and a girl, which illustrates how smart a dog can be. The big collie and the bobby-dog had been great companions romping and playing together. If the girl was away, on her return she would be given a vigorous welcome by the dog which

would leap and attempt to "kiss" her on the face. It so happened on this occasion the girl had suffered broken bone while on vacation. When she got out of the automobile on her return, the big dog made a leap toward her. Fearful of being hurt, she warned him off. The dog was shown the bandages around her shoulders and arms. He was told that she was hurt. After that he made no attempt "to play rough" or to do anything which might cause her pain. He instinctively sensed there was something wrong.—(Windsor Star.)

"What Every Woman Knows" might be the title of a recent article in Lancet—a well-known British medical journal. The article says millions of British women overwork because their husbands don't work hard enough. It says that in Glasgow, which is any loyal Glaswegian will modestly admit, is one of the great cities of the world, the more housewives work the less their husbands contribute to domestic costs. Husbands, it would seem, have become mere drones, or parasites. They let their wives do a full day's work and in addition the household chores. In this regard effete land husbands must have a sneaking envy for the sturdy Scots. How do they get away with it?—London Free Press.

A wise man once remarked that conversation about the weather can be a delightful medium of social intercourse, but only up to the point at which the director of the local weather bureau enters the room. From there on light conversation is impossible; the experts who know the answers to idly posed questions, who understand the true facts about curious phenomena over which amateurs love to speculate, invariably kill off enthusiasm by his mere presence. Further discussion must soon degenerate into scientific analysis, leaving the shallows of mere talk for the depths of sound knowledge. Nothing remains but to change the subject for one on which all present can claim a common bond of ignorance.—New York Times.

Natural gas production in the United States rose 7.5 per cent in 1952; petroleum output was up 23 per cent.

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