

A LEIPHRON

THE OLD MAN

Recently, one fine morning, I was walking along University Avenue toward Charlottetown. I had been at the University and had an enjoyable conversation with a friend of mine which left me in a pleasant mood.

I was alone on the entire sidewalk - no one else, until, suddenly, about 200 yards ahead of me, there emerged what seemed to me, an old man.

I was no longer alone.

He was coming in my direction. Suddenly, I no longer felt easy. My thoughts turned to him - who he might be; whether he was happy or sad; rich or poor; in good health or bad.

I was becoming anxious; the closer he came the more anxious I became. It suddenly occurred to me that I did not want to meet him. What will I do when we meet? How will I behave?

Usually what I do is: turn my head or, pretend I am concentrating on some object, person, or event in the distance so as not to become involved in the encounter.

It is very easy to avoid an encounter if someone is with you, or if there are others close by. But, we were alone. I would have to face this; I would have to say, "Good morning", or "Hello" and maybe, just maybe, smile; as though I meant it. But, no! I decided I would not smile, it is not my nature. I'll just say hello and keep going. I wish, though, that he were past. But, he's still coming. "The old bastard! Doesn't he know what he's putting me through?" "Come on, now, of course he doesn't know; how could he?"



Still, he comes closer. "Get ready now, he's almost here; don't let the anxiety show - don't give yourself away - play it cool; year, that's it, be cool!" "Clear your throat, and..."

I was dumbfounded! He spoke before I could. He smiled and said, "Good morning. Nice morning, isn't it?"

Completely relaxed I replied, "and good morning to you, sir. Yes, it is a very nice morning."

But, what happened? Where did my anxiety go?

The old man took me by surprise, for he did what I did not expect him to do - he greeted me from his heart. No pretensions! But what surprised me most of all, was my own genuine response. But how? I did not think I could do it. It was him-- the old man.

His sincere greeting elicited a genuine response from me. He undermined my phony plot to deceive him by saying "good morning" without meaning it.

But, was it the old man? Or, was it something else?

We went our separate ways.

I have a vague notion of why I should be good; but, unlike the old man, I don't know how to be good. He taught me that.

Stan Dalton



MARIJUANA

Why don't people just stop and think sometimes? This question could be applicable in many situations but in this case it was sparked by a front-page article in the Charlottetown Guardian of September 28. Dealing with police and their opinions on drugs, it started that

"...The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has cautioned against opening the floodgates for 'clandestine dope' by condemning 'any permissive legislation or attitude on the part of any government'." One wonders what is going on in their heads. Don't they know that they are actually encouraging the "clandestine" nature of dope? Right now, you and I and the police all know that if the government were to legalize marijuana and control it in the same manner that liquor is now controlled, the two-bit criminals who now profit from its wholesale distribution in the larger cities would be virtually wiped out.

They could no longer use the money obtained in the lucrative marijuana and narcotic business to buy into other fields, legal and illegal. Not only that, but the money obtained from a governmental tax on the sale of marijuana could be used to benefit society and lighten the tax burden.

One cannot help but draw parallels between this situation and that infamous episode in North American life known as the Prohibition. The prevailing justification for these restrictions in both cases was to "protect the moral fibre of the nation." In both cases, all that resulted was the people sought other

sources of supply for their contraband" and provided organized crime with immense financial backing. This, in turn, led to a sharp increase in the number of violent crimes and to the rising influence of criminal elements in the political and social life of the society.

Of course, this attitude also fostered a rejection of the society by certain segments within it. How can one respect the laws and morals of a society that accepts documented death by tobacco and the clinically-proven perils of alcoholism while at the same time rejecting marijuana because it is "dangerous", - even though this theory has never been scientifically substantiated. Now, we are not advocating the banning of tobacco, alcohol or any other "potential pitfalls." It is the weakness of the individual that leads to extreme abuses of these products and not the products themselves..

Not so, say the Chiefs of Police. Marijuana is different! "On drugs, the organization says there are definite signs marijuana users graduate to higher drugs like heroin." One might also say ".... there are definite signs that beer users graduate to hard liquor and eventually to alcoholism." What the police are ignoring is that many people just like sitting back and drinking a beer--or smoking a joint. In point of fact, I'm sure that if the police would just think about it, they would realize that any disturbance involving young people is more likely initiated after they have been drinking and not after they have been smoking-up. Marijuana is a much more socially acceptable method of pleasure-seeking than alcohol. Like the Prohibition of alcohol, the Prohibition of marijuana will eventually be seen for what it is - an absolute souvenir from the Victorian epoch.