

THOUGHTS FOR OUR TIME
BY HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL McGUIGAN

MORAL PRINCIPLES MEAN SAFETY

We are glad to join other public leaders of church and state in urging everyone to exercise the greatest of care when driving a car. Doubtless one of the most distressing social scourges of our time is the grim massacre of life and limb that takes place daily on our highways.

The "toll of the road" over the years has developed into an ever-mounting social evil which demands the serious attention of every thoughtful person.

Only this past year, the Catholic bishops of Australia chose for the subject of their yearly pastoral letter on some aspect of social justice not such a topic as, for example, nuclear warfare, or international justice, but the equally weighty problem of death on the highway.

What is especially tragic about the situation is that most highway casualties could be avoided if a reasonable amount of care were exercised. Unfortunately it would seem that many remain unaware that the grave duty to respect the lives of others obtains on the highway as well as any place else. It is urgent that such persons be given a vivid sense of their obligations in this matter.

Since some people require impressive statistics to be shocked into thoughtfulness, here are some facts about this daily massacre that should stir even the most apathetic citizen into a sense of deep concern for his own safety and that of others. In the United States—I do not have at hand the figures for Canada, but doubtless approximately the same proportion holds true for both countries—more Americans have been killed (not to speak of the permanently injured) in automobile accidents than in all the combined wars and armed conflicts in which the United States has taken part; this includes the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the First and Second World Wars and the Korean conflict: 1,227,914 killed and 40,500,000 injured.

EVERY 15 MINUTES
The tragedy may be put in another graphic way: In the United States there is a road death every 15 minutes, and three road casualties every second. That is, every day 96 people who rise from bed healthy do not live to see the morrow because of automobile accidents.

Actuaries working on the Australian statistics have warned the people of that country that in any average young family of five, when the father would be 35, the mother 30, with children 7, 5 and an infant, one of the children is doomed to become a road "victim".

From the economic standpoint it has been estimated that road accidents cost the United States approximately two billion dollars each year, a sum that might

serve as yearly wages for some 400,000 workers.

It is easy to see how important it is that everyone endeavor to limit, to the greatest of his power, the number of these accidents. The situation would doubtless be greatly eased if everyone were keenly aware of his moral obligations as a driver. This is especially so if we realize that most accidents are caused by carelessness.

Excessive speed is the number-one killer every year. Inattention on the part of drivers follows rather closely, and then careless acts of pedestrians, passengers and other road users, followed by intoxication on the part of drivers and mechanical defects in motor vehicles. Analysis reveals that the driver or someone else is responsible for 95 per cent of traffic deaths.

There is a morality governing automobile driving just as there is for any human act. The problem is not so much one of clarifying moral principles on this point, as of getting people to apply, to motor driving, moral principles which are quite simple and well known in other contexts, but which people never think of applying in this one.

A car is, from one point of view, a potentially dangerous and lethal weapon. The same principles apply to carelessness in its use as apply to carelessness with a shotgun. But, for some reason, people do not seem to apply to the one case principles which they readily recognize as valid for the other.

The moral principles involved here are simple and straightforward and follow directly from the natural law and from the fifth commandment. We are gravely bound to respect the life and bodily integrity of ourselves and of our neighbor.

SERIOUS WRONG
To kill an innocent human being or cause him grievous bodily harm is a serious wrong. Moreover one does serious wrong, not merely when he intentionally causes death or bodily injury, but also when he does so unintentionally, if the damage is caused by negligence on his part.

There is, however, another principle which is not always adverted to. It is that a person who is guilty of gross negligence in the driving of a car does something gravely wrong whether an accident results or not. A person who is guilty of gross negligence in his duty to drive with reasonable care. If he grossly neglects that duty then he is guilty of serious wrong, and other things being equal, the only difference which the actual occurrence of an accident would make is that he would thereby contract a further moral obligation to repair the damage he has done to person or property.

A person who fires a shot into a crowd does not escape grave moral guilt if, by God's provi-



COMMISSIONER

Supt. Joseph Marshall Bellis, 51, a native of Kenora, Ont., has been promoted to acting commissioner in the RCMP. He joined the force in 1928 and has seen service in all the western provinces. In December, 1958, he assumed his present position as director of security and intelligence at headquarters here. (CP Photo)

ROLLO BAY

Mr. and Mrs. Merlin Chaisson and Mr. Freddie Chaisson, Brighton, Mass., are spending a few days with relatives and friends in Rollo Bay.

Mr. Reginald Peters who is a patient at the Provincial Sanatorium is spending the week-end at his home in Souris West.

His many friends regret to learn that Mr. Henry Chaisson, Rollo Bay is not enjoying good health and is receiving medical care at his home.

Mr. and Mrs. Terence Doucette Brighton, Mass., are on a short visit to their respective parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Doucette, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Chaisson, Rollo Bay.

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Mullally and family, Souris West, motored to Wood Island on Sunday.

where they visited Mrs. Mullally's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Angus MacMillan.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sheehan and young son David, Charlottetown, spent the week-end with their respective parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Sheehan, Bear River, and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Burke, Rollo Bay.

Miss Flora Peters, student nurse at the Charlottetown hospital spent the week-end at her home in Rollo Bay.

MOSLEM SHRINE

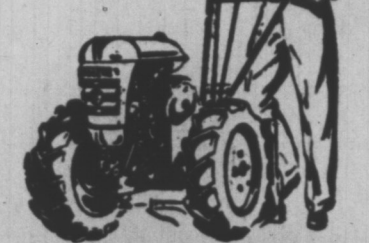
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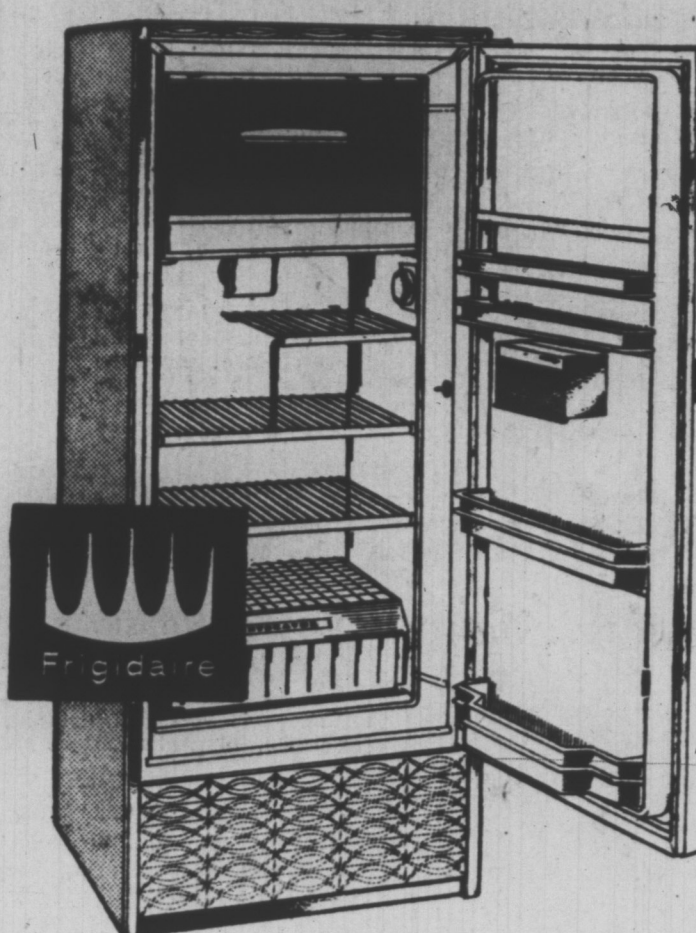
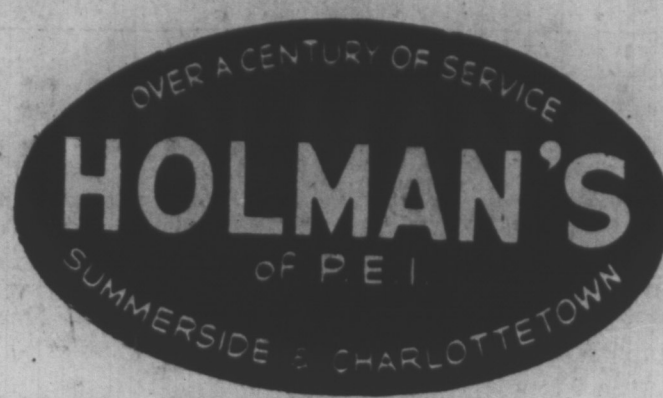
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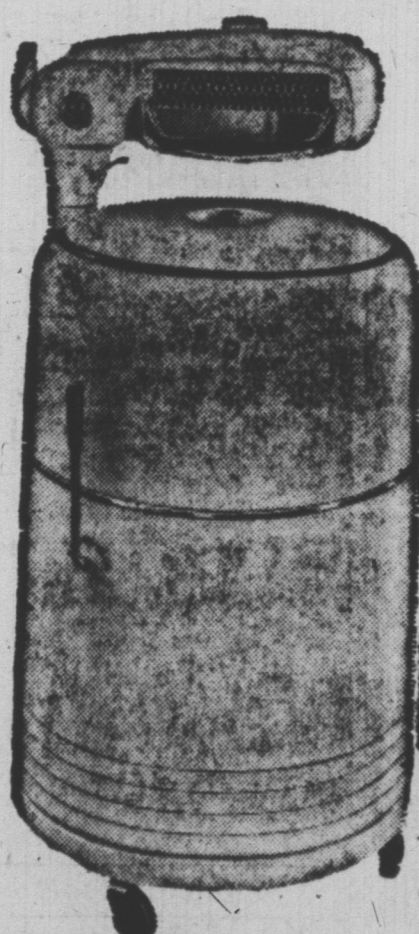
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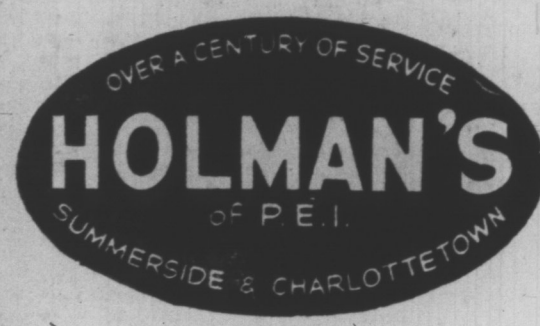
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