THE GUARDIAN

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

THURSDAY, MAR. 31, 1955

Fire And The Atom

It is common knowledge that there was a period in man's arduous climb towards his present moral stature—such as it is—when fire was feared and worshipped at one and the same time. In fact, some historians go so far as to suggest that primordial—or post-primordial—man held fire in such awe that the human sacrifices which were continually made on its altars went very near to destroying the race. Later, when it was discovered that fire could be tamed to render kindly and useful service to those who learned to handle it carefully and wisely, man ceased to be its slave and became its master. This change did not come to pass in a hurry, however; it was a gradual process covering many eras.

Today, almost as if history were bent on repeating, for the discipline of this 20th century, the fears and uncertainties of those days when civilization was at the dawn, atomic power may be said to be in the place of awe once occupied by elemental fire. That it is an object of fear, no one will deny; the symptoms are on every side. Nor are signs of atomic idolatry entirely absent. Power in modern terms means preponderance in actual and potential atomic strength. Nations—those who have the bombs and those who do not—are resting their chances of survival in a war-tormented world to this new, complex, and terrifying force; while, at the same time, no one is quite sure that survival, in the accepted sense of the word, has any real meaning for any nation or any civilization.

Thus far, then, the repetition of ancient vagaries in the slow unfolding of history, is fairly obvious. The question now is whether the next phase—assuming there is to be another—will see atomic power removed from the place of fear and near-idolatry to the place where it can be accepted as the good and useful servant of man.

Conference On Education

In a recent issue of the New York Times, Dr. Benjamin Fine, that paper's education editor, tells of plans now being made for a nation-wide appraisal of the schools—what they are doing and how they can be improved. It is hoped that under the direction of Mr. Roy E. Larsen, President of Time, Inc., and an educator in his own right, the campaign will help to bring public attention to such questions as: What should the schools accomplish? How can we finance them? How can we obtain a continuing interest in education? How can we get enough good teachers and keep them? "Our goal," said Mr. Larsen, "is to reach the grassroots of the country."

Recognizing the fact that grassroots thinking needs to be channelled into official places where education policies are determined, and there subjected to expert scrutiny, sponsors of the movement have arranged for it to come to a head at the formal White House Conference on Education in November, at which the President of the United States will preside.

This White House Conference on Education is an annual event. It is attended by leading educators, school and Government officials, and representative citizens from the various States. While it has no executive powers, the Conference does much to bring together different ideas and viewpoints which are of incalculable value in educational planning which, of course, is the responsibility of the individual States. Perhaps something of the kind could be tried in this country. A Prime Minister's Conference on Education would sound good; and, if it did nothing else, it would at least show that education, as much as any other branch of the national life, is a matter of top level importance. There is nothing wrong with a little dramatization of matters affecting the schools; and this would be one good way of bringing it about in an orderly and well-planned programme.

Fun And Rhetoric

Little political beguilements are not the exclusive property of mediocre politicians; they can be found in the very best circles. Take, for instance, Sir Winston Churchill's reference to current Labor Party difficulties in a speech before his constituents last Saturday. Sir Winston knows perfectly well that Mr. Aneurin Bevan is not in trouble with the official leadership of his party because of any dispute over an individual's right to express his opinions. There is a world of difference between that right and the chronic querulousness in which Mr. Bevan has been indulging for years. Yet, in his speech, Sir Winston tried to make out that the right of free speech and the right to differ from the majority are somehow involved in the dispute. Said he: "It is evident that the further to the left parties go the more rigorous their discipline becomes, until finally the personalities and convictions of an individual are ground up wth the power and rigor of the machine." A fine little piece of rhetoric, nothing more. It is true, of course, of Communism and any other totalitarian system; but it is not true of British Labor, and the Prime Minister knows it as well as anyone.

Now, for a brief look into the House of Commons where a Labor member, Mr. Arthur Woodburn, after listening to Sir Winston's spirited replies to questions, is asking one and all "where the Conservatives got the idea that the Prime Minister is too old to do the job." For two or three years Labor Party spokesmen have been hinting—sometimes stating openly—that Sir Winston should retire on account of his age. Now that his retirement appears to be imminent—though no one would be rash enough at the moment to say it is certain—it seems that they are going off on another tack and suggesting, ever so gently, for courtesy's sake, that the Prime Minister is being "ousted" by his impatient colleagues.

It's all in fun, of course—Sir Winston's statement in Woodford and Mr. Woodburn's question in the Commons. But behind it is that trace of beguilement that seemingly goes with what the irreverent call "the political game."

EDITORIAL NOTES

His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, born this date, 1900.

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We are moving but slowly out of the past. Two men accused of witchcraft were hanged by a mob in Mexico this week.

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Agriculture is to take on new importance at Ottawa. The Government has decided to build a $2,000,000 building to house the department's 600-man head office staff. It will be erected on the 1200-acre Central Experimental Farm and will be completed by 1958.

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There is a vending machine for almost everything these days. The latest on the list is reported from Wisconsin, where co-operative farmers are using a machine for distributing eggs by the roadside. Customers put their money in the slot and out comes a dozen fresh ones.

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The theory of atomic weapons in battle is to be a subject of study at Camp Gagetown this summer. The exercises will involve one of the largest concentration of troops in Canada during peacetime and will include "situations where the use of atomic weapons will be envisaged."

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Norway is not one of the "great powers" from the standpoint of military and industrial strength: but, as one of the very few countries where there is not one illiterate person, it has claim to a distinction that is not shared by most of the richer and more powerful nations. The United States, for example, still has a sizable illiterate population. So has Canada.

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Contrary to popular opinion, shipwrecked sailors can stay alive by drinking sea-water. This has been demonstrated by two French naval officers and eight men, who spent six days on a rubber raft under shipwreck conditions. The men were rationed to six tumblers of sea water a day, the equivalent of half an ounce of salt. When the experiment ended, they had lost an average of nine pounds, but were otherwise unaffected. But the experiment proved that sea water must be drunk with caution, "in small gulps, like whiskey."

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Progress in the Saskatchewan oil and gas industry is indicated by impressive figures. While as far back as 1942 Imperial Oil was engaged in regional exploration, it was not until 1949 that one of the largest land plays in the history of oil exploration in Canada developed, with from $4,000,000 to $5,000,000 spent in oil exploration that year in Saskatchewan. Since that time, almost $200,000,000 has been spent in the province on exploration and development, resulting in 11 light oil, 31 medium oil and 36 heavy oil discoveries as well as the discovery of 29 gas wells. At the end of 1954, a total of 240 active exploration permits were in force covering 28,909,886 acres of crown-owned mineral lands, and 2,223,056 acres of crown-owned mineral lands were held by various oil companies under 3,004 development leases.

More Groundwork

OTTAWA REPORT

A Respected Speaker

By Patrick Nicholson

One of Canada's greatest parliamentarian careers was launched when Hon. Rene Beaudoin was first elected to the House of Commons. That day in 1945, he was a 33 years young French-Canadian lawyer in Montreal.

Today, although only in his second year as Speaker of the House, he has already raised that post from lush patronage to a respected eminence; he has established himself as one of our greatest authorities of all time on Parliamentary procedure; and he is regarded in knowing circles as the most able possible heir to the role of leader of French-Canadian Liberals.

As Speaker, he is responsible for sharp-eared attention to every word spoken in the Commons, and to ensure that members observe the rules of procedure as to decorum, keeping to the point, time limit and politeness when speaking.

His car was parked outside his parliamentary office for long days all through the summer and fall recess last year, while he laboured in his office to create the first and complete record of rulings made by all his predecessors in the role of Speaker. The Beaudoin compendium now extends to many neat black loose-leaf volumes, filling several shelves in the book-lined panelled Speaker's Chambers.

By quick reference, the Speaker can now advise himself of every possible precedent on any point raised by an M.P.

PROCEDURE IMPROVED

The result is that the proceedings of Parliament are now, for the first time in the memory of even longtime members, being kept strictly to the point in rigid accordance with the rules and precedents. Today Parliament deals strictly with the affairs of the nation; it no longer relapses into a gossip chamber resembling a village general store.

To achieve this worthwhile progress, Rene Beaudoin has had to crack down on M.P.s who try to stretch the rules. He has, like the [illegible] stopped one in three. Many of the Members [illegible] has become too [illegible]ers admire his courage, knowledge and attentiveness in exercising the rein.

Speakers of the House and of the Senate are appointed by the government for the length of one Parliament, which is normally four years. The Speakership has grown to be regarded as a little plum for the reward of dutiful government supporters unqualified for the richer plums of Cabinet appointments.

But as it is only a four year plum, most Speakers must look to the government for their future political career. Maybe they hope for ultimate appointment to the Cabinet; maybe they want no more than that lush life pension, a Senatorship.

IMPARTIALITY SUSPECT

This dependence upon future government kindness is at times suspected of holding back a Speaker from full impartiality and courage, which would lead him to pull up a Cabinet Minister as sharply as he would dare to crack down on a lowly Opposition back-bencher. Human nature being what it is, a Speaker may sometimes feel the caution of a rookie traffic cop wondering about giving the Mayor a parking ticket. But Mr. Beaudoin has shown this type of quality of impartiality.

Now a group of M.P.s are very reasonably asking whether our Speaker should not be appointed on a permanent basis, with a pension awaiting him on retirement. Only with such life security could Parliament be assured of all the qualities expected in a Speaker; only with such long-term tenure could a Speaker give Parliament the knowledge and experience needed in that role.

The Speaker of the Commons has recently had his remuneration raised to $26,000 a year. It probably should be at all times on a par with the remuneration of a Cabinet Minister, now $27,000. It would also be reasonable to lift the Speaker above the strife of the ballot box. This could be done by the British tradition that other parties would not oppose his re-election; or better still by nominating the Speaker to be the Member of Parliament for some specially created "pocket borough", perhaps that uninhabited half mile square know as "Parliament Hill, Ottawa".

On some such terms, it would be no surprise to see Rene Beaudoin appointed as our first permanent Speaker of the Commons — an appointment which would do much to raise the standard of our parliamentary proceedings along those lines where he has already made such a remarkable start.

Pulling against his acceptance of such an appointment, Speaker Beaudoin might understandably have ambitions — quite capable of being fulfilled with similar distinction — of becoming the leader of the Federal Liberal party in Quebec Province and even in all Canada.

The Poet's Corner

AS THE CLOUDS

As the clouds that are so light,
Beautiful, swift, and bright,
Cast shadows on field and park
Of the earth that is so dark,
And even so now, light one!
Beautiful, swift and bright one!
You let fall on a heart that was dark,
Unillumined, a deeper mark.
But clouds would have, without earth
To shadow, far less worth:
Away from your shadow on me
Your beauty less would be,
And if it still be treasured
An age hence, it shall be measured
By this small dark spot
Without which it were not.

—Edward Thomas.

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

MORE TRANSPORTATION

Sir,—After reading C. M. Fitzgerald's letters in the press re transportation, I would suggest that when the public have read them, they would be well advised to ponder over and digest his words carefully, as Captain Fitzgerald is a veteran who thoroughly knows harbours and ships.

We are willing to endorse the Captains statement when he stressed the seriousness of the proposed ship which is to be built to operate between the Island and Nova Scotia. He spoke of the length, width and depth — which he said wouldn't work. The Captain knows — for he did not only sail the Seven Seas, but built schooners, ferry boats and many other smaller crafts.

Many years ago he was captain of a schooner which he built for himself — this proved to be one of the fastest sailing schooners on the Atlantic Coast.

I would not hesitate to say that Captain Fitzgerald is the one man to whom those in authority should listen when he says the only sensible thing for the Government to do is to build a suitable boat to operate between Georgetown and Pictou.

I am, Sir, etc.,
RAY SOLOMAN

Georgetown.

The Age Old Story

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

HISTORIC ISLAND

Crete, largest of the Greek islands in the Mediterranean, covers 3,234 square miles.

NOTES BY THE WAY

Everybody tries to solve everybody else's problems, which is why the world is so full of wrong answers. —London Free Press.

A Sudbury spinster says that women always have to guard against a chatty conversation turning into a catty one. — Sudbudy Star.

It was Samuel Goldwyn who said it, as you might think. He claimed at a press conference the other day that "the future of the movie industry lies ahead of it." This is as good as his famous "include me out". —Kingston Whig-Standard.

To think, to form an opinion, to judge—these are our guarantees of freedom. If we do not keep our minds active in some constructive way for the better part of our waking hours, we may yet awaken to discover that someone has blinded our eyes, that we have been robbed of this freedom which is almost as dear as life itself. We can lose anything that has been gained if we continue going about seeking ways to escape the proper exercise of our mental faculties. —Guelph Mercury.

The newspaper in West Palm Beach, Florida, the other day reported with professed amazement that it was 30 degrees blow zero in Winnipeg and one of the department stores was advertising a special sale of lawnmowers. Actually this was a bit of Florida propaganda or sloppy reporting. It failed to note that the 30 below temperature was the low during the night. During the day the thermometers in Winnipeg rose to a balmy 10 below — just about right for cutting our hardy lawns. —Winnipeg Tribune.

Under the inviting title—The Delectable Canadian Rutabaga—the Ontario Department of Agriculture has prepared a booklet expounding the virtues of the humble turnip. The department would like to see more turnips on the dinner tables of the province, not only during holiday occasions when it is served as a side dish to fowl, but also throughout the winter when they make "an appetizing and economical addition to the family's meals." Ontario turnips are nutritious with a higher vitamin C content, particularly if eaten raw in salads or cooked quickly in a small amount of water. Science has contributed knowledge to the improvement of the turnips through a milder, sweeter flavour and growers have learned how to trim and wax the vegetable to avoid waste and maintain the high quality appreciated by the consumer. One of the objections to turnips is that they create an odour in the kitchen. Not so, says the Department of Agriculture, if they are cooked quickly. Here is to the success of the department in promoting the greater use of the delectable rutabaga! —Sudbury Star.

Defending the world championship, Russian hockey players defeated an American teams 3 to 0 at Krefeld, Germany. The Associated Press report attributed the outcome to superb condition on the part of the Russians and a tiredness that seemed to grip the Americans from the moment they went on the ice. We hope the Russians will be gracious in their moment of victory. They could say, for example, "Shucks, it's realy nothing. After all, hockey is just like everything else—we invented it." —Detroit Free Press.

A barn cat, that creature of infinite content, well adjusted to a satisfying winter environment of dry hay, warm milk and multiple mice, never worries about the circumscribing effects of snowbanks. But that other important animal, the farm dog, gets frankly bored by the time February comes to hillsides where a woodchuck is still secure under a snow-covered split-level roof and rabbits do most of their stepping out by moonlight. A dog that has been accustomed to following its owner around summer fields, watching a tractor from the sidelines, barking frivolously at crows and a stone wall chipmunk, is now reduced to the bootless inactivity of sleeping behind the stove. He fattens up noticeably. He fosters a fine taste for cornbread and pork gravy. And on any brief trips to the outer world he barks little and lethargically. There is not much for a back road, hill country dog to bark at in the winter months. —New York Herald Tribune.

Medically Speaking

Herman N. Bundesen, M.D.

CONSTIPATION IN BABIES IS SELDOM VERY SERIOUS

Don't worry if your baby is constipated. This condition is seldom serious.

While most babies have at least one bowel movement each day, there are some perfectly normal and healthy infants who have one only every two or three days. These babies, of course, are not constipated.

There are several things which might delay proper bowel functioning in a baby.

If he is bottle-fed, maybe this milk mixture contains too little sugar or water.

Normally, a baby under five months old should be give one-tenth of an ounce of sugar in his milk mixture each day for each pound he weighs. After five months, he probably should get about one-fifteenth of an ounce per pound of weight. After seven months he might not need any additional sugar.

Lukewarm Water Helps

Make sure your baby gets enough water. Whether he is bottle-fed or breast-fed, plenty of lukewarm water is often enough to overcome his constipation.

Offer him a few ounces two or three times a day, between feedings, if he is awake. Let him drink as much as he wants. Don't force him to take it, however.

One or two tablespoonfuls of prune juice each day, after the baby is a month or two old, might also help prevent or overcome constipation. If he is over six months old, try giving him two or three tablespoonfuls of prune pulp.

Coarse cereals, such as oatmeal or cereals made from whole wheat, prevent or help overcome constipation in many older babies. But don't give him these if he is under six months.

An older baby sometimes becomes constipated because you did not use the proper method of training him to have his bowel movement. He may refuse to have one simply because he knows that you will become worried and give him a lot of attention.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

M. L.: What causes warts under the armpits and what can be done to remove them ?

Answer: The cause of warts is not known, but it is possible that some of them are due to infection.

Some types of warts may be removed by cauterizing them with acetic acid, or by freezing them with carbon dioxide snow. Others may be removed by the application of nitric acid, or by means of an electric needle.

LENTEN MEDITATION

Vocational Attitude To Life

The Times, London

"Elect of God" is the startling phrase in which, in one of the epistles, St. Paul describes the Church at Colosse. He does not refer to men of exceptional sanctity but to those very ordinary people, converts and beginners in the Way, whose limitations and imperfections are written large over his correspondence.

No failure nor inconsistency on man's part can cancel the fact of the divine election which is the foundation of the Christian life. Christianity starts from God, not from man. Christians are those whom God himself has called, with no deserving or merit on their side, to serve him in holiness of living through the grace and truth revealed in Jesus Christ. That is the vocation of the Christian man.

Vocation, like charity, is one of those Christian words which have been devalued in popular usage. In modern speech its connotation has come to be restricted to ordination or entering a community. These are spoken of as vocations, not careers, much as the Inland Revenue returns distinguish trades, professions, and callings. The implication is never far away that only in such ways of life as these can men be obedient to the call of God. Such an idea is deplorably sub-Christian; it cuts across all the principles contained in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Specifically religious forms of service are not in themselves holier than the rest. The distinction between religious and worldly is not in the kind of work done but in the spirit in which it is undertaken.

In reaction against this narrow interpretation came the formative notion of the "calling" in the sense of a man's vocation in the world—the work to which he is called by God, in and through which he is to exercise the fundamental calling of a Christian. This overcame the fatal division between what is sacred and what is secular and thus restored to the layman his vocation within the total ministry of the Church. It means that there is no lawful human enterprise which cannot be baptized into Christ, no way of earning an honest livelihood but may be and should be essentially religious. Everything is sacred which is offered to the will of God and hallowed by his grace. Thus regarded, a Christian's daily work may become the embodiment of his faith and prayer and may be redeemed and sanctified in worship.

For the Christian life is in itself vocation. Every Christian is called to serve God in his purpose of creation and redemption. The only question that remains open is how and where that call is to be obeyed, in what work vocation is to be fulfilled. The believer will approach that decision asking what God would have him do, not only how he can do best for himself. To choose a career for purely selfish reasons may prove to have been the unforgivable sin, because it has poisoned all the springs of motive. No doubt only a few to-day have wide freedom of choice open to them; many occupations imposed by economic necessity appear to have hardly any Chrisitian meaning. Yet even these the Christian may approach in a sense of responsibility before God—in doing an honest day's work, for example, and in Christian relations to his fellow-workers—and thus live the prayer, "Hallowed be thy name."

This vocational attitude to life reedeems the daily round from futility. Without it even the most worth-while activities may degenerate into an uninspired routine in which men find no true satisfaction.

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