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 "The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink."
 FRIDAY, FEB. 11, 1955

Lord Russell's Views

Lord Bertrand Russell, who just the other day gave it as his opinion that, unless some way is found to resolve the present Formosan crisis, and that speedily, the human race may have ceased to exist before the year is out, has added another book to his long list of political and philosophical works. It is called "Human Society in Ethics and Politics." His ethics, incidentally, are the traditional ones of the Christian religion, despite his well known scepticism regarding some of the basic Christian doctrines which gave these same ethics life and meaning. The book itself is, in part, an eloquent plea for love of truth and tolerance, and for dissipation of fear and hate, and, in part, an expression of non-confidence in the foreign policy of either major side in the present world struggle. In short, Lord Russell appears to believe that the free nations are almost as much to blame as is the Communist bloc for the tensions which threaten the survival of mankind. Added to all this is an almost childish assumption that military force, no matter how formidable, is of very little use against the aggressive temperament of warmakers. Hitler, if he were alive, could put him right on that; that tyrant, like all other tyrants of history, yielded to force and to nothing else.

Surely the whole purpose of free-world foreign policy, about which Lord Russell does not appear to think too highly, is to help the Communist states to a realization of the folly as well as the wickedness of aggression while there is yet time to forestall the world-shaking conflict which Lord Russell, quite justifiably, fears may be imminent. Even the most pronounced pacifist must admit that it was only when persuasion proved to be ineffective that the West decided to build up its armed strength as a further inducement to reasonableness on the part of the Communist Governments. Doubtless, if all human beings were as kind and loving and tolerant as Lord Russell—borrowing from a Hebraic-Christian ethos, the doctrinal basis of which he has not always treated with due respect—would like them to be, armies and fleets and bombs would be unnecessary. But, since that ideal condition has not yet been attained, free men can do no other than look to their defenses and, if necessary—which Heaven forbid—throw all the strength of which they are capable against the aggressor.

From Noah To Einstein

The cubit of Noah's time was the length of a man's forearm, the distance from his elbow to the end of his middle finger. The yard of later years (still used for rough estimates) was the distance from finger tips to the tip of one's nose. This and much other curious information is contained in the current monthly letter of the Royal Bank of Canada, dealing with the importance of standards of measurements, some of which have come down to us from antiquity and still serve us well, while in other cases we have added new devices to match our needs. The moral of the Bank letter is that accuracy is as much needed in business and private life as it has been since the very beginning of engineering.

Accuracy is a measure of the tolerance allowed between parts of a machine, or in the actions of a man. To be accurate is to conform to a standard, to be correct, to be truthful and precise. Nearly all grand discoveries of science and nearly all great developments in business have been the rewards of accurate measurement and patient labour in the gathering and sifting of numerical results. In our everyday activities it is far better to make some rough measurement than no measurement at all.

The sciences of astronomy, physics and chemistry, and the art of architecture, are built on a foundation of careful measurements made with ingenious instruments and related to known principles. So are the automobile, the factory machine, the cigarette lighter and all big and little mechanical things we use daily. A thousandth of an inch is so small it can hardly be seen, yet it is one of the most important things in modern living.

In the early days of the automobile there were at least 800 different kinds of lock washers and 1,600 sizes of steel tubing; today there are 16 kinds of lock washers and 17 types of steel tubing. Not only the assembling of an automobile, but the simplification of parts, and the accuracy of making them, are triumphs in engineering and production.

A very real difference may yet be very

small. Atoms are no less real because they are invisible to the unaided eye. In parts of a refrigerator, accuracy in the order of thousandths is essential. A publication of General Motors Employee Relations Staff in 1952 pointed out that a carburetor jet a thousandth of an inch too big could reduce a car-owner's gasoline mileage by a mile or more to the gallon. The plunger is fitted to the cylinder of a Diesel engine injector with an accuracy of twenty-five millionths of an inch—1/120 the thickness of a human hair.

When we turn our thoughts from accuracy in the infinitely small to accuracy in the infinitely big, we catch a glimpse of equal marvels. It is shown in geometry that if the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter be written to 35 places of decimals, the result will give the whole circumference of the visible universe without an error as great as the minutest length visible in the most powerful microscope.

To deal accurately with any information demands a wealth of background knowledge: to know why something came about is as important as to know what happened. Measurement and standards and mathematics are not to be unduly worshipped, though they cannot be neglected by even the person in private life. St. Thomas Aquinas said it neatly: "An angel perceives the truth by simple apprehension, whereas man becomes acquainted with a simple truth by a process from manifold data." And worldly-wise Plato made the point that one must be able to see the truth accurately in order to judge his distance from it if he is practising deception.

Salting The Sky

A new lost-cost process for stepping up rainfall by literally salting the sky has successfully passed initial tests in West Pakistan, where it was developed by Pakistan meteorologists and a young scientist from Unesco.

Two test regions, each covering 1,500 square miles in the semi-arid province of Punjab were the scene of experiments during July, August and September last year. Readings of rain gauges in the area showed they received 60 per cent more rain than adjoining regions.

During the experiments, eight tons of salt were wafted into the sky by two ground "generators", consisting basically of an ordinary silversmith's blower—similar to those used by craftsmen in any Pakistani bazaar—and manufactured locally at a total cost of 80 rupees (\$25).

These experiments were described recently in Paris by Dr. Michael Fournier d'Albe, a 33-year-old British physicist who recently completed a three and a half year assignment in Pakistan as a member of a Unesco team of geophysicists sent out under the United Nations technical assistance programme.

A cautious scientist, Dr. Fournier d'Albe refused to be trapped into extravagant claims of rain-making. He believes, however, that the Punjab experiments are preliminary proof that "sky-salting" can increase the amount of rain produced by clouds. The method holds the most promise for tropical countries—usually the very countries unable to afford expensive large-scale cloud-seeding experiments with aircraft. Thirty-nine days of "salting" in the Punjab added up to a total cost of only \$1,000.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Thomas A. Edison, "the Wizard of Menlo Park", born this date 1847. In all, 1,097 were issued to Edison, the greatest number ever issued to one inventor.

Now that Northern Affairs Minister Lesage has reassessed this country's claim to all territory within 500 miles of the North Pole, ownership of the Pole itself can await further negotiations with other interested Governments. Anyway, it would seem to be a purely hypothetical question.

A mass flight of about 1,000 British Boy Scouts from the U. K. to Canada will take place next August, it was announced recently. The boys, aged between 15 and 18 will be going to the Scouts Eighth World Jamboree, to be held at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Negotiations are being conducted for 30 South African, 12 Gold Coast and two Malta Scouts to join the party.

They are having potato trouble in Alberta. Nausea and illness have been reported from many parts of the Province where persons have eaten bitter-tasting potatoes grown during the wet summer. The Division of Horticulture, University of Alberta, has reported the existence of large amounts of solanine in many samples and has issued a warning to Albertans to avoid eating bitter-tasting tubers. Solanine is a substance containing toxic alkaloids, which is formed in potatoes during excessively wet seasons, and through improper methods of handling and storing.



Addition To The Family

Madagascar's Secret Past (Unesco)

Late in 1952, the world was startled by the news that fishermen of the Comoro Islands had caught a strange fish, apparently the last survivor of a species which had disappeared some fifty million years ago. The Coelacanth, which thus leapt into fame, proved to be closely related to a species which formed the link between fish and batherians—the transition, that is to say, between sea life and life on land.

The discovery of this creature from far-off prehistoric days revives another question which is still shrouded in mystery: the origin of that part of the globe which under the name of the Indian Ocean, may cover the lost continent of Gondwana, of which the great island of Madagascar, together with India and Malaya, would seem to represent the last vestiges.

In India, the jungle still reveals relics of dead civilizations. In Central Africa, the Rhodesian bush displays in the silent ruins of Zimbabwe, the remains of a powerful Negro Empire which was, perhaps, the fabulous Kingdom of Ophir. But Madagascar, the Red Island, still holds closely locked the secrets of its past.

On this island 980 miles long and 360 miles wide, no traces of man of the fossil-bearing strata have hitherto been discovered and the quaternary strata reveal no evidence of human existence. Palaeontologists suggest that anticyclonic winds would have prevented prehistoric man from navigating in the Mozambique channel and that Madagascar, isolated from human contact, developed its fauna and flora "in a vacuum", thus accounting for the fact that the species found there today are unique.

Yet a study of the present population of Madagascar, of the various types, their names, their language, customs and traditions sheds some light upon the great island's past.

Nineteen tribes inhabit the territory. Of these, the Merina are undoubtedly the most interesting, because their history provides the fullest data for investigation and comparison. The Merina, who number some 950,000 out of a total population of over 4 millions, are the people of the country of broad plateaux, they inhabit the High Plateaux and in particular the country round Tananarivo, the capital. They are usually light-skinned, with finely-drawn features, smooth black hair and slightly slanting eyes. This definitely indicates a Negro admixture, while other individuals are purely African in aspect.

The written history of the Merina—which is that of Madagascar—begins around 1500. In 1498 navigators had opened the route to the East round the Cape of Good Hope and the Portuguese, who discovered the great island which he called "St. Lawrence". In 1500 the Merina were ruled by Queen Rahoby, with whom the genealogy of Madagascar's sovereigns really begins. Rahoby was the first of the Merina to be a Negro, her ancestors had belonged to a tribe of Negro stock, the Vazimba who were worshipped as divinities. The Vazimba belonged to a tribe inhabiting the left bank of the Zambezi. As a result of defeat in battle they were, it seems, driven into the sea, and a few survivors reached the Madagascar coast.

According to legend these African elements mingled in the XIII or XIII century with emigrants from the East who landed in Madagascar from canoes of a Malayo-Polynesian type. These elements of Malayan stock appear to have merged gradually with the Vazimba. Their marriage resulting in the Merina of today. This dual origin is apparent in the caste system: there are four castes: the first, that of the Andrians or "Nobles", comprises the descendants of the Malayan emigrants; the second, that of the Hova or "Free Men", groups descendants of the Vazimba chiefs. The third caste, the Maliny or "Negroes" lies midway between the Negroes and the

fourth caste, the Andevo or "Slaves". According to local tradition a third group, the Betsileo, originally inhabited Madagascar along with the Vazimba and the Merina. This tribe, "the unconquerable horde", lived on the High Plateaux to the south of the Merina country; they seem to have been of African origin, although between Negroid and Malayan in type.

Today, the Great Island can be likened to an enormous jigsaw puzzle, of which the various pieces have been thoroughly mixed up in the course of the centuries. Certain elements came from Malaya and Polynesia, others from Africa, Arabia, and Europe, quite apart from the Indian and Chinese influences since the end of the XIXth Century.

One important point, however, remains in doubt. The Malagasy language is indisputably of Malayan origin, and only a few expressions bear traces of African, Arabic and European influence. Could it be, therefore, that this language was unknown in the Great Island before the landing of the Malayan immigrants, not more than nine or ten centuries ago, and that there was previously another language which the Madagascans of today have forgotten?

Certain very ancient legends speak of a people of "little men", Pygmies, whom the Madagascans regard as foreign to themselves (the descendants of immigrants from the East) and against whom their ancestors had to fight; these little men are called "kimosy" and this word does not belong to the Madagascan tongue.

The same legends recount that the Vazimba, when they landed on the West coast of Madagascar, found themselves in the presence of tiny men, whom in Swahili, their language, they ironically called "Wa mblili kimo", "double-size people". The Vazimba drove the Kimosy before them and the latter fled to the plateaux; then, in face of the Malayan advance from the east, they began a tragic exodus towards the South. Their course can be followed thanks to a series of Kimosy cemeteries, which are scattered in the manner of tiny, oval burial-grounds. Present-day Madagascans, when questioned as to these cemeteries, say that the people buried there were of a race different from their own, connected with the Lemurians. Antanosy folk are still to be seen in the mountains of the great Australian continent which disappeared thousands of years ago. The Negroites language was Malayo-Polynesian, which remained the basic language of Madagascar after the continent's disappearance. And the Malayan immigrants of the XIII Century simply renewed, in their new home, this tongue, which they took with them from which their own had stemmed. In the course of later migrations, African, Arabic and European words came to be added, thus forming the Madagascan language as it is spoken today.

Thus Madagascar's folk-lore, and the small Kimosy tombs which they bear a name that seem to send us the last message from the dawn of the Red Island's history.

The Age Old Story
 These spirits saith that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Medically Speaking

Herman N. Bundesen, M.D.

WHEN BABY'S EAR ACHES

If your baby pulls at his ear, or sneezes and turns his head from side to side, he may have an earache. These signs are even more indicative of an earache if he has a cold and a fever.

Cause of Earache

The most common cause of an earache is an infection of the middle part of the ear which may occur in the so-called "catching" diseases, especially in colds or in cases of sore throat.

These disease germs might be carried to the ear through a tube which leads from the baby's throat to the middle part of his ear. In this way, the ear might become infected.

If you baby has an earache, don't get excited. There's a lot you can do to help him. First of all, call your doctor. He'll be able to give him penicillin, streptomycin or one of the other antibiotics, or one of the safe analgesic drugs. He may also advise you to put three or four drops of warm glycerin or mineral oil in the ear every few hours.

Applying Warmth

Warmth usually has a soothing effect. There are numerous ways of applying it. Probably the easiest is to place a warm water bag or a hot water bottle against the baby's ear. Make sure either is well wrapped in a towel or some other cloth, so it will not burn his sensitive skin.

You can also use a cloth soaked in hot water and wrung nearly dry, or even a bag of salt warmed in the oven, and remember a partially filled water bottle or bag of salt will feel more comfortable to your baby than well-filled bags.

Sometimes the warmth of the palm of your hand placed against the baby's ear will help relieve the pain.

You can also give him aspirin. Half a tablet is enough for children under six years of age.

If there is a discharge from the ear, you can wipe it clean with dry, sterile cotton. Of course you must be very gentle. Don't put warm oil or anything in an ear that is discharging unless your doctor advises it.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

M. R.: I recently had an examination and was told I have subcutaneous nodules. What would cause them?
 Answer: Swelling under the skin might be due to a variety of causes. A condition known as von Recklinghausen produces swellings of this type. Multiple tumors of other types might also occur.

You should have a biopsy done of these swellings; that is, a small piece of tissue should be removed and examined under the microscope to help determine their cause.

It would probably be protruding an inch or so out of the sand at the top of a hillock. You might take it for a piece of root and gnaw it. Better investigate.

If on inspection you will find the object is not wood but a rocklike formation you may have found a scientific treasure. When you try to remove it be gentle, for it is very brittle. It is in fact natural glass.

Your discovery may go down into the sand any distance from a few inches to five or six feet or even deeper. It may be only a fraction of an inch thick or as much as three or four inches. It is apt to taper to a point, and it probably branches out at underground, like a tree upside down.

Your prize will probably be greyish white in color and translucent; but it may be yellowish, greenish, reddish, or black.

A scientist would call the formation a fulgurite. The name comes from the Latin word for lightning. Lightning tends to strike high places, so you are more likely to find a fulgurite at the top of a dune than in the lower ground between.

Sand is largely a nonconductor. Offering a great deal of resistance, when the lightning strikes the heat is so terrific that it melts the sand as the bolt plunges downward, and this lasts only a second, and it quickly cools. Result: A hollow glass tube. It is hollow because it actually cools and hardens before the sand has time to settle back into the hole created by the lightning.

Often if these natural glass tubes are not found by someone the wind may bury them in the sand and they will remain untouched for years. Then by some chance of wind or storm they will appear, sticking out of the bank of a sand wash. In the United States the Carolinas have probably yielded the largest number, but many have also been reported in Nevada, Utah and Michigan.

The Poet's Corner

FEBRUARY
 Oaks that held their leaves so long
 Are weathered now and thinning;
 Snows have melted, waters rise.
 This is spring's beginning.
 Red is on the maple buds,
 Gold is on the willow;
 A blackbird from the cedar's top
 Whistles to his fellow.
 Rain and frost have been at work
 Feeding grass and clover;
 February, fleckle month,
 But the soonest over.
 —Katherine Van Der Veer in the New York Herald Tribune.

Reforming The Senate

(Sarnia Observer)
 Like a hardly perennial, there is talk of Senate reform in the air at Ottawa, this time in the form of suggestions that senators retire at the age of 75—in the case of present senators, with full pay and allowances for the rest of their lives.

The rumor is that during the present session of Parliament a resolution will be brought down in the Senate to effect this reform, and that it will secure ready support in the House of Commons. It is significant that the Prime Minister has been so chary of filling Senate vacancies that now 20 of them exist—one fifth of the whole number. Certainly it would seem an apt time to deal with reform, when there are relatively fewer to be reformed.

We do not share the cynical view that we would be better off and more efficiently governed if we were more democratically at that with no Senate. It is true that almost all the provinces are governed by a single chamber, yet the value is great of a second chamber at Ottawa made up of those more experienced on the whole than Commons, and drawn in some instances from circles that are free of party politics. We could wish, indeed, that the Prime Minister would consider a greater percentage of non-political appointments that would be free of the inference of a reward for services rendered to the party in power.

Over the years since Confederation the usefulness of the Senate has been considerable, even though there are periods in which that august body has appeared to the man-in-the-street as largely unnecessary. But certainly they are aware that the very word "senator" implies an old man's word would be gained by removing the reproach that the Red Chamber is an Old Man's Home filled with political veterans at a "age of declining sensibility. We could do with younger senators; a few more women senators; and more senators drawn from the arts and science and education as well as from ordinary non-political circles.

"Petrified Lightning"

(Margaret Romer, in Natural History Magazine)
 If you walk among the sand dunes near the seashore or on the desert in a region where thunder storms are frequent and violent, you may find a piece of "petrified lightning."
 It would probably be protruding an inch or so out of the sand at the top of a hillock. You might take it for a piece of root and gnaw it. Better investigate.

NOTES BY THE WAY

There's much education to be acquired outside the classroom. The apprenticeship system did and still can provide many young people with those compulsory attendances at school is often a waste of time, and worse, with the kind of education they most need and which will do them and the community the most good. —Saskatoon Western Producer.

It's comforting news to a great many of us to hear the views of Dr. Jean Mayer, Harvard faculty member, who says that it's time to stop criticizing fat people for over-eating. Don't criticize, says Dr. Mayer—fat people just can't help it. Still, comforting or not, we can't go along completely with Dr. Mayer's tendency to throw up his hands over the problem of fatness. Criticism can do the job. Nothing can put a man on a diet and make him lose weight faster than judicious comments by an ever-loving and ever persistent wife who repeatedly points out that he no longer looks like the trim, jaunty guy she married. Nothing that is as simple as that. —St. Thomas Times-Journal.

A six-storey office building is going to be erected on a turntable at Grand Junction, Col., so that the clockwork swivel will catch the sun's rays in winter and avoid them in summer. We're wondering what the results will be if the lazy Susan principle extends to construction generally. Will junior be told to come home from his date at 11 p.m., or when the front porch faces east? We've heard of houses that turned people's heads. It would be interesting to see some that turned people. —Minneapolis Tribune.

The winter's problem of snow removal must be one of the easiest known to man. It is all too easy to imagine the expressive of the first householder as he emerged from his cave one morning to find before him ten inches of newly-fallen snow. No doubt, but his puzzlement is not about the texture of snow, which on the whole is rather soft and pleasant, but about how to get rid of the miserable stuff. It may be assumed that the first householder is the same one who the day before invented the wheel, and so intellectually is a bit above his neighbors. Yet he is puzzled. What can be used to remove snow? He can be imagined as scratching his head, trying out various on-the-spot inventions to get it out of there, and then picking up a shovel. That implement he had invented a fortnight before the wheel. It is too dreadfully easy to imagine his expression as he stooped over and up, over and up, to remove the snow from his path. And then to dissolve, as the movies say, to 1955, it is also too dreadfully easy to see the same expression on the face of any householder faced with snow. The expression still is of puzzlement. —New York Times.

City council has settled a vexatious issue by deciding to "open night" in stores. We do not feel this decision in the interests of the public which, by its patronage, indicated approval of Friday evening shopping. Yet the blame for this decision rests mainly with the merchants themselves, rather than with city officials. The merchants were sadly divided pro and con, with conflicting statements about the advisability of Friday evenings open. Not enough thought was given by some council members or many merchants, to the public convenience. —Windsor Star.

In a recent report, Toronto's Board of Health recommended: "Whereas every major medical, dental and public health organization in Canada and the United States, qualified to speak on the subject, has recommended fluoridation of communal water supplies as a safe and effective method for the substantial reduction of dental caries; "Whereas, in spite of careful search, no evidence of harmful effects has been found anywhere at any age in life from long consumption of water containing fluorides in the minute amounts used in controlled fluoridation..." the Council of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto be requested... to commence the fluoridation of the water.

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