THE GUARDIAN

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CIRCULATION

"Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew"

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

CHARLOTTETOWN FRIDAY, JAN. 8, 1954

Prison For Poverty

The plight of poor people faced with "fine or imprisonment" has appealed to many public spirited citizens and organizations. It really makes one law for the man with money in his pocket and another for the one without.

Irving Himel, chairman of a delegation from the Association of Civil Liberties which waited on the Ontario Legislature's reform institutions committee, made that point amongst others. His suggestion is that allowing fines to be paid by installments would enable poor people, unable to meet the full amount of their fines at once, to stay out of jail.

There is another aspect in which the fine or imprisonment sentence is unfair. Many of the punishments were fixed when money was worth far more than at the present time, so that in effect the poor man is being punished more severely today in comparison with the more prosperous offender than was the case in former times.

There is a case for both making fines higher in relation to the alternative jail term and for allowing the offender time in which to pay the fine if he desires to do so. After all, if Parliament authorizes fine or imprisonment for an offence the intention clearly is that the fine should be considered a sufficient penalty. The imprisonment is merely a means of enforcing payment although in practice it is an alternative.

It is only just that both rich and poor should receive the same sentence in effect as well as in form. Permitting time for the payment of fines would go far towards placing them on a common level. Another point is that the same fine does not represent the same degree of punishment to different people, but that is a problem which may well be beyond the courts to solve satisfactorily.

Truth And Prejudice

The nineteenth century was peculiarly the age of scientific enquiry. The question that was asked was: "Is it true?" There has been a profound change in recent years and a French journalist, M. Kayser, points out that in international discussions on problems of information, people nowadays talk less about "truth" and more about "objectivity". . . . It has become common to preach the doctrine of the "raw fact" as if it were possible to present "facts" in such a way as to give no indication whatever of personal bias. But, however praiseworthy, is this not an illusion?

Do we, for example, read such a rigorously exact, impartial and objective statement as "the one-litre bottle on the table contained five decilitres of wine?" If the writer says: "The bottle was half empty", he speaks the truth—a pessimistic truth. If he had said: "The bottle is half full", this too would be the truth—but the truth of an optimist.

Can we object to lack of objectivity in either case? Certainly not but, equally, we cannot deny that such a phrase carries with it a point of view, perhaps unconscious, which does in fact tend to create an inevitable prejudice in the reader.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council is vitally interested in the whole problem of truthful and objective reporting. So, indeed, is every journalist and reader. When every precaution has been taken, however, there remains the inevitable subjective approach of the individual writer. Only free access to many independent reports can give the reader the full objective truth.

For Safer Driving

Judging by the comparatively few traffic accidents over the late holiday period, it would appear that the safety driving campaign sponsored by the Attorney General's Department has been productive of good results. We have also succeeded, during the past year, in cutting down the highway fatality toll, although the number of persons killed—thirteen as against twenty-five in 1952—is still quite alarming. It is to be hoped that this year will see a further decrease in tragedies of this kind, without resorting to more drastic preventive measures which other Provinces are being forced to consider.

In Saskatchewan, for example, the Provincial Treasurer, Hon. C. M. Fines, has announced that his appeal to motorists to be more careful in their driving habits has failed to achieve the desired results. The consequence last year was an all-time record of people killed and injured, and of automobiles destroyed. He warns that particularly in the case of drunken drivers, regulations will be more strictly enforced, and that more suspensions and cancellation of licenses, along with additional police patrols, are being considered.

Incidentally the chairman of the Saskatchewan Highway Traffic Board, Mr. J. A. Christie, makes a strong point of the frequency of winter driving accidents due to reduced visibility and inadequate traction. Under normal conditions, he states, a motorist will travel 42 feet before coming to a stop after applying the brakes when travelling at 20 miles per hour, 130 feet when braking down from 40 miles per hour, and 190 feet when braking down from 50 miles per hour. With the added winter hazard of slippery roads, this distance might be increased as much as ten times. Motorists who drive at 50 miles per hour on a dry road under normal conditions may think they can drive safely on ice at 20 or 30 miles when actually a top speed of 10 would be more nearly comparable. One accident in three, Mr. Christie maintains, is caused by driving too fast for road or weather conditions.

These comments are of general application, and well worth remembering at this season.

The R. C. M. P.

An article by Richard L. Neuberger in the New York Times Magazine points out that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police perform the duties which, in the United States, combine the activities of the F.B.I., the Secret Service, the Coast Guard and the Border Patrol. Yet they are a smaller force than the police department of either Los Angeles or Philadelphia. Mr. Neuberger found one lone constable stationed at Port Radium on Great Bear Lake, where pitchblende for atomic bombs originates. He found only 31 men patrolling the Yukon Territory, an area almost as large as Texas. Nor has he forgotten the time at Dawson Creek, during the construction of the Alaska Highway, when a pair of Mounties was superseded by two dozen United States Army military policemen.

Certainly no Canadian would want to see the R. C. M. P. with fewer men than it needs, as may well be the case, says the Montreal Gazette. Yet this readiness to vest high authority in a few men has been part of a heritage. It goes back to the year 1874 when some 200 men of the North West Mounted Police rode out into the prairies to establish the law. The emphasis was placed from the first on the force of authority—not on force of numbers. It shows how tradition counts. The "fetish for solitary missions" in the Mounted Police is actually a recognition that every Mountie has not only his own training on his side, but he has tradition also. It is certainly something to be cherished.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The movement of potatoes continues to be greatly facilitated by recent mild weather. Our open harbours have been a very important asset indeed this year when it has been particularly valuable to keep down shipping costs.

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With a strong R. C. A. F. establishment in Summerside the Air Cadets had a heavy advantage over other cadet corps. Now that personnel of the R. C. N., Fleet Air Arm, are on the scene, however, a Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps has been most successfully launched.

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The attempt of an English youth and a descendant of Louis XIV to marry without her father's consent in Scotland recalls the famous Gretna Green marriages. The marriage of runaway couples by the village blacksmith ended almost a hundred years ago, however, when an Act of Parliament in 1856 imposed a residence requirement.

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Alfred Russell Wallace, English naturalist, was born this date 1823. He began life as an architect but became interested in Botany. He visited the Amazon and the Malay Archipelago, establishing the "Wallace Line" which zoologically separated Lombok and Celebes from Bali and Borneo. A study of Darwin led him to enunciate the idea of the "survival of the fittest" as a correlation of natural selection.

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It is pleasing to see that a reader picked up the Ottawa Journal on an inaccuracy in an article on "Space Ships and Stations". It was stated that a speed of 28,000 m.p.h was necessary to overcome gravitational pull, whereas the author's figures worked out to show that the necessary speed would really be only 25,200 m.p.h. There is already too much unnecessary speeding without drivers being given an additional excuse.

Really Into Things

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.

THE RUSSIAN CHARACTER

Sir,—The faults of Russian leaders stand out like nails in a wall, and we are always blaming them. Perhaps we do not think as often as we should what the Russians are suffering, the losses they are sustaining. Sympathetic pity might often take the place of blame, if we tried to sense how Russia feels. She is sustaining a loss that no nation can afford.

Madam Pandit, chairman of the United Nations Assembly, who spent some time in Russia, remarked that her most appalling experience was to see children informing the government against their parents. That children should so turn against their parents and put them in serious danger was very distressing. A government that can encourage such conduct in the children of their country is devoid of all sense of honor and love.

William L. Ryan, a newspaper correspondent, who spent some months in Russia, tells an illuminating story of women shopping in Russia. At the door of the store they get in line in a queue of people waiting to get in. Once in, they wait in a queue at the counter where they expect to buy. (The stores are always crowded). When they have bought the article they must go to the cashier and pay for it in line with others, then return and get the article they bought, standing their turn in line. It took Ryan 25 minutes to buy a comb, and in a week's time all the teeth were gone from it. The significant thing that Ryan says about all this waiting in line is that women are pushed and jostled about in a most unmannerly way.

The sad fact is that from top to bottom, faith in each other seems to have pretty much disappeared. They seem not to trust anyone. The six weeks the Reds held up the prisoner question till General Dean and the others were disgusted, illustrates how faithless they have become.

It is no wonder that the Russians have lost faith in each other and in every one else. always ready to suspect the motives of others. People who give up faith in God and disregard the moral law may expect to develop a very faithless character. Faith is the bed-rock of all the best in our civilization; and for want of which Russia is in serious danger of going all to pieces. In fact we can say that this is inevitable.

We would like to think, and it is probably true, that many people among the peasant classes of Russia, have not been corrupted by the selfishness and ill-manners of the ruling classes. They are the hope of the country. We cannot think of so great a nation going utterly to ruin. Will 1954 see a great change beginning in the very heart of the Russian Government? That is worth praying for.

I am, Sir, etc.,
W. I. GREEN

Stanley Bridge.

The Age Old Story

They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their heart. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. but peace shall be upon Israel

Churchill & The Atom Bomb

Winnipeg Free Press

Should the United States have used the atomic bomb against the Japanese as a quick means of ending the war in the Pacific? There has been controversy on this point ever since the bombs were exploded at Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945.

The decision to use the bomb, after due warning to the Japanese, was made by the United States Government on the recommendation of Henry L. Stimson, the then Secretary of State for war.

Writing in 1947 on this decision, Mr. Stimson said:

"The face of war is the face of death; death is an inevitable part of every order that a war-time leader gives. The decision to use the atomic bomb was a decision that brought death to over a hundred thousand Japanese. No explanation can shange that fact and I do not wish to gloss it over. But this deliberate, premeditated destruction was our least abhorent choice and the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put an end to the Japanese war. It stopped the fire raids, and the strangling blockade; it ended the ghastly spectre of a clash of great land armies . . . ."

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There is an outstanding comment on this in Sir Winston Churchill's latest volume of War Memoirs. The trial tests of the atom bomb were carried out successfully in July, 1945, while the Potsdam Conference between President Truman, Sir Winston and Stalin were in progress. These tests proved that the devastation within a one-mile circle was absolute. A conference between President Truman and Sir Winston and their staff followed and Sir Winston writes:

"Up to this moment we had shaped our ideas towards an assault upon the homeland of Japan by terrific air bombing and by the invasion of very large armies. We had contemplated the desperate resistance of the Japanese fighting to the death with devotion, not only in pitched battles, but in every cave and dugout . . . . To conquer the country yard by yard might well require the loss of a million American lives and half that number of British—or more if we could get them there: for we were resolved to share the agony. Now all this nightmare picture vanished. In its place was the vision—fair and bright indeed it seemed—of the end of the whole war in one or two violent shocks. I thought immediately myself of how the Japanese people, whose courage I had always admired, might find in the apparition of this almost supernatural weapon an excuse which would save their honor and release from their obligation of being killed to the last fighting man . . . . We seemed suddenly to have become possessed of a merciful abridgment of the slaughter in the East and of a far happier prospect in Europe. I have no doubt that these thoughts were present in the minds of my American friends. At any rate, there never was a moment's discussion as to whether the atomic bomb should be used or not. To avert a vast, indefinite butchery, to bring the war to an end, to give peace to the world, to lay healing hands upon its tortured peoples by a manifestation of overwhelming power at the cost of a few explosions, seemed, after all our toils and perils, a miracle of deliverance."

• • •

Sir Winston says that the British Government gave its consent to the use of the bomb against Japan. The final decision lay with President Truman. Sir Winston concludes: "I never doubted what it" (the decision) "would be, nor have I ever doubted since that he was right . . . . There was unanimous, automatic, unquestioned agreement around our table; nor did I ever hear the lightest suggestion that we do otherwise."

But was it the atom bomb that defeated Japan? Sir Winston says —"No", adding: "Her defeat was certain before the first bomb fell, and was brought about by overwhelming maritime power. We, an island power, equally dependent on the sea, can read the lesson and understand our own fate had we failed to master the U-boats. All that the bomb did was to hasten the inevitable.

Old Charlottetown

(And P. E. I.)

CURRENCY COMPLAINTS

From The Novascotian, Oct. 2, 1835:

"We believe that if ever a Colony was cursed with an issue of inconvertible paper, it is the Island of Prince Edward. They have no Bank Paper at all, but they have tried to perfection the scheme of making money by an issue of Treasury Notes. Quire after quire of them have been thrown into circulation, and, as a natural consequence, everything else has been driven out. We believe there is not one man upon the Island who has not had occasion to rue the day that ever his Representatives tolerated such a rascally currency; and certain it is, that no man out of the Colony, who has had any transaction with it, but must have felt the necessity of laying on a few additional Pounds percent, to compensate him for the delay, disappointment, and annoyance of getting the stuff in which he would be paid, turned into money. A Pound Note in Charlottetown is worth about sixteen Truro shillings, and silver dollars are eagerly bought up at six shillings each. The time alone lost to the Island every year by these inconvertible Treasury Notes, is worth more than six times the interest they save."

From The Examiner, Oct. 6, 1835:

"It would appear from an editorial in The Novascotian of last week that our Treasury Notes are not in high favour with the Halifax people; but as they were intended for our own accommodation, not theirs, this is less to be regretted. That a Pound Note is not what it purports to be, the representative of twenty shillings, we are free to admit; but so long as its relative value is understood among ourselves, and is found to answer the purpose for which it was issued, it is of little importance what the traders from other countries may think of it. The mercantile part of the community, such at least as trade directly with Britain, and are engaged in lumbering and shipbuilding to any extent, and who are perhaps the most competent persons to form a proper estimate of the utility of a paper circulation, so far from uttering any complaints, would, we are persuaded, be the first to raise their voice against the present currency being abrogated, or to any serious extent diminished.

"It does not therefore appear that there is any solid ground for declining to enter into trade owing to the state of the currency. Some few importers who are bound to make their payments in cash, and Halifax printers and others who come here to collect their debts, are dissatisfied because our notes do not pass in other countries, or, what is the same thing, that specie cannot be procured for them here, at their nominal value. These grumblers, however, do not consider that this is a state of things by no means peculiar to this Island; that it is the very nature of local currency to be depreciated, and that were it otherwise it would cease to be local. That there must be bounds set to this depreciation every person of common sense will allow, but as we have before stated, the currency as at present constituted is not found productive of any inconvenience to those most extensively engaged in the commerce of the country."

The cornerstone of the Cologne cathedral was laid in 1248, and the structure was completed in 1880

Notes By The Way

The biggest puzzle to most abstainers is how a consumer can afford to be an alcoholic.

—St. Thomas Times-Journal

We don't know anything about these atomic bombs the nations are stockpiling and can only hope they're not stamped like camera film with a reminder that they must be used before a certain date.

—Winnipeg Tribune

"It is believed," says a medical article, "that the function of the sinuses is to lighten the skull and give resonance to the voice." They also serve the subsidiary purpose of giving people who have had an operation something to talk about.

—Stratford Beacon-Herald

Today, when through oratory, radio and television the spoken word is assuming more weight than perhaps ever before, when speech seems more and more to be taking the place of the written word, it is the more dangerous that such cardinal ideas of our culture and civilization, such as Democracy, Freedom and Truth should be in danger of the same bankruptcy. There is not only no sense, but there is real danger, in expressing ideas in spoken words if those words are either inaccurate in meaning or devoid of meaning.

—Halifax Chronicle-Herald

William Noakes who lived and loved newspaper work more than life itself, died in his sleep. A tired heart which had stood the strain and stress of an exacting profession for more than 62 years finally wrote "30" for the editor of the Brandon Daily Sun, and column after column of Sun Gleams, is silent today, but none who worked with him, or were associated with him will ever forget "Old Bill" as he so often signed himself.

—Brandon Sun

Today few persons can name all of the "Twelve Days of Christmas," even if they are able to recite all verses of the old English Ballad about the Twelve Days, from the "partridge in a pear tree" all the way to the "twelve lords a-leaping." First is St. John's Day, followed by Holy Innocents Day, St. Thomas Day, St. Sabinus's Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Holy Name Day, St. Genevieve's Day, St. Gregory's Day, St. Simeon's Day, and Epiphany, the last being the day on which most of us take down our Christmas trees.

—New York Times

Painters, musicians, sculptors and poets have produced things which have bankrupted understanding. They have produced the incoherent and the incomprehensible, and have assured us with bland or intolerant superiority that this is art seeking new modes of expression. And while it may also be true that sometimes the artists, like the Fat Boy in Pickwick, do things to us simply to make our flesh creep, it still remains a fact that if art is to teach any lesson to the world of its time—and without such a purpose, be the lesson what it may, art is surely fairly pointless—then the terms in which the lesson is taught should be at least understandable. Unintelligible art may or not be a tribute to the cleverness of the artist. It certainly does nothing for the beholder.

—Halifax Chronicle-Herald

Bigotry is especially common in young people, but in them it can be excused to some extent, or at least explained: In youth everything is black and white and definite, but as a man grows older he begins to see—or should begin to see—all the shadings of grey in the world and its ideas, and his opinions become—or should become —much less rigid; there is an old saying that the more you learn the less you are sure of, and this is perhaps the root of the wisdom. The adult bigot has seen the shadings. He is suffering from retarded mental development: he has simply not grown up. "He who will not reason is a bigot," wrote William Drummond 300 or more years ago. But that is the least part of the bigot's offensiveness. If he kept his unreason to himself he would not "plague the gentle world." But he insists on trying to impose his prejudices on everybody else. If he has come to the conclusion that the only way to become healthy is to eat nothing but carrots, then all the world must eat nothing but carrots. If he has misinterpreted religion to mean that it is a sin to skate on Sunday, then nobody must skate on Sunday. (—From an editorial for young people, Hamilton Spectator.)

The Poet's Corner

SKI JUMPER

From the hill's waterfall of white,
gracefully over pools of pine
and watching faces poised and
bright
like cool clean bubbles in deep
wine,
the skier floats. And time recalls
the heron drifting from Autumn
oak,
lovely as dream, to skim the lake;
or the sweet instant when through
the flow
of super silence in Winter cold
when lonely wind makes timbers
shake,
love's word falls, like aster smoke,
easing the heart with gentlest
glow.

—George Abbe in the New York Times.

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