

THE BOMBAYMAN'S DIARY

Neither Here Nor There

THE Maharashtra Government's new-look prohibition policy is worse than a curate's egg; it's neither here nor there. Being based on an odd mixture of old-world idealism and hesitant pragmatism, it cannot perhaps be anything else. We have been hearing for quite some time about rationalisation, liberalisation and relaxation — terms quite attractive in themselves, but when inspected closely mean much less than they threaten to — but the result of all this chopping and changing and one step backward, one step forward technique of dealing with an experiment which has disastrously flopped, is that nobody concerned is quite happy. All these changes have been introduced allegedly with a view to making prohibition more "effective", a wry euphemism for unacknowledged failure.

Liquor used to be permitted only for so called confirmed addicts once upon a time; then everyone over 40 could easily (well, easier than before, at any rate) get a permit; then the unit quantum for brewed stuff was raised; and now everyone over 30 can ask for and get a health permit. This covers practically all earning and independent adults. But would even that discourage illicit distillation or reduce the pressure on the common man's purse? (These are said to be the main motives behind the liberal policy.) Hardly, since the price of permitted liquors is ridiculously high, thanks to a whopping sales tax of 45%. To make things worse, it has just been disclosed that the price of the 5% beer ("freely" buyable) will not be much lower than the normal beer. This makes nonsense of the entire policy and since it is to be sold only through licensed vendors' shops, there will be even greater confusion. And why should today's sale wait till September?

AUTHOR Curtis Gordon Pepper, popularly known as Bill Pepper, is in town to write a book on Pope Paul's visit to Bombay during the 38th International Eucharistic Congress.

The cover story on the Pope in the "Newsweek" of December 14, 1964, was written by Pepper, who was then with the Pontiff at every stage of his historic trip to India.

It is impossible to read history or biography without being struck by the momentous consequences of trivial events. What the American writer is on the look-out for are small, unknown incidents connected with the first-ever journey to India undertaken by the Head of the Catholic Church.

Human Angle

"I want to have a chat with all those who met Pope Paul or were directly or indirectly connected with him. It is the human angle which I am after. For instance, I wish to call on the fishermen who met the Pope near St. Andrew's Church while he was driving to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount at Bandra. I'd deem it a favour to have whatever information people may know on the subject", he said, when I met him at the Taj Mahal Hotel.

And he proceeded: "I was told that a drunk sneaked in the room of Gregory Cardinal Agapianini, but was quickly picked up by the police, bundled up in a bedsheet and driven away in an ambulance."

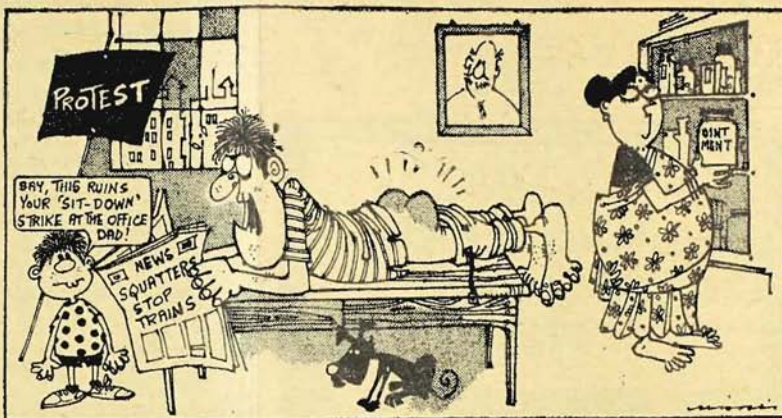
Pepper met Cardinal Gracias, saw the room the Holy Father occupied in Archbishop's House, visited Our Lady's Home at Parel and had a talk with its director, Monsignor J. A. Lobo.

Bill Pepper, 47, a graduate in architecture from Illinois University who has married sculptress Beverly Pepper, was chief of the Newsweek News Bureau at Rome for 11 years. "In fact, I founded the bureau. I am no longer with it, but I still have my home in Rome. It is close to the Vatican. I have done two cover stories on Pope Paul VI, one on Pope John and another on Pope Pius XII, and have written two books on the Vatican, entitled 'Pope's Back Yard'."

Curious Thing

Another book of his, "The Artist and the Pope" is being published by Grosset and Dunlop, U.S., and will be simultaneously released in America, Italy, Germany, France and the U.K. The publication, Pepper tells me, deals with Pope John's great friendship with the famous sculptor Giacomo Manzù, who has sculptured the bronze doors of St. Peter's and done Pope John's Death Mask.

"A curious thing about this sculptor is that he is a theoretical Marxist, though born of Catholic Italian parents. He has stopped going to Church for quite some time, but is not a member of any communist party. 'Do



These rail tracks do get terribly hot in the summer

you love mankind?" Pope John once asked him, and the artist immediately said: "Yes, I do. That's enough for me," was the Pontiff's reply."

Pope's Death Mask

St. Peter's doors done by Manzù are works of art, says Pepper. They are 24 feet high, eight feet wide, and weigh three tons. The first door the artist did in a special alloy: silver and bronze. He did not charge for his work, but the casting of the metal alone cost more than 15,000 dollars.

Pope John did not live to see the doors. Whilst sitting for Manzù who was making his bust, the Pope once asked: "How is the work on the doors going on?" Pat came Manzù's reply: "The doors are dying in my hands." Before long, the Pope's secretary asked the sculptor to make a death mask of Pope John.

AN important musical event on Sunday will be the presentation of guest artist Margarita Schack, the famous German soprano, by the Bom-

band would be happy if they cultivated among Indians an appreciation for Western music and thereby bring about a cultural integration.

Margarita had a dig at some "fashionable" Indians who tried to win for themselves social status by pretending to know Western music. It was a pity, she said, they cared little for their own music. Indian music, Margarita declared, was so much vaster like the unbounded oceans. She did not mean to decry her own system by any means but a Western musician was just a reproducer whereas an Indian artist was a composer all the time.

Margarita's soprano is not just a mild fluttering to please the ring-side audience. At the rehearsal, one found it power-packed and seasoned at the same time to a mellifluous tone.

A FULL-LENGTH film, "Mount Everest", produced by the Films Division, with music by Shankar and Jaikishan, and a book, "Nine Atop Everest", written by Commander M. S.

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Last year, he climbed Mont Blanc with an international mountaineering expedition which met in France.

Commander Kohli, 37, is married and has two sons. His wife, Pushpa, is a keen mountaineer, who has trekked to Khilmarg (13,000 feet) in Gulmarg, Kashmir.

NOW on his second visit to the city since his migration to France 18 years ago, Sayed Haider Raza, 46, has opened his exhibition of 14 oils at Gallery Chemould.

He has come to India with his painter-wife Janine Mongillat who recently had an exhibition of her paintings at the same gallery. Raza says Paris is a competitive art centre

where there are 30,000 painters and 350 art galleries.

"We work separately there," chimed in Janine Mongillat. "I have my studio, and he has his. You have to be alone when you are painting. I like to paint to the sound of music, but my husband just can't stand it when he is working."

The Parisienne, who is visiting India for the first time, says the mental picture she had formed of our country does not conform to reality. "I find this country complex and human. I have visited Delhi, Rajasthan, Jaipur, Agra, Udaipur and Bombay. The rhythm of people in cities and villages, their clothes, their way of life, and the alluring landscape have fascinated me."

IN a touching gesture of humility

Pope Paul knelt before each lad as he gave communion to 22 boys of an orphanage in Parel during his memorable visit to Bombay on the occasion of the 38th International Eucharistic Congress. Later, the Pontiff had breakfast with "the unwanted, the outcast, the rejected of society", he rumpled their hair, played and joked with them.

"Our hearts are full of joy," piped their young spokesman, "because we have left important people and places in order to meet us, the poorest ones of your large flock, in poor home."

The orphanage soon made big news all over the world. The Pope returned to Rome and sent a donation of 200,000 dollars towards building a new home. With the donation of the Holy Father came a substantial gift in cash from Cardinal Florit of Florence, and smaller sums from other donors.

Today, "Our Lady's Home", has its own, modern building, which houses 249 boys, some of them are foundlings, abandoned children left to the mercy of their fellowmen, some are orphans and others have guardians who do not have a place of their own to keep their wards with them.

The orphanage is a pioneering project of zealous charitable Monsignor J. A. Lobo, who has been ably assisted by Rev. Fr. Nelson Mascarenhas, now appointed parish priest of St. Anthony's Church, Vakola.

Msgr. Lobo tells me that the boys belong to all communities. The new building has cost Rs. 15.5 lakhs, but there still remains Rs. 80,000 to pay. The maintenance of the Home entails an expenditure of Rs. 90,000 a year. It is an uphill task, no doubt, but the people of the city always come to its rescue in times of need.



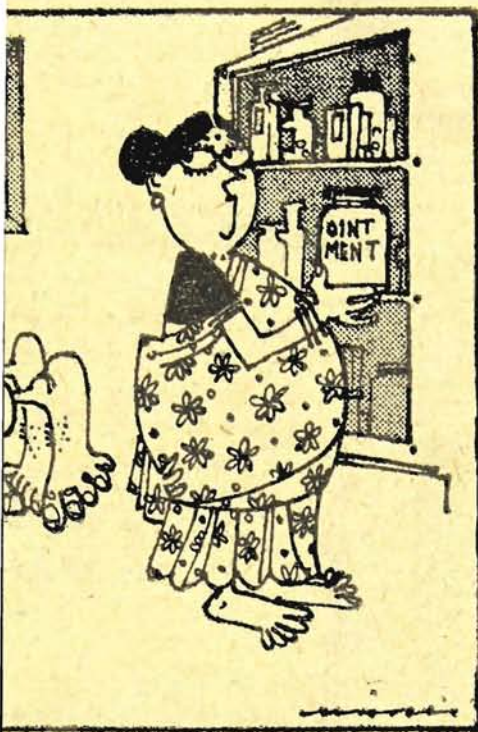
Round and About By BUSYBEE

The Koyana earthquake stirred Maharashtra as nothing did. It stirred the nation too. But the lady I met on the Malabar Hill Point has almost taken it as a personal tragedy. Yesterday, she spoke to me about it as if

tic and enterprising band of women workers, is busy organising a fun fair, "Come and Enjoy the Evening," at the Turf Club, Mahalaxmi Race Course, on Saturday from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. It is organised by her and the

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