

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

By PETER McARTHUR

MR. WILLIAM STONE did not impress me as a humourist or even as an occasional joker, the time I met him on a matter of business. Quite the contrary. He struck me as being a typical man of large affairs, serious, direct and competent. He seemed just the kind of man one would expect to find spending his time in a giddy round of directors' meetings of the most solemn and high financial kind. But that request he made of Chief Grasset—wait a minute till I catch my breath. It is not often I run across anything so sly and rib-tickling, as the paragraph in *The Globe*, which reported that Mr. Stone asked "That the police, whenever possible, notify motorists *at time of the offence* that they would be summoned for speeding or breaking the law." Can't you just imagine you see a fat Toronto policeman or an asthmatic country constable overtaking a "hell-bent" automobile to politely inform the owner that he will be summoned. In justice to the officers of the law I venture to say that any and all of them would give a day's pay at any time for a chance to say a few things to the speeding automobilist, but when was one ever known to wait? If he waited he was not a true scorcher. Unfortunately the arm of the law cannot reach out far enough and quick enough to catch the offender so that the officer can grab him by the ear, while the mood is upon him, and roar in the tympanum-shattering tones that alone would express his feelings: "You infernal slob, I'm goin' to have the law on you next Chues-day." Perhaps if the police were provided with Ross rifles they might be able to stop some of the less speedy offenders, but it is not likely that such an innovation will be allowed just yet. In spite of Mr. Stone's request it is likely that the old and unsatisfactory way of having the officer lay an information in the dry and unemotional phraseology of the law will prevail for some time to come.

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BUT for true humour I am not sure but the explanatory statement that followed this amusing request was still richer. Here it is, so that you may judge for yourself:

"The deputation stated that there had been a large number of complaints by motorists that they had not received their summonses until several days after the alleged offence, thus preventing them from recalling the exact circumstances and deciding whether they were guilty or not."

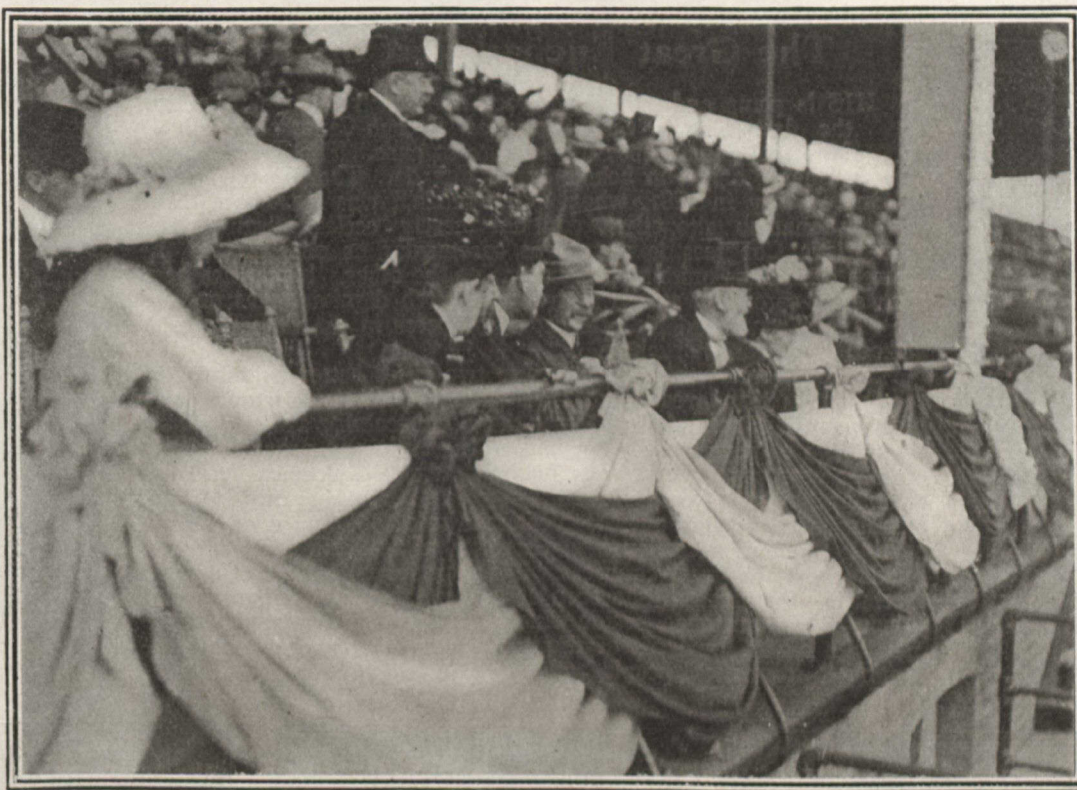
As Artemus Ward would say, that first joke was too much and this one is two too much. Who that has ever paid attention to court proceedings, not simply in the case of scorching automobilists, but in cases of any kind where the defendant might be guilty, has not noticed what a rock of defence a poor memory invariably proves. Surely Mr. Stone would not rob the joyous scorcher of the plea that he could not remember what he was doing or where he was at the time mentioned in the summons? Does anyone seriously believe that the motoring fraternity would thank Mr. Stone for robbing them of their one chance of escape. If any of them put up that argument I suspect that they were "Horsing" the worthy president. If I may venture to make a suggestion, why should not motorists who obviously cannot wait for a policeman to catch up when they are exceeding the speed limits keep diaries in which they would enter the exact time and place where they knowingly committed breaches of the law. If they did that they would be in a position to refresh

their memories and help in their own convictions when the slow-paced machine of the law caught up with them three or four days after they had been having their good time. If Mr. Stone meant his request and explanation to be taken as jokes, I take off my hat to him as a humourist. If he meant them to be taken seriously I take off my hat and throw in a bow, for that would make them funnier than ever.

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ONE needs to live in the country for a while if he wants to find out just how much automobilists are hated by the farmers, and how thoroughly they deserve the loathing they inspire. Once out of the city limits and beyond the range of law officers who are in active service, the average automobilist sets law and order at defiance. I have seen them passing along the country roads at a higher rate of speed than the express trains make on the railroad. It is true that an occasional one will slow down when approaching a horse and rig, but as a rule they go honking through without the slightest regard for right or decency. We who have to suffer from their insolence or thoughtlessness no longer dare to take chances to bolt up a lane or side road when we see the cloud of dust in the distance that announces the approach of a devil-car. During the summer months farmers having spirited horses are obliged to keep to the back roads, and leave the improved roads to the invading scorchers. The advent of the automobile has changed the best roads to the worst, as far as their usefulness to the farmers is concerned, and those whose

farms are situated beside these motor-haunted highways are forced to keep their doors and windows closed at all times so that they may not be suffocated by the dust. Some day the farmers are going to get so mad about it that they will force the legislatures to pass laws forbidding automobiles to travel faster than wheelbarrows. As matters stand, there irresponsible, insufficiently taxed users of the public road are putting a stop to the good roads movement and destroying the roads we already have by the wear and tear of their trackless locomotives. Something has got to be done about it, and it is not likely that it will lie along the line of more politeness and courtesy towards the offenders on the part of



Guest Box at the Opening of Toronto's Great Fair. General Sir Robert Baden-Powell is distinguished by his Stetson hat. On his right is President Gooderham and on his left, Lieutenant-Governor J. M. Gibson. Standing in the rear is General W. H. Cotton.

officers of the law. There is much that a man in Mr. Stone's position should be able to do, but it will not be done through the co-operation of the police. It will be done through the co-operation of the motoring fraternity. If he got a rule established among that speedy lot that any man who boasted about the speed he had made would be fined a case of champagne for each offence, and forced to sit looking on without getting a taste while the good liquor was being lapped up, he would be doing much to discourage them.

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IF one does a hired-man's work he must expect to be treated like a hired-man. The other day there was some whitewashing to be done and in the course of human events it became necessary for me to do it. While the work was in progress a cheerful voice called from the garden gate, "What-ho Bill! Is the Boss at home?" I directed him towards the hammock where she was sitting and proceeded with my work in a thoughtful mood. The cheerful stranger was a salesman of some sort and if he had seen me at a desk in an office preparing an editorial on some subject full of ready-made opinions for people who cannot think, or who must not be allowed to think, he would have approached me with caution and perhaps with awe. But just because I was wielding a whitewash brush instead of a fountain pen he called me "Bill."