

Editorial

The editorial page is traditionally used by the editor to expound on those subjects near his heart. A vehicle for his personal expression... an open letter to readers, if you like.

This quarter I hand the editorial page over to Cst. Barry Urquhart of Port Hawkesbury Detachment, "H" Division. His "Toast to the Force" address given at the Sydney Sub-Division Regimental Dinner last May, exemplifies, I feel, why most of us joined the Force, and why we remain. Ed.

It is usually the toastmaster's duty to offer a short homily on a topical matter, and my brief comments deal with the simple and basic question of why we continue to serve as peace officers. My comments will sound rhetorical, but they should not be construed as trite, and if any of them ring of cliché it is because cliché contains truth that refuses to be ignored.

We are like goldfish in a bowl. Each year we face numerous and varied experiences and the way we act is constantly being monitored. As a result of this high profile we are required to continually evaluate a changing society. We all appreciate the reality of growing pains in a society which is going through a metamorphosis of embracing social, economic, political, moral and religious change.

It is my contention that any success we have in objectively evaluating these changes comes from that basic predisposition that existed with you and me when we became members of the Force. On joining we offered a variety of reasons for doing so, including that of security, respected position in the community, variety of work, and a host of other considerations. Yet, we should all realize that these rational reasons are superficial. We all joined, I suspect, because of a substantial conviction, an emotional position, that separated us from our peers; one that held that law and order is necessary, and to that cause we would dedicate ourselves. I am talking about ideals, and in our society such discussion is not in vogue, for it makes individuals uneasy and embarrassed. Yet, without these ideals we could not have become members, and without them we cannot remain so.

Each year you and I feel forces which separate us from our original goals. Many of them are extremely important and include such factors as risk and personal danger, boredom, adverse working conditions, and any number of personal reasons. Conversely, positive factors lend a balance, and included on this list are diversity, security, respect, and again any number of personal reasons. However, unless we retain the basic belief we had when we joined, that emotional predisposition to uphold law and order, then no incentive, no amount of experience or finesse will replace what was lost somewhere along the way.

Our toast to the Force is one formal means by which we recommit ourselves to these basics, confirming that we belong to a Canadian institution that is greater than individual concerns or styles. It is a distinct honor that you and I share this toast, hereby paying homage to those ideals that led us to choose our uniform yesterday, and which will allow us to wear it with pride today, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.

I offer this toast... to the Force!