

EVER since civilized man began to work regular hours he has been inventing holidays. The so-called savage does not need them, for he works only to satisfy some immediate need and stops as soon as he has enough to fill his stomach or protect him from the weather. Some of his work, such as hunting, fishing and making tools and weapons, is probably fun. He doesn't draw the sharp line that his civilized brethren do between work and fun.

The more complicated and the more highly organized a human society becomes the more quickly that line is drawn. The distinction is easy to make. Work is something we get paid for. Fun is what we do for nothing. The holiday usually has a religious or patriotic significance, but all the world over it is an excuse for letting off steam, easing tensions, giving tired nerves a rest.

Nobody except a few old-fashioned people who firmly believe that Satan will find mischief still for idle hands to do can possibly object to the multiplication of holidays. Indeed, the increasing use of labor-saving machinery makes it inevitable that there should be a growing amount of leisure for every one. But in such a small world as this is coming to be, a haphazard and irrational arrangement of holidays can create an enormous degree of confusion. A little study of the situation will indicate that a re-arrangement and stabilizing of the world's holidays is almost as essential as an international postal system. When one country's banks and places of business are closed on days when another country's are open, and vice versa, it is difficult for those two countries to do business conveniently together.

Let us suppose that we are in some kind of business which may require us, at one time or another, to buy, sell, borrow or lend in any one of fifty or more countries. We look into the matter of holidays, using, perhaps, the excellent booklet on "Bank and Public Holidays throughout the World" which is issued annually by the Guaranty Trust Company of New York.

We find that, counting Sundays, there are just 57 days in the year, 1937, that are not holidays somewhere. Of the 57, eighteen are Saturdays, which has long been a half holiday for banks nearly everywhere and which shows signs of becoming a whole holiday for many occupations during all or part of the year. Because holidays falling on Sunday are likely to be observed on the following Monday, and because there is a tendency to stretch the Christmas and New Year's holidays, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, we should probably deduct a dozen more days this year on which we shall not be able to transact business with all our correspondents.

STABILIZING Our HOLIDAYS

There Are Only 27 Days In The Year
When There Are No Holidays Anywhere

By R. L. DUFFUS

That leaves us with 27 days on which we can reasonably count on finding offices open everywhere—about one day out of every 13 or 14. If every holiday were universal we should work those 27 days and rest the other 338 days.

The chances are that few who read this will have direct business connections all over the world. Yet all of us who live in civilized countries do have such connections indirectly. We are all dependent to some extent on foreign trade, for our prosperity is linked up with what our country sells abroad. We undoubtedly pay for the confusion of holidays in lower profits on what we sell and higher prices on what we buy.

There would be less confusion if every holiday had a fixed place in the calendar, or if every holiday fell each year on the same day of the week. But neither of these things is true. A holiday which is tied to a calendar date—December 25, for instance—travels through the week at the rate of a day a year and two days in Leap Years. A holiday which is tied to a day of the week will necessarily fall on a different day of the month. Thus, Christmas fall on Saturday this year (1937) but will fall on Sunday in 1938; the Fourth of July fell on Sunday this year (1937) but will fall on Monday in 1938; Thanksgiving Day this year

is November 25 but next year it will be November 24. Less familiar holidays in this and other countries slip around in the same way.

Now, it is quite clear that we can't abolish other people's holidays and that we cannot permit them to to abolish ours. Wars have been fought for lesser causes. Holidays are loaded with sentiment and warm associations. They link past and present in a way that is singularly pleasing to the dizzy dwellers on this whirling earth.

Let us hop around in an imaginary airplane and consider a few of these annual days off. Alaska celebrates Seward's Day on March 30—it was Seward who bought the Territory from Russia. Argentina celebrates its independence on July 9. In Austria May 1st is not a holiday for revolutionary labor or a day to go fishing—it is Constitution Day. In the Azores January 1st is dedicated to Universal Brotherhood. Ethiopia, prior to the Italian conquest, chose September 11 as its New Year's Day; the Chinese New Year falls on February 11; the Jewish New Year is observed on September 6, although the Jewish people also make a holiday of January 1 like the rest us; in a number of North European countries Mid-Summer Day is celebrated; Palestine, with three major religions, has a plethora of religious holidays; India has so many holidays that a

special functionary has to devote his entire attention to calculating the days on which the movable ones will fall.

In our own country we have quite a number of state and sectional holidays: Admission Day, celebrated in California on September 9; Lee's Birthday and Jefferson Davis' Birthday, observed in several Southern states (Kentucky, by the way, has made both Lee's Birthday and Lincoln's Birthday legal holidays, thus commemorating its historic split during the Civil War); in New Orleans and several other Louisiana communities the Mardi Gras is officially designated; in New Hampshire a Fast Day is usually declared on the fourth Monday of April; Tennessee sets aside a day to honor Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Confederate cavalry leader; Texas commemorates its freedom from Mexico on March 2; Utah honors its pioneers on July 24; Vermont stops work on August 16 to remember the Battle of Bennington, in which a detachment of the British General Burgoyne's troops was defeated.

People who have holidays like these don't want to lose them, but it does seem that something might be done to keep them from prowling up and down the calendar the way they now do. Well, then, somebody suggests, why not organize first a National, then an International Holiday Association? Why not utilize the facilities of the League of Nations, which, though it has not been able to put an end to war, has been very useful in handling a number of international undertakings? The idea is not a bad one, but we will probably have to be a little more fundamental. We will have to decide what we want to do with our holidays.

Mr. Henry Morton Robinson, writing in *The Reader's Digest*, has advanced or revived an ingenious plan. Mr. Robinson points out that at present "when a legal holiday falls on a Sunday it is customary to transfer it to the next day, Monday," and proposes that "when certain holidays fall on any other day than Monday we shall take a full day off the following Monday." In that way every one who got a holiday at all would have a two-day or maybe a three-day vacation. In a similar way business men could adjust themselves to having the mid-week free from interruptions.

It will be at once evident that when there are so many holidays in the world no World Calendar can be so arranged that all holidays will fall on Monday. Yet a goodly number of them do link up with the week-end; December 31 or 30 follows Saturday, January 1 falls on Sunday, Leap-Year Day, or June 30 or 31 follows Saturday, Labor Day may easily be Monday, September 4, and Christmas Day falls on Monday. If other holidays

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were retained in their present positions in respect to The World Calendar—for instance, Wednesday, July 4—a business man would at least know where to find them. He would not be confronted with the problems which arise as a major holiday advances, during a series of years, past the week-end—falling on a Thursday, let us say, and thus making Friday a bad business day, or falling on a Tuesday and making Monday a bad business day.

But there could easily be a general agreement, under The World Calendar, that the important holidays in every country—those which really cause a general cessation of work—should be assigned to Monday. Holidays are usually either seasonal or anniversaries. If they are seasonal—for example, if they mark the beginning of any one of the four solstices—they can be shifted a day or two. June 18 or June 25 feels as much like summer as does June 21.

As to anniversaries we must remember that there is and can be no such thing as an exact anniversary. Under our present calendar we celebrate a day which we call December 25, but actually we begin each celebration (between Leap Years) about six hours too soon. This is because it takes the earth not 365 but 365.2422 days to get around the sun. When we throw in a Leap Year we catch up or drop back, whichever way one looks at it but the interval is 366 days. An exact anniversary would have to begin at a certain fixed spot in the earth's orbit regardless of what time the clock said it was. The exactness would hardly compensate for the confusion.

In dealing with holidays, of course, we must never forget the emotions and habits which attach to them. Independence Day has intangible values for Americans. Bastille Day for the Frenchman, Boxing Day (the Monday after Christmas) for the Englishman, and a long list of religious holidays for those adhering to the great sects—and for many who are far from devout. How much of the pure joy of spring, there is, for instance, in a lovely Easter Sunday. How much of the pleasure of Christmas comes from the sense of the returning sun!

We don't want to destroy any of the poetry of holidays, nor do we need to. Let the holidays continue to stand for different things to different people in different countries. Let them be religious or patriotic, as they are now—or let them be merely jolly, as one supposes December Y or June L will be under The World Calendar. Let Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Confucians, Taoists, Americans, Englishmen, Irishmen, French, Italians, Germans, read their own meaning and their own traditions into the days they commemorate. The hum-

an race must reach back into time and remember. It is good for it to do so, especially in these days of fierce and rapid change. There is a comfort in feeling the kinship between oneself and one's ancestors.

Moreover, we can afford more holidays but to make good use of them. The use which a man makes of his leisure hours and days may come to be as important as the use he makes of his working periods—even more important. The schools will educate as much for hobbies and avocations as they do for trades and professions. Libraries, theaters, radio and motion picture programs, amateur athletics, parks, playgrounds, laboratories to which the layman may resort, all sorts of commercial recreation, are likely to take on even more significance than now.

The culture of a nation may come to be judged by what it does with its holidays—whether its diversions are on the whole genial, wholesome and one might even say *creative* as well as *recreative*, or whether they take the form which results in a headache the next morning.

We may come to speak of the play-week with just as much seriousness as we do of the work-week and we may do quite as much to adjust it to human needs, comfort and convenience. But it will need some thought and experiment to make it come right. The combina-

tion of Mr. Robinson's Monday-holiday plan with The World Calendar plan would seem to the present commentator an excellent beginning.

The World is, after all, linked by the intangibles—by sentiment, by customs which can be made to have a universal appeal, by attitudes which are human rather than national or racial. If we were more rational these intangibles might outweigh some of the tangibles which make trouble—the economic rivalries, the pressure of populations on frontiers, the armies and the navies. The present writer is not so naive as to believe that a World Calendar or a world agreement as to the incidence of holidays would end war and bring in the millennium. Yet there is something gained when there is international agreement about anything, no matter how small. And there could be agreement about a calendar and about the placing of at least a few holidays.

The imagination jumps ahead a little. May not the time some day come when there will be holidays that belong to the whole human race and are celebrated with equal zest at the same periods in every land on the face of the earth? These might be linked with the changing seasons but they might commemorate victories and great occasions which are human, not na-

PRINCESS . . .

(Continued from page 36)

ner in the hotel dining room—that had been specified. But she didn't want food. She wanted John Harvey; she wanted the comfort of his arms and his trust. Or even if he didn't trust her any more, she wanted him. He must understand; they fight things through together. But John Harvey was two hundred-odd miles away—and she had been warned not to make telephone calls.

The first thing to do was to get out of this place; get away where Colonel Babcock would not find her. She counted the money in her purse, feverishly—twelve dollars and some change. Twelve dollars wouldn't take her very far. But it would take her somewhere where she could think in peace.

Could she bribe a chambermaid to change clothes with her for twelve dollars? But then she would have no money. She held her head in her hands, trying feverishly to think.

For Billy and the Malloy woman mustn't get away with it, not while she had a drop of blood or a breath of life. John would see it her way when she explained it to him—he must. It would take lawyers and money—a lot of money. It would mean trying to find old servants who'd know her when she was a child, and hiring handwriting experts and taking journeys.

It was disgraceful not to have an identity stamp, a birthmark, some absolute identification. When John and she had children, she would insist upon that. Fingerprints! She stiffened for a moment, and then slumped back. No use. She had never had her fingerprints taken. And Nora Malloy's, not hers, would be on the things in her bedroom.


It would be a long fight—years, possibly—but it must be fought. She would buy those years from John's life—pay him richly for them. Later on, he could have the best laboratory in the world. If he failed her, even so she would have to fight. But he mustn't fail her. And she knew that he wouldn't.

Meanwhile, there was something at the back of her mind—something that had flashed and gone again when she thought of fingerprints. Some quick solution that would make the fight half won. What was it? She pressed her hands to her temples.

[To Be Concluded Next Month.]

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tional—some great epoch in the conquest of disease, some great liberating invention, the first steps toward the abolition of war.

Time and holidays are both, in a way, human devices, of interest and concern the world over. They might be made of real service as a means of breaking down the barriers between peoples.