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DISCIPLINE IN PRISONS

There is now a widespread defiance tion and reform that many people ridiculous than dangerous, but this is not a state of affairs which can be tolerated for the sake of encouraging a happy atmosphere. A policy of appeasement would be unlikely to have that effect. It would more probably further embitter the staff and give free rein to the bullies among the prisoners. Nor may conclusions safely be drawn from a comparison between prisons and industrial enter-

Men do not enter prison by consent and their approval need not be required for their style of life there. When rules are broken punishments should be imposed, and if necessary punishments with some sting in them. receive the necessary backing from be dangerous becomes frankly impossible.

But to leave it at that would be to solve the short-term problem at the risk of storing up even worse trouble for the future. Indiscipline cannot be condoned, but conditions in many British prisons are so bad that some disorder is not surprising. There has been so much talk about rehabilita-

of discipline in British prisons. In think of the average British prison some instances this may be more as a place of relative comfort, with much useful and stimulating activity. sion in the building programme. This | ducts of the neo-Classic era. Its archipresided over by sensitive and understanding warders. It is not a picture that would be easily recognized by those with much knowledge of the system. There is too much overcrowding, too many antiquated buildings, too many of the staff harassed and overworked for ideals often to be translated into reality.

There is already a substantial prison building programme in progress, concentrating sensibly enough on providing more training prisons. But the annual report of the Prison Department a couple of months ago was able only to offer the hope that this programme would gradually "equip the prison system with To that extent the prison officers are modern buildings that can provide justified in their demands. They must decent, though austere, living conditions for inmates and tolerable workalways difficult and may on occasion an improvement being brought about in the immediate future. Similarly, much attention has recently been devoted to developing alternatives to prison and the Criminal Justice Bill takes a number of modest steps in that direction. But there is unfortunately no reason to hope that these will have much effect in the near future in relieving the pressure on

So if British prisons are not to remain places of festering resentment there will have to be a further expanwould be expensive, but the alternative is even more distasteful. It is no use pretending that order will be preserved indefinitely in appalling conditions by draconian discipline. British public opinion would have no stomach for that over a period of time. Nor would it be a civilized way to run a modern prison system.

There have to be incentives for good conduct as well as penalties for breaking the rules. For the short or medium-term prisoner the hope of early parole ought to be a good incentive. This is not so for the long-term prisoner. In many cases his early ' release would be a danger to society, yet he cannot be left to rot without any hope of any improvement in his | Keswick Road, SW15. condition. The incentive in his case authority in enforcing the regulations. ing conditions for inmates and staff in prison, and many other prisoners The yellow door hope rather than a somewhat more distant prospect no matter how inviting. More could certainly be done in British prisons not only to prepare men for their release but also to develop an adequate system of rewards in custody. The immediate ' disciplinary challenge must be met ' strongly and effectively, but this is ' also the time to seek more lasting improvements in the system.

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING IN HONOLULU

With an appropriate Japanese bow, treaty. Within those limits each Mr Nixon has wished Mr Tanaka well in his forthcoming negotiations in Peking. He could hardly have done less. Last year's announcement of the President's intended visit to Peking was a shock not just to distinctively Japanese sensibilities. By any standard it was a discourtesy, carrying with it a touch of disdain that could

In effect Mr Nixon has readily acknowledged that Japan must in relations with China unact together. At most they can be well informed of each other's interests and intentions. That was the real

country can make its own terms with China. Each country must reach such an accommodation with China

as will best serve their interests. countries' approach to China is deeper Japan's economy. The same ties, than would appear on the surface. expressed in the security treaty, The world seen from Washington is affect relations with China. Yet the one world. No one region divides Japanese cannot but assert a degree strategic, political or economic of independence in their dealings with hardly escape notice in Japan. In interests absolutely from any other. return for Mr Nixon's backing, Mr For the Americans Japan is an impor-Tanaka has agreed that Mr Nixon's tant trading partner and the problem visits to Peking and Moscow were of their vast trade imbalance has significant steps in search of peace. taken up as much time and generated more heat in Honolulu than the supposedly contentious Chinese one. necessarily follow her own interest Japan has also been the post-war keystone of American policy in the Far inhibited by any American pressure East. Despite their new approach or advice. The two countries cannot to China the Americans want Japan

as a firm friend. Japan does not live in a world of quite such global unity. Japan is not purpose of the Honolulu meeting. a world power and does not seek the Both leaders were aware that when role. Japan inhabits two worlds. Mr Nixon went to Peking last Feb- One is the western one to which treaty. For their part the Chinese ruary the effect was to spur Japan Japan is attached inescapably by may be in no hurry to see an on to her own direct initiative. There virtue of trade, currency, and all the American withdrawal from the could still be an element of competi- complicated network by which ad- region lest it should offer opportutiveness which China might exploit, vanced capitalist economies are nity for the Russians to move in. in particular over Taiwan, an island linked. The other is Japan's historical Over Taiwan the Chinese would want China wants to detach from the and cultural world. Here the ties any withdrawal they can attain from interests of both countries. However with China are unique. Normalizing either the Japanese or the Americans, Mr Tanaka has undertaken not to relations with China is not, for Japan, but their view of this national terridisregard the concerns of his simply the recognition of a govern- tory differs from their view of the American ally. Both leaders in ment; it is an action that carries region as a whole. All three parties Honolulu have affirmed their will- with it every kind of resonance of share an interest in the detente. All

The overtones are subtle and intan-

At Honolulu these two Japanese worlds have abutted on each other. | art. The difference between the two acknowledged to be important for China: it is inherent in any links between Tokyo and Peking. Seeing the sudden turn round in China's attitude following on Mr Tanaka's election in July the Americans feared that their own detente with China could be fouled by over-hasty Japanese action.

China may not, however, wish at this point to exact strategic concessions from Japan such as the Americans fear. One opinion expressed in Peking is that Japan's developing relations with China will necessarily emasculate the American security room! ingness to maintain the security. Japanese identity and affiliations. three may be in no great haste.

BEAGLE-TYPE LIABILITY

When, in February 1971, Rolls-Royce went into receivership, the board of the company and the Government argued that no other option was open. So far as the board was concerned, this was certainly true, if no further government assistance was to be forthcoming. So far as the Government were concerned, the argument was based on a highly questionable interpretation of section 332 of the 1948 Companies Act.

This interpretation was repeated as if it were a matter of fact in the White Paper on the Rolls-Royce affair, published in January, 1972. Thus "it was clear that no (other) solution . . . could be found which was consistent with section 332 of the Companies Act 1948".

It is an interpretation which was strenuously questioned by The Times. It is therefore gratifying to find that the Commons Committee of Public (though on this occasion in relation to the Government's dealings with Upper Clyde Shipbuilders) in its latest report, published on Thursday.

The point is simple. Under section 332 persons who are deliberately

party to fraudulent trading by a company may incur unlimited liability for the company's debts, if the company is subsequently wound up. In the case of the Beagle Aircrast Company the previous Government decided to meet the company's liabilities in full. Ever since (and particularly in relation to Upper Clyde and Rolls-Royce) Whitehall has been obsessed with the dangers of entering into a "Beagle-type liability", when considering financial assistance to companies on the verge of insolvency.

Evidence published with this Public Accounts Committee report shows that for a period late in 1970 the Government withheld under section 7 of the Shipbuilding Act because they feared that granting it to UCS might incur a Beagle-type liability. And, as we have shown, the same considerations were at large

over Rolls-Royce in February, 1971. debate the tactical or industrial case so requires". It is to be hoped that for not granting money to UCS or for allowing Rolls-Royce to go into receivership. For that is past history.

certain industrial concerns will continue to find themselves unable to continue operations without Government financial support. A correct interpretation of section 332 in such cases is therefore of more than academic interest.

The Beagle case was exceptional. It was-wholly owned by the Government, which had been closely involved | after the Bank Holiday closure. in its affairs. Though the question was never put to the test, the Government might have incurred some "section 332" liability and they therefore decided that the company should cease trading and that they should meet its liabilities in full. It is difficult to maintain the assertion that the same relationship existed with UCS and Rolls-Royce.

In this context the Public Accounts Committee concludes that Whitehall ' "should not be inhibited by a strained unreasonable interpretation of section 332 from lawfully using its | powers to help a company to con-We are not concerned here to tinue in business where public policy | centre. this observation will inform future government action in this increasingly difficult area of government-It is however only too likely that industry relations.

Limits on size of lorries From Mr Stafford Langridge

Sir, It seems that too great a proportion of the public are unable to visualize the effect upon their lives of the advent of the super-lorry. They cannot have experienced them, for I feel sure we should have a general outcry against

Recently in Pewsey, Wiltshire, watched a juggernaut attempting to negotiate the town. It was too long: its rear wheels mounted the pavement with disastrous results to the curb. oncoming traffic had to be halted and reversed out of the way—the affair was quite elaborate. A "local" commented the pavement had only just been relaid. Also, I noted the long string of baulked private cars; it would be a brave—or foolhardy driver who tried to overtake. So, we advance toward Europe, Gadarene fashion—surely we can sway our new masters to grant one concession, for otherwise we may find our road system years out of date, and ' most of our minor bridges unsafe. Restrict the size of lorries—left-hand drive is wrong here, surely, but can be accepted on motorways, but the pitiless

domination of country towns and the individual should be halted now, whilst there is still time. I am, yours faithfully, STAFFORD LANGRIDGE. 3 St Ronans Avenue, Redland,

'Grand strategy'

From Air Vice-Marshal S. W. B. Menaul Sir, The BBC and Mr Michael Howard are to be congratulated on the docu-. "Grand Strategy" mentary serial which ended on August 23. This was without exception the best production of its kind yet seen on television and was clearly prepared with great care. attention to detail and a regard for historical fact so lamentably absent in other recent productions.

Mr Howard is of course a recognized expert in his field and probably the best military historian since Liddell Hart, but the series should surely emphasize that accuracy of historical content, authoritative and unbiased presentation and vivid though not over emotional photographic illustration will always

succeed where triviality and deliberately biased comment invariably fails.

It is to be hoped that there will be a further opportunity to see this splendid series again at a later date and that it will be preserved as a valuable contribution to serious military studies by future generations.

I am Sir, yours faithfully, S. W. B. MENAUL, Director General Royal United Services Institute. Whitehall, SW1. August 24.

Smoking in prison

Reading, Berkshire.

From Mr F. A. Ruddle Sir, With regard to prisoners setting fire to their furnishings, etc, where do they obtain the means of ignition? If this is allowed for smoking I suggest that no prisoners be permitted to smoke at all. Apart from benefit to health the "trading" tobacco would also end, to the advantage of discipline Yours faithfully, F. A. RUDDLE. 9 Northumberland Avenue,

An outstanding building doomed

From Mr S. MacRobert Sir, One of England's greatest buildings is soon to be destroyed without, it would seem, even a cursory mention in the national press. Grange Park in Hampshire is one of the most remarkable protectural pedigree is impeccable: among its architects were Robert Adam, William Wilkins (National Gallery, London), Robert Smirke (British Museum) and even, perhaps, Inigo Jones.

The house faces imminent destruction because, it is said, there is no use for it: the suggestion that the central portion should be retained for a permanent exhibition of neo-Classic art has not, apparently, been considered. The house will probably be destroyed by explosive (in order to forestall any moves to save it): the sound of the explosion may be audible on September 9, when the Council of Europe's exhibition "The Age of Neo-Classicism" opens at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Sir, can nothing be done to save this Yours faithfully, 1 27 Avon Court.

From Miss Elizabeth Stevens Sir, I was much impressed to read about the lengths to which the Bath City Council will go over one yellow door in the Royal Crescent. I cannot help feeling, however, that their zeal for preservation could have been more usefully deployed over a broader front. Yours faithfully,

ELIZABETH STEVENS. 36 Onslow Road. Richmond, Surrey. September 1.

Art without daylight

From Sir Charles Wheeler, PPRA Sir, I am glad Mr Hans Feibusch has spoken out against the dreadful Hayward Gallery (August 31). The exclusion of daylight denegrates its works of

The remembrance of the Rodin Exhibition held there some time ago urges me to write you supporting his suggestion, ie, the gallery's demolition, or for windows to be made in it, if indeed the horrid structure permits it. Rodin's bronzes had a dark, polished patina, each piece reflecting a hundred ceiling l lights which reduced the sculptor's breadth of form to littleness, its grandeur to pettiness. The only item one could properly see and appreciate was the magnificent "Balzac" and this because the work had a matt surface. Why do modern gallery directors dislike daylight, put in false ceilings and lavish money on harsh artificial lighting? The question re-occurred to my

mind when I first saw the Leonardo Cartoon in a darkened room in the National Gallery. Its illumination beginning at the top gradually weakens towards the bottom. It appeared so much happier when it could enjoy the daylight which it did for nearly two centuries at the Royal Academy. Imagine, if you can, the Prado putting Velasquez's "Las Meninas" in a darkened

Yours faithfully, CHARLES WHEELER, 1 22, Cathcart Road. S Kensington, SW10.

Efficient street works

From Mr Eustace H. Allan Sir, Everyone criticizes officialdom, very rarely is there a word of praise.

During last weekend the Department of Planning and Transportation of the Greater London Council undertook the mammoth task of building a traffic "umbrella" at the junctions of Oxford-Davies-South Molton Streets in order to be able to allow London Transport to start work on rebuilding Bond Street Station under the "umbrella".

The occupants of nearby premises were given due warning of what wasgoing to take place and the whole operation was carried out between the hours of midnight on Friday, August 25 and 6 am on Tuesday, the 29th. All the diversions were very efficiently signposted, there was only minimal interference with the comings and occupants and we were able to start 'business as usual" when we reopened · Yours faithfully,

EUSTACE H. ALLAN, -Director, Paris House Ltd., 41 South Molton Street, W1.

Threatened terminus

From Mr D. S. Macdonald Sir. In the Regional notebook (August (28), by John Chartres, it is stated that St Enoch station in Glasgow was built by the Midland Railway Company, Tut. Tut! Let us be fair to the Glasgow and South Western Railway Company, who had St Enoch station built to give them a new terminal in Glasgow with the advantages of being on the north bank of the River Clyde and nearer the city

Although only partially completed at the time, St Enoch station was opened in October, 1876, by the then Prince of Wales, and I see that in the meantime in each of the years 1874 and 1875 nearly half a million passengers booked at the new station. Yours faithfully.

D. S. MACDONALD, 77 Grange Loan, Edinburgh.

The Decalogue

From Canon F. H. Pickering Sir, Last Sunday evening I was ministering in a small village church to a congregation of about 20 souls of whom four were choir boys. I was talking, not preaching, on the Gospel for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity in which is summarized the Decalogue. I said that one rarely heard the Ten Commandments chosen as a theme for a sermon or rehearsed distinctly in the Holy Communion; the. I turned to the choir boys and asked whether they knew the Commandments, and all four readily confessed their utter ignorance of them.

I am now wondering whether some of present delinquencies and social miseries are partly due to our seeming neglect of them. Yours sincerely,

F. H. PICKERING, Park Lodge. Seend Cleeve, Wiltshire.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safety of Asians in Uganda

From Professor Colin Leys and others Sir, Anyone with some knowledge of conditions in Uganda must be increasingly aware that the personal safety of all men, women and children of Asian origin in that country is now seriously threatened, and especially the safety of all who now appear liable to be placed "camps", perhaps remote from Kampala where conditions will not be readily observable by the outside world.

We are surprised that in these circumstances the British government has not yet made a public statement indicating that it will hold the Ugandan government responsible for the personal security and immediate welfare of all British citizens in Uganda, regardless of their "origin", and making it clear that it will itself take any necessary measures to protect them, for example, by insisting at least on international participation in the operation of any such camps.

As a corollary to this, should there not also be a clear statement that any British citizens expelled from Uganda without their assets will receive sufficient British government financial and other assistance to enable them to establish themselves in Britain if they wish

COLIN LEYS. ALAN ANDERSON. NOAH LUCAS. J. BIRCH, J. MOHAN. ANTHONY ARBLASTER, Department of Political Theory and University of Sheffield. August 31.

Yours faithfully,

From Mr John Tatton-Winter Sir, Since you recently had the grace to publish a letter from a lady who lives in a somewhat similar environment to my own, may I offer, possibly from the wrong side of the tracks, a few comments on the Uganda Asian question, insofar as it affects people such as my-The ethics and morality of General Amin's actions have been discussed by better men than myself, so J

will not concern myself with them. The concern expressed is, I feel, somewhat overdone. Possibly seeing the numbers expected, written down, has given a false impression of the size of the problem. Scattered around in the larger cities, I very much doubt if anyone would notice them. A street like mine, for example, with a fair number of Asians already resident: if a couple of Asian families move in, who is to know whether they came from Uganda or Birmingham?

The popular nonsense about Britain already being an overcrowded island can be answered thus: Is another 0.1 per cent going to make all that much

I hold no particular brief for the Asians. Their clannishness and selfimposed isolation is an unwelcome feature of life in this part of the world. Very different are the West Indians whom many of us here have learnt to meet, and associate with, on something approaching equal terms.

To be realistic, the impact of these peoples' arrival on the man in the street (my street?) may well be minimal to. the vanishing point. 1 am. Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN TATTON-WINTER, 37 Cambray Road, Balham, SW12. August 29.

From Mr George Pole

Sir, The official cries of horror against General Amin for his action in expelling Asians has a hollow ring for those colonial officials who know the African and advised HMG at the time of independence will have predicted it and advised the Government of the day accordingly. The surprise is that it has taken so long. It is therefore a crime against this country that so many British passports, creating the situation which exists today, should have been issued at the time. Citizenship of any country is a valuable status conferred automatically only by right of birth in the country of citizenship, and only exceptionally otherwise.

With the passing of the British Empire. disappeared also the status "British" and the responsibilipeoples granted independence, minorities territories. Prominent in the agitation for that independence, were leading members of these minority communities. They cannot now expect their cake and eat it!

There are attempts by attacking Amin to draw attention away from the central issue—that of the officially approved, but popularly opposed, massive influx of aliens into this country. One has heard much about the "rights" of

Asians holding British passports and indeed, we have been subjected by some sections of the mass media to accept, as undisputed fact, these rights, but we have heard almost nothing of the rights of the indigenous people of these islands: to priority in jobs. housing, education, a rising standard of living, and an envir

onment and community which is not

alien to them. The over-riding duty of a Government is to govern in the interests of the people it governs. The Government's decision to allow in unspecified numbers of East African Asians (there has been much double-talk about the actual numbers involved) is manifestly a culpable act calling for the impeachment of those responsible, for it is carrying a stage further the colonization of our cities, which, in the past, blood and treasure has been spent to prevent.

So wide-spread and deep among all seations of the country, irrespective of political allegiances, is the feeling of resentfulness against the Government over this issue, that I fear the repercussions will have serious political consequences. It is understandable that, in a mood of despair, people who would not otherwise do so, are now looking to Enoch Powell for the kind of leadership that they feel will put this country's interests first.

With the bewildered and frustrated feeling on the part of the governed. and the acceptance of their inability to influence important events, democracy's future is threatened, and its position had not been helped by the widening gulf between Government and people. acting in the way, it has done over the Uganda Asians, the Government has hastened democracy's demise in this

Yours faithfully, GEORGE POLE, 94 Cornwall Gardens, SW7.

From Bishop Stuart Sir, I have seldom been more shocked than I was by Mr A. E. Cooper's letter. Some of the students and residents from Uganda he wants to deport from the United Kingdom I know well, as also knew their parents and often their grandparents, and they are some of the finest men and women I know. Thank God we have a Prime Minister (and Foreign Secretary) who is an honourable man who will do what is right without regard to such letters as Mr Yours sincerely.

C. E. STUART. Formerly Bishop of Uganda, Liberty Cottage, Gorran Haven, St Austell, Cornwall.

From Mr H. A. Vicary Sir, Mr Nicholas Winterton says in his letter (August 25) "The people of this country are looking for a leader who will put the interests of this country and its people first". Fortunately not all of them are; I wish none of them were. Certainly the British government ought to stand up for the rights of Britain, but it should do so out of a concern for justice and for the interests of humanity as a whole, not out of national

Our recent industrial troubles have shown what naturally results when a group of men devote themselves exclusively to sectional interests, abandoning Christian and Humanist moral principles and not even displaying particularly enlightened self-interest. Excessive devotion to one's country can be as dangerous as excessive devotion to one's trade, union or one's social class. Yours faithfully,

H. A. VICARY, 2 Abbs Road, Norwich.

From Mr James Haigh

Sir, The announcement by Corby New Town Development Corporation that Corby has room for only five to 10 families of Ugandan Asians is most puzzling. After a decision earlier this year by the corporation to demolish an 18-year-old block of four flats because they have been empty for years and cannot be let, my wife spent a morning touring one estate and found there 40 empty dwellings, 18 of which were boarded up. None was more than 18

One can only suppose that the corporation deliberately keeps 50 to 100 dwellings empty as a lure to employers they are trying to persuade to move to the town. At a time like this should not accommodation built at government expense be made available to the refugees? Yours faithfully, JAMES HAIGH, 3 Kirby Close,

Corby, Northamptonshire.

Downland flora

From Mr John Buxton

Sir, Your correspondent, Mr Christopher Booker (August 26), says, with reference to the excellent recent article by Ben Darby on downland flora, that 'any financial scheme which might encourage the protection of these remaining examples of our downland flora would not come a moment too soon". May I say that we in the Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation entirely agree with him, and hope that some such scheme as outlined by Mr Darby may prove possible.

In the meantime we have done, and are doing, whatever we can by means of covenants with land-owners and farmers, and in other ways, to preserve the best of what remains. For three quarters of the surviving downland turf in the country is in Wiltshire, and is therefore especially our concern. But it cannot be wholly our concern; for Wiltshire is not yet densely populated—under halfa million at the last census—yet since the opening of M4 last Christmas it is within two hours' reach of London. And that has made the work of conservation still more urgent if anything of the flowers and butterflies of the chalk downs is to be left for future genera-

For that reason the trust with its slender funds, and with generous help from the county council, has been doing all it can in the last 10 years to protect Yours faithfully,

JOHN BUXTON, Chairman Executive Committee, Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation, Cole Park, Malmesbury.

August 26.

Use of museum charges From Mr Hugh Leggatt Sir, Mr Kenneth Walthew (August 26)

pleads that proceeds from admission charges at the British Museum should be devoted to effecting improvements in the inadequate library service, and Mr A. R. Ward (August 30) also refers to such a possibility. The present intention of the Government is however that, if and when such charges should be introduced, the proceeds (after 10 per cent value-added tax has been pocketed by the Customs and Excise) should go to the Exchequer and be treated as an appropriation in aid of the Vote. In other words, the Treasury is to economize by reducing pro tanto the funds which it makes available for running expenses.

There can be no doubt that the vast majority of those who visit the museum and make use of its facilities would wish that, if the are to be required to pay for the first time in the history of the institution, the income from this source should at the very least be placed at the sole disposal of its trustees. In this connection it is relevant to point out that at the annual general meeting of the National Art-Collections Fund June 14 last the following resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority: "The NA-CF expresses its support for the amendment to the Museums and Galleries Admission Charges Bill, tabled

by Mr David Price and other MPs, to the effect that proceeds from any future charges to the national museums and galleries should be at the disposal of the institutions themselves; and approves that the text of this resolution be notified to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a copy to the Paymaster-General." Yours faithfully. HUGH LEGGATT,

30 St James's Street, SW1.

August 26.

When cows have a choice

From Mr A. G. Lyman-Dixon

Sir, I do not doubt for a second that Major Bell (August 28) has picked up some considerable farming experience during his military career and indeed is even now producing tons of food for our hungry nation from his home in Park Avenue, Woking. Perhaps, therefore, he can help me in my present

There is nothing I like more than to put on my smock on a fine sunny morning, tie up my trouser legs with bindertwine and go out and throw grain to my chickens with a straw stuck between my

However my cows do not seem to appreciate this eschewing of "modern intensive methods". They spend six months of the year cruelly shut up in sheds, where they have heated water troughs, straw beds and regular meals . . and yet the poor things are never let out for a jolly scamper in the snow or a wallow in the mud. But come spring, they are turned out into fields, where they have to feed themselves, where they are persecuted by flies in summer and are afflicted by liver fluke in the autumn and where they have to walk half a mile to water themselves in a spring which they have made filthy;

all as free and natural as nature in-- All this veritably Arcadian summer freedom and yet if they are brought past their winter quarters for some reason, they endeavour to stampede through the doors and if left undisturbed, settle down for a comfortable cud. What can I do? The stupidity and lack of gratitude of my cows is begin.

ning to sap my morale. I have another problem too. As an increasingly intensive farmer I try my utmost to do what is right by our horrid reputation and utterly destroy the soil structure and therefore, as far as this farm is concerned, our national heritage. But we find that the humus increases, porosity improves, the structure betters itself and productivity shoots up, the more animals we cram in.

I don't know which way to turn. J think I'll go and unhitch Dobbin from the muck cart and go and sit on a wurzel to contemplate how to make my customers happy by carrying on a mediaeval peasant technique of husbandry, whilst the other half of the world starves. Yours faithfully,

A. G. LYMAN-DIXON. Lyman-Dixon Farms, Lower House, Felindre, Knighton, Radnorshire. August 31.

Reading room delays

From Professor C. Scott Littleton Sir. As a visiting scholar who has experienced delays in the reading room of the British Museum similar to those described by Mr Kenneth Walthew (August 26) and others, I have a suggestion that might speed things up: eliminate the time-consuming process of delivering books to readers' desks. As books become available, seat numbers could be flashed on a large, electronic sign board located high enough to be visible throughout the room. Books could then be obtained from a central

Similar systems have long proved effective in many major American university libraries, among them the library of the University of California, and I see no reason why the process would not work equally effectively at the British Museum. The initial cost of installation would be more than made up by the increased efficiency of the whole operation. Yours faithfully.

C. SCOTT LITTLETON, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Occidental College, Los Angeles. Kemsing, near Sevenoaks, Kent.

Escaped lioness

47 Barrack Road,

August 29.

Christchurch, Hampshire.

From Mr Basil Druitt Sir. It is reported in The Times and elsewhere that the escaped and pregnant lioness at Woburn had been harassed by other lions. Does such harassment normally occur, in the wild or in safari parks, if the animals have sufficient acreage per family or "pride"? ask because expert observers of animal behaviour seem to think otherwise, and their public response to the question would be interesting. Yours faithfully. BASIL DRUITT,

From Mrs Leonard Smeed Sir, I am not by nature sentimental over animals but the killing of the Woburn lioness this week has left me feeling very sad about today's standards and the worship of money.

If the Duke of Bedford must choose to have wild animals to draw in yet more crowds, and yet more money, he should. I feel, be at least be prepared to allow these animals some rights. And surely one of these rights was for this poor old lioness to have her

cubs in peace, and for once, to deny the humans entry until she was recaptured from her known hiding place. Yours faithfully, DAPHNE A. SMEED,

187 Terringes Avenue. West Worthing, Sussex.

Ploughman's lunch

From Mr Clement Jones Sir, As a result of being in Berlin at this time, I have only just caught up (through your invaluable air mail editions) with the correspondence about

the ploughman's lunch. As a plough boy, 50 years ago, my lunch was farm baked bread, often a week or more old but still firm and sweet, salty butter, red "mousetrap" cheese, fruit cake and buttermilk.

And five hours after breakfast it was more than welcome. CLEMENT JONES. Express and Star. Wolverhampton. August 29.

From Mr J. E. Plowman Sir, They like Parma ham and melon. Fillet steak. Cheese soufflé.

washed down by a bottle of good claret. I know. Yours faithfully,

J. F. PLOWMAN, Lane Farm. Church Lane, Lacey Green. Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.