



## EDITORIAL

In a previous editorial I remarked upon the policies adopted by cruise lines in relation to passengers who died or became ill on voyages and their apparently mercenary attitude to such misfortunes [2010] TLQ 5. However, speaking to the hotel director of a major cruise line recently it is apparent that this cuts both ways. He related the story of the woman on one of his cruises who died on board and her body had to be repatriated. No sooner was her premium cabin vacated than he had an approach from another passenger enquiring whether it would be possible to have an upgrade! "Would you jump in my grave so quick?" is the phrase that jumps to mind, and the answer in this case would be clearly positive.

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They say that travel broadens the mind but when I hear this I am reminded of the army recruiting poster which declared "Join the army. Visit exotic places. Meet interesting people" the spirit of which was corrupted by the addition of another line "And kill them." While not subscribing to this homicidal policy I admit to being sceptical about the benevolent effect that travel has on the average tourist. To take a personal example, let's look at the passenger in the next stateroom to ours on our recent cruise. Once you know that he came from Gun Barrel City, Texas, pop. 5145, motto "We shoot straight with you" (yes it really does exist) that is all you really need to know about him. As a staunch Republican he did not believe in what he called 'socialised medicine' nor in welfare handouts, nor in gun control and he and I spent a week hurling spurious statistics at each other in an effort to convince the other of the righteousness of our respective points of view.

Subsequently, he has emailed me with stories from what he calls 'left wing sources', CNN and the Houston Chronicle, which support his view that people on welfare are just work shy scroungers, while I respond by searching for figures on the number of Americans who have no form of medical insurance to prove my point that the richest country in the world is failing its most vulnerable citizens. Somehow I doubt that I will change his mind and certainly he won't change mine – unless of course he threatens to shoot me with one of the many guns he possesses, which until now have been confined to shooting rattlesnakes.

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Banff and Jasper National Parks in the Canadian Rockies must contain some of the most stunningly beautiful scenery on earth – jagged snow bound peaks, emerald green glacial lakes, sparkling rivers and immense glaciers all combine to create a landscape which is truly breathtaking. And through the parks run the great transcontinental railway lines that were constructed in the late 19th century to bind the country together and discourage interest from below the 49th parallel. But having built the railway in such a wilderness who would travel on it? The answer was provided by Sir William Cornelius Van Horne, Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who said, in a memorable quote "If we can't export the scenery, we'll import the tourists" and he proceeded to build both the Banff Springs Hotel and the Chateau Lake Louise; the former the largest hotel in the world when it was built and the latter a suitably grand structure to complement the lake it faces. And certainly the tourists arrived, and they still come today in their hordes, by car rather than rail, crawling over the scenery and disturbing the

silence. I wonder whether Sir William would have approved of modern mass tourism – whether it filled his hotels or not.

David Grant  
Co-Editor

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