

The Guardian

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"The strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink."

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1956

New Life In Senate?

An Ottawa press dispatch expresses the opinion that new life and interest have been injected into the Senate of Canada by the thirteen new members who were appointed last summer. It is to be hoped that the opinion is well based, for certainly the upper chamber could do with a little fresh stimulation. It may not be exactly an "old man's home" as some of its more outspoken critics have called it, but neither is it a place of much liveliness; at least, it hasn't been for some years past.

At least one of them has made a very fine and appropriate speech in which he has allayed fears that his fifty years of political life under the Liberal banner would prevent his saying anything but "yes, yes" to every single jot of government policy. Specifically, Senator C. G. Power says he does not believe in the infallibility of the Cabinet. He urges Senatorial restraint on an "otherwise omnipotent ministry". These are courageous words. They are, moreover, words that needed to be said, as long as they do not indicate fractiousness for its own sake, which is most unlikely in Mr. Power's case.

It is common knowledge that at least two or three members of the present Cabinet consider themselves to be both infallible and omnipotent. This is due in part to their long tenures, and, in part, to the big parliamentary majority they seem to have at their beck and call. Even if all Senators were as independent in their approach to political questions as Senator Power evidently is—and, of course, they are not—it is doubtful that they could do much in a direct way towards restraining governmental indiscretion in any particular circumstance. Indeed, the constitutional limitations under which they operate would make such a course well nigh impossible. Nevertheless, even one Senator who is not afraid to speak his mind when he feels the government is in error can exercise a really good influence—though perhaps an indirect one—on governmental ways. Incidentally, there is no reason in the world why any of the new Senators should feel under obligation to the Cabinet. The Prime Minister, to his credit, made that quite clear when he gave them their appointments.

Shorter And Livelier

The first test of the new speaking rules of the House of Commons, applied to the debate on the Draft Address, has been an unqualified success, according to Mr. Grant Dexter, one of the most experienced members of the Press Gallery. Writing in the Winnipeg Free Press, Mr. Dexter says the most noticeable and entirely unlooked for effect was in the manner of speaking. There was an astonishing reduction in the number of speakers who read from manuscript. Nearly all the speakers spoke either from a few headings or extemporaneously.

The explanation is interesting. Under the old rules, there was no deadline and therefore no pressure to be ready to speak at a particular time. The tendency was for members to prepare a speech which would not become stale and outdated if it were left unspoken for a week or two. Under the new rules, the debate is limited to 10 days. On the tenth day the division bells rang and the final vote was taken.

Many highly interesting and encouraging developments flowed from the limitation in time. Realizing that there would be only so many hours of debate—actually 57 hours and 15 minutes—the parties divided the time. Formerly, there was no need to divide time because everyone who desired to do so could speak.

The division this year was made, roughly, to conform with the strength of the parties. The Liberals took 49 per cent of the time; the Conservatives 28 per cent; the

C.C.F. 16 per cent; and the Social Creditors, 9 per cent. The three independents were bulked with the Liberals.

The fact that each party possessed only the given amount of time resulted in the shortening of speeches by 25 per cent. The rules restrict speakers, other than the leaders of the government and of the Conservative party, and speakers advancing or replying to no-confidence motions, to 40 minutes. Under the new rules, there were 110 speakers and the average speech was just under 30 minutes. The number of speakers was considerably lower than in 1955 (134 speakers); 1954 (124 speakers); or 1953 (160 speakers).

Members could never be sure of when they would speak because the exigencies of the debate might counsel delay. They might be asked to stand aside in favor of a colleague. Where the debate was unrestricted, there was no reason why this constant shuffling of speakers should not take place. In these circumstances, it became the practice for members to prepare a speech which would keep indefinitely. They would dictate it and have it, so to speak, on tap. Such speeches, inevitably, lacked liveliness and timeliness and this undoubtedly accounts for the dullness of past debates on the Address. But with the new rules, the pressure of time has held shuffling of speakers to a minimum and has caused a very high value to be placed on every minute of debate.

The next major test will be the budget debate. Here the debate is restricted to 8 days. Formerly there was no limitation, and since 1951 the debate has run from 9 to 16 days. It is anticipated, however, that the real gain here, as with the debate on the Address, will be from the shortening and brightening of the speeches—results only attainable, apparently, where there is a limitation of time.

There is a hint here that our local legislators could work on profitably. A new broom sweeps clean and the new Assembly could get away to a good start this week by making the formal speeches shorter and livelier.

Illiteracy

With so many big issues involving war and peace occupying the attention of free world governments, public opinion is apt to overlook one of the pressing problems of the times, illiteracy. Yet, notwithstanding the great emphasis that is being placed on education, the inability to read or write is still the lot of hundreds of millions of human beings. In Latin America alone there are 45 million adults who are utterly illiterate, and as many more who can just barely read or write their own names. In an attempt to do something to rectify this unfortunate situation, the Organization of American States, made up of the 21 independent nations in the Western hemisphere, has made a gift of some 100,000 books to Costa Rica in Nicaragua. They are being distributed to teachers in 1500 centres in each of the two countries for use in classes where beginners—from 8 to 80—are given elementary instruction in reading and writing. These 3000 centres are just a beginning. In time, officials of the O.A.S. hope to have as many as 100,000 such centres scattered over Latin America.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Advertising is still the mainstay of business. This year, it is estimated, American industry will spend \$9 billion in that field, as against about \$2 billion for industrial research.

The Chinese press celebrated the New Year by changing its method of printing Chinese characters. In future the people of Pekin will read their newspapers from left to right, Western fashion, instead of following the print from top to bottom of the page, in the traditional way.

Publication is announced in Israel of "The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness", an important study by Dr. Yigal Yadin on one of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scroll, which according to Dr. Yadin was written about the year 40 B.C., tells the story of a war between the tribes of Levi, Judah and Benjamin, representing the Sons of Light, and a league of neighbouring enemy nations, the Sons of Darkness.



Getting Closer

"Gentlemen: I Present ..."

(By Heath Macquarrie)

Most after-dinner speakers have had their moments of discomfort during the ceremony which inevitably precedes any public address. The "introduction of the speaker" is a well-established piece of ritual, which is designed to instruct, enlighten, and perhaps amuse the audience before it is delivered to the tender mercies of the guest speaker. But while this part of the program is being carried out the usual roles are reversed and it is the speaker, not the audience, who faces the hazards of the spoken word! In that broad category of embarrassing introductions there are a number of standard types, but perhaps the following are the most familiar.

Mistaken Identity. A common but not very painful type. The introduction is something less than perfect because the chairman has forgotten the speaker's name. For the resourceful chairman there are several ways out of this dilemma. Substitution is fairly easy, but it is important that the name chosen for the occasion be retained throughout the whole introduction. Perhaps the worst form which this type can take is that of the chairman who hopes that during his introduction the speaker's name will "come back" to him. If, after a glowing recital of the speaker's merits, he has to confess "I'm sorry, but I don't know his name" the occasion will be retained.

The Filibuster. The most common type of all. Consists simply of chairman displaying his regard for the speaker by consuming about nine tenths of his allotted speaking time. A twenty-five minute introduction of a speaker who was committed to a twenty minute speech is a very common example of this variety.

The Steal-Your-Thunder Type. Also fairly common. Here the chairman anticipates the speaker by giving his views on the announced subject matter, adding perhaps,

The Poet's Corner
WIRE JUNGLE
Once a genius with pliers
Spent his idle hours with wires:
Took a length and twirled and twisted
Till it went the way he wished it.
Push the bedroom door discreet—
Now this long forgotten clown
Keeps the whole world bending down.
Reach into a closet dark,
Looking for a place to park
Overcoat or evening jacket...
Lovely Lucky, what a racket!
Grabbed a hanger, nothing more.
Thirteen others hit the floor!

Sneaking home from "clandestine"
Everything is going fine:
Wife is sleeping, breathing sweetly.
Push the bedroom door discreetly.
Empty hanger hooked on nail
Breaks out like a nightingale!

At the office, five to five.
Everybody makes a dive
For their clothing—what a huddle.
What a rarin' tearin' muddle!
Hangers hooked around your feet
Trailing halfway to the street.

Slippery, restive, dark and dire
Are coat hangers made from wire;
Thin, elusive, "puzzle-looping"
Keep a man, forever stooping.
Banish them I say, for good!
Let us stick to ones of wood!

RESCUED OFF BERMUDA
NORFOLK, Va. (A.)—A coast guard cutter has picked up all 21 men aboard a navy seaplane patrol bomber forced to land Friday on the ocean 110 miles southwest of Bermuda. No one was injured. The plane sustained no damage in the emergency landing. The cutter took the plane in tow for the trip to Bermuda.

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open to the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinions of correspondents.

CAUSEWAY OR TUNNEL

Sir—It is impossible to understand the attitude of those who have recently resurrected the construction of a causeway, and who, through various agencies, have requested that no alternative be suggested, even by Members of Parliament. In other words—all should back the causeway.

Mr. T. J. Kichham, the Federal member for Kings County, believing that a tunnel would be better than a causeway, has had the courage of his convictions and has disobeyed by publicly expressing his views; but I for one think that he has acted wisely and properly in not allowing himself to be silenced.

Let those who would dominate public opinion remember that this is a Democracy and that if the Federal Government considers our present means of transportation inadequate, surveys will be made of both propositions, and let us hope the result will be satisfactory to all concerned.

I am, Sir, etc.
THOS. V. GRANT
Senate Chamber,
Ottawa, Feb. 17th.

CAUSEWAY PROPOSAL

Sir—You are to be congratulated on the editorials you have published in your paper recently on the proposed causeway, which if ever built will link P.E.I. with the mainland, and also the Charlottetown Board of Trade for the part they are starting to play in this matter.

It was very distressing to read in your paper the other day Mr. Tom Kichham's reaction on the causeway. I would say Mr. Kichham was entirely out of order in making his statement when he did. It would have been better had he held off until this proposal was thoroughly investigated and estimates given of cost and length of time it would take to build the causeway. Then if it was not feasible let him come out with his proposals.

There seems no reason why this causeway can't be built, and it is the answer to our problem of getting on and off the Island. It is up to every organization, Boards of Trade, associations and large business concerns to push and push hard for the Government in Ottawa and on the Island to lose no time in having surveys made and the reports given out to the press whether it can be built or not; then if it can, lose no time. Forget politics, forget petty grievances, forget everything but the causeway!

I was speaking to a gentleman not long ago, and he claims this can be built in eighteen months and that there is lots of rock not far away from either ends on both the Island and mainland for this project. If his remarks are correct, which I hope they are, perhaps we will not have to wait so long for it. It is gratifying to read and to know Premier Matheson is behind this project, and in all sincerity, I know the Premier will do his best to get things rolling.

I hope that the Federal Government will not use this causeway for a political football in the next Dominion election, but lose no time in getting the machinery rolling to make the start. And I hope that for once the people will unite in one mind and body and get moving on it too. Let the papers be told the straight facts. I do not think the fish will be harmed in any way, that it will disrupt any fishing grounds, or that the ice will pile up on the causeway in the winter, as it does not pile up on or at the ends of the Island.

I am, Sir, etc.
KEITH PRATT
Bloomfield Station.

The Age Old Story

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Medically Speaking

By Herman N. Sandosen, M. D.

RHEUMATIC HEART VICTIM NEED NOT BE AN INVALID

One rheumatic fever attack does not necessarily mean your child must lead the life of an invalid. One-third of the children with rheumatic heart disease recover without any demonstrable heart injury. And another third—while showing some signs of cardiac damage—are able to lead normal or almost normal lives.

Persons with rheumatic heart disease don't suddenly drop dead. The heart, like other body organs, is designed to do more work than it generally has to do. So even if a rheumatic fever attack leaves it a little out of kilter, the patient probably will be able to lead a fairly active life.

It's up to your doctor, of course, to decide just what the youngster can and can't do. Don't limit your child's activities unnecessarily simply because he has a heart murmur. Follow the doctor's advice in this matter.

Some children will have to be excused from competitive sports although they will be able to attend regular school classes. If there is much stair climbing in the home, it may be wise to seek permission for your youngster to arrive in class a few minutes late and leave a few minutes early.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Vocational guidance is essential for many cardiac children. It should begin in the last year of elementary school and be carried on throughout high school.

Now there are few cardiacs who can't earn their own living and many have an earning capacity just as high as anyone else. But for those whose activities are restricted, it's a good thing to plan early for future jobs.

This must be worked out jointly by your parents, the physician, school authorities, vocational counselors and, of course, the child himself. He should find work where he will not have to do physical labor. He should also avoid working in dampness, dust or in other bad hygienic surroundings.

PERMITTED TO MARRY

As for the girls who once had a rheumatic fever attack, marriage and motherhood generally are perfectly all right. The average young woman who can do light housework or office work and go walking and shopping without developing heart symptoms probably should not fear becoming a mother.

Go to medical care from the beginning of pregnancy. It is important, however, because she does run a greater risk than a woman with a healthy heart. The most important thing to remember is to consult your doctor about any major steps you plan.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

E. C.: What are vitreous floaters and what causes them?

Answer: Vitreous floaters refer to small bits of material which are loose in the fluid in the back part of the eye. This condition may arise in a number of different ways such as from bleeding, etc. You should consult with an eye specialist concerning the possibility of treatment for it.

Lasting Monument

(Chatham News)

Before Jack Miner died, his name appeared in the Book of Knowledge, in its listing of the world's fifteen great men—a listing that includes Edison, Ford, Pasteur, Bell, Churchill and Aristotle.

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Now the famous naturalist has won another enduring recognition which, through the years to come, will make his name increasingly familiar to the school children of the United States.

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The lessons of Kindness and Conservation which he consistently taught, and which he illustrated in the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary at Kingsville, just east of him, in imperishable print, this living and lasting monument.

DIES OF INJURIES

CHICOUTIMI, Que. (CP)—Eight-year-old Therese Leclerc, who remained unconscious from the time she was struck by an automobile last Sept. 4, died Friday. The little girl, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Welle Leclerc of Chicoutimi, had been in Hotel Dieu Hospital here since the accident.

PLAYWRIGHT RECOVERING

TORQUAY, Eng. (AP)—Sean O'Casey, 71, ailing Irish playwright, was reported "comfortable" in hospital here Saturday. He underwent a minor operation a week ago.

EXECUTORS AND TRUSTEES FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY

ASCOT, England (AP)—Sir John Crocker Bulteel, one of Britain's top horse racing officials and secretary of the royal Ascot Track, died Saturday. He was 67. Bulteel handled arrangements for all royal visits to Ascot.

RACE OFFICIAL DIES

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Notes By The Way

There is good precedent for simplicity (in writing). The Bible says, "Heal the sick," not "Rehabilitate those who are suffering from psychophysical maladjustment!"—Branford Expositor.

One wonderful thing about those little celluloid stiffeners that come in shirt collars is that they are the only item you can throw away without finding some need for later on.—Winnipeg Tribune.

It would help the peace of the world this year too if a few wise men were to go to Bethlehem. The Arab-Israeli conflict needs them there.—Kingston Whig-Standard.

With small boys in long pants and grown men in knee pants and women wearing pants of all dimensions, it's got so you can't tell either the age or the sex by the apparel. At least that was the thought that went through our minds while watching 800 young people skating at a rink. Didn't see one girl wear a skirt!—Bowmanville Statesman.

In Lewiston two enterprising mothers have embarked upon a plan to help solve the expensive problem of hiring baby-sitters in their area. They are organizing an exchange system, whereby mothers would go to baby-sit for each other. There's a sound idea. Such a pool has economic advantages. All it takes is a bit of initiative to get going.—Niagara Falls Review.

Jean Paul St. Laurent is quite welcome to his claim that he is the only man to see the Prime Minister in his pyjamas.—St. Catharines Standard.

Only about 3 1/2 percent of Canada's milk production is surplus, but that dribble can cause a lot of trouble.—Farmer's Advocate.

The \$2 Haircut has arrived in Chicago. The men are getting thoroughly trimmed.—St. Catharines Standard.

When people think of Canada, says Mayor Nathan Phillips, they had to walk to school, lived exactly three miles from the schoolhouse.—London Free Press.

What a tragedy to learn to read but never really read. Or read only trash. The world is in turmoil, even revolution. It is never more important to know what is going on, what is wrong, what others propose that we do about it. Only thus can we be intelligent citizens of our community, our nation and our world. Good newspapers, magazines and books are available—at least some are available. But too many of us turn to the soap opera and its like and to little else—World Call Magazine.

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