

The Press Editorials

● OPINIONS ● FEATURES ● COLUMNS

Does It Make Sense?

Everyone seems to agree that there are far too many school dropouts and that something should be done about them.

The State Legislature recognizes the problem as "critical" but it won't give the schools the money they need to do the job. For some reason, which is a curious comment on current values and priorities, we appear to be more willing to finance measures designed to correct problems after they have developed than to support preventive efforts that would have kept them from developing in the first place.

A good example of the State's approach to the dropout problem is the major anti-dropout legislation passed last month by the Legislature and signed by Governor Brown—Sen. McAteer's Senate Bill 115.

The McAteer bill sets up a consultant in the State Department of Education and establishes a pilot program which will provide for experimental studies in nine school districts. It will help a few thousand children on a pilot program basis. This is fine as far as it goes, but obviously avoids tackling the problem head-on.

We have no objection to the philosophy of the McAteer bill. Research, pilot programs and consultants help to evolve, improve and promote worthwhile programs. But this bill affects only a handful of children, compared to the tremendous need throughout the State.

The McAteer bill will serve no permanently useful purpose unless it results in large-scale appropriations after the two-year study. If the 1965 Legislature appropriates the money required to reduce dropouts, then the McAteer program can be considered a magnificent forward step.

Californians are willing to spend millions of dollars for corrective measures—for mental health, aid to needy children, unemployed, correctional institutions—but we turn tight-fisted when it comes to providing the crucial ounce of prevention.

Does this make sense?

Social Conscience

When the state legislature closed its doors for summer, in the haste to get through business members failed to pass a bill which would have provided funds to finance legislation they have already approved.

The Bill was Bill 636.

Funds provided by the bill would have implemented expansion of Short-Doyle services.

Under the Short-Doyle Act, which was passed in 1957, communities are encouraged to establish locally administered and locally controlled mental health programs.

The law has resulted in a substantial increase of services which help the mentally ill in their own communities. Senate Bill 636 would increase to 75 percent the amount the state government may reimburse local governments for these services.

Last Monday the legislature reconvened in special session. If citizen interest is aroused, our legislators could conceivably give high priority to reconsidering Bill 636.

This would be an appropriate action of social consciousness.

UNIVERSITY EXPLORER

100-Year Dispute Continues Afresh

The University Explorer brings you regularly the views or findings of a University of California authority on a topic of current interest.

In the early summer of the year 1863, the American Civil War stood at a half-way point. Nearly two more years of bitter fighting would take place, including some of the bloodiest campaigning; but the greatest battle of the war, perhaps the most fateful engagement between Waterloo and the Marne, occurred that summer during the first three days of July. It all happened in the rolling farmland outside the quiet little country town of Gettysburg in southeastern Pennsylvania. Gettysburg was the war's turning point, for after that climactic battle the decline of the Confederate States of America began in earnest.

If Gettysburg provides the climax of the Civil War, then the climax of the climax, the central moment, perhaps of American history, occurred on the third day of the battle. That was when General George Pickett led his well-drilled troops in a massive assault

on the Union Center at Cemetery Ridge. The attack was a disastrous failure. The Union was saved.

Years of Controversy

As with all great battles, the tumult and chaos of the fighting on Cemetery Ridge began in after years an equal tumult and chaos of controversy. For a century now, commentators from both the North and South have been debating the pros and cons of Pickett's Charge. What really happened there on Cemetery Ridge at the high-water mark of fighting? Why did General Lee order the ill-fated attack in the first place? Who was really responsible for its failure? These and many more questions have plagued military historians and students of the Civil War ever since the summer of 1863.

What must be the most thorough study ever undertaken of the famous assault is George E. Stewart's "Pickett's Charge." Dr. Stewart is professor of English literature, emeritus, on the Berkeley campus of the University of California.

In his book, subtitled "A Micro-history of the Final Attack at Gettysburg," Stewart has reconstructed the

From The Reporter

It is part of human nature to wish to censor what appears offensive, dangerous, or merely unpleasant. It is part of political maturity to stifle that desire. In the early 1930's, the Florida Chamber of Commerce complained because a geography textbook contained more pictures of California than of Florida. In the Middle West, more recently, a well-intentioned lady started a campaign against Robin Hood who, by taking from the rich and giving to the poor, seemed to her a Marxist in disguise.

On Long Island, a social-studies teacher cut out of the school library books all references to "bundling" in a discussion of courtship in colonial days, thus aiming at being more Puritan than the Puritans and, at the same time, advocating the mutilation of books. And in Los Angeles, a Hearst newspaper not long ago started a crusade against an allegedly subversive music book because it contained a "ditty from behind the Iron Curtain." The offensive song, "Swing the Shining Sickle," turned out to be an American harvest song, vintage 1897, leaving the newspaper sleuths' faces somewhat redder than their target.

Window Dressing

These are only a few examples of the collection of censorship stories interspersed in The Censors and the Schools by two expert newspapermen, Jack Nelson and Gene Roberts, Jr., who started their research as Nieman Fellows at Harvard during 1961 and 1962. The comic cases are mere window dressing. They have their point: one way to defeat the censors is to laugh them out of court—and sometimes this can be done, as for instance when the Girl Scout Handbook came under suspicion of being infiltrated by subversion.

In reality, of course, censorship is not funny. Even though it may often be motivated by understandable human instincts to protect the young and offer instant security in an insecure world, political and educational freedoms depend largely on the success in taming such busybody instincts.

The process of taming the censors and preventing them from tearing and burning books is a continuous one. When the political climate is poisoned, as it was during the McCarthy era of the early 1950's the only hope is in open battle against totalitarians posing as protectors. It was then that even a man so generally unopposed about literary and intellectual issues as General Eisenhower was moved to an eloquent ad lib against book burning in an address at Dartmouth College.

Open attacks on books are generally made more obnoxious because they attract unscrupulous charlatans who consider the defense of free enterprise to mean largely the protection of

OPINIONS OF OTHERS

The Book Burners

their own enterprising freedom to make a fast buck out of hate campaigns. Allen A. Zoll, who adorned his lucrative academic career with a doctorate purchased from a diploma mill, was the classic example.

Shrill Alarms

A graduate of earlier profiteering through anti-semitic pro-fascism, he scared membership dollars out of panicky home owners and the medically uninformed. Less mercenary were the motives of a publication known as the Educational Reviewer, which sounded shrill alarms about alleged subversion in textbooks. (Today, similar efforts in the textbook field are being carried on by America's Future, Inc., which has among its textbook-reviewing staff three editors of the monthly publication of Robert Welch.) The Reviewer, like censors throughout history, employed as its favorite technique the use of "selective" or edited quotations.

In attacking one of the favorite targets of textbooks censors, the high-school text on American Government by Frank A. Magruder, the Educational Reviewer charged that it advocated collectivism. The proof was this quotation: "By Democracy we mean that form of government in which the sovereign power is in the hands of the people collectively." The trouble with this "example" was that it placed a period where there had been a comma, followed by: "and is expressed by them either directly or indirectly through elected representatives."

But although the censors' means are often shady, their battle vicious, and their aims totalitarian, I suspect that the most serious aspect of the problem is not in the examples of open combat but in the more subtle censorship that works beneath the surface. It is in the documentation of that hidden danger that this book offers the most vital service. For it seems to me that the outright defense of freedom should quite naturally be expected to be a continuing story. True, some of the skirmishes are extremely unsavory, and reputations tend to be smeared in process. Worse, some of these skirmishes are lost by the defenders of freedom, and there remain many communities and even entire regions that appear to love their censors more than liberty. But dangerous as those islands of totalitarianism may be, they are at least identifiable.

Invisible Poisons

The invisible poisons in the system, on the other hand, are hardly noticeable. For example, the fact that most high-school history textbooks refer only to the War Between the States—that South-pleasing euphemism—is a pretty sure indication that it would be naive to expect a truly honest discussion of the Civil War in books that aim at being "adopted" for mass distribution in the South.

For a long time, textbook publishers who, not unlike automobile manufacturers, were out to capture a maximum share of the market in the competition for book adoption, demonstrated their panic by the way in which they replied to even the most illiterate charges. One large textbook house was confronted with the "charge" that a line count of the index showed Republican Presidents to be given less space than Democrats. (Line counting is one of the stock yardsticks of the censors—a kind of textbook version of the equal-time theory of television.) The accommodating reply, matching the attack in foolishness, was that Lincoln, Coolidge and Hoover were single-term Presidents while Wilson served two terms and Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to four.

To the charge that the books of another firm fail to make it clear "that the government of the United States is a republic, not a democracy"—one of the chestnuts of the extreme Right, which would rather have totalitarianism replace popular government anyway—a serious "reply" offers this justification: the word "republic" does not appear in the Constitution. By way of further apology, the publishers said that the fault was with the compilers of the index, who failed to pick up the term "republic" even though it actually appeared on three pages.

And who made the "charges" that moved the publishers to apologetic replies? E. Merrill Root, a professor of English who has figured as censor-in-chief in many textbook battles, had been hired by the Mississippi legislature as an expert to investigate textbook subversion, and had been called by an Illinois legislative committee to testify on a textbook-censorship bill. An indication of the kind of books that would satisfy Professor Root is available in his own words. He has said that he believes "Kennedy and his administration are even softer on Communism than Eisenhower was."

Jefferson a Bircher?

He thinks that if Jefferson were alive today, he "would be a member of the John Birch Society" because he caused he was "against taxes and coercive control by the central government." And, consistent throughout, Root describes the John Birch Society as "one of the most consecrated and anti-Communist groups we have" and Robert Welch as a man of "Great wisdom and courage." Yet Root merits the fearful consideration of at publishers.

(To Be Concluded Next Friday)

SLIM DOWN, FRIEND

In a population study of heart attacks, overweight men developed two times as many heart attacks as men who were not obviously overweight, so slim down, friend.

Hannah's Harpoons

BY HANNAH SAMPSON

I spent the greater part of last evening in extra-curricular activity (p. 355 Webster's Collegiate Dict.; p. 175, Dict. of Amer. Slang).



HANNAH

This activity consisted of reading a closely annotated copy of the Wentworth-Flexner Dictionary of American Slang (Crowell Co., N.Y., 1960). This particular copy of the dictionary is being circulated together with a petition urging its suppression.

The first item of interest appears in the copyright: This book has been in existence for three years in its present state—that is: with all of the "objectionable" definitions—without noticeably corrupting the youth of the land.

The second item concerns the annotations. These appear in neatly-underlined red pencil marks. (There are also blue pencil underlinings for scoring dialect and/or references to race or religion, and lead-pencil annotations for references to narcotics in any degree.)

SHOCK, EXTITEMENT

Now, one can understand the shock and excitement that some of the more explicit definitions would create in the innocent. But the inclusion (as objectionable) of the following leaves one baffled:

BRA: BRAINWASH: ("to court a girl") CLASSY CHASSIS: DISH ("a pretty . . . girl"), FAG (homosexual; Web. Colleg. p. 477), GUTS. As you can see, this list goes only to the seventh letter of the alphabet.

The obvious point is, of course, that to one mind the word (and connotation) of the word "dish" is just as unacceptable as any of the obviously taboo four-letter words to the greater majority.

The question arises: would these anxious people be as eager to sign a petition to force the withdrawal of the book if only the lesser words appeared in the dictionary. My guess is they would not.

Yet, the dictionary contains relatively few taboo expressions. And, like it or not, they are in the language, and in common usage more than most of us care to admit.

HAIR CURLS

The major objection to the dictionary appears to be the inevitable corruption of our youth. Nonsense! Our youth have too much sense to be corrupted by words. Four-letter words are used by youngsters as a form of experimentation. I hear youngsters playing on the ballfield in back of my house when I'm out in the yard pruning the petunias. The curl in

my hair is not, repeat NOT, from a permanent wave! What makes my hair curl so nicely is the exchange of pleasantries between the young men as they prove how virile they are.

But even this word-throwing has its limits. Self-imposed. What is more, I know of one young man of 14 who confided to his mother that he thought he'd see a little less of certain buddies because he thought "they really got foul mouths and I'm sick and tired of it!"

PEOPLE - LANGUAGE

There isn't a man today (and, alas! many a woman) who hasn't matched his fellows expletive for expletive as a part of growing up. One of our foremost Generals in WW II had a reputation for "purple" language. He wasn't considered a monster because of it.

It is true that using the proper word at the appropriate time is evidence of an educated person. Yet, many educated persons use highly "colorful" language as a matter of course. With some people this is a way of life.

The truth of the matter is that from the word "go," books have contained the subject matter treated in the dictionary. Shakespeare (The Rape of Lucrece); The Bible; Byron; Wilde; and later, Joyce, Faulkner. And once they attempted to burn Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter."

We teach our children what is acceptable—at a very early age—in dress, and social behavior. Let us teach them what is acceptable in speech. Knowing what is unacceptable is often the only guidepost to what is correct and proper.

SCHOLARLY WORK

Such an obviously scholarly work as the Dictionary of American Slang should have been placed on the market for at least twice the \$7.50 it now sells for. The fact is that it took 10 years of painstaking work to compile, with the full knowledge of the authors that it couldn't make them much money.

Attempts at censorship (and three years after publication!) will, at a minimum, increase book sales in a way the authors could not hope to achieve on the scope of the book for ordinary use.

Soon, this "cause celebre" will stop serving certain ends, and the dictionary will return to its rightful place on the reference shelf, next to Bartlett's Quotations, Canterbury Tales, and Webster's Collegiate.

Then, once in a great while, when a writer is attempting to depict a human being as he really is in a stressful situation, the dictionary will come in handy. Then perhaps we shall hear a man say, in a motion picture, when his ship has rammed the iceberg, and 1200 people are drowning, something a little more realistic than "Golly!"

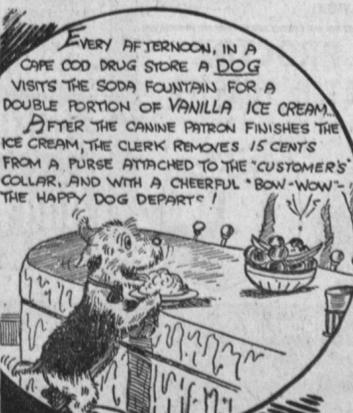
IT'S AMAZING!



CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN TOP MINNOWS HAVE THE UPPER HALF OF THEIR EYES ADAPTED FOR VISION IN THE DARK WATERS !!!



PERFUMES, VARNISH, ROOFING PITCH, EXPLOSIVES, PAINT, GRAPHITE, SACCHARIN, MEDICINALS, ASPIRIN, ARE DERIVED FROM COAL!



EVERY AFTERNOON, IN A CAFE OOD DRUG STORE A DOG VISITS THE SODA FOUNTAIN FOR A DOUBLE PORTION OF VANILLA ICE CREAM. AFTER THE CANINE PATRON FINISHES THE ICE CREAM, THE CLERK REMOVES 15 CENTS FROM A PURSE ATTACHED TO THE CUSTOMER'S COLLAR, AND WITH A CHEERFUL "BOW-WOW" THE HAPPY DOG DEPARTS!



A PART OF THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT IN SUMATRA PROVIDES THAT THE GIRL'S FATHER KEEP HIS SON-IN-LAW FURNISHED WITH CLOTHES FOR 5 YEARS AS COMPENSATION FOR MARRYING HIS DAUGHTER !!!