

INSULT

This time of year we seem to hear more about people insulting each other. Perhaps it's because it's election time for municipalities and building up to elections for the Province and Federal governments. I have pretty well ceased paying attention to what is said at question periods in both Toronto and Ottawa because the participants in this uncontrolled and demeaning event seem dedicated to showing our young people how uncouth, illogical and insulting they can be.

The dictionary defines insult as 'to treat with insolence, indignity or contempt' and what with references to dogs and such and the level of intellect being used is surely an insult to those of normal intelligence.

It needn't always be so. All insults are hurtful to the recipient but some provide others, who heard it said, with a feeling of 'Oh gee, I wished I'd said that.'

I think immediately of two such insults in an exchange between George Bernard Shaw and Winston Churchill. Shaw, who had a play opening sent two tickets to Churchill for the opening night with the note 'I have enclosed two tickets for you and a friend, if you have one.' Churchill replied 'I'm sorry I can't make the opening night but will attend the second night, if you have one.'

The other famous one is the interchange between Lady Astor and Winston. Lady Astor, in high dudgeon at a dinner party said to Winston 'you are the drunkest man I have ever seen.' Winston replied 'and you madam are the ugliest woman I have ever seen, but I shall be better in the morning.'

I was musing on this topic with a friend a while ago and he sent me some 'insults' from the web. You might get a laugh from these, I did, especially since our home grown legislators seem very much less intelligent.

'He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.' – William Faulkner about Ernest Hemingway.

'Poor Faulkner, does he really think big emotions come from big words.' Ernest Hemingway about William Faulkner..... or these.

'Thank you for sending me a copy of your book, I'll waste no time reading it.' Moses Hadas.

'He can compress most words into the smallest idea of any man I know.' Abraham Lincoln

Here is one that most of us could have said on many occa-

sions. 'I've had a perfectly wonderful evening, but this wasn't it.' – Groucho Marx or

'I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying that I approved of it.' Mark Twain.

How many people could we address this one to. 'He is a self-made man and worships his creator.' John Bright or use this one from Mae West. 'His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork.'

Although the next few are not new they could be used to address many of our current politicians, either singularly or as a group.

'He is not only dull himself but the cause of dullness in others.' Samuel Johnson.

'He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up.' Paul Keating

'He has delusions of adequacy.' Walter Kerr

'They never open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human knowledge.' Thomas Brockett Reed.

'He has the attention span of a lightning bolt.' Robert Redford.

'A modest little person with much to be modest about.' Winston Churchill.

'He has no enemies but is intensely disliked by his friends.' Oscar Wilde.

'He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire.' Winston Churchill and 'He uses statistics as a drunk-en man uses lampposts for support rather than illumination.' Andrew Lang.

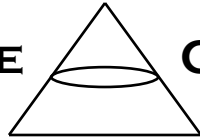
Here are some others that I would have been proud to have originated.

'He inherited some good instincts from his Quaker forebears but by diligent hard work he overcame them.' James Reston about Richard Nixon.

'He loves nature in spite of what it did to him.' Forest Tucker.

'Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever

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