

Let's hear from you

Received a letter recently from the Managing Editor, no less, of the Petrolia (Ont.) Advertiser-Topic, one of the papers that runs my column.

Gee, I wish I were a Managing Editor, and could dash off memos that would make people shake in their shoes. Once upon a time I was a Managing Editor. It meant that I was allowed to carry the bags of newspapers up to the post office on press day. But I never got to write any terse memos.

The letter reads:

"Smiley:

I'm getting so weary of those columns on education and teen-agers. Talk about adults. I distrust teachers who talk about school and students. You're better as a non-expert. One more education column and I cancel.

Regards,

Chas. Whipp."

Now, who could resist answering such a belle lettre? I couldn't.

"My Dear Mr. Whipp:

Thank you for your warm and courteous letter. It brightened up my whole day. But I think you have me confused with columnist Richard Needham of the Globe and Mail, who preaches rank anarchy day after day, exhorting students to drop out, see the world, forget about a formal education, live and love.

I'm as straight and square as they come, as my daughter (whoops, there's a teen-ager) will assure you. I deplore the use of drink, drugs and demonstrations by students. I urge them to drop in, not out, and find out what the mysteries of life are all about.

Now, let's have a look. You're weary of columns on education and teen-agers. Why? Were you once bitten (or hiten) by a teacher when you were a teen-ager?

Second, education takes about half your tax dollars. And within a couple of decades, adults will be outnumbered by adolescents. A couple of horrible thoughts, but surely worth a column occasionally.

Third, my columns about these topics bring more mail than any others. The letters are funny, poignant, sympathetic, tragic. One lady wrote telling me I'd helped her son.

Another poured out her heart over the death of her 16-year-old.

Fourth, I think a check would reveal that these topics are far from dominating the column. I'd get sick of them if they did. Why not let your readers decide? All your readers not just a couple of cranks. You know, I do write about sports, the family, the church, politics, the seasons and anything else that is part of modern life.

Next, you say, "Talk about adults." I do. But adults are merely teen-agers out of their teens. I've nothing against them. Some of my best friends are adults. But how would you like your sister to marry one?

Then you say, "I distrust teachers who talk about school and students." I don't distrust Managing Editors who talk about newspapers or dentists who talk about dentures. Who would you trust to talk about school and students? Managing editors? Plumbers? Doctors? Hair dressers?

Again, "You're better as a non-expert." Dear Mr. W., that's exactly what I am, in the field of education, and any other field you can mention. And I think that's why so many other non-experts read the column. They're a little disillusioned with the glib solutions of the experts and identify with the amateur, like me.

Finally, you threaten to cancel unless I comply. Others have tried to lean on me before: politicians, advertisers, preachers, the educational establishment, to name a few. But never before a Managing Editor.

Maybe I should be flattered. But I don't flatter, or flatten, that easily. Education, school, students, teen-agers. There, I've said all the dirty words. It's a free country. Cancel if you will. Never mind about my wife and brains.

And regards without rancour to you, dear Chas.

Bill Smiley."

Is Mr. Whipp right? I'm often wrong. Readers are invited to give their opinions to him at the paper, Petrolia, Ont., or me, at 303 Hugel Ave., Midland, Ont., or to their local editor. Let's hear it.

Toronto Telegram News Service

No wonder women don't like mustaches - they don't look good in them.

N.D.P.'s DISCUSS PROGRAM

Douglas Sly, N.D.P. candidate for Thunder Bay Riding (Federal) and Jack Stokes, M.L.A. Thunder Bay met with the Riding Association Executive in the Nipigon Campaign Offices on Sunday, May 12th. They presented the group with the Federal N.D.P. platform consisting of a 14-point program, which begins by saying New Democrats want to hand on to the children of Canada "a new society where excessive privilege and wealth for the few will be replaced by equal opportunities for the many." A New Democratic government will give top priority to solving the housing crisis and the problem of poverty and to coming to terms with the new condition for our survival as ONE COUNTRY. A lively discussion followed the presentation of the issues which had particular relevance to the people of this Riding.

Rev. E. Prinselaar of Schreiber chaired the meeting. Out-of-town guests included Mr. D. Benson of Wawa, Rev. and Mrs. Bigelow of Beardmore, Mrs. Helen Stokes and Mr. and Mrs. G. Gordon of Schreiber, Commissionaire John King of Armstrong, and Mr. E. Pearson of Red Rock.

RECREATION BRIEFS - by David Courtemanche

Minor Softball - We have received approximately 190 registrations from boys and girls who wish to play softball this year. The teams have been drawn up and the coaches and helpers will be called to a meeting sometime this week to be assigned their teams. It is our intention to start the softball schedule next week. Schedules will be posted in the Recreation Centre. It will also be up to the coaches to notify each player of their playing time.

With 18 teams involved in our playing schedules, we find that we will need more assistance. If you would like to coach, help or umpire, please call the Recreation Office - 3542.

As mentioned in last week's NEWS, it is our intention to run the ball programme after dinner hours from Mondays to Fridays, with the schedule ending approximately July 1st.

Minor Hockey Executive 1968-69

So far, our appeal for nominees to act on the Minor Hockey Executive in 1968-69 has met with no response. It would appear that nobody want Minor Hockey next season. We have just finished a very successful hockey season, and it is a shame it has been forgotten so soon.

(Cont'd on page 12)