

WHY NEWSPAPERS ARE UNREADABLE

IT is a poor gathering of intellectuals in these days, in which somebody does not cast a stone at the daily press. It is a well-known disposition of individual great men to blame the foolishness of their utterances upon the reporter; but a far more serious matter is the collective disposition of all the great men of the country to blame the country's foolishness on its newspapers. It is as necessary for a university professor to deplore the condition of the press as it is for a minister of religion to deplore the condition of the stage; not to do so is the mark of a vulgarian and a person of no culture. The feelings of a newspaper man in a University Club may be compared with those of an actor at a meeting of the Ministerial Association; he soon learns that while he may personally be the most delightful of fellows, the institution which he represents is not to be condoned for a moment.

I am a newspaper man. I do not insist on a hyphen, and I am willing to spell it as one word, two words, or a word and a half. But I must insist on the term. That is to say, that I, in common with several thousand fellow-Canadians, derive an inadequate and precarious, but thoroughly enjoyable, living from the making of newspapers. I do not know whether I am, or am not, a journalist. It is a pleasant-sounding title and looks well in a telephone directory; but in these days there is a grave suspicion attaching to all words ending in "ist" unless there is a definite signification applied to them by law. I should not, for example, object to being a dentist or a pharmacist, with a nicely-executed parchment showing exactly what I could do and where I could do it; or a recidivist, with an official court record kept for me by the authorities of the peace; or even a polygamist, if that term conveys the distinction of having achieved polygamy