

# "THIS SMALL MOUNTAIN OF DIAPERAGE"

By P. F. MARCH

Oh for the delight of a good argument! There can be nothing more invigorating nor a challenge more stimulating than to enter into a battle of words.

Unbeneficially though, it seems that argument has gone out of style. Worse still we have all but lost the art of sophistry. That delightful art of conclusively proving nonsensical statements for argument's sake.

Take the following:

"Christians love God. God is love. Christians love love. Christians love God because they love to love. To love for the sake of loving is selfish. Christians are selfish because they love God not for His good qualities but merely because they enjoy loving."

It is a delight to listen to such mental gymnastics. The following argument proves that God did not create man:

"If the Lord is our Shepherd and we are His sheep, imagine then the first shepherd, roaming the hills of Neanderthalia with His flock. One might ask who came first? Was there a shepherd before there were sheep to be tended? If not, how then could God who is a shepherd have created His sheep (us) who were here before Him?"

Such nonsense! But no — I think not. Is any of that worse than a politician's words?

"Men are equal." We can reason from that that he intends to abolish punishment.

Logic itself is open to attack. "The study of logic requires logic. One studies logic to learn logic. Without logic one can not study logic. A man without logic can never learn logic — a man with logic needn't bother. It is illogical to study logic. Better still take that religious bigot who denies that man came from the ape and ask him whether it is more likely that man came from an ape or a mud pit.

If life goes on after death are most men buried alive? The purist and the pedant are perhaps the people who are most open to sophistry. Hear them say: "One should never generalize"; then remind them that their statement is a generalization itself.

The English professor is an artist at sophistry. He will claim that something like the following actually has meaning:

"Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past".

T. S. Eliot

Most people claim that sophistry began with the Greeks — I think not. Have you ever heard a woman say: "I ran away from him until I caught him" or its converse: "He chased me until I caught him"? Finally: "I'm not going steady or going or dating — I'm just going out with him".

Two women communicating in private can talk more nonsense in a minute than a roomful of monkeys are able to do in an hour. And all the more power to them, for their's is perhaps the most significant and delightful nonsense which remains for our pleasure.

The only real example of sophistry I ever heard being uttered by a student was: "The more I learn the less I seem to know". It is rather stretching the point to call that sophistry. My article is, I hope, the first and last example of the truth of that statement.

Speaking of the truth: True happiness comes not from the search but through the attainment of virtue. But its greatest virtue is not, the discovery but rather the search and concern of a good man after truth. Little or nothing can be proven conclusively true but there is the roar of an ocean to be listened to sound true?

## Cognition: The Day After October 8th

By IAN CHAMBERS

The October 8 provincial election in this province is certainly full of significances.

Without wishing to hack at the badly battered Liberal carcass, it would certainly seem to me, that they deserved every loss.

The insanity is plain but tragic, there can be no other word for it, of having as their leader a man, who can not speak effectively, who is completely lacking in personality, who becomes hopelessly confused on issues for which he has not conned by rote the party dogma.

It is all the more so, because the Liberal ranks do not lack capable men, especially Peter Nicholson, for whom Liberals should fervently pray as their next leader.

It must be admitted that the Conservative, pardon me, "Stanfield Government" (the terminology is not mine, but that of many campaigning Conservatives) was not returned with so substantial a majority merely because the Liberals bungled.

Although they might fairly be charged with playing too heavily on the personal image of Stanfield, they did come forward with ideas and a platform, which justified the "progressive" in their name.

The real test is yet to come. If the Stanfield government can defy the axiom of "absolute power corrupting absolutely" then voters who elected the Government did so wisely.

Of course, the P.C.'s are helped by the fact that they are not absolute, and the opposition, however small or feeble, is still there to check the laxness.

It is significant also the NDP vote should be so sharply decreased. It might well be taken as a sign that the Nova Scotians are returning to their rightish conservatism, which favours two parties, both of which might be considered fairly conservative.

In this respect Nova Scotia, like the other three Atlantic provinces, is out of line with the Upper and Western Canadians.

Nova Scotian labour does not tend to vote "en masse" nor is it consistently the most radical section of the electorate as opposed to the conservative agricultural element.

As was quite foreseeable, this election was yet another reflection of the Canadian Victorianism, which expresses itself in mistrust of farseeing idealism and policy. Rough as this Victorianism is particularly in Eastern Canadian, it prevails throughout the country and causes foreign political observers to consider Canadian policies, provincial as well as federal, "incredibly dull".

Without a mass swing toward anarchism, facism, or communism, more radicalism in Canadian politics, might not go amiss.

Nova Scotia is declining. This is indisputable. But the complacency, with which her citizens are accepting it is little short of appalling.

Stanfield's progressive policies were typically vague but what is worse is that so many voters did not look for progressive policy. A quest for stability is laudable, but when it drags a community into an abyss of political lethargy it loses all merit.

It is made unlikely that this trend will be reversed during the Stanfield party's third term. Unhappily it will continue after that, unless new ideas are brought into the parties and into the voters.

It is the 21-30 group in European politics from which progressive and radical parties draw their greatest strength. It is the youth of Nova Scotia that must give Nova Scotian politics its required "shot in the arm".

If parties with new political concepts can gain only insignificant support from this group, they have no hope.

In what direction our provincial politics will go depends in part on the sparse opposition. As Real Couette is currently demonstrating in the federal parliament, a few voices can be very effective.

If the opposition can successfully carry on its difficult but vital role, with rather more verve than is the course of provincial affairs, let us strongly hope that it will not take the easy course of lapsing into comparative silence and inaction resulting from discouragement.

But what should certainly be foremost in the mind of every Nova Scotian, is the fact that while having gained 39% of the popular vote, the Liberals have only four seats, two of which are not yet secure. The PC's with 56% of the vote hold a full 90% of the seats.

## POINT

Doctor Benjamin Atlee, outspoken professor emeritus of medicine and Halifax's leading "leveler" has broken his unaccustomed silence after a period of comparative inactivity.

Speaking on education Dr. Atlee told a meeting of the university alumni in Kentville last month that everyone should be able to qualify for a degree at the high school level.

Dr. Atlee did not stop at merely accusing the Universities of "arrogance". He claimed that the Universities of Canada had derived the idea of an intellectual elite too which they intend on perpetuating.

Reiterating his standard that the current academic system is totally inadequate for the present day world, Doctor Atlee said creation of select bodies is always undemocratic and is unfair to the mass of people in that it denies them what he termed to be their right to higher education.

Another sore point with Doctor Atlee is the method of hiring professors. The university practice in this country is based on the number of books that the man has published and the number of degrees he has rather than his performance in front of a classroom.

## COUNTERPOINT

The high school diploma, as Doctor Atlee said, is now inadequate to open the doors to better positions. This has become almost self-evident — with this statement we have no quarrel.

But, has Dr. Atlee bothered to stop and ask himself just why this is so? Could it not be said that the very process of extending to the masses their "democratic rights" for equal education has, by lowering of standards and inclusion of "practical" courses in place of academic ones, Cheapened it to the point where it is

hardly worth the paper it is printed on?

These certificates indicate, for the most part, merely that the holder can read, write, and do simple arithmetic!

Dr. Atlee appears to have missed the fact that there are differences between people in their intellectual capacity. All the worthless diplomas and degrees in the world will not alter this inescapable fact.

By lowering the standards as he advocated, a university degree will soon become as useless as many high school diplomas, a

disaster which graduates discover when they present themselves to a prospective employer for the first time. Some firms, for example, now require a junior matriculation for the position of delivery-truck driver. Does Dr. Atlee want this to become the fate of the degree of Bachelor of Arts?

Whether or not the existence of choice groups is undemocratic or not could be termed a debatable point. It could be said, however, that any attempts to create a "level" society have inevitably ended in chaos — followed usually by the establishment of an elite.

## LAWRENCE OF ARABIA: A REVIEW

By BARRY MILLS

An actor can contribute greatly to a film in more than mere acting scene after scene; subtle gestures, facial expression and attitudes can characterize a pose that will remain in the viewer's mind long after the film has been seen. Peter O'Toole delivers an excellent portrayal of this legendary World War I figure T. E. Lawrence. It is no small task to present a figure who is at once a daring adventurer and a sensitive, effete man of thought.

Director David Lean has paralleled his fortunate choice in Peter O'Toole with an excellent supporting cast, all of whom fill out their roles to their true historic value. Prince Feisal (Alec Guinness) creates a perfect foil to the character of Lawrence as does Ali (Omar Sharif) on a lower level — both have more constancy of purpose and determination of Lawrence.

Lawrence's initial task for the British Army was to unify the Arab tribes in revolt against the Turks in the Near Eastern Theatre of World War I. The film depicts his progress (which was thoroughly if not ruthlessly completed) as well as the decline in his zeal for posing as the altruistic hero of

the Arab peoples. His later efforts show him to be an opportunist and a self-flatterer. Even the Sheikh Auda abu Tayi (Anthony Quinn) the gold-seeking robber leader had finally enough scruples to serve a greater need. The other characters all mirror or contrast some personal trait of Lawrence. This superb casting of the roles allows for many sequences of dramatic moment.

That Lawrence of Arabia was an enigma has been the fond word of many critics. Any individual may be styled an enigma whenever the uniqueness of his personality or the complexity of his character is considered. The film has outdistanced any written biography or collection of memoirs

with its impartial treatment of its major subject and its close attention to detail; these two qualities involve the cooperation of the whole production company. All the facets of film-making have been shaped into a film that serves as a prism focusing all the glimmerings of Lawrence's character into a unified whole.

Yet there are defects in this film. The involved screenplay, although it provides excellent material, lacks coherency because the average moviegoer does not possess the depth of historical knowledge concerning the events. To see the film under the best of conditions it would be advisable to do some reading on the character and the period.

Despite the clear focus on characterization, the first half of the film depicts the man, the second half, the legend; this discrepancy is essentially one of plot rather than of character portrayal. The latter part of the film comes close at times to deteriorating to the low of the typical widescreen epic.