



Letters
Satire?

To the Editor:
As a student at this university I was most horrified to find out that all my professors, those same people into whose hands I had placed the salvation of the world, were at least fellow travellers if not card carrying members of the Communist Party.

A revealing editorial published by The Edmonton Journal on Wednesday, December 16, 1959, showed me that these so-called "free" thinkers were free in the sense of the word, but were really undercover agents for Khrushchev.

Never again will I accept what they say without question; in fact, I am contemplating a withdrawal from this hot bed of communists and devoting my life to fighting communism and reading Journal editorials.

It is certainly not bad that we no longer have a man of the calibre of Senator McCarthy (that saviour of democracy) to investigate these followers of Satan and Marx and oust them from their positions so they no longer can brainwash us, the citizens of tomorrow. After all, any fool knows that people who call for a cessation of nuclear testing, and above all, those who oppose the proposed French nuclear blast are playing directly into the communist plans for world enslavement.

Yes, all these hypocrites such as Albert Schweitzer (a man who dares to call himself a Christian); Lord Bertrand Russell; Dr. Linus Pauling (a Nobel prize winner in chemistry); the president of the University of British Columbia, Dr. McKenzie; the president of the University of Alberta, Dr. Johns; the National Director of the United Nations Association of Canada, Wilson Woodside; the Prime Minister of Canada, John Diefenbaker; the Canadian Minister for External Affairs, Howard Green; not to mention thousands of physical and biological scientists throughout the world who oppose continued testing—can righteously be "accused of advancing the cause of the communist world conspiracy" as The Journal editorial stated.

I hope that The Edmonton Journal will keep up the good work of supporting continued nuclear testing so that we can all procreate deformed children and die of cancer; of calling for an everlasting state of preparedness for nuclear warfare, and a continuing terrifying fear on the part of all peoples; and above all, by maintaining those views which are Very Right.

Keith Wright
Arts 3

Bank Talk

To the Editor:
The editorial which appeared in your recent issue with regard to the "Club 60" function is naturally of considerable interest to me. I am therefore taking the opportunity of writing this letter as something of a further explanation of the points contained in that editorial.

You mentioned that our orchestra played for two hours of the three-hour duration of the function. In

fact, we played for less than two hours. It has always been the policy of our groups to take two ten-minute intermissions. We are not contemplating a change in this policy, and it was followed on November 28. The first of these two intermissions occurred at ten minutes past ten. The second would normally have been at ten minutes past eleven. At approximately five minutes to eleven, however, there began a forty-five minute floor show. The nature of the show was such that the orchestra was required to accompany two of the selections involved, and therefore remained on the stand during the course of the entertainment. At about forty minutes past eleven, the show ended, the orchestra played two selections for dancing, and took the second intermission.

Immediately following the end of the dance, I mentioned, in a conversation with the director of the function, that it was my opinion that in future instances where entertainment is to be presented at University dances, more direct contact could be made between those persons responsible for planning the entertainment and the bandleader involved. In this way, time spent unnecessarily on the stand could be utilized as intermission time by the orchestra.

We have in the past provided as much assistance and co-operation as possible to University campus groups in the planning of these occasions. On occasion, services for rehearsals, etc., have been provided at no cost whatever, which is contrary to regulations set down by the union to which you refer as having "great power". It is my opinion that the editorial, which was slightly derogatory in nature, was written without regard for, or perhaps without knowledge of, the facts ma'am.

The comments on the entertainment provided, although it doesn't involve me in any way, came as rather a surprise too. If I recall correctly, the comments following last year's "Club 59", at which semi-professional local talent was employed, were to the effect that it was felt that more use should be made of on-campus talent. There appears to be some confusion in the ranks.

I hope that this letter will not be considered presumptuous. In the past, your editorial staff have been more than kind to me in their comments. When one is criticized, however, the first instinct is to defend yourself. I am a victim of that instinct.

Tommy Banks

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Ask No Quarter

ASK NO QUARTER: the story of Agnes Macphail, by Margaret Stewart and Doris French: Longman's Green and Co., Toronto.

Agnes Macphail was an amazing woman and character, who played a fairly important role in Canada's parliamentary history.

It is a pity that she could not have a better biography.

Aggie was still a teenager when she decided that she was destined for better things than marriage, with the attendant life of darning and baking bread. As an Ontario school teacher she became interested in farm politics, the then-current issues of tariff reform and co-operatives.

When she was 31 she was elected to parliament as the first woman MP in Canada's history. When her party (the Progressives, a farm movement) collapsed, she continued for twenty years as an Independent.

She had a sharp wit and a vicious tongue and loved to pare men down to size. Her caustic speeches were drenched in parliament and the press gallery soon had her typed as a "bitter old maid." Yet this old maid had in the course of her first few years in parliament received proposals from two members of the Opposition and one member of His Majesty's government. She turned them down, refusing to sacrifice her career for cooking.

Her political influence was so great that both the Liberals and Conservatives when they were in power offered her cabinet posts if she relinquished her independent seat to side with them.

She was an excellent speaker and on several speaking tours in Texas was courted by a Texas millionaire who received the same treatment as the MP's.

A pacifist, she fought in the most un-pacific manner for reforms she thought necessary, and she worked most of her life towards penal reform in Canada. Possibly the greatest concession she made in her life was when she went back on all her previous statements advocating in 1940 to go to war.

This woman had a fantastic life—there are hundreds of anecdotes about her sharp wit and the way she handled hecklers.

For example, in the middle of one speech a male heckler shouted, "Don't you wish you were a man?" She retorted, "Yes. Don't you?"

But few anecdotes have wormed their way into this biography. Instead, her years in parliament are recorded as a series of names and events, with little insight into the personality that was Agnes Macphail. Doris French is responsible for the part of the biography dealing with Agnes' career.

One gets the impression that Mrs. French obtained and read thoroughly twenty years of Hansard, noting every time Agnes' name was mentioned, and then edited these disjointed excerpts. She has managed to obtain some excellent quotes, but it is a painful process to wade through much of the verbiage.

The possibilities of getting fascinating details on Canada's Houses of Parliament, gossip about the back-bench dealings of the parties, the meetings in the corridors and the

Book Reviews

intrigues in the offices are skipped over, while pages are devoted to the rise of the CCF party in Ontario. This information concerned Agnes, but reveals little of her besides her political views.

Co-biographer Margaret Stewart was hostess to Agnes Macphail when she was campaigning in London, Ontario. She obtained a great deal of background material on Agnes' childhood and family background through a series of interviews then and later.

She contributes a great deal of detail, much of it irrelevant, but enough to help the reader understand the factors influencing Agnes' attitude to life, her determination to be independent, her sympathy for persons she felt to be in unfortunate positions.

Books Reviewed by Penny Whittaker

Although during her first term Agnes felt it unnecessary to look attractive, do her hair, or have flattering photographs taken, and she wore the same dress practically every day, she later became very fashion conscious. As her position in parliament became more firmly established, she indulged her luxurious tastes in shoes and dresses. Her concepts altered radically, and although at first she almost refused to curtsy to Lady Byng, wife of the governor-general, she later became a frequent guest at the governor's residence.

Agnes Macphail died in 1954, worried over her financial situation, because an expected senate appointment did not materialize. As she owed allegiance to no political party, she was not entitled to the usual annuity with which a party can sometimes honor a faithful adherent.

All her life she made good newspaper copy. The press never left her from the first day she entered parliament. Her lectures were well attended, her views well publicized.

Her biography could be a great tragedy or a great comedy. Instead, it is neither, not even a great bore. It could serve as a reference text to students of Canadiana, or, better, as a Valentine's gift to your uncle who was kicked out of cadets in 1934 because Agnes talked the government into cutting expenditures for such war-like institutions as military academies. She really was

Prairie Harvest

PRAIRIE HARVEST: by Arthur G. Storey, published by the Ryerson Press, Toronto. Winner of the Ryerson Fiction Award, 1959.

Prairie Harvest is Canadiana.

For the unedified city-born who do not even know that in 1910 a sulky was the latest thing for breaking land for oats, this prize-winning novel is a must.

Quantities of authentic farming details bedeck this story of a home-staying family in Saskatchewan, from their pioneering days, through successful years, into the drought-stricken thirties and poverty. The technical details in this book are so accurate that any avid reader could go out tomorrow and break land.

There is an element of romance which will endear this book to a large number of women; with the adventure involved with a lone woman defending her home-stead in a blizzard while her husband is in Quebec earning grocery money.

This little woman (who, by the way, is pregnant), is a dead shot with any form of artillery, shoots a runaway criminal who tries to break into her cabin. Later the RCMP arrive, and the tall, handsome, red-coat congratulates Saskatchewan's Madeleine de Vercheres.

The first threshing machine, the first harvest, the first baby, the trip to the doctor in Regina through the blizzard, the first sod shanty, log cabin, clapboard house, barn, silo, chicken coop, school, neighbor and death all receive prominent attention. Honorable mention goes to the first tree felled, the day the young son of the hero dropped buckshot in the school stove, and the long cold nights of the first winters, with attendant dark dawns and milkings.

Students of economics will also be interested in the harrowing tales of the drought in the thirties.

The style of the novel is not inspiring, but at the same time is very readable. It is good light reading, and is recommended on this basis.

a pacifist, and would tear to shreds anyone who said she wasn't.

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