

DANGEROUS CORNER

by Naomi Griffiths

A fair number of the readers of this column will have heard Mrs. Springford's adjudication of the play. On the other hand, there are a good many who will not have had this opportunity. The reviewer faces the problem of whether this article should be a precis of an excellent judgment, with an occasional aside when there is a difference of opinion, or whether, its emphasis should be a fresh criticism. I hope in my attempt to achieve both these aims; It may be found that I have succeeded in neither.

I first heard of the activities of U.N.B.'s Drama Society in London, roughly three years ago. As a result I looked forward to this year's production with as much interest as I did to the arrival of the Stratford Players. Having seen "Dangerous Corner" I feel, probably inevitably, a little disappointed. Whilst I do not dislike this self-avowed "pot-boiler" of Priestley's, I would agree that it is not a brilliant play, and, as Mrs. Springford pointed out, such a script presents more difficulties than one of greater merit. To bring out the inner philosophy of such a play, which uses a trite plot and every gimmick in the theatrical bag-of-tricks to convey its points, is difficult, but to ignore this task and to present it solely as entertainment is disastrous. Wednesday night's production succeeded in making the point that the path of the future depends on what the present might consider an unimportant detail.

The director and his cast made this point, and they made it well. The evening saw entertainment that was both good and enjoyable, but it was not excellent. The action of the play as a whole was not sufficiently neat, not sufficiently polished, in a word, not sufficiently "professional". One felt that the cast was talented enough to have been more than good.

As Mrs. Springford pointed out, the decor was excellent and I would reiterate her unreserved praise of this. The stage was uncluttered, each piece of furniture was there for a purpose, the backdrop was impressive, the total effect was excellent. In such a small area this was a tremendous help to the players, and they made full use of it. Their moves were for the most part good, only occasionally was one conscious of a slight feeling that perhaps an actor had walked across the stage for the benefit of the performance, rather than for the purpose of the play.

The plot of "Dangerous Corner" centres upon Robert Chatfield, a successful publisher, who in pursuing the factual truth of his brother's suicide, destroys all the illusions which have made his life liveable. He was ably portrayed by Iain Barr, who received the Robin Bailey trophy for the best student actor. As Mrs. Springford said, whatever his technical faults, his performance was sincere, and the development of his character creditable. I would like to add my own congratulations to those of the Brunswickan for his work.

Freda Chatfield, his wife, played by Joan Yeomans, suffered from not being sufficiently sophisticated. The adjudicator remarked that she should look like a woman who sometime in her past actually did have an affair; I feel that it was partly the fault of her clothes that this impression was not made. The other married couple in the play, Gordon and Betty Whitehorse, played by Stephen Fay and May Keith were excellent characterisations. Perhaps Miss Keith could have played Betty slightly harder, emphasized the fact that here was a woman who would make the best of a bad job, and did not much mind if the methods she chose were immoral. I enjoyed Stephen Fay's acting, but feel that he could be careful of his voice, which was inclined to become uncontrolled in his more hysterical scenes.

Of all the players I enjoyed Joan Mansfield's work best. Her quality of stillness, when she was not directly involved in the action of the play was excellent. Her long speeches were delivered with great effect and her other lines were spoken easily. I feel that this actress knew how to throw away a line. She was ably supported by Michael Gordon as Charles Stenton.

Mrs. Bobby as Miss Mockridge gave an excellent characterization, but at times she was almost inaudible. I liked the way in which she handled smoking on the stage, a most difficult job.

In conclusion I would like to compliment the work of the stage crew, and all those whose work behind the scenes enabled this performance to take place.

The University of New Brunswick would like to thank Mrs. Springford for constructive criticisms. It is adjudication of this type which is most useful, and which will lead to improvement in the quality of U.N.B.'s productions.

McGill Debating

by Naomi Griffiths

The work of Stuart Smith and the Debating Committee of McGill University in organising a Tournament in which forty Universities took part, on the same week end as the Montreal Carnival, was magnificent. Whatever difficulties they had, whatever the crisis which occurred, no one but themselves will know. As a member of one of the competing teams my impression was that the accidents which befall lesser mortals just did not happen to them. From the cocktail party on Friday afternoon, through the debates themselves, to the concluding Banquet on Saturday evening, events ran smoothly.

As Stuart Smith emphasized in his after-dinner speech, by far the most important result of the Tournament was that debaters from all over North America had the opportunity to meet one another. It was interesting to discover the different attitudes of the various universities towards debating; Pittsburg grants Debating Scholarships, U.N.B. sent up a team with little publicity and few hopes, McMaster entered two teams, as did several other Universities. The topic for discussion was "That this house approves of the principle of Athletic Scholarships", and in the Final Debate, which was fought out between the two Pittsburg teams, the motion was defeated. U.N.B. had the negative case to present, and won two out of its three debates, being placed among the top ten in the final marking.

This was the first experience of North American Debating, apart from one debate which I had attended at U.N.B. and comparisons, besides being odious, are sometimes entertaining. I felt that the students took themselves very seriously, and yet presented their case with what was to me an astonishing informality. Being used to debating subjects such as whether Monogamy is monotonous, or whether Columbus sailed too far, in a strict Parliamentary style, I found this attitude somewhat confusing. I enjoyed the debates, especially our last one against McGill, in which we were defeated, and I feel that in this case, that the topic was well chosen. It was sufficiently serious to allow for worthwhile argument, and required logic, rather than facts. I feel that debaters on this continent should remember that a debate is not a law court.

The guest speaker at the Banquet was Doctor F. J. Miller, Professor of Philosophy. His topic was "The Logic of Debating", and his speech was both witty and informative, his final sentence was warning his audience against expecting logic from their judges.

In conclusion I would say that the Tournament was made more enjoyable by the fact that it coincided with the Carnival celebrations.

TELEVISION AND EDUCATION

Mr. A. Davidson Dunton is one of the most controversial figures in Canada. Through his position as head of the board of directors of the C.B.C. he has become inseparably associated in the minds of the Canadian public with the organization and the policies of Canadian radio and television. He has been accused of everything from trying to force culture upon the Canadian public to providing a refuge for second rate home talent. Because of his position of tremendous influence in Canadian radio and television, what Mr. Dunton has to say about the policies of the C.B.C. is of great import. Thus his appearance here on a panel discussing the topic "Television and Education" was an occasion of special interest. The other members of the panel were Mrs. F. L. Miller, provincial president, IODE; Prof. R. J. Love, Department of Education; Prof. Fred Cogswell, Department of English; Mr. Barry Toole, editor, The Brunswickan and Mr. A. A. Tunis, director of university public relations as chairman.

Professor Love opened the discussion with a consideration of the possibility of using closed circuit TV programs in university education. He said that these methods did not satisfy the basic requirement of effective education, "a two way communication" or a "meeting of minds". He suggested that although this "canned education" had no more value than the ordinary film in the education of young people, it might have great possibilities in the field of adult education.

Prof. Cogswell felt that TV had a valuable steadying effect on young children. He suggested that the "spark of interest" or of curiosity might be aroused and that this in itself would be a positive contribution. He said that although some of the programs reflected the ideals of courage or virtue the advertisements reflected only the ideals of commodities. He said that where most ads exhorted parents to buy their children this or that he recalled one particular ad which seemed to represent the reductio ad absurdum: "It is a crime not to give your child . . . such and such". Prof. Cogswell went on to say with tongue in cheek that today's programs were not "violent or bloody or sadistic enough" to provide the necessary release for the emotional energy of children.

Mrs. F. B. Miller spoke of the great impact which TV had on the family. She felt that there should be a considerable degree of control to reduce the possible harmful effects of the medium and that the responsibility for much of this control must lie with the C.B.C. Mrs. Miller also said that there might be set up a system for estimating or labelling programs "just as they do drugs and medicines" in order to supply a degree of intelligent protection from certain types of programming. She went on to suggest that possibly the best method of controlling program selection would be the "coin in the slot" method. She said that the C.B.C. television committee was responsible to the public and that this fact should be made clear.

Mr. Barry Toole, attempting to reflect a degree of the student's opinion, suggested that there might be too much emphasis "on the Canadian in programming and not enough emphasis on quality". He said that more good programs might be brought in from the U.S. Mr. Toole also asked if there might be some effective way in informing the college student of possible careers in television and communications.

Mr. A. D. Dunton surveyed this "long and varied bill of indictment" and began to consider the opinions of the other panel members in order. He said that he did not disagree with Prof. Love's comments on the use of closed circuit TV in education. However, he did say that "our business is not to educate or to teach". This is a provincial responsibility, and those experiments in education which were being carried on were being done "at the request of the provincial authorities". He said that "our business is to put forth material of all kinds and to let the Canadian consumer choose for himself".

Mr. Dunton remarked that he was pleased to hear Dr. Cogswell's opinion of the "therapeutic effect" of television upon children. He agreed with Prof. Cogswell's statement of confidence in the child's intelligence in respect to viewing television.

Concerning Mrs. Miller's opinions, Mr. Dunton felt that the people should be allowed to decide on the programming themselves rather than the C.B.C. assuming the responsibility of selective control. He felt that the C.B.C. Board of Governors considered themselves "trustees for all the people" and that part of their job was to put "a variety and a clash of ideas" before the people. Mr. Dunton said that "it is not our place to inculcate culture in the Canadian people". We should present good music and some intellectual material but also pretty Canadian girls and good comedy "if it can be found". He said that about half the programming on most private stations was American and that he would like to see more "not less use of Canadian talent".

Congratulations

The Drama Society, with their spring production of "Dangerous Corner" has given the university yet another indication of what competent and interested work can produce . . . an enjoyable play. It is clearly very significant that the Drama Society has commanded a new respect at UNB. Perhaps its the rebirth of aesthetic appreciation. Let us hope!

SWIM MEET HERE FRIDAY

The Maritime Intercollegiate Swim meet will be held in the pool of the Lady Beaverbrook Residence on Friday. It is expected that four teams will be in competition for the championships: UNB, Acadia, the defending champions, Dalhousie and Mount Allison.

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