the Gateway, page 11/

the "quill is mightier than the sword"



AT WORK . . . 'Dam tits typical Canadian

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money we pay you freelance." That was acceptable, but I had to be able to continue my freelance work. How did the October Crisis affect

you?

I did some of my best work during those few months. There were front page courtroom scenes, political cartoons, just tons of stuff. It was a time of intense

My work does typify the common Joe and describe his perceptions.

pressure, and many opinions. About six months later, my kids were still young and here was a chance so we left for Europe "en famille." I took a year of absence.

It was wonderful, exciting and educational. When we hit Spain I was broke, so I called Frank Walker at the Star and asked if I still had a job.

He said there was one available, and I told him to wire me a thousand dollars to get home. He did.

When I arrived back in Montreal, things had changed at the Star. Although Walker and others defended

me, the Star felt my cartoons were too

radical. So I left the Star and took advantage of a standing offer at the Gazette.

Do you think your work is radical? People did then. My work hasn't changed, but people's ideas have. I write

what the average Joe thinks, but can't say without seeming pretentious. I listen to them and try to speak for them.

When I joined the Gazette in 1972, it was during rough times. I was using many chemicals that were somewhat less than legal, but I smartened up. Things have been on the rise ever since.

How did you feel about the Star's demise?

I felt awful about it. Cities with smaller anglophone populations support two English dailies successfully.

Montreal is a newspaper town. People

here have a tremendous diversity of opinions and they should be able to express it. Besides, many good friends lost their jobs at the Star.

Your work seems to typify the common man, and take his side.

My work does typify the common Joe and describe his perceptions. When Eaton's has to drop the "S" from their name, it's a corporate decision made in Regina, or some other place. When Ed's in Verdun, or anywhere else, have to change their sign, it's a big deal. They can't run away to Calgary.

I hope that some of my cartoons destroy the myth of the "Anglophone Boss," because many of them aren't.

In my cartoon about moving headquarters, we aren't talking about Sun Life. It is two guys who have been sitting in the

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same tavern for years.

Why are you so cynical? I'm cynical on occasion; the event or action really determines the outcome. For a simple event, I won't be caustic, but for a major issue, out comes the cynicism.

It can run from poking fun at an individual to "bringing out the sledgehammer.'

News scares me, some of it is awful. When I read in the Toronto Globe and Mail last week about the dumping of TNT near other industrial wastes, each unknown to the other, I was mad. One cartoon will be hard, another soft; the reaction depends on the story

What bothers you about society?

Complacency and privilege are the most distressing things today.

Aren't you one of the privileged? I don't want to be hypocritical; I'm not

perfect. When I say that bothers me, some things that I do also bother me; I'm not

perfect.

Do you feel your cartoons preach?

Political cartoons bother people if you preach to them. It should reflect how people think, the average person. I do it for the people out there, but being paid for something I love to do is great.

As far as preaching, for me to preach would be hypocritical. I sign my work. Because of tradition, editorial writers in the English press don't. Many of them would like to so they can be stronger in their words. I say what I want and I sign.

I do about six cartoons a week. Three for the Gazette, three for freelance. It's like any job, it takes time and concentration. How much is Aislin, how much is

Mosher in your work?

Aislin is Mosher and Mosher is Aislin. They are one and the same. In this business you have to be part writer and part entertainer. The little white space that you have to fill with a picture and line has to fulfill that old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words.'

Journalism in Canada is not as exciting as it could be, but there are a lot of excellent journalists living in this country. I'd like to see the media set up where it wouldn't be so dependent upon advertising.

I remember when I published the

Political cartoons bother people if you preach to them.

cartoon of two men in a soup kitchen talking about going to Regine's, which I consider silly and superfluous. Regine's PR man called the next day and was very happy. Regine herself was in town and wanted to buy the original. I usually charge between two to three hundred (dollars) per original, but I asked her for \$500. She said no, but offered me a free membership. The print is still in my drawer.

All I can say is if the work isn't good, then what's the point?



