

THE Calvert SPORTS COLUMN by Elmer Ferguson

NO DOUBT thousands of good, decent United States citizens stood aghast at the sequence of "shocking revelations" concerning the "fixing" of college basketball games recently developed. Previously, there had been similar revelations concerning boxing and football, and the regular routine of knavery in horse-racing circles.

But few good citizens thought the fix could ever invade collegiate circles. And even fewer good citizens stopped to think that in the final analysis, they themselves, the good citizens, were largely to blame.

You can hear the Good Citizens cry in horror: "Who, ME?" And the answer is: "Yes."

For the Good Citizens of the United States, Canada, and everywhere else, bets on games. He bets, of course, in a spirit of innocent fun. He wouldn't, for the world, try to "fix" a game, but he is unwittingly contributing to a structure whereby games conceivably could be fixed.

Just why a substantial citizen cannot enjoy football, hockey or basketball games without betting on the outcome, is not quite clear. It demonstrates a degeneracy in the appreciation of sports, whether amateur or professional, a search for a thrill the contest itself does not provide.

But people bet, and the urge to bet is not necessarily evil. But we'd say that if you feel an irresistible stimulus to bet, make it a private deal with a friend for a bet, a round of drinks, a dinner, a hand-painted necktie, or \$50 in coin of the realm.

But don't place a bet in a commercial booth. That's where the possibility of an "arrangement" creeps in. Keep it private and personal, among friends whose integrity you know, and make it modest.

It is all well and good to scorn the characters who did the pretty handsome creature, and fortunately in Canada, we've had little or nothing of such things, certainly nothing that would even remotely cloud our collegiate sports picture, nor our football, or hockey, or basketball. But the same developments as came to the United States are possible in Canada. And it is light in the United States to see in volume, your wager and your friend's wager, if diverted into commercial wagering channels, that develop into dangerous growths in our own midst.

This observer is by no means alarmed over the possibility of such a practical approach to our games as exists across the line. Our approach is more on the sentimental side. And we don't have the organized betting, apart from racing and this may be the most important factor of all in keeping our sports scandal-free and above reproach.

One of professional hockey's near approaches to scandal developed a few years ago, and ended in disgrace of laughter. The player involved was tall "Babe" Pratt, a genial, though somewhat uninhibited and unpredictable young man, then playing on Toronto Leafs' defense.

The word got around in some way that Pratt was betting on hockey games. Immediately, there was internal turmoil, pallid faces, and nervous concern in the higher ranges of the National League, together with a solemn clucking of tongues, and a variety of "tut, tut's."

Investigation was, of course, set on foot. Yes, said Pratt when questioned, it was quite true. He was betting on hockey games. In fact, he was betting on his own team, the Maple Leafs, to win. And what of it, enquired Pratt brusquely.

"This betting is very naughty," said one of the investigators with solemn mien. "You can't do that sort of thing. It's unethical, it endangers the very foundations of our structure."

"Blessed be," agreed Pratt, with straight face, "it's just plain silly. I bin betting on Leafs for three weeks, and we ain't won a game in that time. If you go on, I'll return me the money I have lost. I will quit betting right away."

Your comments and suggestions for this column will be welcomed by Elmer Ferguson, c/o Calvert House, 431 Yonge St., Toronto.

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Finds Rare Book Worth A Fortune

When the library of Ripon Cathedral underwent a spring clean, an ex-Leeds University librarian, Mrs. Mortimer, decided to take the opportunity of cataloguing the books in her spare time. She little dreamt that her decision would lead to a discovery which is now exciting collectors of rare books and printing experts all over the world.

It happened this way. She picked up the book and glanced at its title, "Epitome of the Pearl of Eloquence," by Laurence Gualdus, an Italian. Mrs. Mortimer immediately felt a thrill, for the type of print to her expert eye resembled the work of William Caxton. She felt certain it was a genuine Caxton, printed in 1480.

She has now been proved right by British Museum experts. Its type and watermarks are undoubtedly Caxton's. This 34-page volume's original owner seems to have been aware of its value for he wrote in it: "Please not to touch this book. What is its value? At least \$75,000."

Power Politics. In Pahokee, Fla., Mayor Lewis Friend explained how he managed to shoot his fellow hunter, Town Councilman D. W. Cunningham, who had selected a tree as handy observation post: "I mistook his polka-dot shirt for a turkey gobble."

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Real 'Blind' Courage

Everybody who walks regularly along the Boulevard Saint Michel, Paris, knows Robert DeFrance and his wife Christina. For this devoted pair are both blind, and every day they can be seen walking slowly, sometimes hand in hand, along the boulevard. They walk with a certain confidence because the way is so familiar to them. But something went wrong recently. Men were working nearby and a manhole was accidentally left open. A few moments, Christina DeFrance changed to be two steps in front of her husband. She stepped into the hole and plunged 19 ft. to the roaring stream below. The shock caused her to lose consciousness and she lay helpless and silent.

Robert sensed at once that something terrible had happened. His wife found the hole and he did not hesitate. He at once jumped through the railing, deciding to be by her side rather than stand by and watch her drown despite his blindness.

He said afterwards that the fall seemed endless. Down, down, down, and groping until the swirling water he found the inert figure of his wife. He lifted her and held her close as he swam, for help. Nobody had seen the blind couple step into space, but the husband's cries quickly brought workmen to the spot.

Within a short time they were rescued. Neither had suffered any injury, yet the underground canal into which they had plunged is one of the deepest in Paris.

Where and when the canoe was born is shrouded in the mists of antiquity. The Eskimos and American Indians have had them for centuries. But the British canoists claim credit for developing the art of paddling and sailing a canoe as a sport. They introduced it to the European continent soon after the formation of the Royal Canoe Club through two students attending the University of Bonn, Rhine, who were famous as bachelors of Beethoven. And a "mad Englishman" astonished the inhabitants of Sweden shortly afterwards by paddling a canoe across their country.

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STAY PUT, BROTHER!

A shipwrecked sailor, who had spent five years on a desert island, was overjoyed one day to see a ship drop anchor in the bay. A small boat came ashore and an officer handed the sailor a bundle of newspapers.

"That captain suggests," he said, "that you read what's going on in the world to-day, and then let us know if you want to be rescued."

Planes meet with many unexpected hazards. Earlier this year an R.A.F. Canberra jet bomber's attempt to fly the Atlantic non-stop without refueling had to be postponed because it met with a collision. A hole eight inches by six inches was made in the leading edge of the starboard wing—by a seagull!

Quite small numbers of the animal kingdom are capable of causing the most freakish accidents. When five buildings were razed to the ground in Pearl River Village, New York County, a crow was to blame. Someone took a shot at the bird, missed, but set off a series of explosions in a fireworks factory. Igniting gunpowder caused extensive damage to four nearby buildings, but the crow flapped off unharmed.

A bee was recently responsible for blacking out, half a town in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. The bee stung a motorist's nose, the motorist crashed into a pole and broke all the power lines.

Fish were indirectly to blame for another black-out, when the automatic control system of an American railway was short-circuited. An angle near Wellington cut his line into a creek beneath a railway bridge. It caught in some wiring and the result was that fourteen freight trains and three passenger expresses were held up two hours.

A dog shot a man in Texas last year. He snuffed at his master's rifle, raised a paw and touched off the trigger.

A Cambridgehire this year a cricketeer went up in smoke and fished for the pavilion with fire-flicking at his trousers. A ball had hit a box of matches in his pocket which immediately burst into flames.

A somewhat similar occurrence is reported from California. A farmer had been working with a weed-killer made from sodium-chlorate. When he put his hands in his pockets, his trousers exploded, the chemicals used being highly inflammable.

An even less likely accident occurred in Indiana this May. A stepladder, James Swanton, was tried in hospital for considerable injuries. He had fallen from a stool!

Yet an ex-paratrooper, Richard Beckham, of Fairbanks, Alaska, fell from a kitchen shelf, then hit a tap and turned on the water. Soapy suds clogged up the sink, waste-pipe, the water overflowed, short-circuited the electric wiring and the house almost burned.

In Appleton, Wisconsin, a man sneezed so hard that he fell out of bed and broke his toe. A severe sneezing attack caused another to crack his Adam's apple, and yet a third sneezer, a Sussex woman, dislocated her spine and broke her neck.

A kidnapster girl whose face once kissed her with too much force. Kissing apparently needs a lot of care, for in America an actor embraced his leading lady so thoroughly that he broke her nose. He has since been given compensation for injuries received in the course of duty.

You never know what may cause an accident!

Parlay, in Detroit, after Deane Hunter, 11, told how he had run a \$30 stake up to \$2,805 at the horse races, the judges ordered him to sink all his winnings in U.S. defense bonds.

During World War I sawdust was converted by German chemists into cattle fodder by means of sulfuric acid. The acid broke down the lignin (stick stuff in woody cells) so that the wood or cellulose could be digested in the rumen of a cow. A cow has four stomachs, of which the rumen is the first. Cows can eat cotton, which contains no lignin.

In the laboratories of the General Electric Company Dr. M. Dexter Bellamy has long been trying to make sawdust digestible without the aid of sulfuric acid. He does this by turning electrons on sawdust. The electrons do something to the lignin so that the bacterial action can convert the cellulose into acetic acid, propionic acid and butyric acid. All these volatile acids can be absorbed by a cow's intestines.

The electrons that Dr. Bellamy turns on the sawdust come from a modified X-ray tube. An X-ray tube glows in action. This visible glow consists of a stream of electrons. When the stream strikes a tungsten target invisible X-rays shoot forth.

Dr. Bellamy wants the electrons and not the X-rays. Accordingly, he applies a discovery made years ago by Philip Lenard. In other words, he substitutes a thin aluminum window for the target. The electrons pass through the aluminum into the open air and make a fine miniature aurora.

When the stuff in the glass was exposed to electrons for only one minute there was no real effect. But with an exposure of twelve minutes the bacteria digested the sawdust as readily as they did hay.

If starch sticks to your iron and scorches, making it hard to work and using up extra current and effort, let the iron cool, then run it over a waxed paper (paraffin discharges static); lastly, wipe clean with soft cloth.

If some starch still remains, soften it with beeswax, then scrub with soapuds or very mild scouring powder, using only a very little water. Don't scratch iron!

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