

## The Office Window

Last week marked the passing of another year in the business life of the owner of this newspaper. Your editor purchased, and took possession, of this newspaper twenty-six years ago last week, in September, 1931. . . . The turn of another business year is, probably rated as more important to those involved than is the passing of a calendar year, and so our thoughts turn back over the years. . . . Possibly the common denominator for Bradford in 1931 and 1957 is shortage in comfortable housing accommodation—apart from that there is small resemblance between the Bradford of 1931 and 1957. Our experiences in regard to housing in 1931 made such an impression that we never see a moving van arrive without experiencing a bond of sympathy with the owner of the contents of that van. We are rural in our interests, but to come from a city apartment to the average small town house is a memorable experience, but not a cherished memory. We do not believe that any one improvement would be a greater attraction in Bradford than having good housing available. That, of course, must be preceded by sewers, and it is heartening to know that same are not a forgotten cause. . . . Books have been written by the wives of editors dealing humourously with the trials and tribulations of publishing a weekly newspaper. One has to view these trials through long-range perspective to discover anything resembling humour. The occasions upon which that old newspaper press of earlier years broke down and we spent an all night vigil beside the ailing monster; the days upon which the 'phone began to ring as soon as the paper reached cer-

tain readers and their objections were voiced in no uncertain terms regarding something published or omitted from publication; the early mornings when we were aroused from slumber by the pealing of the telephone to answer an enquiry, "You take — newspaper?", and when the answer was given in the affirmative, we were asked to look up certain information in that newspaper; and the enquiry, which usually came at meal time or early morning, "Are there any apartments or houses to rent in Bradford?" . . . The old press has been discarded, which certainly removed one of our trials. The critics now seldom contact us directly, we having learned a few answers which balance the tirade. They have learned to be more subtle, using the unsigned letter instead of the direct approach. We have not proved very obliging about searching for the theatre advertisements in neighbouring towns, and the demands for that service are now few. The calls regarding housing continue, but the majority of our callers have learned that our business demands much night work and we are not prepared to brightly answer the 'phone at 6 a.m. Anyway, the house searcher has our sympathy, and we try to do our best. If the real estate men receive as many calls as we, that is a lively business. . . . And the rewarding memories! We couldn't have remained in this business if we hadn't had them. Publishing a newspaper is not sufficiently financially rewarding to hold anyone's interest. The reward has to be a feeling of satisfaction from the knowledge of service rendered, and to the many who through the years have made the little added effort of expressing such appreciation we are grateful. We are all childish at heart and no child will give his best without some encouragement. The newspaper writer has to feel enthusiasm to write with enthusiasm. It isn't

a matter of will. To write with conviction one must first convince oneself of the worthiness of a cause. The routine program at a meeting, for example, can be reported easily, but the few words which impress that the program was of value come from the impression made upon the reporter. . . . During the campaign for funds for the community centre, time and again adults said to us, "We thought that the whole project had been dropped until we read what you wrote in last week's paper." What kept us driving on that campaign? The answer is a simple one — the children of the community. Children have little reason to be on the side of Barrie Street on which this office

is located, but during the years of the canvassing campaign they not only passed our window, but stopped to wave, and if we did not see them, to tap on the window. They wanted that building and we were their friend because we kept on writing in support of the cause. The building is up, and the youngsters have gone back to the customary side of the street, but they did sustain our enthusiasm and kept it high until the task was accomplished. They were our reward and our source of inspiration. . . . Time and again people have said to us, "The Witness is a great booster for Bradford." Realizing that this newspaper is Bradford's advertisement we have endeavoured to give the best possible publicity, suppressing what might not be ad-

vantageous and publicizing the town's desirable features. In case any wondered why Bradford in 1957 received first place in the Centennial Book, preceding the history, the reason was the same — an opportunity to give Bradford desirable publicity in every part of the world reached by that book. It was planned to send copies to various European centres, to ad-

vertise Bradford, the idea being that such a book was much more likely to be spared for reference than the ordinary publicity brochure. . . . Bradford isn't all sunshine. It has its problems, but what place has not? The problems may be publicized at home, but when we advertise afar it is poor salesmanship to stress them. Therefore that Bradford 1957 page was a "best foot forward" endeavour. . . . A home town weekly newspaper may be a private business in ownership but there its privacy ceases. Its relationship to the people of the community which it serves is a personal one—it is their newspaper. During our twenty-six years we have endeavoured to establish this relationship between the people of the Bradford district and The Witness—commending when commendation appeared deserving and criticizing when such appeared to be necessary. If praise is administered too lavishly it loses its value, therefore if opinion expressed in a newspaper is to be held in respect it must be realistic, and criticism as well as commendation must be expressed. . . . A few have been spared to edit a weekly newspaper for more than half a century, one such being your editor's father, but as we look back over our more than a quarter century we wonder how they did it. Don't believe we'll make that length of service one of our objectives.

Bradford Witness

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