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## NEWS-LETTER #163

## BURLINGTON CAPITALIZES ON "IS" AND "ARE" CONTROVERSY

Here is the sentence appearing in an advertisement prepared by the Chicago Office for the Burlington Railroad which started a controversy among the nation's leading grammarians, was capitalized in a publicity article sent out by the Burlington, made the first pages of metropolitan newspapers, the editorial pages, cartoons -- all netting a considerable return in publicity of some value to the Burlington:

"For within this tremendous area are produced: Two-thirds the oats, more than half the corn, more than half the barley, half the wheat, half the hogs, nearly half the cattle, nearly half the sugar beets grown in the United States; vast riches in iron, timber, coal, oil, copper, silver, gold, wool and cotton."

The copy, as we submitted it, read "is produced." The Traffic Vice-President of the Burlington thought it should be "are produced." On reconsideration, the copy writer felt that "are" was preferable, although either would be correct. Meanwhile, the Passenger Traffic Manager, our contact, had submitted the sentence to the University of Chicago and to Northwestern University. The former declared for "is" and the latter for "are."

Sensing a controversy and thinking to have some fun with it, the Passenger Traffic Manager then wired the lexicographer of The Literary Digest also Yale, Princeton and Harvard. The lexicographer and Yale voted for "are;" Princeton and Harvard prefer "is." The story was then given to a Chicago concern which handles newspaper publicity for the Burlington, which distributed it with the result already noted. The Burlington people now are preparing a pamphlet summarizing the controversy and are giving it wide distribution on their trains and through ticket offices.

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## ART DIRECTORS WIDEN SCOPE OF LECTURES

The 1927 educational lectures of the Art Director's Club are planned to run beginning the first Monday in February at a cost to those who enroll of \$10. for the entire series of ten lectures. Separate admissions will be \$2. each. The place of meeting will be determined upon later.

While to some extent this course will be a continuation of the two courses which preceded it and will draw upon the same audience,



namely, art directors, teachers of art, artists of the younger group, and advertising people, the new series will be keyed up more especially for the last named class. Our committee, consisting of Arthur Munn, art director of Young and Rubicam, and Carl Burger of Barton, Durstine and Osborne, is working to adapt the course to copy writers, junior representatives, traffic executives, and members of the printing and engraving staffs of agencies, and, in fact, all those in advertising whose duties require a knowledge of art principles.

Two or three agencies at least plan to send seven or eight members of their staffs to these lectures. It seems to be a real opportunity and it is not too soon for agency people to plan to enter for the course. The average attendance last year was two hundred but it may be decided to cut this number down, in which case there will probably be a preferred list of applicants.

The cost is, of course, nominal and simply suffices to pay the necessary expenses of the meetings. The lecturers in every case are men of reputation and professional standing who donate their services.

A printed description of the course, its purpose etc. with an outline of the subjects and speakers will be distributed in January.

Peirce Johnson

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#### THE FIFTH ESTATE

H. V. Kaltenborn, Associate Editor of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, who is described as "the first current events speaker to attain a big audience on the air," discusses the "Mike" for the New York World:

"Radio is influencing public opinion by what it excludes even more than by what it gives. Our present tendency is toward uniformity rather than toward diversity in the material that is broadcast. Small stations are giving way to large ones. Super-power is succeeding low power. Multi-station hook-ups are replacing single station programs.

"Only a little while ago the Socialist candidates in any large city who were denied the use of a broadcasting station during a political campaign might have combined and for \$10,000 established a station that would have reached most of the voters. Today the high powered stations would drown them out.

"Radio is making people think in unison. It is doing more than any other agency to develop the lock-step in public opinion. As radio is now controlled, it objects to that which provokes and stimulates independent thinking as 'too controversial.' A debate between William Jennings Bryan and Prof. Henry Fairfield Osborn on evolution was barred on this account.

"All stations dread adverse publicity. They are seeking to build up



good-will and exclude any feature that might offend a part of their audience. An offering must be sufficiently innocuous to appeal to young and old, male and female, to butcher and baker and radio set maker.

"Radio problems will not be solved overnight any more than those which face the press, the school or the church. It has been called the Fifth Estate in recognition of the place it has assumed as a maker of opinion. It has become a giant over night and is still almost unaware of its power.

"Certainly it has not yet begun to use its power with a constructive purpose. There is much to be said in favor of the wise restraint with which its power has been used. But the time has come to ask for a broader, braver policy that will permit radio to tread more freely and firmly on the battlefield of modern thought. Public opinion is the king of America, and radio must assume a more conscious responsibility as democracy's king maker."

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#### HEAT AND LIGHT IN HOMES

##### Further Facts from the Survey by the General Federation of Women's Clubs

In last week's issue of the News Letter there was some information relating to the first section of the National Home Equipment Survey of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Figures are now available which cover the second section of the investigation. This deals with heat and light.

The outstanding fact which the club women discovered in connection with electricity is that, although it is the youngest of the home-serving utilities, it is the second most widely used. Taking the entire United States into consideration electricity is used for light by 80% of all the families. Running water alone exceeds it, and then only as meaning a kitchen sink.

Naturally there is a wide variation in different communities. Contrary to the off-hand opinion of some the city is not the place in which the use of electricity shows at its highest. Instead the high records are made in small towns, particularly in the northwest and middle West where there are many towns in which 100% of all the homes are wired for electricity. In many of the large cities, especially the older places, there is a wide gap in the use of electricity for any purpose.

In the small towns there have for years been evidences of the appreciation which women who do their own housework have for electricity. Small town America is a primary market for all types of electrical equipment. The homes are wired. The power is there. The selling



remains to be done. This is shown by the fact that less than a quarter of all families covered use electric washing machines. Less than one-third use vacuum cleaners.

For the country as a whole the percent of families having such machines is 23.4. But the towns of 1000 to 2500 population the percentage of washing machine ownership in Illinois is 69.3; in South Dakota, 60.9 in Iowa 41.7; and in North Dakota, 41.4. The use of electric ranges is almost negligible the country over, but in the small towns (those from 2500 to 5000) of Washington ranges are used in 29.2% of the homes and in Idaho in 14%. Both of these states enjoy the benefit of exceedingly low electric rates made possible by numerous hydro-electric installations.

The complete figures of this survey are intricate and elaborate, but the summary of them which appears in the January issue of Woman's Home Companion shows clearly that, whether it be in the small town with every home wired, or the big city with many nonelectrical homes, there exists an enormous undeveloped market for every known type of electrical appliance.

Besides electricity the survey also covered the availability and use of gas. Here, of course, the small town fell below the large city average. In fact, gas is seldom available in villages except those in a region producing natural gas. The chief use of gas is for cooking and its use for illumination is falling off rapidly. Of 165,400 homes in smaller cities only 1780 use gas for lighting, or a trifle over one percent. Even in the large cities the figure runs up to only six or seven percent, although in the same homes gas for cooking and water heating stand at virtually one hundred percent.

Figures obtained on heating plants were surprising. Even in large cities furnaces are far from universal, in fact are not in half the homes. To quote the summary:

"The heating information afforded by the figures compiled from returned questionnaires suggest the following tendencies:

First: The coal or wood stove is still the most important house-heating unit in the country as a whole. While dwellings in cities of 50,000 and more population would seem to be more frequently equipped with furnaces than dwellings in smaller places, of the 35 large cities giving data, two fifths state that not half of the dwellings have furnaces.

Second: There are certain states from which adequate reports have been received, however, where furnaces are found more frequently as the main heating unit than stoves. In Illinois the reports of 71 towns show that 62.6 per cent of the combined



number of dwellings have coal-burning furnaces and that 4.3 per cent have oil-burning furnaces. Data from 113 towns in Iowa indicate that 53.4 per cent of the dwellings have coal-burning furnaces and 2.7 per cent have oil-burning furnaces. In Nebraska, half of the dwellings in 90 towns have coal-burning furnaces and 6.5 per cent have oil-burning furnaces.

Of the 19 states from which adequate figures on heating methods were received, 12 reported the use of natural gas. They were Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Utah and Washington. The percentage of coal-burning furnaces ran highest in Delaware, with the District of Columbia second and Illinois third. Oregon leads in the percentage of coal and wood stoves used, with Nevada second."

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