

SOME DEAD LINES ON DOCKET

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Twass the Night before docket

I had just been double chinning with Carrie Chapman Catt,

And wise-cracking-up Chicago with Hutchins after that,

And looking up my calendar to find I had a tryst

With an emigré - you've guessed the kind! - a Psychoanalyst.

My interviews were over, though my diary not begun,

When Briaerius W. Brierley said, "The Docket isn't done.

The greatest item of the year is still upon the shelf

The project that the GEB shan't suicide itself."

So I telephoned to Scarsdale to confirm their worstest fears

Saying, "I'm a doing docket and I wont be home, my dears."

And I rummaged for the outline till I finally came upon it

Of what a docket should contain - a docket's like a sonnet,

A firm and fine tradition of a literary style

Like Camels, once it gave a lift and now you'd walk a mile.....

Yes, a form to learn and stick to if you really want Trustees

To suit themselves unanimously voting what you please,

Which sounds a trifle tricky but that's a common fallacy

For in docket composition NST is the best policy.

Well, somewhat after midnight when the Poles begin to clean

And Schoenly asks, "All out now?" though he means "Where have YOU been?"

The docket was completed with an item to amaze all

The argument I give you clear for record and appraisal.

RESOLVED

The sum of thirteen thousand grand,
Or as much thereof as shall be need,
Be, and it is hereby, paid out of hand
By Edward Robinson as chicken feed
To keep the GEB alive for one more year,
Its officers, its programs and cashier;
The GEB to be recipient
Of all such money hereby spent.

Relation to Program

A vote to keep going, what program more clear?
A vote for survival, what project more dear?
You can't help institutions if you ogre 'em.
To stop is not a program, it's a pogrom.
No sense our ruddy checks to blench
By murmuring the word retrench.
I'm almost sure that all the Trustees like us
That is a central fact - an umbilicus
'Gainst which no pruning knife should carry
Th'idea of financial hari kari.
To GEB or not to GEB is not the question,
That's just a form of acid indigestion!

Previous Interest

When things roll high and handsome as a Palm Springs Greyhound bus

The interest in us can't help being slightly previous.

Was Talladega listless when JD would come to town,

Was advice just all they wanted when TA neared Morris Brown?

Would that Frankenstein of Larry Frank, the non-lactating Mother

Show an interest in a grant in aid from one year to another?

Could we somewhere west of Gary where the best is like the worst

In progressive education send a helpful Havighurst?

When Abe showed Pierrepont Morgan what it costs the Sloane to back,

Or painted rosy pictures for George Eastman to Kodak,

Was he languid and indifferent to the finest and the best,

Was he lacking in enthusiasm or in interest?

Oh my elders, oh my children, oh my colleagues still alive,

Can a duck swim? Don't forget our previous interest was five,

And when five per cent was normal and we sat upon the lid

Their interest was as previous as ours in all we did.

General Description

Can a paragraph contain it? Could a thumbnail sketch at random

Tell all about the GEB without a memorandum?

Can a docket item do it when historians have quailed

At the maze of all the programs which succeeded and which failed?

For the pattern it was Buttrick's who had the sense to see

The policy of the Board is just to have no Policy.

The records amply bear that out: no rhyme but lots of reason

Adorn the Board's accomplishment -- in season, out of season.

General Description (Cont'd)

Those spirited philanthropoids swung happy branch to branch
Of knowledge in paraboloids that made assistants blanch.
They seldom came a cropper and they rarely took a spill,
Though eighty million dollars was Abraham's doctors' bill.

But this general description is not general enough
Shall we dial to Mr. Brierley and ask him for the stuff?
Why, he'd bury us in contracts and upon the piles cut capers,
We'd be avalanched with letters, monographs, occasional papers,
Books and notes, addresses, lectures, tracts and digests, syllabee
Both in pedigese and English of the General E. B.
Bolsoverwhelmed with records we'd die in a conniption
Fit (or surfeit) of General Description.

Financial

I must admit the principal appeal
Of this part is to G. J. Beal
To gladden all his fellow officials
By fixing to it his initials
(What do they mean this G this J this B?
Stet! Nihil Obstat! Amen! Let it be!
Fiat Lux! Selah! Okie Doke!
There's a plenipotentiary bloke!) -
But this story of finances still must struggle to be told.
Who gives what, and just how often? Bonds of C.F.I. or gold?
Is it matched, or is it outright, or conditional or what?

Financial (Cont'd)

Is it earmarked or contingent? Or is it just a blot
On the crystal pure tradition we inherited from Kirk
And an error in the figures to be blamed upon a clerk.
Does it taper, taper, taper, to chic extremity
Like the silhouette of Anna Held or now of Marlene D.?
Or is it Elsa Maxwell-like, a lump sum once for all
To give a simpler pleasure to whom it may befall?
No, the facts are very simple once the policy is made,
It's just a thirteen million dollar routine grant in aid.
For the GEB's great service which would otherwise be in tatters -
The money isn't needed, its the moral help that matters
When Ted Robinson has drawn the check and everyone is still,
'Twill be written to his order (and be put back in the till)
And we'll all learn what it feels like to be a real grantee
And demonstrate the value of some immortality.
That's the purpose of this item, for the officers believe
Life more certain and more meaningful with something up your sleeve.

Implications

None. I said "None."
You heard me, everyone.
In Youth's Bright Lexicon
There's no such word as bail.

If this great project fail
An in review
In 1942
We can't think what to do -
We might renew.

But with an imprecation
The officers deny
This to imply
The slightest implication.