

SUMMING UP

THINGS TO REMEMBER

WORD magic is still with us and it can be used for good or bad purposes. The bad side of word magic will continue to mislead and confuse us unless we understand the symbolic function of words. Our knowledge can help protect us.

The creation of symbols is one of man's greatest achievements. The power of symbolization helps us to use our collected wisdom from generation to generation. We preserve and pass on our knowledge through words.

As symbols, words have no meaning in themselves. Nor are they necessarily connected to what they stand

for. They have meaning only because we agree to give them meaning. If everyone agreed to substitute the word *hurther* for *bed*, then we would all sleep in *hurther*. There is nothing in or about the word *bed* that connects it to the object it refers to. The connection is simply by agreement.

Words are neither good nor bad in themselves. The "goodness" or "badness" of a word is in our minds, since we give meaning to words.

For word-wisdom we would do well to repeat over and over . . . *The word is not the thing . . . The word is not the thing . . . The word . . .*

THIS HUMOR IS NOT TO BE LAUGHED AT

We've seen how words can be juggled to mislead and confuse us. A humorous side of this verbal juggling is a crazy kind of sentence called the "Irish Bull." The words of an Irish Bull seem to make sense—at first. But the closer you get, the crazier they become. Look at the following Bulls and see if you don't end up in confusion.



You'll Need a Ball-Point Penguin for This Exercise

Some words, like Wacky Wordies, can be closely connected to the thing they refer to. Other words can be spliced together to make one word with one specific meaning. Read the following "Splicers" and then try your luck at them.

1. POSSECAT—the sheriff's mascot
2. BALL-POINT PENGUIN—a bird that writes underwater
3. ASTRONOT—a spaceman who flunked his physical
4. RUMPUSS—a cat fight
5. AUTOTOPSY—the examination of a crashed car
6. ULTRAVIOLENT—purple with rage

7. INKOME—a printer's wages
 8. HETQUIPMENT—what a girl needs to capture a man
- What can you call . . .

1. An argument between squirrels? *Squarrel*
2. A place to buy extinct reptiles? *dinostore*
3. A boat for giraffes? *giraff*
4. A hairpiece for frogs? *today*
5. The horse of a nobleman? *noblemane*
6. Salted wafers with duck soup? *Quackers*
7. Jagged-toothed blades for cutting apples? *Applesaw*
8. Jelly beans that make you sad? *crybean*

Answers are on p. 31. Can you add your own splicers?