

### Congressmen Vie In 'Bee'; Writer Says Girls Robbed

By FRANK ELEAZER  
Washington—(UP)—Three congressmen met three school girls in a spelling match and modestly admitted afterwards that the school girls had lost.

This is to file a minority report. The girls were robbed.

The eighth-grade girls from California flew in from California to take on the lawmakers after clobbering directors of the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce. The directors reportedly had made the mistake of complaining that kids these days are not learning to spell like they used to.

This proved to be true, and thank goodness for that. Those businessmen apparently couldn't spell fire sale.

To ease their embarrassment, they sic'd their victors on Congress. They figured no doubt that with the kind of gobbledygook they talk around here the lawmakers had forgotten all they ever knew about English.

Rep. Clement Miller (D-Calif.) was their first choice as a legislative sacrifice to the girl spelling champs. The girls got their start by winning a three-county bee conducted by the Santa Rosa Press Democrat in Miller's congressional district. Miller couldn't very well say no. Anyway, yes is one word every congressman learns to spell right away.

Miller looked around for support and came up with a couple of obvious experts, Reps. Jeffery Cohelan (D-Calif.), a former Fulbright scholar at Oxford, and Ken Hechler (D-W.Va.), a Ph.D. and former college professor who helped write speeches for Adlai E. Stevenson.

The girls arrived for the contest unshaken and early. Miller was there, too, but his two experts were nowhere to be seen. They hurried in minutes late, and the word was they had been studying.

From the outcome, it would be hard to say that.

The photographers got things moving by asking the girls where they were from, and to spell it.

Mary McFarling, 14, said her home is Ukiah. Carolyn Storts, 14, said she comes from Gualala. Valerie Turner, 13, gave her town as Petaluma.

Majority Would Rule  
Cohelan said on the panel shows he watches the contestants get time to confer. Anyway, he said all decisions would be by majority vote.

The photos said please run through some warmups while they shot the pictures.

Then they got down to the contest.

Mary handled slavery, bachelor, grotesque, and chandler without even trying. Valerie ran through scarce, committee, involuntary, and embroidery. Carolyn got breakfast, discrepancy, genesis, and laboratory, with no more than a sigh.

Miller got safely through romance. He staggered on aggravate, but got it right on the second try, in clear violation of rule 5, which said once is enough. He managed gullible and moccasin.

Licked on Mayonnaise  
Cohelan handled bicycle and crescent but was licked on Mayonnaise. He tried that close.

Hechler eased through available, geranium, abdomen and fallacious.

On seismograph Carolyn rolled her eyes to the sky, tried C for a starter and was ruled out under rule 5.

Miller collapsed under tonsillectomy, Valery went down under tercentenary. Mary drew fictitious which she spelled like that.

She was the only one in the room who seemed shocked when the judges said she was wrong. The official list, it was noted, spelled it fictitious.

So Hechler was proclaimed winner. The girls left mildly crestfallen. And George Coffey, the UPI West Coast reporter, raced off to file the results to Ukiah, Gualala and Petaluma. When George was half-way through writing his copy, Richard Hallett, the UPI teletype operator, got to the part about Mary losing out on fictitious.

"She spelled it right," Hallett opined.

I called the Library of Congress for a ruling. The experts there consulted their dictionaries, then wisely declined to arbitrate a contest between school girls and congressmen.

What they did say though was that Hallett was clearly the winner.

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