

Best-Selling Author Gives Opinion on Being Good Writer

By A. ROBERT SMITH
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Washington — On a recent nationwide tour in connection with promotion of his new best selling novel, "Advise and Consent," Allen Drury found a surprising number of people asking what they could read in the press that was trustworthy.

"How do we know we're getting the true story out of Washington?" he was asked.

Drury, a New York Times correspondent, found it disturbing that so much critical skepticism exists about the reliability of dispatches from Washington. He said he advised questioners to read many sources, balance one against the other if they suspected one of bias, and use their own best judgment.

This raised the proper question: what are Washington correspondents trying to do in covering the big and little events that occur here? Drury offered his answer in a speech at the National Press club.

"The kind of writer I would like to be is the kind of writer any reporter or radio man or TV commentator with an ounce of integrity would like to be, I think. The kind of writer who says a little something valid about the human experience, insofar as it is given him to see it, and who illuminates also something of his times so that his contemporaries and those who come after may find their understanding a little better for what he has done."

In Essential Agreement
What are they trying to accomplish?

"I think most of us are in essential agreement as to what we should like to do. And that is to say a little something honest in a phony time about a country who needs all our understanding and all our help and all our love if she is to come safely through the fearful perils which beset her."

Drury believes the true America has somehow got lost from herself, "observed by the more clamorous of her clever, clever citizens" in an era when "slogans are substituted for reality, in which false values have behind them all the force of organized advertising and promotion."

"Somewhere under all this phoniness, God knows, there still lives a great Nation and a great people; and it is to them that I, and I think most of us, should like to be true in whatever I write. For I suspect that when the last TV program is snapped off, the last urgent advertisement is

laid aside, and the last hearty admonition from the hidden and not-so-hidden persuaders dies out upon the quivering air, the great majority of us in this country are still creative non-conformists.

"Beneath the mush and organized hogwash, beneath the phony pretensions and the phony attitudes and the phony hopes with which too many try to hide from the problems of our world instead of facing up to them honestly and unafraid, there is still, I think, a great vigor and a great vitality and a great decency and a great courage, both of purpose and, quite often, of achievement."

"It is this essentially that I, and I think most of us in this business, should like to record, in whatever ways we may have the ability, when all else is said and done — that here is a Republic, not perfect, yet with great decencies; not infallible, yet with great strengths; not all-knowing, yet with a kind intention and a brave heart."

"Most of us, I believe, would like to so write about America that our contemporaries can say, 'Yes, we see ourselves; and in a later day if men happen to come across the record we have left, they may say to one another, 'This is how it was — in that country — in that time.'"

"If we can do that, in whatever medium, fiction or the columns of the daily paper or whatever, then I think our people, our integrity and our profession will have been well served."

Drury was undoubtedly asked to address the Press club because his book had turned out to be so successful. But when he finished talking, he received a standing ovation — for what he had said, he had said for all of us, and with considerable more eloquence than most of us can muster.

Rogue River Branch Of Group Starts

Rogue River — A Rogue River branch of the Oregon Education association was officially launched Tuesday, Sept. 22, with the adoption of a constitution for the local teachers group.

Meetings of the new group will be held monthly and officers for the current year will be elected at the October meeting. Evans Valley faculty members are to be invited to join.

Association aims are "to foster professional improvement, encourage cooperation with organizations working for advancement of the teaching profession, create a spirit of fellowship and mutual helpfulness and promote good public relations," the group reported.

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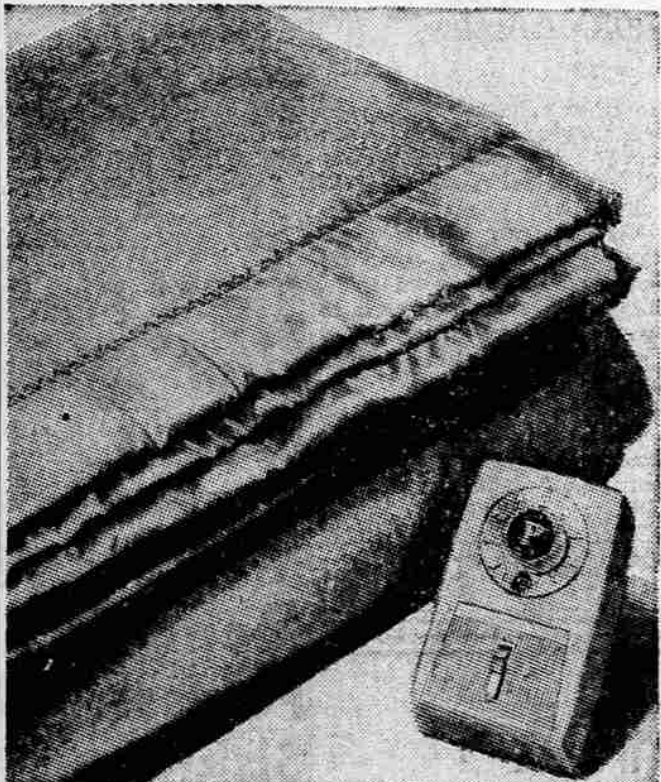
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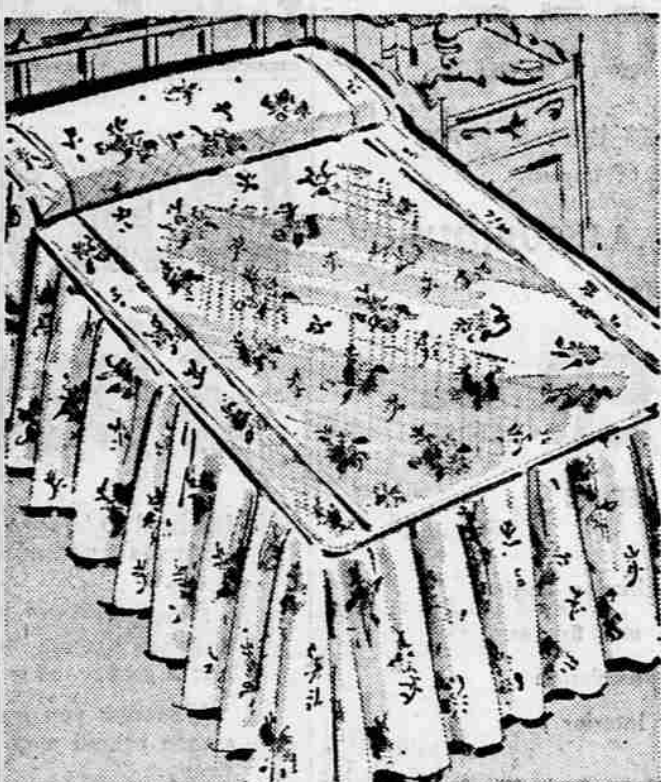
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