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SPEECH OF THE MAYOR, C.I.R. PATRICK LEWIS, AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE JOHANNESBURG TURF CLUB AT THE RAND CLUB ON TUESDAY, 23RD DECEMBER 1969.

IN THE COURSE OF A NORMALLY BUSY LIFE ONE USUALLY, IN THE END, MEETS THEM ALL. WELL, THERE WAS THIS GREAT DAY AT THE RACES, THIS VERY LAST SATURDAY, IN FACT, AS YOUR GUEST.

THE NIGHT BEFORE, CAN YOU BELIEVE IT, JUST AFTER THE CAROL SERVICE, I WAS TOLD OF MURPHY AN IGNORAMUS, SUCH AS MYSELF, WHO WAS ATTENDING HIS FIRST RACE MEETING IN DUBLIN. HE WATCHED THE PARADING OF THE HORSES IN THE RING. HE NOTICED A PRIEST GO UP TO A HORSE, SPRINKLE HOLY WATER ON THE HORSE'S NECK, MUMBLE A PRAYER AND THEN CROSS HIMSELF. MURPHY NOTED THE HORSE'S NAME AND

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AND NUMBER. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT, THE HORSE, AN OUTSIDER, STRODE HOME AN EASY WINNER. THE NEXT RACE THE SAME PERFORMANCE TOOK PLACE IN THE RING AND BASED ON WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE FIRST RACE, MURPHY, ALTHOUGH A PROTESTANT AND SUSPICIOUS OF ALL CATHOLICS, PUT HIS MONEY ON THE HORSE BLESSED BY THE PRIEST. AGAIN IT ROMPED HOME. IN THE THIRD RACE THE SAME RITUAL WAS PERFORMED. MURPHY AGAIN BACKED THE HORSE AND AGAIN COLLECTED HIS WINNINGS. THE FOURTH RACE PARADE TOOK PLACE. AGAIN THE PRIEST POURED HOLY WATER ON THE HORSE, AGAIN A PRAYER, AGAIN THE PRIEST/...

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PRIEST CROSSED HIMSELF. MURPHY THOUGHT THIS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE AND PUT ALL HIS WINNINGS ON THE HORSE.

THIS TIME, HALF-WAY DOWN THE STRAIGHT, THE HORSE COLLAPSED, TURNED OVER AND GAVE UP THE GHOST, ALL FOUR LEGS RAISED TO HIGH HEAVEN. IMAGINE MURPHY'S DESPAIR. MURPHY SOUGHT OUT THE PRIEST TO DEMAND AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT HAD GONE WRONG. THE PRIEST SPEKE TO HIM IN DISGUST AND SAID "THE TROUBLE WITH YOU IGNORANT PROTESTANTS IS THAT YOU CAN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN A BLESSING AND THE LAST RITES."

SATURDAY WAS A GLAMOROUS DAY AND I VASTLY ENJOYED THE FASCINATION OF THE UNFAMILIAR, THE MOTION AND COLOUR AND EXCITEMENT, AND THE PATENT IMPOSSIBILITY OF NOT BECOMING INVOLVED TO SOME DEGREE IN IT ALL.

AND TO MY FURTHER DELIGHT THERE, ROUND THE RAILS, WERE SURELY THE ORIGINAL DAMON RUNYON CHARACTERS WHO ARE PART OF THE SCENE AT ANY RACE TRACK IN THE WORLD - AT EPSOM OR TURFFONTEIN, AT CLAIRWOOD OR THE KENTUCKY DERBY. THERE WERE HARRY THE HORSE AND HOT HORSE HERBIE AND SAM THE GONOPH AND LOUIS THE LUG.
SOME/...

SOME OF THEM WERE TALL SKINNY GUYS WITH WHAT RUNYON WOULD DESCRIBE AS DEPRESSING KISSERS. AND SOME WERE AS WELL DRESSED AS DAVE THE DUDE IN VERY FANCY CLOTHES.

I THOUGHT OF A STORY I'D HEARD WHICH MAY HAVE COME FROM RUNYON BUT I DON'T THINK SO. IT SEEMS THAT A POLICEMAN WHO WAS DISENCHANTED - CAN IT BE POSSIBLE? - WITH HIS NEW BEAT AT A BIG RACE MEETING SAID SADLY TO A COLLEAGUE: "SO THAT'S THE FAVOURITE? HE'S GOT WARTS ON HIS NOSE." HIS EXPERIENCED FRIEND RUBBED HIS HANDS IN GLEEFUL ANTICIPATION AND REPLIED: "THOSE ARE'T WARTS, YOU
IGNORAMUS./...

IGNORAMUS. THEY'RE BITS OF GOLD."

I GOT HIS MEANING WHEN I THOUGHT I SAW A WINNER COME IN BY A NOSTRIL ON SATURDAY.

BUT I DON'T INTEND TO SPEAK HERE TO THE KNOWLEDGABLE AND THE CONVERTED ABOUT RACING. YOU ARE HAVING YOUR EXCITING FILL OF IT THIS MONTH AND I WAS INFECTED BY ITS MAGIC IN THE EXHILARATING TURFFONTEIN AIR ON SATURDAY.

MY TASK TONIGHT IS EASY - TO ENJOY MYSELF IN YOUR CHEERFUL COMPANY AND TO REPLY TO THE TOAST ON BEHALF OF THE GUESTS. WE HAVE HAD A GREAT TIME. THIS DINNER HAS BEEN ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF A MEMORABLE DECEMBER WHICH HAS BROUGHT US A LOAD OF RAIN AND JUST AS MUCH SUNSHINE, MILLION-RAND SHOPPING SPREES, BRILLIANTLY ILLUMINATED STREETS, PARTIES, BANQUETS, TREATS BOTH GIVEN AND RECEIVED AND ALSO ON YOUR PART, I RECALL, AN UPROARIOUS DINGAAN'S HANDICAP WON BY A 20 TO 1 OUTSIDER. RACING HAS BEEN TIME-HONOURED IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS. THE FIRST/...

FIRST RECORDED EVENT WAS, OF COURSE, AT THE CAPE, ON GREEN POINT COMMON, IN 1798, A GLITTERING, HIGHLY FASHIONABLE AFFAIR WHICH WAS FULLY REPORTED IN THE LONDON MORNING CHRONICLE. THE FIRST FEW THOROUGHBREDS IMPORTED IN 1792 CAUSED GREAT INTEREST, BUT WHAT ATTRACTED MOST UNIVERSAL ATTENTION WAS LADY ANNE BARNARD IN A SPLENDID CARRIAGE DRAWN BY EIGHT SPANISH STALLIONS.

PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO HEAR A LITTLE OF WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE IN THE SADDLE IN WHAT I CAN ONLY DESCRIBE AS THE MAYOR'S JOHANNESBURG/...

JOHANNESBURG CHRISTMAS HANDICAP, AN ANNUAL EVENT AS TRADITIONAL AS ANY ON THE TURF AND ONE, LIKE YOUR SPORT, WHICH IS UTTERLY DEMOCRATIC.

THE TRAINER FOR THIS EVENT, I SUPPOSE, IS THE JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL WITH WHOM I HAVE BEEN RIDING FOR MANY YEARS. THE OWNER IS THE WHOLE OF OUR WIDESPREAD CITY. THE STAKES ARE ENORMOUSLY HIGH BUT INTANGIBLE, PAID OUT AS THEY ARE IN THINGS LIKE HAPPINESS AND GOODWILL AND FELLOWSHIP AND GENERAL WELFARE. AND THE/...

THE COURSE, I ASSURE YOU, IS LONG AND STRENUOUS BEYOND BELIEF.

THE JOCKEY OF COURSE, IS THE MAYOR, THE COLOURS GREEN AND GOLD, AND HE IS WEIGHED IN WITH THE ADDITIONAL HANDICAP OF A SOLID GOLD CHAIN. HE RIDES T J 1 BY ROLLS OUT OF ROYCE - A GREAT FILLY FROM A FINE STABLE WHO SHOWS PRETTY CONSISTENT FORM EVEN WHEN SHE MEETS WITH INTERFERENCE FROM AND HAS TO SCRIMMAGE HER WAY THROUGH THE OTHER HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS HAPHAZARDLY USING THE SAME COURSE. SOMETIMES SHE IS EVEN A RELUCTANT STARTER. AT OTHER TIMES SHE TENDS TO GET EXCITED, BOILS OVER AND REFUSES TO BUDGE./...

BUDGE. THIS, AFTER ALL, IS HER 13TH ENTRY FOR THIS CHRISTMAS HANDICAP.

THE MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS HANDICAP STARTS ROUND ABOUT THE END OF NOVEMBER AND ENDS JUST ABOUT CHRISTMAS - A MONTH-LONG MEETING. BOTH THE MAYOR AND HIS LADY SET OUT AS MEDIUM WEIGHTS BUT BALK AT STANDING ON SCALES ONCE THE EVENT IS OVER AND WON. JOHANNESBURG IS ALWAYS HOSPITABLE, MARVELLOUSLY SO AT CHRISTMAS TIME WHEN FOOD AND WINE FLOW FREE AND DIETS ARE RICH. THERE ARE THE ADDITIONAL HAZARDS OF FORCE FEEDING SUCH AS I HAD AT ONE PARTY/...

PARTY WHEN A LITTLE GIRL INSISTED THAT I SHARE HER ICE CREAM ON THE GOOD OLD NURSERY FEEDING PRINCIPLE OF "ONE FOR YOU, ONE FOR ME."

THE COURSE COVERS THE WHOLE OF JOHANNESBURG, EVERY AREA OF IT, RICH AND POOR.

PROSIACALLY, IN THE CITY HALL, THE ENTIRE EVENT IS KNOWN AND DIARISED AS THE MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS VISITS. BUT THIS, I THINK, IS ALTOGETHER TOO OFFICIAL AND FORMAL A DESCRIPTION OF SOMETHING WHICH IS AT ONCE A SPECIAL HAPPENING AND A RICH UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

DECEMBER, I THINK, IS A "PERK" IN ANY MAYORAL YEAR AND THE MAN WHO IS CHIEF CITIZEN AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR IS LUCKY INDEED. THIS IS WHEN HE GETS THE FINEST INSIGHT INTO AND SEES THE BEST PART OF THE WORK OF THE CITY, WHEN HE MEETS THE COUNTLESS BACKROOM BOYS AND GIRLS WHOSE CONSTANT WORK IS THE WELFARE OF OTHERS, AND WHEN HE IS MADE SUPREMELY CONSCIOUS OF THE GENUINE SPIRIT OF CHARITY WITHOUT WHICH EVEN THE BIGGEST AND MOST GLITTERING CITY IN THE WORLD WOULD BE A DESOLATE DESERT.

I STOLE A QUOTE FROM CHARLES DICKENS FOR OUR CHRISTMAS CARD
THIS/...

THIS YEAR. HE WROTE: "I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF CHRISTMAS AS A GOOD TIME - A KIND, FORGIVING, CHARITABLE, PLEASANT TIME." OUR WISH TO YOU ALL ON THIS SAME CARD WAS THAT THIS SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS WOULD PREVAIL IN JOHANNESBURG THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF THE COMING YEAR.

DURING THE ROUND OF MAYORAL VISITS I FOUND THAT IN MANY PLACES IN JOHANNESBURG THE KIND, FORGIVING, CHARITABLE PLEASANTNESS FELT BY DICKENS WAS INDEED A 12-MONTH LONG AFFAIR, AND WAS MOST OFTEN TO BE SEEN IN PLACES WHERE DEDICATION, LOVE, PATIENCE AND
TACT/...

TACT WERE CONSTANTLY ON TAP EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS FROM DECEMBER TO DECEMBER.

I AM THINKING OF NOW, AND SPECIALLY SALUTE, THOSE OF OUR CITIZENS WHO WORK WITH SUFFERERS FROM CEREBRAL PALSY; THOSE WHOSE LOVE AND CARE ARE GIVEN TO THE POOR AND SICK IN ANY FIELD; THOSE WHO MAKE OUR HOSPITALS PLACES OF SWEETNESS AND LIGHT; THOSE WHO LABOUR IN OUR WELFARE SERVICES FOR AFRICANS; THOSE WHO DO NOT DISMISS THE PIONEERS AND OUR VERY OLD AS HAS-BEENS, BUT DO THEIR
UTMOST/...

UTMOST TO KEEP THEM IN THE COMMUNITY TO WHICH, IN THEIR YOUNG DAYS, THEY CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH.

I AM THINKING NOT ONLY OF THE FUND-RAISERS BUT OF THOSE WHO COLLECT TOYS AND ACTUALLY TAKE THEM TO OTHERWISE DEPRIVED CHILDREN; THOSE WHO DISTRIBUTE SPECIAL FOOD PARCELS FOR CHRISTMAS DAY; THOSE WHO GIVE UP THEIR OWN AFFAIRS ON BUSY DAYS TO TAKE ROUND MEALS-ON-WHEELS TO THE SHUT-INS AND POSSIBLY HELPLESS.

THE CATALOGUE OF TRUE CHARITY IS MUCH LONGER THAN THIS BUT THE FEW I HAVE MENTIONED WILL UNDERLINE THE POINT I AM MAKING - THAT/...

THAT CHRISTMAS WOULD BE AN EMPTY TIME, AND GOODWILL AND CHARITY HOLLOW PHRASES, WERE IT NOT FOR THE THOUSANDS OF JOHANNESBURG PEOPLE WHO SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME NOT ONLY IN THINKING OF AND ORGANIZING, BUT IN ACTUALLY TAKING PRACTICAL HELP TO LESS FORTUNATE

WE ARE REALLY TREMENDOUSLY RICH IN JOHANNESBURG, NOT ONLY IN GOLD BUT IN PEOPLE OF QUALITY. WE ARE ALSO RICH IN OUR CAPACITY FOR ENJOYMENT, AND THE OLDER WE GET THE MORE WE SEEM TO ENJOY THE DELIGHT OF A FUN GET-TOGETHER WITH OUR PEERS. I HAVE BEEN TO MANY SUCH EVENTS THIS MONTH.

I AM/...

I AM SURE YOU WOULD HAVE ENJOYED WITH ME THE LUNCHEON CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE OLD FOLK OF THE GOLDEN CITY CLUB; THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS VISIT TO JORDAN HOUSE, THE HOME FOR COLOURED AGED, INDOMITABLE, WONDERFULLY COURTEOUS FOLK WHOSE FACES ARE WRINKLED INTO LAUGH LINES; THE PARTY FOR THE TWINKLING RESIDENTS - THERE IS NO BETTER ADJECTIVE TO DESCRIBE THEIR ZEST FOR LIVING - OF PIONEER HOUSE, GERALD FITZPATRICK, QUEEN ALEXANDRA, AND SIMILAR OTHER PARTIES AT RANDJESLAAGTE, QUEENSHAVEN AND NAZARETH HOUSE.

AND/...

AND AS FOR THE CHRISTMAS DANCE OF THE OLD TIME DANCE GROUP OF THE BERTHA SOLOMON AND ORIBI RECREATION CENTRES! DID YOU KNOW THAT THE MAGENTA WALTZ, STROLL ALONG SAUNTER, THE BARN DANCE, THE SOCIETY TANGO, THE GROSVENOR GLIDE, THE SHERRIE SAUNTER AND THE LANCERS ARE STILL KEPT ALIVE BY THIS SWINGING GROUP OF NOT SO YOUNGS!

THE COURSE OF THE MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS HANDICAP ALSO RUNS OVER THE ZOO LAKE, NEVER MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN IN THE LATE DUSK WHEN/...

WHEN THOUSANDS OF CANDLES ARE HELD ALOFT DURING THE CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE.

IN TWO DAYS' TIME MY CHRISTMAS HANDICAP WILL HAVE BEEN RUN. I THINK, ON THE WHOLE, THE TOTE HAS CHALKED UP SOME GOOD GAINS FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE. IT HAS BEEN A GREAT GALLOP OVER A THRILLING COURSE AND TJ 1 WILL BE PUT OUT TO GRASS FOR A DAY OR TWO OF REST WHILE HIS RIDER DOES SOME INVESTIGATION ABOUT CRASH DIETS TO COPE WITH THE CALENDAR NOW BEING DRAWN UP FOR THE NEW YEAR.

THANKS/...

THANKS ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.

ON BEHALF OF THE GUESTS I WISH YOU MANY SPARKLING RACING DAYS. MAY ALL YOUR HORSES BE DISTINGUISHED BY THE SPOTS OF GOLD ON THEIR NOSES.

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