

'Dum Spiro Spero'...

... which is to say, "While there's life, there's hope." The article by Vice President Agnew that was published in our "Topics" column last Saturday contained so much good sense that we freely commend it to anyone, particularly Mr. Agnew himself, as a guide for the conduct of public discourse. The national climate can only be improved by general agreement to "differentiate between the kind of division that embitters and negates, and the division that encourages intelligent debate."

If Columnist Agnew can persuade Vice President Agnew, the country should be hearing less from now on about the "effete corps of impudent snobs" and more about the hard issues that divide the Administration from its youthful critics. There should be less talk about those "rotten apples" that the Vice President thinks should be "separated" from the rest of society, and more about improving life in the barrel.

Perhaps Mr. Agnew will even want to modify those negative approaches to debate which he now so rightly deplores—such as characterizing war critics like Senator Fulbright, Mayor Lindsay and former Secretary of Defense Clifford as "summertime soldiers and sunshine patriots." Or to tone down his attack on Cyrus Vance as a failure and on Averell Harriman for "trusting Communists" to the point of sacrificing other peoples' lives and freedom while gaining two thoroughbred horses—"compliments of J. V. Stalin."

In apparently wanting to end this shabby sort of dialogue (the Vice President undoubtedly got from some quarters as bad as he gave), Mr. Agnew may be trying to tell the opposition that he is not really the ogre he has seemed at times to want people to think him. If so, we are happy to hear it—whether the change indicates a fresh estimate of the national temper, a political eye on the future, or merely a weariness with playing Mr. Hyde to the President's Dr. Jekyll.

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