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Que faire des post-positions ? (Concours IIe série, No 3)

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Now for the question of the stylistics of the text. The word "fjord" takes me thousands of miles away, to Norway. A number of these words exist in English, each one associated with a certain locality. In addition to "fjord", which I associate with Norway, there is "firth", which seems to go with Scotland; "estuary", which conjures up a picture of England; and finally, "inlet", the American term. For a Canadian text, it might be better to use Lynn Inlet, were it not for the unfortunate assonance. I propose starting anew after the word "or" with something along the line of "...else farther up the inlet of the Lynn". The comparative is justified by the use of "mouth" in the previous clause.

Finally, the next to the last sentence presents a rather curious inverted transposition. A French noun is frequently transposed into an English verb. Here we have a French verb transposed into an English noun, something that does not often happen. It leads us into a seeming contradiction between "estimated" and "ranges". I wonder if it would not have been better to have foregone the temptation to transpose, and to translate in a straightforward (and businesslike) manner by: It is estimated that the completed installation will cost between 500 million and 2 billion dollars." The passive voice, and impersonal form, are characteristically English. "Travaux", a plural concept in French, almost invariably corresponds to a singular concept in the English-speaking mind.⁽²⁾

B. T. H



¶ *Que faire des post-positions ?* (Concours IIe série, No 3)

Voici une liste de phrases, relevées au hasard de lectures par M. Vincent Guillon, professeur à Smith College, Northampton, et au cours d'été de français de Middlebury College, Vermont, — qui montrent à quel point les écrivains de langue anglaise font un large usage des post-positions. Comme le souligne justement un critique du *New York Times*, "the Greeks have words for a number of things but, as A. P. Herbert of *Punch* and Parliament has remarked, they have a neat trick of hitching on the front of words little gadgets that prodigiously enlarge the effective range of their language. Again, as Mr. Herbert says, we have a way of doing the same thing. But our trick is to trail little words of all work after our big ones. For example, a game hunter in Africa *shoots lions*, a bad man in a Western movie *shoots up a town*."

M. Guillon nous propose donc de traduire ces phrases en français, en méditant auparavant, comme le veut André Gide, "les spécifiques vertus et qualités de chaque langue, ses résistances, ses réticences et ses refus." Il est probable que le nombre de ces phrases, qu'un simple coup d'oeil au journal du matin pourrait augmenter considérablement, fera reculer les plus téméraires. Nous suggérons que chacun s'essaie à telle ou telle phrase qui frappe son imagination et éveille des échos favorables; un essai de corrigé sera publié dans le numéro 1 du prochain volume, qui paraîtra en avril 1958. Date limite pour l'envoi des manuscrits: 15 mars 1958.

1. The herd stampeded past him.
2. The sheep had already pattered out of sight.
3. We horned the big truck aside.
4. She shrugged away the thought.
5. Undertaking such as those described cannot be shrugged off as isolated phenomena.
6. She danced her way into the hearts of the spectators.

² A propos du texte discuté par M. Vinay au numéro précédent, page 96, ligne 2, en réponse à la question "Would you care for something from the bar ? / Prendriez-vous une consommation ? ; it contains disposable diapers . . .", on pourrait proposer la réponse bilingue suivante: "No thanks, I hold my liquor rather well / Mais cette remarque ne s'applique sûrement pas aux gens qui boivent cul-sec".

7. Enemy propaganda is eating away at civilian morale.
8. He tried to puzzle out the meaning of the message.
9. Undersize recruit stretches itself into the army.
10. The bill of the committee was talked under in the Senate.
11. He talked himself out of jail.
12. He stared him into silence.
13. He reasoned the child out of her fear.
14. The sovereigns smiled their way through an ordeal of exhaustive travel and ceremony.
15. The headwaiter was bowing out two ladies.
16. The vice-president apologized for having gaveled the amendment through.
17. Some day you'll wisecrack yourself into a hole.
18. The wedding cortege is Mendelssohned out of the church (Kipling).
19. He drank his wife and children into the poor-house.
20. The draperies were tortured into motion by the rising tempest (Poe).
21. You can't argue a tire out of a field of dandelions.
22. It was a very old car, but John managed to sputter his way through the next three counties.
23. Cigarette-advertising copy-writers have become experts at training a negligible little flea of a fact to hop all over the United States and bite its way into the consciousness of the nation's customers.
24. The film shows how a couple of nuns from France parley a few dollars into a fund big enough to set up a hospital.
25. She snapped her bag shut.



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A NOS LECTEURS

¶ *En cas de changement d'adresse, veuillez nous avvertir immédiatement. Nombre de numéros se perdent à chaque envoi.*



¶ *Nous avons besoin de bonnes volontés pour aider le secrétariat à faire des enveloppes, envoyer le Journal, répondre aux abonnés, etc. Téléphoner à Mme G. Vacariu, RE. 3-7229.*



¶ *Pensez à des articles que vous pourriez nous envoyer; soumettez-nous des problèmes de traduction.*