

Republicans refuse to speak of Democratic party

By Theodore M. Bernstein
 That certain party. Since the mid-1950's some Republicans have refused to speak of the Democratic party and insisted on calling it the Democrat party. The idea apparently was to avoid giving the impression that the Republicans conceded that their rival party was truly democratic. However, the trouble is, as Russell Baker has pointed out in one of his columns in *The New York*

and Mary went too," and certainly one would not appear in a construction such as, "Me too." When too in the sense of also appears in the middle of a sentence, however, it is customarily set off by commas; for example: "More taxes will have to be paid and probably more forms will have to be filled out, too, under the new law."

Ready? A columnist in *Variety* criticized some ad writers quite properly for having turned out the line "Nestea is also in ready-to-drink cans." As he pointed out, the cans are not ready to drink. Ready-to-wear clothes are clothes that are ready to wear, but ready-to-drink cans are not cans that are ready to drink. Maybe the ad writers should have made it "ready-to-drink-outa" cans.

Problem of the times. A question in a physics test that was reprinted in a newspaper recently raised a question of usage that caused at least two readers to write critical letters. In essence the question began, "If that distance is made 3 times larger than it now is . . ." The readers argued that "three times larger than" means "four times as large as," which is not what the test meant to say. They contended that "three times larger than" one is four since three times one is three, and that amount added to one—i.e., producing a "larger than" total—would make four. They maintain that the wording should have been "three times as large as." Something that is three times as large as one is three. Certainly as far as common usage is concerned and perhaps also as far as technical mathemati-

cal usage is concerned the readers' contention is correct. It's a tricky question, but obviously there is a difference between the two wordings that should be kept in mind. **Selfless** A reader in Salt Lake City deplores what he calls the change in usage that has turned a pronoun that he likes—*hisself*—into *himself*. No such change ever took place. In old English *him selfum* was the dative singular of *he self*. There never was any possessive element in the term or any such pronoun as *hisself*.

Word oddities. A comma indicates a separation or a pause in writing. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the word derives from the Greek root *koptein*, to cut off. With that we will *koptein* this column.

(c) 1976 Theodore M. Bernstein
 Special Features

bernstein on words

Times, that the phrase accomplishes nothing except to make the Republicans using it sound both illiterate and coy. Isn't it about time for the phrase to be dropped by the Republic party?

A comma that can go to. Whether to put a comma ahead of the word *too* when it ends a sentence is a problem that bothers George Economaki of Des Moines, Iowa, and he asks whether there is a rule that applies to that situation. We are aware of no rule that tells writers what to do in such a sentence. Most often, however, the comma is not used ahead of a final *too*. No comma would usually appear in a sentence such as, "Johnny went to the store

Please support **MARCH OF DIMES**
mothers
march on birth defects


"Big Red" cans of
Budweiser
 12 pak warm \$2.79
 For a Real "Big Red Salute"

Standards Foodliners
 At 13th and Q 475-0083

FOREIGN CAR SPECIALISTS
 27th and T
 475-9022

Mercedes-Benz • Porsche • MG • Lotus • Jaguar • Toyota • Austin • Datsun • Daewoo

GATEWAY PET CENTER
15% DISCOUNT
 with valid student I.D.
 includes everything
 except livestock purchases.



We'd Like
 Your Thoughts
 on what types of programs and services
 you would like to have in the new
 building.

Please tell us your thoughts in the space below. Rip it out of the paper and toss it in the box at the old East Union or other boxes around East Campus.

There's a
NEW
East Campus
Union

Includes Cafeteria, Bowling,
 Billiards, TV Lounge, Foosball,
 Pinball, Bookstore, Study Areas,
 Art Gallery, Meeting Rooms,
 Student Organization Offices,
 Banquet Facilities.