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***It's Time to Bury the Hamilton Gag, Comedians Have Worked it to Death***

If you are a regular attendant at the theaters of Toronto you always go to a musical show with a calm mind. You may not know the tunes. The lyrics may be new to you. It may be the first time that you have seen the principals. But your mind is calm and quiet. Sooner or later you know that you will hear it. Before the evening is over you are confident it will make its appearance. It always does.

It is the thousand-time perpetrated Toronto-Hamilton gag. Usually it comes out like this.

First Comedian: "Do you live in the city?"

Second Comedian, hitting him across the face with a sausage so the audience will not forget that he is a comedian: "No, I live in Hamilton!"

Always someone laughs heartily. Look at the laugher. Mark him well. He may be a distinguished visitor from foreign parts. One thing at least is certain: it is his first time at a musical show in Toronto.

Of course twenty years ago native Torontonians probably laughed when the jest was first pulled. It is their fault. For a tradition has evidently been established in the profession that to ensure success to their patter it should contain some reference to Toronto and Hamilton.

It may have been funny at first. There might be certain funny aspects of the seizure by infantile paralysis of a neighbor's child. But why refer to it year after year? There must be other local things that could be utilized as jokes instead of eternally inflicting the Hamiltonian tragedy on the theatergoer.

The essence of true comedy as observed at the shows that have appeared here this season seems to be to inflict severe physical suffering on one or both of the comedians. Any fat man falling down anywhere is good for a laugh. If a fat man falls into a tub of water, the applause is tremendous. The fatter the man and the larger the amount of water he falls into the greater the humor of the situation.

Working on that principle, if it could be arranged to have a really enormous fat man drowned in an ocean, the production staging the spectacle would be assured of success. It would be the comedy triumph of the age.

Any vaudeville team act in which the feminine half constantly slaps and smacks the masculine half in the face is a riot. In a recent act at a local vaudeville house neither the man nor girl could sing or dance well enough to earn even a ripple of applause. By dint of the girl's constant slapping of her partner's countenance, the house was soon in an uproar and the act was an immense hit.

Combining this principle of comic violence with some really snappy local dialogue, visiting comedians should be able to add the desired "hometown" stuff to their performance without employing the haggard old Hamilton wheeze.

These are offered as suggestions to any members of either vaudeville or the legit who care to make use of them:

This would be very funny:

First Comedian: "Have you a mayor here?"

Second Comedian: "Ha, haw!"

First comedian then hits second comedian with a chair, knocking him over the footlights into the audience. Cheer after cheer rocks the house.

Or they might employ more subtle stuff like this:

First Comedian, shooting second in the back: "Did you hear about the new man working on the new Union Station?"

Second Comedian, knocking his teeth out with a blackjack: "Oh, the other man got lonesome!"

It is very easy. Anyone can do it with a little practice. There are two jokes. One will be good until a change of administration and the other until the station is finished. All comedians are quite welcome to them. By the time they are too old I will have thought of a couple more. But let us bury the Hamilton joke.