A VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

MERLIN X. HOUDINI, IV

From my majestic towers in the logological stratosphere, I look down upon the teeming verbal plain beneath me. What I see astonishes me and saddens me.

The latest to-do concerns a problem facetiously dubbed "The Big Challenge" (properly approached, it isn't much of a challenge). The August 1975 issue of Word Ways reports on the solutions to this problem submitted by three of the keenest minds in logology today. The highest score achieved is 769.

How disheartening! Any qualified logologist, understanding the problem and evaluating his solution to it correctly, should be able to reach a score surpassing 850. Since the so-called logomasters have tried and failed, the obligation devolves on me to step into the breach with a real solution to the problem, lest the good name of logology be tarnished forever by the incompetence of its would-be practitioners.

I begin by setting the problem in proper perspective. It is, essentially, an extension to the 10-letter level of analogous problems on the 6-letter and 8-letter levels to which I presented complete, perfect solutions in the February 1974 and November 1974 issues of Word Ways. With the increase in number of letters being used to 10, the problem becomes much more complex, and it is necessary to remove a restriction imposed in the case of the 6-letter and 8-letter problems: the number of consonants and vowels used need not be equal. The most promising group of 10 letters is one consisting of 6 consonants and 4 vowels, rather than of 5 and 5. With this restriction waived, and with permission granted to draw words and names from non-Websterian sources when necessary, a perfect or near-perfect solution to the 10-letter problem becomes feasible: nothing less need be considered.

Just as defective as the solutions of the logomasters was their method of scoring, in which credit was allowed only for paired words. With the objective of the problem being to obtain a complete solution, the distinction between allowing points only for paired words and allowing them for all words disappears. In any event, the concept of disallowing credit for some of the words in a solution boggles the mind, running counter to every instinct of the dedicated puzzler. If a word is not to be scored, it should not be included in the solution, in the first place!

The 6-letter problem called for a 20-word solution, and the 8-letter problem for a 70-word solution. In the case of 10 letters, the number of words may be as shown below, in four hiatuses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LORAND</th>
<th>SOLDIER</th>
<th>RODENTI</th>
<th>LEAST</th>
<th>ORDINAL</th>
<th>LAIRDSTO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Now, for the paired word blank, MW pocket dictionaries offer a choice of all words, or a choice of all Websterian words, or a choice of all non-Websterian words, or a choice of all words in the two dictionaries (parentheses of all four possible combinations are provided). In any case, more than 150 four-letter words may be expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADEIL</th>
<th>ADEIN</th>
<th>ADEIO</th>
<th>ADEIR</th>
<th>ADEIS</th>
<th>ADEIT</th>
<th>ADELN</th>
<th>ADELO</th>
<th>ADELR</th>
<th>ADELS</th>
<th>ADELT</th>
<th>ADENO</th>
<th>ADENR</th>
<th>ADENS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Before turning to the solution, a word concerning the true logologist. He is one who has a number of solutions at his disposal. He, and note that this applies to different publishers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LORAND Di</th>
<th>SOLDIER De</th>
<th>RODENTI Le</th>
<th>LEAST Or</th>
<th>ORDINAL Nd</th>
<th>LAIRDSTO Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The true logologist has a number of opportunities to expand the possibilities of his words, and he will not be satisfied with the mere acquisition of a solution. He will seek to create a solution that is both perfect and perfect in form, and he will not be content with anything less than a perfect solution, in order that the good name of logology be preserved forever.
number of words needed for a complete solution is 252. My first solution, shown below, includes only 248 words, leaving four gaps or holes. These lacunae can be filled with a little effort, and I shall even offer a number of suggestions for filling them, which I have not had the opportunity to explore myself.

Before turning to the solution itself, I must add a new condition that ought to govern it. Arranging 5 letters to form a word or name is easy. The true logologist demonstrates mastery of his art by rearranging all of the letters he has chosen, at one time, to form additional words or names. In this case, I have selected the letter group ADELNORTH, and note that the letters forming it may be used to spell half a dozen different published terms:

LORANDITES - rare, bright-red minerals found in Macedonia (Webster 1)
SOLDIER ANT - a kind of worker ant with large head and jaws (Webster 2)
RODENTIAL’S - the quotation noun or citation noun plural of "rodential, "pertaining to squirrels, mice, and porcupines" (Webster 3)
LEAST IRON’D - the inverse superlative inflectional form of the participial adjective iron’d (The Oxford English Dictionary)
ORDINAL SET - a mathematical assemblage with specified properties (The Century Dictionary Supplement)
LAIRDSTONE - the name of my own palatial retreat here on Guam (Word Ways, November 1975)

Now, for the solution itself, which has a true score of 856 (on a paired word basis, the score would be only 847). Words from the 1974 MW pocket dictionary (asterisked) score 4 points, words from Webster 2 or Webster 3 (unmarked) score 3 points, words from other dictionaries (parentheses) score 2 points, and words from other sources (double parentheses) score 1 point. Following the solution, the sources of all 1-point and 2-point words are given. Underlined words require more detailed explanation, which is also supplied at the end. The four hiatuses in the solution are marked with asterisk quintets.

ADEL ideal* snort* ADELT anted* rolls*
ADEIN Edina* strol ADEOR adore* lints*
ADEIO -oidea ***** ADEOS oades tri'n'l
ADEIR aired* noths ADEOT oated sn(r)
ADEIS aside* ((Forn, L.)) ADERS reads* Nilot
ADEIT tedia snori ADERT trade* lions*
ADELN laden* riots* ADEST dates* (lorin)
ADELO adelo- instr.* ADILN Ladin store*
ADELR alder* Sinto ADLO aloid stern*
ADELS deals* nitro* ADILR laird* stone*
ADELT delta* irons* ADILS dials* tenor*
ADENO anode* slirt ADILT tidal* snore*
ADENR redan toils* ADINO adion ((Lerts))
ADENS sedan* litro ADINR drain* stole*

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ARRANGED TO FORM A WORD OR NAME IS EASY. THE TRUE LOGOLOGIST DEMONSTRATES MASTERY OF HIS ART BY REARRANGING ALL OF THE LETTERS HE HAS CHosen, AT ONE TIME, TO FORM ADDITIONAL WORDS OR NAMES. IN THIS CASE, I HAVE SELECTED THE LETTER GROUP ADELNORTH, AND NOTE THAT THE LETTERS FORMING IT MAY BE USED TO SPELL HALF A DOZEN DIFFERENT PUBLISHED TERMS:

LORANDITES - RARE, BRIGHT-RED MINERALS FOUND IN MACEDONIA (WEBSTER 1)
SOLDIER ANT - A KIND OF WORKER ANT WITH LARGE HEAD AND JAWS (WEBSTER 2)
RODENTIAL'S - THE QUOTATION NOUN OR CITATION NOUN PLURAL OF "RODENTIAL, "PERTAINING TO SQUIRRELS, MICE, AND PORCUPINES" (WEBSTER 3)
LEAST IRON'D - THE INVERSE SUPERLATIVE INFLENSIONAL FORM OF THE PARTICIPIAL ADJECTIVE IRON'D (THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY)
ORDINAL SET - A MATHEMATICAL ASSEMBLAGE WITH SPECIFIED PROPERTIES (THE CENTURY DICTIONARY SUPPLEMENT)
LAIRDSTONE - THE NAME OF MY OWN PALATIAL RETREAT HERE ON GUAM (WORD WAYS, NOVEMBER 1975)

NOW, FOR THE SOLUTION ITSELF, WHICH HAS A TRUE SCORE OF 856 (ON A PAIRED WORD BASIS, THE SCORE WOULD BE ONLY 847). WORDS FROM THE 1974 MW POCKET DICTIONARY (ASTERISKED) SCORE 4 POINTS, WORDS FROM WEBSTER 2 OR WEBSTER 3 (UNMARKED) SCORE 3 POINTS, WORDS FROM OTHER DICTIONARIES (PARENTHESSES) SCORE 2 POINTS, AND WORDS FROM OTHER SOURCES (DOUBLE PARENTHESSES) SCORE 1 POINT. FOLLOWING THE SOLUTION, THE SOURCES OF ALL 1-POINT AND 2-POINT WORDS ARE GIVEN. UNDERLINED WORDS REQUIRE MORE DETAILED EXPLANATION, WHICH IS ALSO SUPPLIED AT THE END. THE FOUR HIATUSES IN THE SOLUTION ARE MARKED WITH ASTERISK QUINTETS:

ADEL ideal* snort* ADELT anted* rolls*
ADEIN Edina* strol ADEOR adore* lints*
ADEIO -oidea ***** ADEOS oades tri'n'l
ADEIR aired* noths ADEOT oated sn(r)
ADEIS aside* ((Forn, L.)) ADERS reads* Nilot
ADEIT tedia snori ADERT trade* lions*
ADELN laden* riots* ADEST dates* (lorin)
ADELO adelo- instr.* ADILN Ladin store*
ADELR alder* Sinto ADLO aloid stern*
ADELS deals* nitro* ADILR laird* stone*
ADELT delta* irons* ADILS dials* tenor*
ADENO anode* slirt ADILT tidal* snore*
ADENR redan toils* ADINO adion ((Lerts))
ADENS sedan* litro ADINR drain* stole*
Landt, Rindl
The Times Index-Gazetteer of the World, 1965: Laone
The Oxford English Dictionary, 1961 reprint edition: lorin, aldor, trind, roane (see 1st Roan), dorie (see Dory)

Edina: A placename on p. 834 of the MW pocket dictionary.

Törn, L.: Indexed in the 11th Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910-11, is a Lake Törn in southern Sweden. Unfortunately, the index shows it as TÖRN (lake) and the map on which it appears simply as TÖRN. However, the same lake is pictured on the map of Sweden in Volume 3 of the Times Atlas of the World, 1955. Because the lake is very small, it is left unidentified and does not appear in the index of Volume 3. If the lake were named on the map, it would be indexed as TÖRN, L., because two nearby larger lakes, ÅSNEN and MIEN, are indexed as ÅSNEN, L. and as MIEN, L.

Tedium: This is the Latiniform plural of tedium, acceptable because Webster 2 does not specify what is the plural of this word.

tri'nl: This is one of the phonetic spellings of the word trinal.
larnd: Since larn is a variant of learn, the past tense corresponding to larnd is larnd.

TDRN's: This is the quotation noun or citation noun plural of TDRN, a term currently used by Western Union on its telegrams to indicate that the message was telephoned directly to the Western Union center in Reno, Nevada by its sender.

SNLR'd: This is the past tense of SNLR -- "service no longer required" -- construed as a verb. Since the dictionary does not indicate to what part of speech SNLR belongs, I have interpreted it as a verb. SNLR'd means "marked something with the notation 'service no longer required'".

Dol't'n: This is the phonetic spelling of Dolton, in the Gazetteer section of Webster 2.

L. Rond: This is precisely the way that the name of Lac Rond, in Quebec, Canada, is shown on the map of Quebec in the Hammond Ambassador World Atlas, 1973 edition.

tondl: See the entry tondl.

Rodin: See the entry Rodinesque.

tredi: This is an amended spelling of treadle, given in the list of amended spellings immediately following page 7046 of Volume VI of the Century Dictionary, 1891.

lerd's: This is the quotation noun or citation noun plural of lerd, an obsolete adjective in Webster 1 meaning "learned".

den't'l: This is a phonetic spelling of the word dental.
larnt: Since larn is a variant of learn, the past tense corresponding to larnt is larnt.

Finally, I suggest two ways in which words for the 4 missing letter-combinations DLNRT, DLNST, DLRSS, and LNRT might be found:

1) a search of the odd vocabulary in James Joyce’s Finnegans Wake, and
2) a search of speedwriting textbooks would probably reveal the fact that, in speedwriting, the word slanted is spelled SLNTD and the word rentals is spelled RNTLS (providing two of the four words).

Good hunting down below!