MORE CURIOUS CONTRONYMS

RICHARD LEDERER
Concord, New Hampshire

In the February 1978 issue of Word Ways I unveiled twenty contronyms -- single words for which two contradictory meanings survive. As a result of submissions by readers and my own subsequent research, I am pleased to offer an additional collection of contronyms in the form of a brainteaser.

Readers are invited to supply the single word which can replace the two opposite meanings capitalized in each pair below. Answers repose in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

Example: cloth that will ENDURE USE; cloth that will DECAY THROUGH USE
Answer: WEAR

1. to EMBELLISH a tree; to CUT AWAY a tree
2. SHARP speech; a DULL edge
3. I'll do it INSTANTLY; I'll do it IN A FEW MINUTES
4. to CONCEAL a picture; to PROJECT and EXHIBIT a picture
5. a DISPUTABLE point; a SETTLED point
6. the ship will WITHSTAND THE EFFECTS OF the storm; damp air will DISINTEGRATE the cloth
7. the church's EXPLICIT PERMISSION; the church's RESTRICTION
8. he interprets everything ACCORDING TO ITS ORDINARY MEANING; he took one look at the examination and FIGURATIVELY dropped dead
9. I am DEFINITE about what I want; I have a DIFFICULT TO SPECIFY feeling about that plan
10. to RESTORE a fence; to REMOVE PART OF a bull
11. to SEPARATE THE THREADS of a fabric; to ENTANGLE and MAKE INTRICATE a tale
12. FASTEN the coupon to the newspaper; SEPARATE the coupon from the newspaper
13. they argued about the ESSENTIAL NATURE of the matter; they argued about a TRIFLING POINT in the matter
14. he will ACCEPT a dollar for his services; he will often STEAL a dollar from the drawer

(a double contronym)