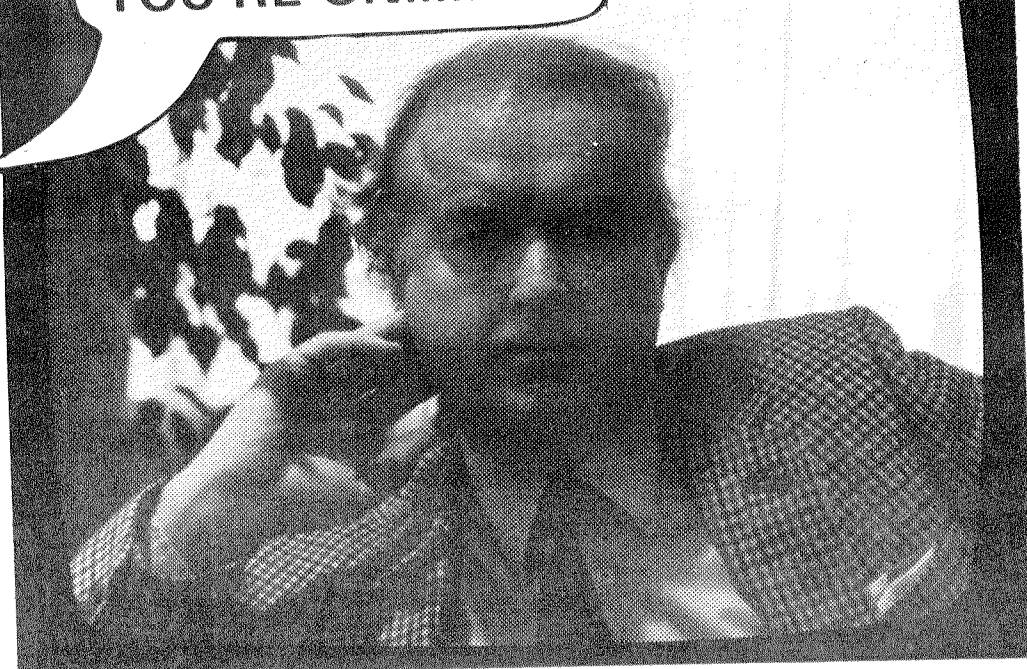


# ARCHIE SPEAKING...

Football in Scotland is in a good state at the moment. The Premier League title race is one of the most exciting ever, the Scottish Cup looks like providing plenty of thrills and the temperature rises as the Scottish squad prepare for Mexico. But there is a vital ingredient to the Saturday night post match argument which is missing! There's no football on the television and the likes of Archie McPherson are absent from our screens. Archie stopped off to speak to the Sentinel about the situation and to tell us what he was up to while televised football was in the dark.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 .....O.K. Archie,  
— Wait for your cue —  
YOU'RE ON.....



### BIAS?

I've never found it difficult to keep a balanced view, not in the slightest. Neither of the clubs I am commentating on pay my wages, the B.B.C. do, therefore objectivity does. There are occasions when you let yourself go because of circumstances. For example, recently in the soccer sixes everybody wanted the underdogs, Dumbarton, to do well against Aberdeen — you get that occasionally.

It's difficult to say who will win the league, Hearts have made a good start but Dundee United are breathing down their necks and I cannot imagine Aberdeen will lose all that many games. Celtic will always do something and Rangers, distantly, maybe not so much, but it's a great league.

Hibs too had a great run but they've hit a bad spell. They've had a better couple of decades than Hearts but they've slipped recently, they're feeling their way a little. It's good to have TWO good teams in the city.

### EDUCATION?

All my other interests outside football are devoted to my job as Rector of Edinburgh University. I've no other spare time or hobby or golf any longer.

I've had a long-lasting interest in education and when I was invited to stand as Rector I accepted. I've been in education for years as a school teacher and then headmaster and this gives

me an opportunity to do something entirely different from broadcasting. About 200 students signed my nomination form.

As Rector you chair the University Court, the ultimate supreme body of the university. You perform a kind of ombudsman role, looking after grievances, relating to the student association, talking to groups and projecting the image of the university in the best possible way.

Money, or lack of it, is the main issue facing us. We might even have to sell off assets — thus in real terms education will shrink.

not providing the funding to produce that — it is, quite frankly, ridiculous.

Of course, I support the teachers. We've got to pay for the kind of education we need. I think it is obscene to be thinking of tax cuts when youngsters are being starved of a decent education.

I don't agree with this government's rigid ideology where cuts are made across the board regardless of the consequences.

Generally speaking, my philosophy would be to support public spending for public institutions — even if

"If Hearts win the League it won't be captured on television for the fans. That's the way its heading and the fans should ask Mr Mercer about it, right away."

Unquestionably, the present situation is having an adverse effect of football. There is an argument about saying there is too much football on television. They say it is bad for the game and live television is even worse. I would not want a disorganised situation where television could do anything it liked. Over-exposure is a bad thing but the arguments against television are short-sighted.

Attendances may be up but football has to have alternative sources of revenue.

Their best source is television which indirectly leads to other advertising revenue from the track or the shirts or from sponsorship. Scottish football would be the only sports organisation in Western Europe without television. It has a vital place in Scottish football.

I think the situation was badly handled from the start and personalities became involved, and rigid attitudes were adopted. There are

some weird and wonderful theories going around about the long-term solution for financing football, just now.

The great principle of people "running their own business" is branded about. Who in society is allowed to run their own business? In society you've got to conform to rules and regulations. One wonders what a constitution of a new league would be like without consensus and collective decisions. It's a weak argument to say I'm allowed to run my own business in my own way. You've got to have some agreement.

I don't believe there will be a breakaway league because of the enormous difficulties involved. If it had been easy they'd have broken away by now. I think the system of relegation and promotion and the system of voting and democracy in governing the game will change. And T.V. will be back, but it may not be until next season.

Don't get me wrong, I think there is a great place in

football for businessmen who have had a successful business life and who know a little about football. But the players have to have a say in their future, somewhere. The spectators do it with their feet, don't they?

### THE FUTURE?

I am under contract with the B.B.C. so there is no way I am out of work. I did the "World's Strongest Man" and other little bits and pieces.

I won't be working for B.B.C. Scotland during the World Cup, I'll be doing network for the first time ever, doing their commentaries for them.



"Archie Gemmill's great goal in Argentina against Holland comes to mind right away when people ask me about the best goal I've seen."

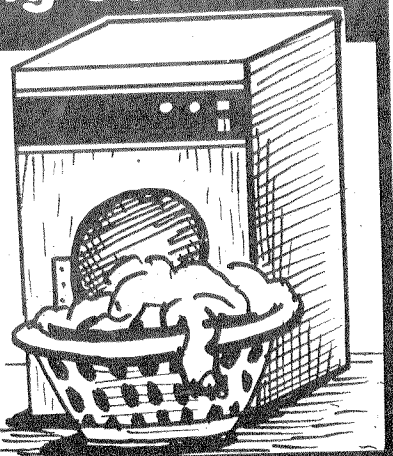
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"The power of television makes some people become demi-gods. Television certainly has an adverse side."

The way this government is treating education is one of the worst aspects of its record. They are killing the Robbins principle of a right to education for everyone. This government's policy is diametrically opposed to Robbins — they are taking an elitist attitude where only the privileged few have a right to university education.

This government is proclaiming the necessity for a highly trained, skilled workforce and yet they are

it means raising taxes. I know that's not terribly popular, but something has to be done or our education system is done for.



Interviewer: Mel Young  
Photographer: Jonathon Hampson  
Location: Royal Scot Hotel, Edinburgh  
Date: 22nd January 1986 at 2.30pm  
Interviewee: Archie McPherson(50), Sports Commentator with the BBC. Been with BBC for 20 years. Recently elected Rector of Edinburgh University for a 3 year term. Prior to BBC taught at Swinton School, Ballieston for 3 years. Born: Glasgow Family: 2 sons  
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