

Sad But True, There's Too Much Lying

PEOPLE used to say: "Most folks are honest." Nowadays we don't seem to be so sure of that. Too many people go lying through life.

A few days ago a friend told of a hearing on a dispute over a business transaction. "He got on that witness stand and lied like a dog," he said of his opponent. "We were under oath and it was just his word against mine." The commission in charge had to make a choice as to who was telling the truth in order to settle the matter.

Juries, judges, investors, consumers, homeowners and conversationalists must make similar choices day after day.

A social psychologist has estimated that the average American tells some 200 lies a day, including white lies and false excuses, such as "Sorry I'm late! I was tied up at the office."

The practice of lying in order to gain one's objective has been around a long time. Satan lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden and many Biblical admonitions to God's people not to lie recognize the wide-

spread human tendency to deviate from the truth.

Sir Winston Churchill referred to the lie as "terminological inexactitude" and commented "There are a terrible lot of lies going about the world and the worst of it is half of them are true."

"Everybody in this industry lies like hell," said a national business leader recently in an interview about new products. It is suspected that considerable lying is done in business about other matters as well, and in private relationships, too.

A writer in a national magazine recently suggested that we just imagine the changes in domestic policies that would occur if our citizenry knew exactly what each candidate thought about every issue and how he or she really intended to conduct the affairs of state, if elected. Politicians have been known to lie occasionally.

The Washington Post was embarrassed a few weeks ago because a reporter was discovered to have fabricated a prize-winning story. It was learned then that she also had

overstated her educational and other qualifications to get her job in the first place.

Business people suspect that job applicants frequently exaggerate their abilities, and many firms have turned to use of lie detectors to help them eliminate chronic liars and potential thieves.

It is reported that two-thirds of the nation's largest companies use lie detectors where anyone is in a fiduciary position or has access to pharmaceuticals or consumer items with resale value.

Scientists say that lying is stressful, regardless of whether it is done for protection, relief, escape or profit. This stress is revealed in reaction of nervous impulses that may be detected through measurement devices used in lie detector tests.

What is some electronics genius should devise a gadget that would warn listeners when stress in a speaker's voice disclosed falsehood? Conversation and sales pitches might be inhibited, but truth would get a boost. These days truth needs a lot of boosting.