

Washington Digest

Few Legislators Authors Of Bills They Introduce

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A bright young railroad executive who has his cum laude in law from a famed university was sitting with me in Burt's the other day.



Burt's is a sort of greenroom for radio folk and others who move and speak and have their being in what is euphemistically referred to as Washington's Radio center. Inspired (or infuriated) by the presence of so many of the few who say so much to so many, my friend launched forth into a tirade on the responsibility of the publicist.

"You can't play baseball according to football rules," he said, shaking a menacing fist at me, "and that is what Washington officials are doing. You studied political science 30 years ago. I studied it only 20 years ago. And you know perfectly well that the present generation is not following the rules laid down by our founding fathers. You ought to tell the public about it."

"Now maybe the principles of our government are wrong. I am not defending them. But I am saying that we are deserting them. Rule of the majority, a republican form of government operated by the representatives of the people, is a travesty, when legislation is jammed through by minorities. And I mean bureaucrats as well as lobbyists."

This happened when the senate was neck-deep in the final debate over the OPA and my friend claimed congress was revolting against what he called the high pressure methods of the administration. Since the congress was tearing the administration measure to shreds at that moment I pointed out that while it was true that congress was sore at Stabilizer Bowles for what they called propagandizing, the example was not a very good one. So he proceeded to develop his theme with specific references all too familiar to me and my colleagues of the microphone and typewriter.

Town Seethes With Lobbyists

You too, are familiar with the power of the "pressure boys" as my friend Kenneth Crawford called them in his revealing book by that name. Crawford estimated there were 6,000 active lobbyists in Washington when World War II started. There are many more now. Speaker Rayburn said the town was "seething" with them.

We all remember the seven-digit sum of money contributed to a campaign fund which came out of the members' dues of one great labor union. True, the head of the union later quarrelled with the president whom he had helped elect because the president refused to take his orders. Nevertheless, this example illustrates what "big money" attempts, and sometimes succeeds in doing.

We know, too, that when the entire economy of the country was locked to a dead center by strikes in two essential industries, coal and transportation, and that when the government itself gave orders, those orders were disobeyed. Minority rule was operating then. Minority groups nullified the wishes of the duly-elected representatives of the people.

My friend, with all his vehemence, with his allegiance to management, made no claim that the demands of the railroad men, the coal miners, were unjust. He merely said that in order to obtain what they considered justice, the powerful leaders of the organizations to which they belonged were able to play baseball according to football rules—temporarily at least.

The theory that the creation of the laws of the land has been taken from the hands of the elected representatives of the people was put forth by Crawford in "The Pressure Boys" seven years ago when he said: "It is improbable that a single important law enacted in the last 10 years has been written by its congressional sponsor or its nominal author. Administration bills are prepared by New Deal experts in executive departments. Legislation independently inaugurated is almost invariably prepared in the office of a lobbyist. Congress maintains a legislative

drafting service which writes bills for committees, but it seldom is called upon by individual legislators for assistance in writing any minor private bills."

LaFollette Bill Would Revamp

Thomas Mechlin, writing on this subject in the current Virginia Quarterly Review, touches on the subject of readymade legislation. He tells how a lobby "gets its own staff together and knocks out a bill which the front office would like to see made a law eventually. It then runs the draft over to a large law firm which has one of its members in congress. Although the congressman cannot personally represent the client, the method used in submitting the proposed legislation through the 'body' of the firm takes care of that. . . . If the lobby is well-organized, it will exploit high-powered publicity from then on out."

I am constrained to admit that much in all of these assertions is true. But I would like to mention three hopeful signs on the horizon, minuscule though they may be. Two were measures introduced but not acted upon in this session of congress. They will be presented again and have a good chance of passing.

One is the LaFollette measure for revamping congress, one provision of which increases the technical assistance available to members. The second is a bill introduced by Representative Sabath of Illinois, which provides for an all-inclusive investigation of lobbies. Most congressmen don't like lobbyists and Sabath's bill, as Mechlin admits, was a crystallization of this feeling.

The third indication was a resolution introduced during the OPA fight by Senator Taylor (D. of Idaho) authorizing the publication of a document on how each senator voted on every measure. He said that the people are becoming more aware of their political responsibilities, that politics is no longer solely in the hands of politicians, ward-healers and lobbyists.

Congress is sensitive to the need of a restoration of majority rule, but the only real hope lies within the majority itself. Unfortunately, the giant sleeps. . . .

South Dakotans See Swearing-In

Two recent visitors to Washington, Mrs. Evelyn Baker and Mrs. James Magee of Custer and Belle Fourche, S. D., can tell their friends back home in the Black Hills region that while they were here they took in three events which might set the tone for all such future events.

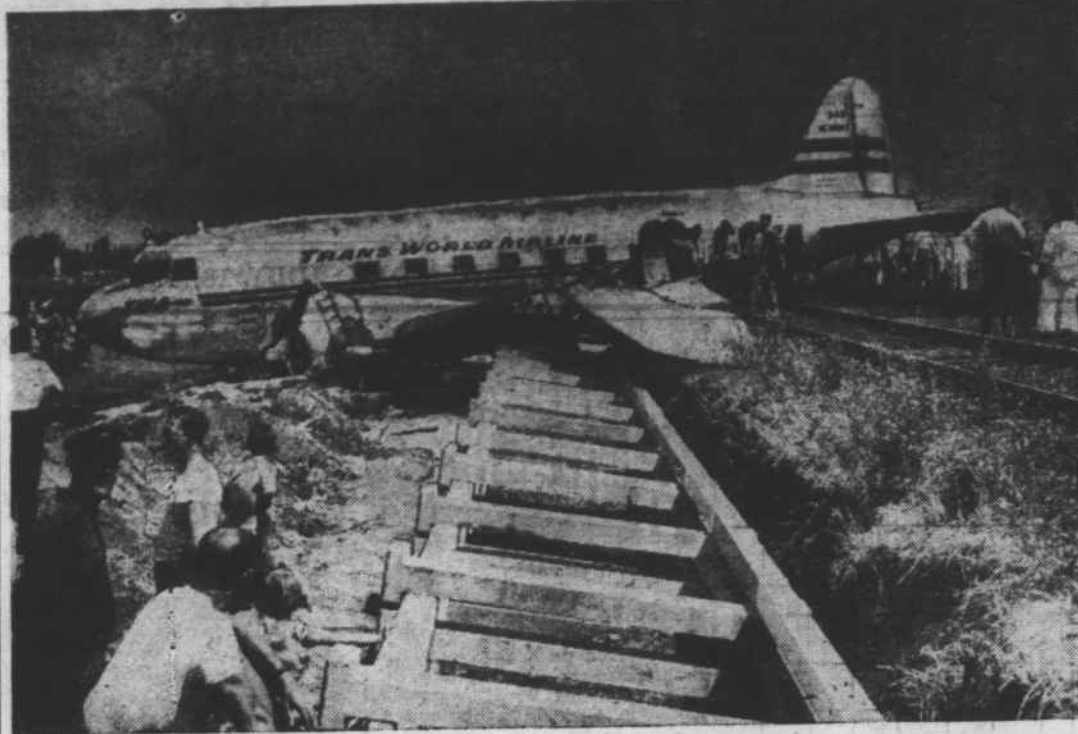
The ladies, winners of a radio contest to honor women who did their bit during the war years, visited Washington during the week when three top-drawer government officials, all close friends of Harry Truman, were sworn into new jobs.

The swearing-in of a cabinet officer used to be a rather modest affair. The swearinee, his family, a few friends, and his office staff, a few of the press, usually gathered in his new office, and the whole affair was over in about the time it takes for bride and groom to say "I do."

True, Fred Vinson and Lewis Schwellenbach did travel to Capitol Hill for their inaugurations as treasury and labor secretaries respectively. But those events occasioned no such hoopla as did the ceremonies which made Monday—Tuesday—Wednesday Washington news one late week in June.

Mrs. Magee and Mrs. Baker and five thousand other spectators, plus the navy band, gathered on the White House lawn to watch Mr. Vinson take over his new office as chief justice of the United States; they saw John Snyder's big moment made bigger when President Truman strolled from the White House to the treasury portico to watch his St. Louis crosby take the oath as head of the treasury department; and they observed tall, young-looking John Steelman's swearing-in as reconversion director, a ceremony which took place in the rose gardens of the White House.

Having observed these impressive occasions, the Black Hills visitors could appreciate the widely-whispered remark of Undersecretary of Navy John Sullivan. (Sullivan got his swearing-in done quietly and traditionally on June 18.) As Sullivan congratulated John Steelman after the rose garden ceremony, he asked, "Well, are you the last of the June brides?"



AIRPLANES TO RAILWAYS . . . TWA mainliner, carrying 18 passengers and a crew of 3, shown after emergency crash landing on a railroad right of way shortly after taking off from Chicago airport for New York. None of the passengers was injured, although pilot and stewardess were slightly hurt. The pilot stated that both engines quit shortly after the takeoff, and that he did not have sufficient altitude to glide back to the field.



ELEPHANT WINS LIGHTFOOT CONTEST . . . Offhand one would imagine that the thin, elongated giraffe would be lighter on her feet than the lumbering 10,500-pound elephant. Such is not the case, however. A G. E. vibration meter made the rounds of the circus at Schenectady, N. Y., and came back with some interesting observations. Toby, the elephant, with the exception of the python, was the lightest stepper of all, registering 3 mils of vibration per second. The giraffe, left, is shown registering 6 mils of vibration per second.



TRIBUTE TO F. D. R. . . . John G. Winant, former U. S. ambassador to Great Britain, delivers in an emotion-shaken voice the principal tribute during the congressional memorial services held in the House of Representatives. President Truman and members of the Roosevelt family attended. Photo shows Mr. Winant as he delivered the address. Seated in back, Sen. Richard Russell (Ga.), Rep. Alfred Bulwinkle (N. C.), Rev. James Montgomery, chaplain of the house, and Rev. Frederick B. Harris, chaplain of the senate.



DREAM TRIP ON 50 CENTS A MONTH . . . How 50 cents a month from the depression-born budgets of six Canton, Ohio, families grew into a kitty of \$3,270 for a nationwide "dream trip" was disclosed with the arrival of the 12 members of the Kitty Kat club in Los Angeles. Eleven years ago the couples were bemoaning the fate which chained them to their homes. They began right then to save 50c a month for their "dream trip." Group is breakfasting in Los Angeles.



CHAMP . . . Robert Fitch, giant star of the University of Minnesota, who topped the performers in the National AAU senior track and field championships, bettering the world's discus throw with a toss of 179 feet 1/4 inch.



DROPPED "A" BOMB . . . Major Woodrow P. Swancutt of Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., pilot of the B-29 "Dave's Dream" that dropped the atom bomb on the ghost fleet in Bikini atoll. He is shown in the cockpit of the huge bomber.

NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By PAUL MALLON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

SENATOR TAFT ASSUMING REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

WASHINGTON.—Ohio's Sen. Robert Taft assumed runaway Republican congressional leadership the later days of the session. It was his OPA bill which passed the senate; his fight held up President Truman's draft-strikers plan and somewhat modified the Case bill. The appointment of Carroll Reece as party chairman left him smiling and happy. Action on the firing line has given him the domestic leadership, no matter how the positions are distributed nominally. But too many positions remain to be taken to mark him more than a leading candidate for '48 now.

Behind him the primaries have brought up Republican Governor Warren, who assured his election by winning both tickets easily in California. Warren seems likely to get the largest proportion of the Pacific states to the next convention. He has taken no stand on international questions known widely; has espoused social security bills in the legislature; and is as free as Taft is committed. But mark him no more than a likely compromise yet.

The Nebraska primary hurt Minnesota's ex-Governor Stassen, who will have another chance in his backing of a nominee (ex-Governor Thye, a strong vote-getter) against Senator Shipstead, in July. To say Nebraska represented an isolationist victory would be to assume too much. The largest paper in that state has been attempting to prove isolationism had little to do with it. However that may be, both internationalism and isolationism seem dead in the East and Central states. Greater events are controlling our actions and destiny. Russia is the only truly isolationist nation still left.

BRICKER ALSO POSSIBILITY

Ohio's ex-Governor Bricker is expected to be elected to the senate, which will place him in line for the Republican nomination on what will be charged to be a conservative ticket. However, I suspect he and Taft have a friendly working agreement, or could get one, so neither would step on the other's toes. Consequently Ohio will present either Taft or Bricker, whose record as senator will largely determine his future.

Quieter than all the rest has been New York's Governor Dewey. He says he is not likely to be chosen, and too many Republicans believe him at this writing. He has not functioned as leader of his party since his defeat for the presidency. Senator Vandenberg leads Republicans internationally, as strongly as Taft domestically (he was renominated in Michigan).

It is idle to talk of '48 then. What is at hand is a congressional election in November, and in this, it appears a refreshed Republican leadership is rising to the top, both out of the primaries and congressional steps.

The primaries are in for nearly all the big states (Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, California) and I recall only Indiana's Republican Senator Willis being defeated for renomination, and exceptionally few house members. Willis got himself into a fight with his state organization, and, as the convention out there was not controlled by him, he had to go back to news editing, which may be a relief. But the significant thing is this: practically all of congress was renominated.

Of course you must say organizations largely control primaries and conventions, and the "ins" are usually the organization, whatever it is. Yet in few previous years of my time have primaries meant so little.

SAME OLD REVOLUTIONISTS

There are some of our people, not many, who believed the old line that the Russians are somehow different than their government. They are not. They have no chance to be different. They live under one-man rule, under censorship, dictatorship, self-censorship and public attack. Whatever beliefs their government feeds them, they take. There are no others. Only one British official has suggested the possibility of revolution. Others all agree that the Stalin dictatorship is firmly established.

What right had we to expect anything different than we are getting? The Russian system had preached world revolution for 27 years. In that time it has practiced communism, socialism and capitalism in a variety of adaptations and phases for its farms and factories. It has no affirmative principles excepting only revolution. It will tear down anything existing, and then try to adapt a program (as in France where five communist deputies are installed in the Bidault cabinet, yet there is no communism). We knew all these things.

ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. When was the Gregorian calendar introduced?
2. Does the flying fish actually fly?
3. The United States has awarded how many Congressional Medals of Honor for heroic action during the war?
4. Will a bullet fired horizontally reach the ground as quickly as one dropped from the same height?
5. William Wordsworth was poet-laureate of England 7 years. Did he write any poetry during that period?

The Answers

1. In 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII.
2. No; the hatchet fish is the only fish that flies.
3. It has awarded 406 medals.
4. Yes, because of the equal pull of gravity.
5. Not a line.

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

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FOR SALE, Astonishing Bible History of Negro race, just published, 300 pages, cloth bound, G. O. \$2.50. Distributors wanted. Cupp Company, Box 1222, Alexandria, La.

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REGISTERED HAMPSHIRE. Duroc, Poland China hogs. Dorset sheep. Edgewood Farm, Kearneysville, W. Va.

MISCELLANEOUS
MOVIES—SONJA HENIE, 100 FT. 16MM \$3.50; Emm. 20 FT. \$1.75. (Free with every purchase Rudolph Valentino photo 40-page synopsis "Son of the Sheik" (gratis booklet). PHOENIX FILMS, 148 W. 45th St., New York City.

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DOAN'S PILLS

BARBS . . . by Baukhage

There are 630 acres of forest land in the United States. Plenty of tall timber to take to when the prices start to rise.

Earl Browder plans to open a publishing house for Russian books in New York City. Why don't we get some pro-American Russian to open an American book publishing venture in Moscow?

The publicity man for the six stunning Goldwyn girls touring the country to boost the movie "The Kid from Brooklyn" expected the President's daughter to have them to tea. Miss Truman was out of town. I made the patriotic suggestion they go to Annapolis instead. If there had been time to arrange it, I would probably have a navy cross by now.