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Federal Civil Service Smells With Politics

Some people have the false and mistaken idea that the U. S. Civil Service Commission is a high and noble organization aloof from and free of politics. Nothing could possibly be further from the truth.

Even members of the Civil Service Commission are politicians, appointed by the President of the United States. One of the present members is Mrs. Francis (Madam) Perkins, a shrewd and wily politician from the word go.

One of the most glaring examples of how the Civil Service Commission can be used for politics is the appointment of former Internal Revenue Commissioner John B. Dunlap as commissioner of the Texas-Oklahoma Internal Revenue District, and supposedly a life-long job.

Old Dunlap was a failure and flop as head of the Bureau of Internal Revenue; investigation proved his department contained an abundance of crooks and chisellers—some of whom have been fired, convicted, etc.

Yet President Truman saw fit to appoint Dunlap to a Civil Service post for life. Apparently, Dunlap isn't able to make a living for himself so has to have a government job.

We wonder if Dunlap ever passed a real, honest-to-goodness Civil Service examination—the strict sort of examination given good, honest, hard-working post office employees, for instance? We doubt it.

And has anybody ever heard of a person being appointed to a Civil Service job by the President of the United States and then failing to pass the examination. Certainly not. It couldn't possibly happen.

Another example of politics in Civil Service dates back to the early days of the Roosevelt administration. All postmasters and thousands of other purely political appointees were put under Civil Service. Whether or not the new administration allows all of this political gravy to remain in the opposition hands remains to be seen. We frankly doubt it.

Civil Service, if carried out under its original high aims, is a good thing. It supposedly frees Federal employees from the taint of politics. There are many good things to be said in favor of Civil Service.

But, it seems to us, U. S. Senator John J. Williams of Delaware, who has sought to clean out the crooks, chisellers and grafters, made a very good point when he said:

"I have always been a staunch promoter of the Civil Service system, but I denounce any attempt to use it as a haven of refuge for repudiated politicians." He was referring to Dunlap and his illustration was a good one.

We believe that down on the level of the ordinary clerks, office hands, etc., the Civil Service functions very efficiently. The abuse seems to be in the political appointments on the higher levels.

There was a temptation on the part of the Democrats, in power for the past 20 years, to put all Democratic employees under Civil Service for lifetime appointments. That tendency will no doubt be continued by the Republicans, but we hope not.

Life appointments to any post kills both initiative and incentive. Few people who "have it made," so to speak, are going to work quite as hard and diligently as those still striving to get ahead.

Frederick OTHMAN

WASHINGTON—The Washington corps of them, correspondents these days is sitting on its respective handkerchiefs. For the first time in 20 years there's not a dang-dang thing for the gents to do.

This is an odd feeling. For two decades our town has been like a dozen circuses combined with a couple of busy fire departments, while a few police cars kept darting full speed into the melee. From the viewpoint of the Washington reporter, that is.

Elections over the years have changed the tempo, except maybe to accelerate it, because the same firm stayed on at the same newly enlarged stand. News men here, except the lazy ones like me, worked so hard so long and so fast that they lost touch with their wives and barely had a speaking acquaintance with their own children. Then, blowie!

Since election of Gen. Ike not one reporter has busted any bones skidding on the marble floors in his race with hot news to the telephone. One I know has seen his first movie in 15 years; says he'd forgotten what a startling invention the motion picture was.

A few of these remarkable laborers are still resting up from the ardors of the campaign trains, while some others are laying low while they pay off election bets on the installment plan.

Those who once wrote the news now grab the papers for word of Gen. Eisenhower, his appointments and his decisions, all coming in by wire from far places. Then they try to make like they're busy. This is a pitiful sight.

The Press Club bar is jammed with experts, interviewing each other, because there's nobody else to interview. President Truman held a press conference the other day; the conferees walked, not ran, to their offices.

These Days



By

Sokolsky

BATTLING THE DEVIL

The Earl Jowitt, who is about to publish a book in defense of Alger Hiss, has already produced a preliminary article on the subject almost reminds one of a feminine libel pen, as the Earl is only a lawyer and not a psychiatrist. Nevertheless, as one reads what the Earl has to say, it is difficult to believe that he does not desire to convince that Chambers is mad. He says:

"But Mr. Chambers has no misgivings. He is right—and all who differ from him are wrong. He sees himself as the modern St. George, clad in shining armor and engaged in deadly combat with the dragon of Communism. As for the case, it is not a mere case in which an individual called Chambers is testifying against an individual called Hiss. It is a 'tragedy of history.' The generation is on trial and God's witness to God's contest is the contest between the forces of good (as represented by Chambers) and the forces of evil (as represented by Hiss); and what is involved in the contest is the soul of the American people—indeed of the whole free world."

How wrong is Chambers? There is something of the devil in any man who sells out his own country. Chambers did it. He repeated and tried to make amends. The greatest cost of this psychological process is the acknowledgement of a wasted self.

Hiss, equally guilty, if not more so, proudly continues to deny what he knows to be true; is wholly unrepentant, makes no amends.

Suppose every word that Chambers said of Hiss were untrue, it would be possible to reconstruct the Hiss story from what we now know in the Harold Ware cell in Washington, its infiltration into the A. A. A. and the Nye and La Follette committees. Earl Jowitt is moving into a mare's nest, for a lawyer, he deals only with the record before him. But the public will deal with the whole record, much of which has been unavailable because the Administration prevented it.

What the Earl is doing, as I am told, is to intend to do in grand form, is that he will stimulate a Congressional demand for the whole record.

The Earl's article, from which I quote, raises questions which for most Americans have been answered, but the gist of this learned jurist's analysis of the subject is an ad hominem attack on Chambers, not only to establish his guilt, but to show that he is mad. It is a form of congenital madness. That was tried during the Hiss trials by the psychiatrist, Dr. Carl A. L. Binger, with sad results for Binger.

It would seem from the context that Jowitt has taken his cue from Alistair Cooke's book, "A Generation on Trial," a book which, at the time it was published, I was tempted to review but resisted the temptation because it seemed to me that here was a British reporter who had long been in America and learned too little about its people, most of whom do not live on Park Avenue. Cooke is now an American citizen and by law has become one of us.

When Jowitt's book appears in this country, if ever, I shall re-read Cooke to see how one has influenced the other. Meanwhile I found a clipping of a review by Miss Rebecca West in which she says:

"So Mr. Cooke says on, always creating an impression unfavorable to Chambers and favorable to Hiss, in big things and in small, it might be that the Committee would have shown prejudice against Hiss in listening to Chambers if his story about the espionage group had been unrelated to any known persons or events."

It is probable that Mr. Cooke does not know that the FBI had this case sewed up long before it came to trial and that the Administration prevented the usual judicial course from flowing.

What I particularly want to see is Sen. Joe McCarthy (R-Wis.) the demon investigator, functioning as boss prober into the Fair Deal and all its works. Probe? Sen. Joe'll use a steam shovel for his more delicate excavations into long-sealed tombs.

Somehow, I am sure, he'll manage to slap a subpoena on his arch-enemy, ex-Sen. William Benton (D. Conn.) and when that happens I want to be close—but not too close, on account of the danger from flying debris.

Sen. Homer Capehart (R-Ind.) who once got so mad at the opposition in a radio debate he took a poke at him, is another of my favorite inquirers. As chairman of the Banking Committee he'll doubtless give the Reconstruction Finance Corporation such a going-over there'll be little left of it.

I mean if you and I can stand the unwelcome peace in these precincts a few weeks more we'll get some excitement. You'll have to put up with some more items like this by myself and my peers (we've got to keep our typewriter fingers in practice) but I give you my personal guarantee that, come January, we'll have ink explosions hereabouts hourly on the hour.

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PARIS (U.P.)—The Duke of Windsor returned to Paris from London today and joined his American-born duchess.



"What a little arrangement to discourage those long-mother..."

The WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

By BREW PEARSON

WASHINGTON — What Harry Truman told Dwight D. Eisenhower and vice versa is known directly only to the two men themselves. But what is known is what President Truman told intimates he said to Ike.

Both men were obviously nervous before and after their interview. One friend who talked to Truman just before he saw Eisenhower, noted that he looked fidgety and dropped some papers.

Eisenhower also looked nervous and wiped perspiration from his barren brow after the conference.

The version which the President gave one of his closest friends also indicates that the two men were a little tense at first. But he broke the ice by telling Ike something like this:

"I've been in politics for 40 years. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. That's politics. Sometimes you have to say some hard things in politics, because everyone's out to win. But let's forget all that."

"The only important thing is the future. I want to help you in every way. I want you to have as much assistance as we can give you between now and January 20."

"I only wish I could have been briefed before I took this job. President Roosevelt's death hit me like a thunderbolt. I didn't even know he was ill. I had only talked politics with him, and hadn't even attended a cabinet meeting. I don't want you to go through that."

Truman pointed to a sign on his desk which read: "The buck stops here."

"Every government official has a boss to whom he can pass the buck—except the president," he said, according to the account given by a friend. "But when it gets to the President, he has no one to pass the buck on to. 'The buck stops here.'"

Mr. Truman had also prepared for the President-elect a series of loose-leaf notebooks containing copies of all his executive orders, reports and defense production, and charts showing exactly the amounts of production achieved in every strategic material. He told friends that he hoped these would be of value to Eisenhower and he certainly wished someone had prepared such reports for him when he took office in 1945.

When Eisenhower and Truman appeared in the cabinet room a minute or so later they were smiling and appeared to be congenial. At this second and enlarged meeting, Secretary of State Dean Acheson did most of the talking.

One important point he made was that, unless Eisenhower made some reassuring statement about continuing the present policy for Europe, the governments of France and Italy might fall.

Secretary of Defense Lovett talked chiefly about Korea and defense production. The latter was the only domestic question discussed during the entire conference.

Neither President Truman nor General Eisenhower did much talking during the conference. It was purely a briefing session, with little opportunity or necessity to talk.

When Eisenhower came out of the White House the grim and irritable manner noted by reporters was because he was surrounded with newsmen. He had expected a military aide through which to walk and remarked that he thought things had been outrageously handled.

Secretary of the Treasury Snyder gave a report on the finances of our allies, warning especially of the economic predicament of France and Italy. England, he felt, was not in such bad shape.

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Eisenhower interrupted at the point to say that he had already made one such statement, but he did not elaborate as to what statement he referred to.

Acheson also said he was "unhappy" about the split between the United States, Canada, France and England over the Indian proposal on Korean prisoners of war, but said he felt that our differences could be repaired—though he did not indicate any approval of the Indian proposal.

NATO MEETING ON SCHEDULE

He also discussed the December 15 meeting of the North Atlantic Pact Nations originally scheduled to make important decisions on Army strength for the next two years. Britain and France want to proceed with the meeting as scheduled on December 15, though because of the changeover of administrations in Washington, no important decisions will be made.

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Walter Winchell

In New York



New York Novelle: After 32 years on the gazettes (since The Vaudeville News (1920) we still haven't figured out why gab columnist like Walter) want to Blow the Poor Old Man Down. Particularly those ingrati we took by the paw when they first hit town and introduced to cuffs society, their liked-includes all the 3-dots, they brought once colum'd "Winchell pioneered another thing. He junked that taboo about not mentioning other newspaper people or newspapers when he wanted to salute and help them". (So get to the point, already) "Okay, E. Wilson, who testified (but never in print): "Walter gave me many a good break when I came to N. Y. from Akron"—and whose books (containing dozens of quips and quotes from our files) were best-sellers (via WW puffs on the air)—makes with the best one between—the head like this: "From WW's Nov. 17th col'd: 'The Pearl Bailey-Jouis Bellon story was Winchell's Friday.'" From WW's col'd Nov. 3rd: 'Pearl Bailey marries Louis Bellon, Duke Ellington's drummer, in London, Nov. 19th.'

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The Worry Clinic

By Dr. GEORGE W. CRANE

Men, use "horse sense" when you pick a wife. Don't foolishly grab the first pretty face and figure that you see. Remember, too, since a kiss is intoxicating, you can grow sufficiently immune to appraise the relative merits of several. Then pick the one that has the most virtues. You can learn to love her.

Men, use "horse sense" when you pick a wife. Don't foolishly grab the first pretty face and figure that you see. Remember, too, since a kiss is intoxicating, you can grow sufficiently immune to appraise the relative merits of several. Then pick the one that has the most virtues. You can learn to love her.

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"Mary Hawthorth's Mail" By America's Foremost Personal Affairs Counselor

HAS WOMAN A RIGHT TO EXPECT HER FRUGAL HUSBAND TO SHARE HIS SMALL SAVINGS WITH HER SISTER? DEAR MARY HAWORTH: My husband, a skilled laborer, is close to 60. He makes a comfortable living and our modest home is paid for. We have two children—a son, 12, to rear and educate and an older son, married, whom we help a little, because we want to give him a good start. We are so thankful for what we have.

My worry is a younger sister, Ellen, in her late thirties, who has 11 children, ranging from infancy to 15. Life is a bitter struggle for them, although they do as well as possible with what they have. For years I have collected and sent them good donated clothing, twice a year. And at Christmas we always send a big box of things. We stopped giving to others so we could do more for Ellen's household.

Now her health has failed and she must have complete rest for a few months. My brothers, who are better able, send her money, but not enough to cover the added expense of her illness. Whatever is sent must be a gift, a loan is out. To help as much as she needs will take hundreds of dollars. But I hate living in comfort, knowing her circumstances.

If Clyde (my husband) were willing, would it be right to take money from his savings to send to Ellen? It would worry him not to have a little backlog security as his work is seasonal and if he gets sick our insurance is surely the only financial aid we could expect. Also I owe a good life to our boy and we help at school and church to make him feel he belongs. What do you think is the right thing to do, knowing Ellen's need? F. F.

PROBLEM BRINGS TO MIND A BOOK DEAR F. F.: Before venturing opinions on "the right thing" in the circumstances, one should know more about Ellen's situation and the history of her needs than you reveal. If she has eleven children, one of them an infant, presumably she has a husband in the picture. And what is he doing in terms of coping with the present crisis? Or in providing, responsibility, for the large family he has begot? Or in conserving his wife's health and energies—by practice of unselfish consideration on his part, for instance?

CUTIES



"UGH—you gettumm better results with a filter. Stop the lens down to F.9 at 1-60th second—UGH."