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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1975

## Trim The Federal Payroll Too

With all the concern over New York's financial problems, especially the city's hefty payroll and expensive pension system, a similar and potentially greater problem should not be overlooked: the growing cost of federal pay and pensions.

Congress recently bowed to President Ford's insistence that a raise for federal employees be kept to 5 percent. Inflation, a federal budget deficit now nudging \$80 billion for the coming year, and a national debt recently pegged at \$595 billion will be adversely affected by even this relatively modest increase.

Federal employees who in recent years have been pushing for pay levels equal to the private sector in fact now have achieved more than "comparability". Federal paychecks have been boosted 120 percent over the past decade, or half again as much as those outside government. The federal government's 500,000 blue-collar workers, for instance, are paid about \$1,500 a year more than their civilian counterparts.

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, established by Congress to monitor the American federal system and recommend improvements, reports that federal employees now earn an average of 46 percent more than workers in private industry. Striving for higher federal wages and benefits further feeds inflation by encouraging state and local public employees to push for fatter paychecks.

Of particular concern should be the growing military payroll. Base pay for officers and enlisted personnel has doubled over the past decade, to the point where military jobs now command considerably more money than comparable civilian posts in the federal government. When such benefits as housing allowances, free health care and retirement systems, and commissary privileges are added in, the military is doing quite well these days—better, in fact, than most civilians in or out of government.

Lawmakers also should be taking a hard look at the federal government's burgeoning pension system. Federal pension payments have risen from \$1.3 billion in 1964 to \$5.8 billion in fiscal year 1975, and are now going up at the rate of about \$1 billion a year.

One way Congress could cut down on the growing pension cost is to remove the 1 percent "sweetener" that allows all federal pensioners (military and civilian) to not only keep up with any rise in the cost of living, but continually move ahead of it, adding further to inflation. When the cost of living goes up 3 percent, for example, retired federal employees get 4 percent more. If inflation averaged only 6 percent a year, the cost of that seemingly small 1 percent could add up to \$100 billion over the next 15 years.

Concerning "comparability" of federal pay levels with those of the private sector, the annual Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of nongovernment jobs should be broadened to include smaller businesses and service trades, thereby eliminating the upward bias that many critics suspect. The survey also should be done on a regional basis, and provision made for either outside participation in the annual job tally or review of comparability figures.

It might also be time for a hard look at the frequent automatic step raises in the federal system that have little to do with merit. Fewer raises of larger amounts more nearly tied to improved productivity might be a better idea.

These are only a few ways in which the federal government should be looking at its burgeoning pay and pension systems. Those who pay for it — the taxpayers — deserve nothing less.

Christian Science Monitor

'No delegation...no banners...no yelling through...  
 this must be Washington'



by Marty Vega

## Special Place Waiting

There is a special place waiting in Hades for the utility companies, you can be sure of that. For a long time I felt the electric companies would command that special place, but now it appears Bell Telephone may more richly deserve the honor.

Consider the facts. They have already raked in plenty of money from tourists and unsuspecting newcomers with the crazy pay phones where you don't put the dime in first, and who in heck would know that, so everybody loses plenty of dimes on this scheme before you catch on.

Now the latest. Local calls cost 20 cents. Okay, now I ask you, in this age of the checkbook, credit cards, etc., who carries cash anymore? You could easily be out in all sorts of circumstances and not have twenty cents on you and not give it a thought. UNTIL you have to make a call.

So the fiends at the phone company already realized this, and guess what they have come up with?

"Operator, I need to call my home right away and I don't have any change. Please make it collect."

"Is that a local call?"

"Well, yes, but this is important."

"I'm sooooo soooooo, we're not allowed to place local calls collect."

"(Expletive deleted)"

"All right, how about this. I want to call 867-0000 and charge it to a third number."

"What number do you want to bill, please?"

"867-0000."

"I'm sooooo soooooo, we can't do that."

"(Expletive deleted)"

"All right, I get it. How about placing a credit card call?"

"Certainly. What is the number of your card?"

"The last seven numbers are the same as my phone. I don't suppose

that will make any (expletive deleted) difference, will it?"

"I'm soooooo soooooo, ma'am."

Of course, it's clear to me that this little drama has been played out many times ever since the new phone LAWS went into effect, yes, don't kid yourself, that's what they are. LAWS, not regulations, policies, guidelines, procedures, but LAWS. So what I want to know is, the Constitution clearly says that only Congress shall have the power to make laws, and the judicial branch shall enforce them, and the executive branch, that is, the President, well, forget it, you get the idea? SO WHY can the phone company get away with making laws? Huh?

And one more thing. I know that the phone fiends came up with this new law that you can't call your own house and put it on your bill because someone who has got it in for me snitched. "That dumbie is always driving around on a bald tire, or on empty, and she never has done anything about the battery, so you'll fix her goo the next time she gets stuck and has to call her husband. Yeah, she probably won't have 20 cents and have to walk home because she so stupid, if she asked a stranger for a boost, she doesn't even know what to do with the jumper cables, and she would rather walk three miles than admit to ignorance. Yeah, pass a law that will fix her good."

## Stories

### Behind Words

by William S. Penfield

Cynical

About 380 B.C., Antisthenes, a former pupil of Socrates, founded a school of philosophy in Athens, Greece.

Antisthenes taught that virtue was the only good, and that virtue could be attained through self-control and independence.

The new philosophy stressed the importance of the individual and questioned many customs of society. In their contempt for the opinion of society, the members of this new school adopted slovenly ways. Later the philosophy deteriorated into a general protest against social customs.

Society held these men in great contempt and called them "Cynics," from the Greek word for dog. From "Cynic" came the word "cynical," which means to be distrustful of the motives of others.

Solecism

Colonists, being cut off to some extent from the influence of the homeland, often modify many habits—especially their speech. The Greeks noticed this centuries ago. The Greeks, however, did not look upon it matter-of-factly.

Some Athenians settled in Asia Minor where they established the city of Soloi. The language of the colonists became a corrupt form of Greek, and Athenians scornfully referred to it as "solokismos," from Soloi, the name of the city or colony.

The word passed into Latin as "solecismus" and into English as "solecism"—meaning a mistake in grammar, or a deviation from the normal or accepted manner.

## CLIFF BLUE ... People & Issues



PLEA BARGAINING -- Is the evils of "plea bargaining" coming to a head? "Plea bargaining" for use by solicitors in our courts was no doubt well-intended, but, in practice it oftentimes seems to be greatly abused. If you follow the court reports in the newspapers over the state you may soon come to the conclusion that "plea bargaining" is being used "right and left" -- to use an old expression, and in such a manner which could have a strong tendency to thwart justice and lead to a break-down in respect for our courts.

Bert Montague, Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts is reported as saying that a number of judges had informally complained of plea bargaining by a District Solicitor and his handling of court calendars.

Superior Court Judge A Pilston Godwin has gone to the unusual extent of ordering a District Attorney in Warren County to show cause why he should not be held in contempt of court.

While the particular case at issue centers around the District Attorney in Warren County, there is enough going on elsewhere to indicate that the practice of "plea bargaining" may be fast becoming a deterrent to justice over the state, with crime on the increase as a result. Many people feel that unless "plea bargaining" can be restrained the privilege should be greatly amended by the North Carolina General Assembly. And be greatly amended by the North Carolina General Assembly. And remember this: Plea bargaining can serve to let the more affluent and the well-to-do escape justice whereas the poor "one-gallus" person must face the hard consequences of law!

In an editorial on the subject, the Franklin Times published in Warrenton, the county seat of Warren, says: "In every case, the District Attorney should confer with the arresting officer, or his superior, to determine if sufficient evidence is available to enable to achieve a conviction before a case is dismissed or a lesser plea is accepted."

## This Is The Law

By Robert E. Lee

Neighbor's Trees

Green and Blue are adjoining property owners. The trunk of a tree is directly on the boundary line between the adjoining owners. Who owns the tree and what are the rights of the parties in respect to the tree?

Where the trunk of a tree is growing directly on the boundary line, the tree belongs in equal shares to the two adjoining owners as tenants in common. Each has an equal interest in every part of the tree whether on his or the adjoining land.

If either destroys or injures the tree without the consent of the other, he is liable to the other for one-half of the damage. The peculiar result of this doctrine is that the tenant in common of the tree has less right to cut off its branches than he would if it belonged wholly to the adjoining owner.

The only way a landowner can get rid of a tree growing directly on the boundary line without the consent of his neighbor is to cut it down and then be prepared to answer in damages for one-half of the value of the tree. If you have angered your neighbor, the chances are that he will place a higher value on the tree than you. If he sues you, the value of the tree will be determined by a jury.

Suppose your next-door neighbor has, growing entirely on his property, numerous tall trees that furnish so much shade on your land that you are unable to maintain a beautiful lawn or grow vegetables. What can you do?

Nothing. Get a chair and cool off from the shade of your neighbor's trees during the hot summer months. Your neighbor has not given you a legal right to complain.

TERRY SANFORD -- In Washington last week Terry Sanford surrounded by ten experts on "full-employment" which he had brought together, attempted to bring into focus his program designed toward full-employment. Juanita M. Kreps, a professor of economics at Duke made a proposal that reducing the minimum wage for teen agers in certain locations be tried as a means to combat unemployment among the young, which is said to be 25 percent.

EMPLOYMENT -- The writer of this column is a former member of the N.C. General Assembly who supported and voted for the first minimum wage bill adopted by the state. However, we feel that a minimum wage that is too high creates unemployment for the many who are unable to produce to the extent that the minimum wage would necessitate for the employer who is having to pay the bill.

We feel that due consideration might well be in order for the teenagers and for the handicapped and senior citizens over 65, not of course that they couldn't be paid the minimum wage or more but that it would not be necessary for those who could not produce sufficiently. For these people to have a job earning something might be much better than being totally unemployed and likely on welfare because they are unable to accomplish as much as others. Would it not to an extent relieve "the humiliation and despair" that the nationally-known Leon H. Keyserling says unemployment means to an "estimated 75 million" people?

JIMMY CARTER -- Former Gov. Jimmy Carter of Georgia who in recent weeks seems to be moving ahead of some of the pack in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, has made a move that could help him, or, on the other hand, could prove to be a drawback!

Last week Carter announced that Morris Dees of Montgomery, Alabama who raised some \$20 million through a massive mailing effort for Senator McGovern's White House race in 1972 had joined the Carter campaign as his finance chairman. Dees is co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery and was in the defense team that won acquittal for Joan Little in the North Carolina murder case.

It may be remembered that the McGovern campaign was far from popular in North Carolina in the 1972 presidential campaign.

## Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:  
 There's no use trying any longer, nobody can understand international diplomacy.

For example, take President Ford's trip to China. The highlight of it was a big banquet, the menu for which I'll get into in a minute, but first the toasts. They work this way: the Chinese send a copy of their toast to the President ahead of time, so he can check it over. Then he prepares his answer and has it typed out. When they sit down to eat, a Chinese leader lifts his glass and reads what the President has already thoroughly read, and the President responds by reading what has been written for him.

Then they settled down to the meal, which consisted of -- and I got this right out of an AP news report -- "shark's fin in casserole, fried chicken, cabbage with chestnuts and steamed wuchang fish complete with head and tail."

Now I was just thinking, that's a long way for a man to go to get served a fish head.

If everybody on both sides knows ahead of time what's going to be said at the big diplomatic banquet, why couldn't the Chinese just mail a copy of their toast along with a copy of the menu to the White House, the President could mail them his reply, and then, if diplomatic niceties demanded it, sit down to the stipulated meal in the White House dining room and, when nobody was looking, throw the fish head to his cat? Why spend all that time and money flying to China to eat when there's bound to be a catfish place somewhere around the corner from the White House?

It may be that I am out of order and that international diplomacy is just too mysterious for us to understand. It may be like trying to understand the benefits from all that money we spent sending men to the moon. Some people say it will never pay off, but I'd like to remind you that at least two of the astronauts have gotten good jobs doing TV commercials.

Yours faithfully,  
 J.A.

## Browsing in the files of The News-Journal

### 25 years ago

Thursday, December 7, 1950  
 Sunday evening at 6:00 o'clock the town's big red fire truck will stream through the streets of Raeford, marking the beginning of a complete canvas of the town for old toys by the Raeford Lions Club.

Santa Claus pays his visit to the teachers of Hoke County a little earlier this year, about next Monday, to be exact, for that is the day when the checks for back pay for the school year 1949-50 under state law passed two years ago.

New 1951 Chevrolet passenger cars and trucks will go on display simultaneously at 7,690 dealerships on Saturday, December 9.

Pvt. John J. Maxwell, son of Mr. and Mrs. W.S. Maxwell and Pvt. Donald F. Cameron, son of Mrs. H.A. Cameron have completed their AF basic airman indoctrination course at Lackland Air

Force Base.

From Poole's Medley:

If anything known to humanity has a firm foundation it is the Christian faith. This is the only thing known to banish the fear of death.

The merchant's committee of the Raeford Chamber of Commerce this week took action to make buying in Raeford a little more pleasant for the people who ride in to do it. They have asked all businesses on Main Street to have their owners and employees not to park their cars on Main Street during working hours from now until Christmas.

### 15 years ago

Thursday, December 8, 1960  
 Hoke County's Golden Jubilee celebration will take place during the week starting May 14, 1961.

Carlton E. Niven was unani-

mously elected by the Town Board of the City of Raeford to fill the unexpired term of Angus J. Currie at its monthly meeting here Monday at the Town Hall.

Funeral service will be conducted at Raeford Presbyterian Church at 3:00 o'clock today for Mrs. John Williamson McLaughlin, who died at 6:00 o'clock yesterday morning at Highsmith Hospital, Fayetteville. She was 87 years of age.

Buddy Luper, ex-Duke football great and coach of the Fayetteville High School Bulldogs, was the guest speaker here Tuesday night at the annual Boosters Club Supper for coaches and players in the Hoke High School Cafeteria.

Christmas operating schedules for the Raeford Plant of Burlington Industries were announced this week by Sam Homewood, Plant Manager, who also revealed plans for the annual Children's Christmas Party.

