

Looking at WASHINGTON

WOULD ABOLISH THE BYRD COMMITTEE

Since 1941, Senator Harry F. Byrd, of Virginia, has been chairman of a Congressional Joint Committee on Reduction of Nonessential Federal Expenditures. From time to time statements have been issued by the committee, or its chairman, vigorously attacking "waste in government and the employment of excessive personnel."

We have not always agreed with the declarations of the committee but it is just as well that somebody in Washington is concerned with the subject-matter of the duties assigned to the joint committee. Naturally, the administration leaders are not altogether pleased with the labor of the committee or its findings.

This explains why Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, of Minnesota, calls for the abolition of the committee on the ground that it is nonessential since the organization of Congress. He also says that the committee has been a "publicity medium," which is partly true, and that it has not functioned to carry out the purpose of its creation.

SAYS OUR DEFENSE IMPROVES

In view of the world conditions, the people of the United States are increasingly interested in the state of national defense. They have been somewhat concerned lest the economy drive of Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson might become the over-riding motive of the department and that, as a result, the ability of this country to defend itself might be jeopardized.

Taking advantage of the charge that their zeal to economize was dangerously weakening the nation's military effectiveness, defense officials have revealed that the strategic striking power of the Air Force has been greatly increased, now reaching the equivalent of the seventy groups necessary for security. The number of planes have been doubled in all nine of the B-29, Superfortress, groups and plans for the atom-carrying B-29 are going ahead.

The defense group also reveals that funds devoted by the Navy to anti-submarine warfare preparations will be doubled. Research and development will have more than \$100,000,000 instead of the \$40,000,000 proposed in the 1951 budget. This increase became possible through savings in other fields and by economies in operation,

such as the move which recently relegated the Missouri to training ship status.

It is also alleged, by defense department officials that there has been a marked increase in the combat strength of the Army. This is attributed to a firm policy in eliminating thousands of desk jobs, with the result that combat strength has moved up from 212,000 on Dec. 31, 1948, to 274,480 on Dec. 31, 1949.

WASHINGTON A ONE-BOMB TARGET

The city of Washington, with the White House, the Capitol, the Supreme Court, governmental offices and some defense establishments, offers an ideal target for the present atom bomb, not to mention the more powerful hydrogen bomb that is on the way.

It is not surprising that some consideration is being given to plans which would scatter the vital agencies of government so that an enemy bomb, dropped in surprise, would not paralyze the functions of the government. Representative Chet Hollifield, of California, suggests an alternate seat of Government, perhaps underground, as a defense measure. Others have suggested serious study of the problem.

The simplest way to safeguard the nation against a disaster which would paralyze its nerve center would be the dispersion of governmental functions over a wide area. This can easily be accomplished, at some expense, and a reasonable time. Possibly, Congress and the President could remain in Washington, but the Supreme Court, many departmental offices and some defense establishments could function just as well in other locations.

There is practically no branch of the Executive Department which could not be divided into a number of regional offices. These could perform their functions, in relation to the area where they happen to be located, just as well as in Washington. The same can be said of the Supreme Court, which, after all might be more judicial, if relieved from the political pressure that heats up the Washington atmosphere.

Certainly, if there is any likely prospect that an atomic bomb might be dropped upon Washington, or even the slightest possibility, it would behoove the government to take time by

the forelock and get set for defense. The top officials and many of the bureaucrats would not relish the removal of their offices from Washington, but if the defense of the nation requires it, they could either follow their jobs or get new ones.

NO DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE OF SEX

"We have heard a great deal about civil rights and no discrimination against anyone because of race, color or creed," declares Senator Margaret Chase Smith, of Maine, who would add a provision to the Constitution that there should be no discrimination because of sex.

Mrs. Smith, evidently cognizant of the fact that the demand for no discrimination sometimes is the basis for preferential treatment, adds that neither race, color, creed nor sex should be the basis for "agitation for special rights and special treatment under the guise of no discrimination and equality." She points out that there is danger of losing balance on the subject and that those who demand equality may sometimes "unconsciously" demand special treatment and privileges over and above equality.

The proposed amendment to the Constitution, to which the Senator refers, states that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." It has been vigorously supported by prominent women of the nation but equally sincere and conscientious women have opposed it.

The amendment has been passed by

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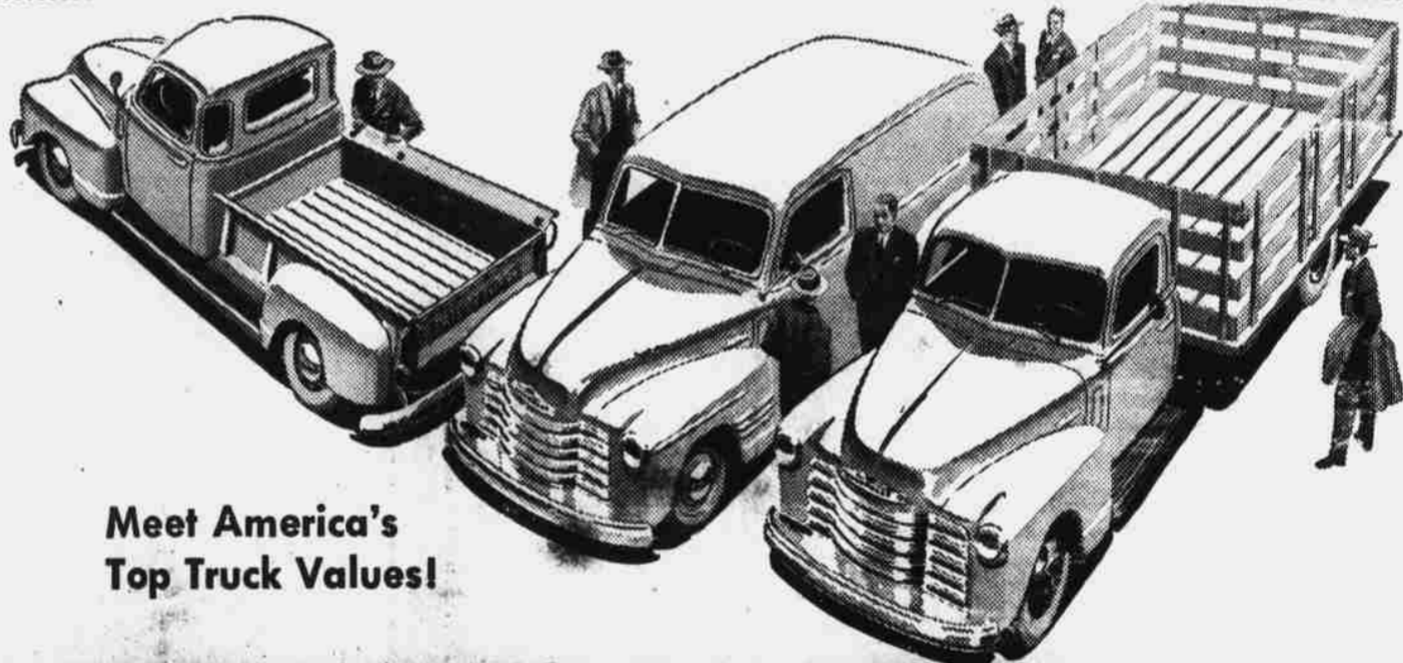
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