

## Rules Committee Undertakers Balked On Legislative Burials

By BRUCE BLOSSAT

The President's housing program would be buried for the year were it not for a 1949 change in the lawmaking rules of the House.

In former times, a bill had to clear two barriers to get to the floor for debate. It had to win approval of the committee that studied it, and then be endorsed by the rules committee.

This powerful group, set up originally to serve as traffic policemen for all measures, had long since gone into the embalming business. Acting as a sort of super-committee, it interred bills right and left. Seldom did any one try to combat its decisions.

It was this committee that last year killed major housing legislation, after the Senate had passed it and the House banking committee had recommended it.

This season the 1948 story on housing has been repeated in every detail save one. The rules are different.

Responding to taunts that the rules committee exercises autocratic power over legislation and can defeat the will of the House majority, Democratic leaders pushed through a new procedure that allows the House undertakers to be bypassed.

Now, when the rules committee says "no," the chairman of the interested lawmaking committee may file a discharge resolution with the House. When the resolution has been on the calendar 21 days, it may be brought up. If it is approved, the disputed bill comes to the floor.

That's the new element in the

housing story. The rules committee turned the 1949 bill down, but Chairman Spence of the banking committee had expected this and already had his discharge resolution on file. So the bill gets a new lease on life, and may come up late in June.

Speaker Rayburn, a veteran legislator not given to overstatement, predicts a housing bill will pass at this session. If he is right, it will mark the first major success of the new rule aimed at assuring its proper voice.

Majorities are not always right. They make mistakes. But majority rule is a foundation stone in our way of governing.

We provide devices for correcting the errors of a majority. A bad law may be amended or repealed or suspended by a better one.

Results may not always be perfect. But they outshine any perfection that could be dictated by the rules committee, a small group of men whose former power felt no tight checkrein from the people.

Whatever the merits of this particular housing bill, it might be a healthy lesson were it to pass the House and go to the president's desk. It would prove to the rules committee morticians that their embalming days are over and they'd better get back to directing traffic.



OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams

## U. S. Lumbermen Handicapped In British Orders

WASHINGTON, June 17.—(AP)—Rep. Norblad (R-Ore) complained to the Economic Cooperation Administration Thursday that British orders for lumber are in such form that American producers cannot bid on them.

Norblad said Great Britain is making the bulk of her purchases from Canada and that purchases in the United States are "of token size only and of little consequence to American mills."

He said the British orders are based on a "packaging basis," requiring the seller to ship each

grade separately and in small lots for British retail yards. He said this is comparable to buying large quantities of coal and requiring that it be delivered in sacks.

"Our mills do not ship in this manner," he wrote the ECA, "and are not equipped to do so."

Norblad urged that steps be taken that will insure American firms getting part of the foreign lumber business. He said that in the first five months of this year Oregon paid loggers and lumbermen \$3,600,000 in unemployment compensation.



SLAYS KINSMAN—Joseph Johansen, 21, of Oakland, Calif., surrendered to police and admitted bludgeoning his half-brother to death. Johansen, who was once a patient at State Mental Home, said he planned to kill his whole family, except his mother. He has been adjudged sane by psychiatrists, will face a first degree murder charge.

## Portland Club Plans 'Court' To Combat Divorces

PORTLAND, June 17.—(AP)—Portland's City Club will study desirability of establishing a "family court" to combat divorces.

A Club committee recommended that such a court be established. It would have three divisions seeking to lessen divorces by giving pre-marital advice, seeking reconciliations, and dealing with divorce actions.

A marriage division, consisting of a physician-psychiatrist, social worker, nurse and others, would be visited by persons prior to marriage. The division's staff would judge their mental and biological fitness for marriage and give advice.

A divorce division would seek to work out reconciliations, review divorce cases and make recommendations to the judge, and have power to order a 90-day waiting period in divorces.

A judicial division would have final responsibility for decision of the other two divisions and would deal with divorce decrees.



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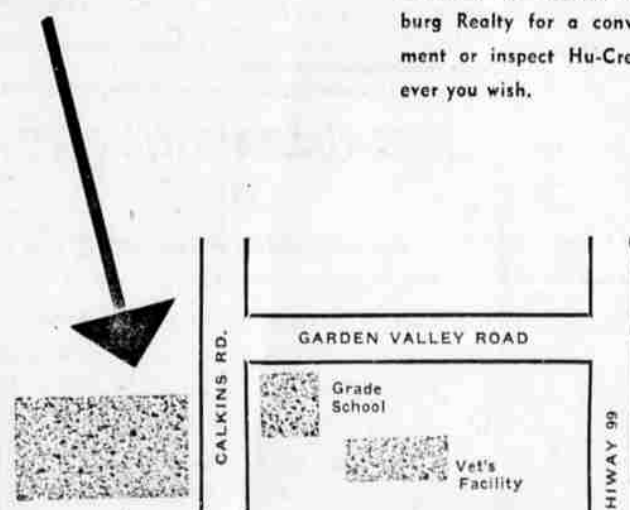
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