

More on Replacing Congress with Contract Help

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

I was hardly serious not too long ago when I suggested that we dispense with Congress, elections and the like, and JUST CONTRACT OUT THE WHOLE BUSINESS previously performed by our elected officials." But I love the way readers responded.

Several cooperating callers suggested that the technique be applied to state, county and municipal bodies--even port districts and other groups of elected officials exercising governance in the infrastructure. One party said that what she thought was so neat about the idea was that the successful bidder on any project could be forced to put up a PERFORMANCE BOND--Do or die pardner! Devise and implement the laws and procedures necessary to stop the drug traffic or else you are bankrupt, sucker; not on the public payroll for life.

Two items in particular seem to have caught the readers' attention as we listed the areas where our national legislative body (or state) has failed to act in a serious way. Surprise that George Bush as a congressman "voted for repeat of federal mandatory sentencing for a minimum possession of drugs." And that the venerable old American arms manufacturing company, Colt (the six-shooter, not the beer,) was a prime manufacturer of the deadly "street wiper" A-15 assault rifle. That company is a large contributor to the National Rifle Association of which President Bush is a life-time member and to

Bush's political campaigns.

One reader set up a schedule of priorities for the assignments to the contract operators. First things first, he said (money honey), noting that as the Knight-Ridder News Service said a week ago, "The Bush administration appears to be DELAYING MOVES TO SHUT DOWN LARGE FAILING BANKS UNTIL AFTER NOVEMBER'S ELECTION for political reasons." The director of the Congressional Budget Office said, "The delay could drive up costs of bank failures by tens of billions of dollars." This was detailed to sleepy congressmen still trying to balance their own checkbooks.

Now, hundreds of billions, not "tens" is more like the amount poor taxpayers are going to have to pick up. William Kistner, an associate with the Center for Investigative Reporting in San Francisco, puts the matter where even an eighth grader can understand it when he described the savings and loan debacle in the Forum Section of the Sunday Oregonian. Our congressmen who have been demonstrated not to be able to count, bought early estimates of "less than 50 billion" in that case as well. Together, the ante can well be a TRILLION DOLLARS!

Another point that came up among our readership (and it frequently does) is the matter of the huge AMERICAN ARMS SHIPMENTS to foreign countries. CNN reports that the Pentagon alone shipped more than 1 billion dol-

lars worth of weapons PER MONTH in 1991. Now this, of course, does not include the direct sales by the manufacturers who supply our defense establishment--who you may have thought to be primarily in the business of American defense. Nor does this "figure of death" include the transshipment to others of weapons ostensibly destined for use by our allies (to kill somebody or another).

The administration has been accusing Saudi Arabia and Israel, in particular, for this type of transgression as though they had no preknowledge in this deadly game of musical chairs. Who dies each time the music stops? Israel, of course, has its own extensive weapons industry and foreign arms sales represent a considerable portion of its Gross National Product. A lot of American (and European) blacks are terribly unhappy yet about the Associated Press report several years ago that Israel had supplied South Africa with THOUSANDS OF SHOTGUNS FOR "DEFENSE" PURPOSES. Against who, the black majority?

Certainly, immediate legislation to correct the insanities we have cited should keep our contract legislators quite busy. I'm well aware that some of you had some rather caustic comments on our CEOs and other industrialists--and there has got to be a way to replace "junk bond happy" businessmen who create no jobs, no futures and no hope. We'll get around to dealing with those characters, too.

Blazers and the Suns: THE Playoff Series

BY BILL BARBER

Fans have one overriding advantage. They can look ahead to the next playoff series. By contrast, players have to look exclusively at the team that stands in front of them. They simply do not have that luxury. The point being, that it really does not matter who wins in the Seattle - Utah tilt. Almost everyone agrees that the hottest series in the Western Conference is the one being played out between the Portland Trail Blazers and the Phoenix Suns this week. Whoever comes out on top can realistically expect an easier series against the winner of the Sonics - Jazz match up. If there was ever a "must have" series for the Blazers, this is it.

What is it going to take for the Blazers to win this match-up? Are you looking for a 100%, "Bet the farm and I aint lying" guarantee? In a word ... Defense. Clyde Drexler said "They play well, but I do think we can play better. Our defense has not been as good against them as we would have liked ... but I think our defense will be much better." The key is to keep Phoenix from getting to the century mark. That is an NBA playoff fact. If you average out the scores of all the 30 games played in the NBA playoffs leading up to Tuesday's game, you will find that the losing teams have only scored 98.7 points. The exact figure is 17 of 30 losing teams. The Suns have never won when Portland kept Phoenix under 100 points. Never.

Well, we have got the easy part done ... Talking about it.

Portland Trail Blazer coach Rick

Adelman has his work cut out for him. No other team in the NBA has beaten the Blazers in the regular season over the last two years. The Suns hit over 50% (.508) from the field which was better than any other team in the league did against the Blazers. Phoenix runs a three-man weave. In addition, the pick-and-roll they incorporate into their motion offense has given Portland a lot to prepare for. The high-scoring team is as good at the jump shots and three-pointers as they are at the fast break. If that description sounds familiar, you probably got the point. It sounds like Portland will be playing a mirror-image of itself.

Portland has an intimidating advantage on the boards, and you can tell that the Suns are very aware of it. "Portland does an unbelievable job on the boards," said Sun Kevin Johnson. "We know what they can do, and they know what we can do. There are no excuses during the playoffs. We have to take away their rebounds. I like our bench. We have two all-stars coming off the bench." Portland has been using a seven-man rotation lately. Robinson and Ainge were able to bring in 14 and 19 points respectively to the last LA contest. Neither of the two have had a great deal of success against Phoenix during the regular season. Nonetheless, you can throw that out the window now that the playoffs are here. Robinson and Ainge have done what was necessary to win whenever they were called on. Back to the subject of the Suns bench; if a team has two should-be starters sitting down at the start of the

game, the totals are bound to look lopsided in the box scores. Alaa Abdelnaby scored a point a minute for the five minutes he put in during clean-up time. Man-for-man the Blazers should have the edge in bench when they are called on. Any way you cut it, if that person you know who has the Blazer-Suns playoff tickets, still owes you a favor, this would be an excellent time to call it in. This series is bound to be one people talk about for a long time.

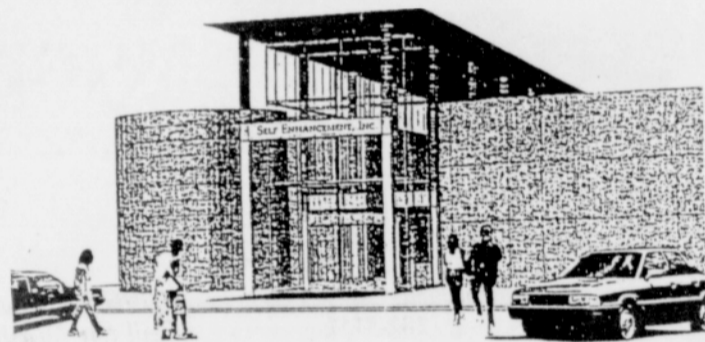
Considering the distractions of the Lakers-Blazers series it is amazing that the team was able to keep its focus. Sports did not seem to be very important when balanced against what was going on outside the building. Sports writers are supposed to write about sports, and nothing else. The same goes for the players. Alas, we're human. When the verdict was announced, it reminded us of the story of the man whose wife came home early to find him with another woman. She was justifiably enraged. The husband looked at his wife and said the same thing the defense attorney must have said to the jury ... "Who are you going to believe? Me or your eyes? The players didn't forget about the problems in LA, but they had to play through the pain in their hearts every bit as painful as the pains in their bodies. The best thing about being a sports reporter is getting to know the players as people.

This is going to be known as the "Business Series." When you talk about "Game-faces," you can bet you won't see a smile anywhere on the court till the final buzzer of the final game.

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-Correction-



In last week's issue we mistakenly ran the wrong name of the Easter Program. It should have been Louisiana Club not Arkansas. We apologize.

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