

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Stays Us No Fear Shall Awe"
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CHARLES A. SPRAGUE, Editor and Publisher

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Scuttling Wage-Price Controls?

The House voted on Wednesday to scuttle wage-price controls by letting the present statute die on its due date, July 31st. The vote was 118 to 87 and members were not on record. The real test will come Thursday on roll call. Administration forces may muster support from absentees and when the roll is called some may not want to be listed as voting to terminate these controls. And after that would come consideration of Senate and House bills by a conference committee. It would seem probable that in the end price-wage controls will be continued, perhaps until March 1st next, which was the date set in the Senate bill.

If the House version stands then an early settlement of the steel strike can be foreseen. Free to raise prices the steel industry probably would quickly come to terms with the unions on wages, leaving only the vexing issue of the union shop to keep them apart.

It is anybody's guess what the consequence would be of abrupt abandonment of controls on prices and wages. Economic law is taking over in many areas and price ceilings are more or less historic. Pressures would immediately be released for wage boosts, especially if steelworkers are given a substantial increase. That would stimulate price increases and might touch off more inflation.

Eager as we are to see bureaucratic controls wiped out we question the wisdom of cancelling authority to impose them, at least through this critical summer. The skies are too dark to assume that our war danger is past.

Tagging Airline Subsidies

The Hoover commission strongly recommended divorcing airline subsidy from payment for carrying airmail. Under the old practice they were lumped together and no one could tell how much was compensation and how much was subsidy to keep the line flying. Tuesday the House interstate committee got round to approving a bill to separate the two, but limited this division to domestic lines. It ordered no separation on payments to U. S. lines on international flights.

Just why the segregation was made isn't clear. There would seem to be little need for subsidy on domestic lines for they are fast becoming financially successful. The international lines may require subsidy as do ships in our merchant marine. In any event the amount of the subsidy should be tagged. It just looks as though the powerful Pan American lobby had won again.

Wrecking the Courthouse

Gaunt-eyed the shell of the old courthouse seems to leer at passersby. The good grey lady of Justice has come down from her old pedestal which already was being crumbled beneath her. Bans windows the old edifice stands like a fleshless skull. Once the county's pride it has become a toothless derelict.

Empty halls which now echo to the blows of the wreckingbar once measured the tread of officeholders and taxpayers, of judges and litigants. Its courtrooms heard the pleas of eloquent attorneys, the tearful confessions of criminals, the testimony of countless witnesses, the verdicts of juries and the solemn sentences of judges. Over his counter the taxgatherer col-

U. S. Ports Blocked to Communist Ships, But Order Kept Secret So 'Not to Stir People Up'

By JOSEPH AND STEWART ALSOP
WASHINGTON—A significant story is told by two allied, but in some ways contrasting, orders recently issued by the American government. The first is an order that was secretly issued to take effect June 1. It limits the use of our ports and the Panama Canal by Soviet and satellite shipping. And the limit is so severe that, in effect, the major ports and the Canal have now been closed to all vessels from the Soviet sphere.

The need for such an order is long and obvious. The Canal and the ports are almost the weakest links in our whole defensive system. Let the Canal be blocked, and our naval strategy will be knocked galley west. Let the ports be cut off from commission, and it will become impossible for us to supply our allies and sustain our own forces overseas. Moreover, the Canal can be blocked, and any of our major harbors can be rendered useless, by the explosion of a single atomic bomb, which any seemingly innocent freighter can conceal in its hold.

This danger has long been debated in the National Security Council and elsewhere in the higher reaches of the government. The question was resolved this spring, when the Coast Guard was told to safeguard the ports while the guardianship of the Canal was confided to the Navy. Enforcement of the order has not yet been necessary, since almost no Soviet or satellite vessels nowadays cross ei-

ther the Atlantic or Pacific. For the same reason, concealment of the order has been possible. And the purpose of concealment was to avoid stirring people up, here or abroad.

Order number two is more recent and is non-secret. It in-creases the 24-hour air watch of our great urban and industrial centers. It has been much criticized, just as the order for closing the ports would no doubt be criticized if it conflicted with the interests, or even with the comfort, of any large group in this country. In the case of this second order, what has been concealed is the real motive for it.

The motive is all too simple. Six months ago, the Soviet strategic air force occupied its forward bases closest to this country, in Kamchatka. Since then, active Soviet air reconnaissance of this continent has been detected on several occasions.

Anyone can purchase aerial photographs of every strategic area in the United States. Hence the object of this Soviet air reconnaissance is obviously to test the effectiveness of our air warning and defensive system. None of the Soviet aircraft flying over Alaska and Canada has yet been intercepted. The main proofs of their presence have been the vapor trails they left behind. Hence our air warning and defense system is quite plainly far from satisfactory.

Under the circumstances, the order for continuous air watching was, if anything, rather belated. But the air watch will be only partly effective, because the true motive for it has been concealed. For the same reason, the civil defense program has been gutted by the Congress. Again, the purpose of this concealment has been to avoid stirring people up.

What strikes one in the histories of these two orders, in fact, is the peculiar schizophrenia that is revealed. The danger hanging over us is considered sufficiently great to justify the orders being issued. But the im-

pulse to hide this danger from the country, the impulse to be bland and reassuring, is also so strong that in one case the order itself was muted, and in the other the easy and natural explanation of the order was put under wraps.

In many other cases, this schizophrenia producing even more unhealthy results. For example, the fact has trickled through the rather misty German segment of the Iron Curtain, that the Kremlin has placed orders in East Germany for no less than 6200 microwave transmission towers. This gigantic order will be sufficient to provide the whole Soviet empire with a closed microwave communications system. The cost of completing such a system will be astronomical.

The fact that such an immense investment is being planned by the Kremlin in turn reflects the Kremlin's concern about a very vital matter—namely, the ease with which all communications systems except the microwave system can now be jammed.

The jamming art was still in its infancy when the Kremlin jammers all but broke off communications between the battle-ship Missouri and the Navy Department, on the occasion, several years ago, of the Missouri's mission to the Dardanelles. The jamming art is in its infancy no longer. Our own communications, internal as well as trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific, are just as vulnerable as the Soviet empire. Yet the huge outlays to give us even partially safe communications will never be authorized by Congress, unless the danger is frankly confessed. Confession will stir people up. So no adequate effort to provide us with safe communications has yet been launched.

It is hard not to feel that telling the truth and taking the consequences is preferable to running the many risks of this sort.
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VOLGA BOATMAN



IT SEEMS TO ME

(Continued from page 1)

fighting to Korea. In late 1950 when MacArthur wanted to carry the war into Manchuria, France and Britain moved to put on brakes—Atlee, then prime minister, flew to Washington to talk against the MacArthur plan. This time Washington did not query London or advise it; but the bombing still was confined to the territorial limits of Korea.

There are two possibilities: one that the bombings may induce the Reds to settle the terms of an armistice; the other that they may precipitate a general war. We doubt if either ensues. Russia has always stopped "short of war." And China is accustomed to such punishment that loss of electric energy will hardly prove decisive. What the bombings will do is to lower the industrial potential of the enemy, serve notice that U. N. forces still can fight if the Reds are not ready for peace, and help restore to the U. N. the initiative that has been sacrificed for the past year in hopes of a peaceful settlement.

The repercussions in Britain conceivably might hurt or overthrow the Churchill government. In fact that may have been the purpose of the Atlee argument, for the British are in a tense political controversy the same as are Americans. However, the report of Lord Alexander now returning from Korea via Washington may cast a different light on the subject. Alexander referred to the U. S.-managed operations in Korea as a "good show"—a British expression of approval. If he conveys this impression to his home people opinion there may be greatly influenced in favor of the course which the United States has pursued.

With so much powder about, gunpowder and political TNT we must expect explosions of varying dimensions in various parts of the globe.

GRIN AND BEAR IT

