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The Register-Guard's policy is the complete and impartial publication in its news and statements on all news. On this page the editors of The Register-Guard offer their opinions on events of the day and matters of importance to the community endeavoring to be candid but fair and helpful in the development of constructive community policy.

Free Press for Britain, But—

Despite the recent report of a Royal Commission which recommended in favor of a free press for Britain, the movement to bring the press under some kind of government supervision or control is not dead. In yesterday's debate in the Commons on the report of the Royal Commission, Deputy Prime Minister Herbert Morrison is quoted as saying:

"If the publishers themselves will not set up a supervising council, then Parliament should appoint one."

In particular, Morrison, speaking for the Labor government, advocates restrictions which will keep the larger newspaper chains from expanding or absorbing independent papers.

It might be expected that a socialist government (for that is what the present Labor party administration of Britain is) would aim for control of the press after nationalizing the banks, railroads, mines and other key industries. But the Royal Commission (which, of course, was selected by the Labor party and not by the king) shied away from government control of press after more than two years of study.

They reported many evils in their commercialized press, notably:

Political bias in reporting, although they scored their own Labor newspapers along with Tory papers on this point.

Inadequate reporting which results in giving the public insufficient facts on which to base opinion.

Triviality and low standards, the sort of cheap sensationalism which usually goes with high-pressure competition for circulation.

In many ways the results of the British study parallel the findings of the Hutchins group and many other critical studies of the American press. The findings of the critics can always be summed up:

"A free press is very full of faults, but a government-controlled press would be much worse."

In both countries, the situation is complicated by the fact that it requires enormous capital to go into and stay in the newspaper publishing business (although the opportunities for small and inexpensive publications are much greater than outsiders might suspect). In both countries the editor is always facing the devil's choice of giving the public what it wants or what it ought to have.

By no means the least of the problems is that which our British cousins call **INADEQUATE REPORTING**:

Often we have seen a reporter spend a week trying to analyze a relatively simple thing like a county or city budget and condense the facts into a few simple words or charts which anybody should be able to understand. How then can you present a clear and concise picture of federal finance? Or the riddles of world peace?

In the parliamentary debates, Brendan Bracken, a Tory member offered a statement which is worth remembering:

"Freedom of the press is the right of the public and not of the press."

The public must guard its rights to a press that is free to print, but in return for the privileges which depend on public confidence, editors and publishers must learn to police themselves or they will certainly be policed. It is not an easy undertaking, and it is not going to be accomplished merely by voting "codes of ethics" and pious declarations. In our opinion journalism must find some way to outlaw any practitioner who violates certain fundamentals of honesty and decency, just as lawyers and doctors or ministers may be outlawed by their own brethren for unprofessional conduct.

In journalism, however, it is much more difficult to draw the boundaries which must not be overstepped because we deal with all life.

The British situation is extremely interesting. Respect for democracy is still dominant. Even British socialism is unwilling to say that the British people should get their news from only one viewpoint. Coming on the eve of the Labor party's battle royal with Churchill's Tories, the report on the press is significant.

Fire Not a Public Circus!

Police are to be congratulated on their efforts to handle the thousands of curiosity seekers who tried to see Wednesday night's big fire at the Clear Fir plant in Springfield. Congestion was not as dangerous as during the Summerbell fire of a year ago. But—strict and effective controls on thrill-seekers have become an imperative in this Eugene-Springfield urban area.

We know that Chief Surfus and his associates in nearby communities are working out a detailed program. It is not an easy thing to do because it involves complete co-operation of city, state and county officers and many other agencies including press and radio. The plans must be so flexible that they can be applied instantly in any critical area. The main features must be:

ROAD BLOCKS on all highways or streets over which fire equipment must move.

ARREST of any person who tries to pass such a road block without valid excuse.

COMMUNICATION system so that road blocks will not be prolonged so as to impede legitimate traffic at any point.

WARNINGS to the public to stay home and keep away from the fire area.

In addition the need of another fast

through highway between Eugene and Springfield—preferably north of the Willamette River—should be obvious. For years there has been talk of a new connector from some point on the McKenzie Highway east of Springfield to the Coburg road and the new bridge now under construction at the end of Mill Street, but nothing has been done about it.

The public must be made to understand that a major fire in any one of a dozen "critical areas" could quickly turn into a major disaster. Fire fighters need not only **CLEARED ROADS** to the fire but plenty of room to maneuver equipment after they reach the fire. They need open avenues for **RETREAT**.

"Suppose a dangerous fire had broken out in Eugene Wednesday evening after the Clear Fir fire had been limited and it had been necessary to recall some or all of the Eugene equipment sent to Springfield. How long would it have taken to clear a path through the home-going curiosity-seekers who clogged the highway from the Springfield bridge to the university?"

Big cities with thousands of policemen and dozens of fire companies and dozens of alternate routes have much less trouble with the crowd menace than we have. Big cities also enjoy the advantage that their industrial areas are relatively compact. In this area we have **EXTRA** hazards—because we are so spread out and because we have so few reserves or alternates.

We need rules and regulations with exceptionally sharp teeth. The firemen of Eugene, Springfield, Bethel and neighboring suburbs have worked out very good plans for cooperation, and the police are doing their share, but all of these plans for mutual assistance will be perfectly worthless if the public fails to cooperate. We have been told:

"Running to fires is an old village habit, and you'll never cure people in Eugene and Springfield of that habit."

We like to think that people in this community have pretty good sense, but if there is an argumentative minority, we recommend some arrests and some stiff fines and jail sentences. The road control system, when it is worked out, will help to reveal the "smarties" who look upon fires as a lark.

This community is much more vulnerable for fire disasters than most people realize.

WASHINGTON LETTER

By Peter Edson
NEA WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

ATTORNEY GENERAL TOM CLARK IS GIVEN A 39-PAGE BUILD-UP

WASHINGTON—(NEA)—The Hon. Tom C. Clark, 49, of Dallas, Tex., completed his fourth year as attorney general of the United States the other day. To celebrate this auspicious event, the Department of Justice put out a 39-page statement telling what a great man Mr. Clark has been and is.

Not much attention was paid to this handout. Maybe it was the heat wave, which makes the reading of anything 39 pages long something of a chore. More's the pity. Because this is one of the biggest puff sheets ever put out on any government bureaucrat.

A few sample direct quotes will give you the drift:

"He is the 59th attorney general," the press release begins. One gathers that Mr. Clark must be the greatest one since the last one, anyway. That was Francis Biddle.

"During Mr. Clark's four years as attorney general, the scope of departmental activities and responsibilities has broadened considerably," the report continues.

"Under the direction of Attorney General Clark, from July 1, 1935, to May 31, 1949, more than 150,000 office cases or matters were handled by the criminal division."

"Since Mr. Clark's induction into office, 2226 war frauds complaints have been received and 1506 investigations instituted."

"At the instance of Attorney General Clark in 1947, a program aimed at conspiracies to maintain or increase prices in the food, clothing and housing fields was launched and is being aggressively continued."

Lays Down Anti-Trust Law

"Since the passage of the Sherman Act in 1890, there have been 21 attorneys general, and the average number of (anti-trust) cases filed by each has been 42. Since Attorney General Clark has been in office, 180 cases have been instituted. To date 986 cases have been filed. At the rate of anti-trust activity under the present program it is expected that the 1000th anti-trust case will be filed during Mr. Clark's tenure."

"Under the direction of the attorney general the claims division has succeeded in defeating all attacks upon the constitutionality of the Renegotiation Act."

"The attorney general's keen interest in veterans' affairs is reflected in the number of such cases handled by the department."

"The admiralty and war shipping litigation carried on by the department during Mr. Clark's term as attorney general was largely concerned with war-related matters."

"Since the cessation of hostilities, which occurred shortly after Mr. Clark's entry into office as attorney general, the type of land acquisition has changed from acquisitions primarily for defense purposes to acquisitions for dam and reservoir purposes."

"Under Attorney General Clark's direction, the government's drive against tax evaders has reached unprecedented heights."

"Attorney General Clark's continuing interest in the improvement of departmental administrative techniques is evidenced by the many important procedural and forwarding (sic) looking changes achieved... during his incumbency."

FBI Record Cited

"The splendid record achieved by the Federal Bureau of Investigation throughout the war... is a source of deep pride, not only to Attorney General Clark, but to all citizens everywhere."

"During the past four years the United States, through the attorney general and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, has welcomed for permanent residence 120,000 war brides, 73,000 displaced persons and 426,000 other immigrants."

"Among Mr. Clark's greatest contributions as attorney general has (sic) been his deep and personal interest in, and accomplishments with, juveniles."

"The Meritorious Good-Time Law... has had Mr. Clark's full interest and support."

"Sixty-eight undesirables entered (the U.S.) between 1933 and 1945, and none has entered since Attorney General Clark assumed his post."

"In addition, the attorney general, under the provision of the executive order establishing the loyalty program, and after an exhaustive and thorough investigation, has listed a total of 159 organizations in the United States as coming within the purview of that order."

Well, there's a lot more to it than that, but these highlights should be enough. "Mr. Clark" by name, or "the attorney general" by title, are mentioned 55 times in the 39 pages. This leads somewhat naturally to the question, "What's he running for? the presidency?"

"Gee Whiz! She Wasn't Due for Months Yet!"



Editor's Mailbag—

THANKS
JUNCTION CITY—(To the Editor)—I wish to commend your articles about the negroes of Ferry Street.

Those, who are helping them find new homes, have a wonderful opportunity to practice the Brotherhood of Man. I'm sure they will try their very best to find them decent housing. Besides setting a good example, they will be helpful in destroying racial discrimination which has become a mighty tool of the Communists.

Sincerely,
MRS. MELVIN BECKER.

RAISH COMPLAINT

EUGENE (To the Editor)—May I add my bit to the "I SAW" column. While driving out Hayden Bridge Road on Sunday, I was surprised and furious to drive over the newly re-surfaced road, beautifully finished, county equipment still parked nearby, and to find that this road runs directly in front of the home of our County

Commissioner Lee Raish and the home of C. H. Raish (name on mail box), who is no doubt a kin of the commissioner. I believe he is the man who proposed 12 miles of county roads a year and to be sure his was in that 12 miles had it done immediately.

I know from the fact that the land in that vicinity is not densely populated that the taxes on that land cannot compare with the taxes we pay in the River Road district. Still our roads are in terrible shape, and no effort is being made to repair these roads, in spite of the fact that city buses, school buses and a hundred per cent more cars travel any of our lanes than do the Hayden Bridge Road on which the commissioner lives.

I am very sincere when I sign my name and say I would like to see Raish go to

Helen B. Damd.

EUGENE (To the Editor)—In behalf of the colored people that are being evicted in ten days from the Ferry Street Bridge, I plead with you to publish my letter, hoping that you will not refuse to help these poor people, who have fought and died for our country, for the children, that are just like yours or mine, except for the color of their skin.

Knowing that you might be able to help, I again ask you to help the Lane County people realize these people's plight.

Very Sincerely,
Mrs. M. B. Hall.

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Father Faces Murder Charge

TAMPA, Fla. — (AP) — A grief-stricken father was charged with first degree murder for "getting things settled" with the Baptist minister who eloped with his 15-year-old organist daughter.

Ward Cornelius, 57-year-old railroad man, was held on the murder charge after he pumped five bullets into The Rev. John Lane, 31, when they met accidentally on a downtown street.

The father answered "Thank God" when officers told him that Lane was dead. He said he had "worried himself crazy" since his high school sophomore daughter, Ann, eloped with the minister a month ago.

Lane's romance with Ann, who played the organ at his Florida Ave. Baptist church prompted him to divorce his wife, resign his pastorate and run away with the girl to Ashburn, Ga., where they were married.

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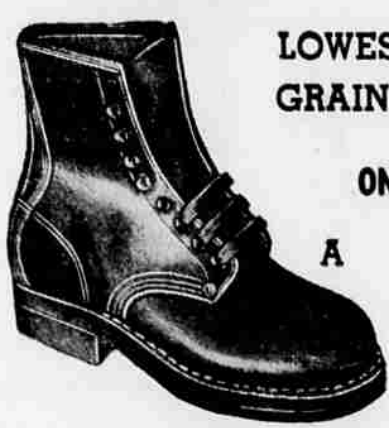
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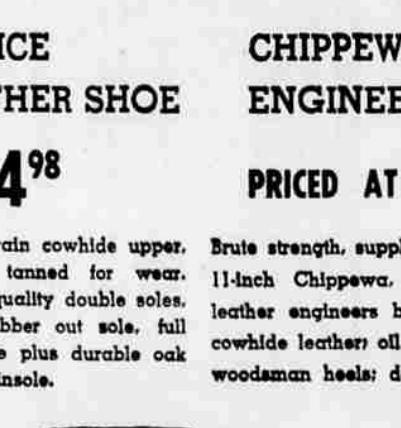
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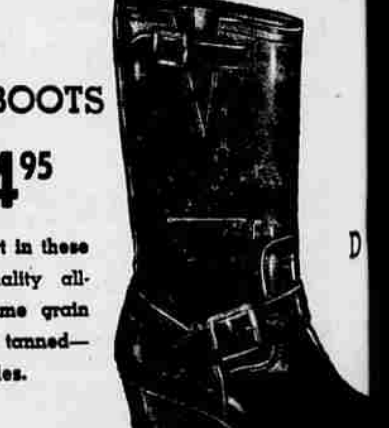
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