Eugene Register-Guard
LANE COUNTY'S HOME NEWSPAPER
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County Road Classification

A big HURRAH! is in order for our Lane County Board of Commissioners. They have announced, at long last, that they are undertaking a classification of the entire county road system which will designate primary, secondary, and service roads, with further breakdown of these as to priority. This newspaper has urged for years that a logical method be devised to bring the county's road system to modern standards. Many improvements in the administration of the roads have been made recently but there is still a long way to go and road classification is one of the most important steps.

Roads in Lane County are big business. The county road and bridge budget hits the $2,000,000 mark and covers a system of at least 1,500 miles. Up until now the roads have been classified only as market roads and general roads, with 440 miles pegged as market roads. It is reasonable to assume that there should be about 300 miles of primary roads which are a county responsibility to construct and maintain.

We hope that the board of commissioners, with a new aligament of two Republicans and one Democrat, will sit down and seriously study what can be done to formulate a program of bringing the primary roads to modern standards. It is still a $10,000,000 problem in our books and cannot be easily achieved with pressure groups from different areas demanding that something be done for a particular road. The economic good of the county demands that primary roads be given top consideration in any program.

We feel certain that the people of Lane County would back any long-range financial plan that is sound and will provide a top system of primary roads. Even if the commissioners could figure a way to put $1 million a year into primary roads, it would be a big gain. At $35,000 a mile (the minimum for good primary roads) it would develop at least 25 miles each year.

A few years ago this newspaper proposed several methods of financing a modern road program for the county and we hope the commissioners will take time to review them. It is also our hope that the new board of commissioners will make a habit of sitting together with Oscar Norberg, the county engineer, in an advisory capacity. He came to the county highly recommended by the state highway department and we believe the commissioners should use his knowledge to the fullest in developing a construction program now that classification of the roads is underway.

Kind Words for Almost Everybody

These are kind words. They are for all the people of Eugene and Springfield who got through 1954 without a traffic fatality in either city. More specifically they are for the two police chiefs, Ted Brown and Harry Howard, and the officers working under their direction. They are the ones who directed the safety programs and who made the record possible.

Springfield has been especially vigilant in this respect. It has now been three years and a half since there was a traffic fatality there. Eugene's last—and worst—fatal auto accident was Oct. 11, 1953 when five persons were killed near the Judkin's Point Overpass.

Chief Brown believes that enforcement and safety are directly related. He has charts to show that the more tickets his men give for "moving violations" the fewer accidents there will be. In the five years from Jan. 1, 1950 to Jan. 1, 1955 the number of tickets given in Eugene for moving violations increased from 6,356 to 13,127. In the same period the number of accidents decreased from 2,600 to 1,900.

And, more important, the number of injuries from traffic accidents decreased from 303 to 191. Chief Brown feels that the only thing making any accident different from a fatal accident is sheer luck. Any accident could be fatal, he reasons.

So congratulations to everybody. But don't let it go to your head. There are many more days to come—if you live to enjoy them.

Calvin Crumbaker, Outspoken Councilman

When the Eugene City Council meets the first time in 1955, it will be sitting without Calvin Crumbaker, a veteran councilman who served the city for the past 12 years. Mr. Crumbaker sat on the council during a period when the city was experiencing its fastest growth and he apparently feels that now is an opportune time to retire. The city has been through a vast streets and sewer expansion program and Mr. Crumbaker notes that the city is "still in good financial condition."

We often disagreed with Mr. Crumbaker in his views on city affairs but there was never any question of knowing where Calvin Crumbaker stood on any issue. This we admire. He was outspoken and determined in his arguments for what he believed to be the right course of action. This is the type of man any city government needs. Mr. Crumbaker was not afraid to stand up and be counted on any issue. A. L. Hawn, a previous member of the city council, and one in the Crumbaker tradition, summed it up nicely when he said, "He (Crumbaker) wasn't afraid of being criticized."

We hope that more members of the council will become outspoken in their views and argue strongly to make their points in public debate. It is only in this way that the people the council is serving can know and understand the decisions reached.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Powell St. Symphony

At 81, the cable car is ailing badly. Even its best friends give the noisy and inefficient trade mark of San Francisco only another five years of life. We hope the diagnosis is wrong and we feel some miracle drug will certainly be found to keep the 30 cars clanging up the steep hills of everybody's favorite city.

The cars, the youngest of which was built in 1888, cost $1,713,526 to operate last year, and took in only $1,361,735. That's the kind of deficit even San Francisco can't live with. The appeal of the quaint little cars as a tourist attraction can't be denied. It is also true that few people come to San Francisco only to ride the cars. But when the tourists do come, they always ride the slow and rickety cars up Powell St. The adventurous also ride down, looking ahead at the steep hills and the narrow, flat spots where the cross streets go.

And even old San Franciscans stop and watch as the car turns around on the platform where Powell meets Market. San Francisco without its cable cars wouldn't be San Francisco at all. As soon flatten out the many hills or cover with black paint the windows around the Top o' the Mark. But scuttle the cable cars. Never.

Earl's Still There

Retirement of Harvey Wells from the Oregon Legislature leaves Lane County's Earl Hill as the most experienced member of that body. Mr. Wells, a Republican from Portland, had served 11 regular and four special sessions of the House before he announced this week that he would not be there for the 1955 session. He first went to Legislature in 1921.

Now there is only one other member who served before Mr. Hill first went down to Salem in 1929. He is Herman Chindgren of Clackamas County, who served his maiden term in 1927. However, Mr. Chindgren has not served so often as Mr. Hill. This is Mr. Chindgren's 11th session. It is Mr. Hill's 11th regular session, too, but he also has had additional experience in three special sessions (two in 1933 and one in 1935).

With a House that is largely inexperienced, it is fortunate that Mr. Hill will be there, sharing with younger men the things he learned in 14 trips to the Legislature.

Lots of sleep is lost by parents because they wait up to kiss the kids goodnight.

"... And Away We Go!"

A. ROBERT SMITH

Study Contrasts Neuberger, Cordon

WASHINGTON — Among the many sharp contrasts between Senator-elect Richard L. Neuberger and Sen. Guy Cordon, the most noticeable on Capitol Hill this past week as the former checked in and the latter checked out was their contrasting relationship with the Washington press corps.

Just before he moved to a downtown law office, Cordon welcomed Oregon reporters into his office for a final bull session, a rare give-and-take which the newsmen told him he should have conducted much more often in his 10 years in the office but which he neglected for "more important matters." The senator, however, true to form, was relishing the thought that he would soon "no longer be news," which probably best expressed his delight in public obscurity.

SECRET BUSINESS

But it was not simply that Cordon hesitated to put himself forward into the spotlight. Take the time he was asked off the Senate floor to explain his vote against a foreign aid bill. He told the reporter brusquely he would explain that to Oregon voters in due time, turned on his heel and marched away. Far from being an isolated incident, this illustrates the manner in which Cordon generally conducted the public's business as though it were a confidential law case, too important to be shared with the citizenry.

Neuberger's arrival here was greeted by newsmen who immediately called for a press conference in which to fire questions at the newcomer. They found him articulate on issues with which he is familiar, but not ready with solutions to most national problems with which he admitted unfamiliarity in adequate detail. But he answered all questions reporters asked without resort to a "no comment" defensive maneuver.

'MADE NEWS'

In Republican circles, the fact that the new Democratic senator-elect "made news" on arrival caused remarks about his being a champion self-publicist. Perhaps sensitive to this charge, Neuberger was plainly taking a go-slow approach at the outset. But like any colorful public figure, so long as he has something new and meaningful to say on current public issues, he will make legitimate news. And Oregonians can make their day-to-day judgments accordingly, however large or small the headlines in the Oregon press.

Quite apart from his demonstrated effectiveness and his long-honored conscientiousness, Cordon strayed too far in the direction of secrecy, cloaking much of his activity from newspapermen whose only reason for inquiring was that he was engaged in important public endeavors and that it was their duty to keep the voting taxpayers as closely informed about these undertakings as possible. The senator didn't see it that way, and that was that.

MALONE TEMPERED

Every elected official has his own personal approach to public office, and only a few stray too far toward being headline hunters or being mysteriously secretive. Sen. George Malone (R-Nev) is an example of a headline hunter on whom the press exercises tempering control, often ignoring for the most part his long-winded repetitious oratory on the Senate floor against foreign trade. Some years ago he sought to overcome this by telegraphing copies of his speeches to newspapers all over the country at federal expense, until this backfired with more complaints than headlines.

But against the secretive wall of "no comment," newsmen are severely handicapped to inform the public either accurately or completely, to the detriment of free elective government.

It is generally believed that Cordon helped dig his own political grave by his behind-the-scenes approach to public affairs—yet the real indictment of political secrecy is not that it may contribute to any individual's defeat at the polls, but that it destroys the very ideal of a sovereign, democratically-governed people being sufficiently well-informed to make wise, mature political judgments upon which the future course of the American nation depends.

MARQUIS CHILDS

Economic Experts Alarmed At Prospects of 'Automation'

WASHINGTON — Almost without exception the year-end prognosticators are saying that 1955 will be a prosperous year. The forecasts are for a margin of sales and profits that will exceed '54 by, in most estimates, a small margin.

Childs

Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks predicts a "moderate upswing" in business activity. But the Wall Street Journal reports that the key American industry, automobile manufacture, is booming. With the brilliantly-colored new models introduced earlier than before, factory sales for November were double those of October and they were 31 per cent ahead of sales for November, 1953.

If these optimistic forecasts prove correct, employment should rise somewhat from the present figure of nearly 62,000,000.

On the business of inventories some of the more cautious prophets, however, are forecasting prosperity with reservations. They agree that the first four or five months of '55 will be unqualifiedly prosperous, with industry approaching even boom-time records. But then when the shelves have been filled up, they raise a question mark about the last half of the year.

There is another question mark on the economic horizon and that has to do with the consequences of the wage and security demands to be made by the United Auto Workers when their contract with General Motors expires in May. Here again, what happens in the key industry may be reflected throughout the economy.

UAW DEMANDS

The UAW has spelled out a series of demands that add up to an estimated increase of 40 cents an hour. Included is the demand for a guaranteed annual wage for all workers in the industry. If the full amount of the increase is applied to the entire auto industry, the wage bill would go up about a half-billion dollars a year.

As with previous wage increases, the cost would be added to the price tags of cars, trucks and tractors. And it is just here that doubts arise about the longer future. Industrial prices have been constantly going up while the income of an important group of consumers—the farmers—has been steadily falling. The disparity between rising industrial output and falling farm income was one of the reasons for the bust that ended the boom of the '20s in 1929.

The Department of Agriculture estimates farm income for '54 at $12.5 billions. For 1951 farm income was $14.5 billions, for '52 it was $13.6, and in '53 the total was $13.3.

Agriculture is proportionately a less-important factor in the economy than it was in the '20s. Nevertheless, a decline in the capacity of the farmer to buy the products of industry raises the old argument about the volume of purchasing power essential to keep goods moving off the shelves. Aggressive unions, such as the UAW and others in the CIO, have leaned heavily on this argument to support their demands for higher wages.

MORE SPENDING

The CIO in its official forecast for next year declares that the "improvement" of recent months can be sustained and expanded in '55 only if "consumer spending rises substantially." There is no indication, the forecast says, of a return to full employment. Government spending—federal, state and local—it notes, has slipped an annual $11 billions since mid-1953 and is expected to drop further in '55.

When they talk privately, officials of the Eisenhower administration express even greater confidence than they do in their public pronouncements. They can see nothing that will interfere with the present high level of prosperity through 1956. This is, of course, on the assumption that President Eisenhower will be successful in steering a course for peace as he has undertaken to do.

These confident men brush aside the doubts and reservations about full employment. They talk about the natural expansion of the economy which will produce more jobs in the months ahead. And they point to factors such as the great new highway program projected by the President.

In economic forecasting there has always been a sort of broad division between the optimists and the pessimists, the division being often one of temperament and politics as much as economics. At the present moment the pessimists must peer into the distant future, although among them are those who predict that if the economy merely stands still new workers coming into the labor market in the current year will increase the total of the unemployed to 4,000,000.

AUTOMATION

These same long-range viewers-with-alarm are also concerned over technological unemployment. The latest word is "automation," a new and advanced production technique that relies heavily on electronic devices to replace workers. According to a report to the UAW bargaining conference in December, a Ford foundry and engine plant at Cleveland is now equipped to turn out the same production with 10,000 men where formerly 23,000 were on the assembly line. Eventually 200,000 men will be able to "match the present output of the million UAW members in the automobile industry." Therefore, the argument goes, a guaranteed annual wage and later a shorter work week are essential to insure sufficient purchasing power to buy the products of these "automated" plants.

But such considerations are for the more remote future. The mood of the present is to enjoy prosperity while it lasts. To most people living under the uncertainties of our age 12 months or 18 months seems like a very long time.

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IN THE EDITOR'S MAILBAG

Good and Evil

SPRINGFIELD (To The Editor)—This is a word picture of people's doings before the flood: "They sat down to eat and drink, then rose up to play." You know what happened. Only eight persons escaped the flood. Later, Sodom sinned and it was burned and buried in brimstone and ashes. Three persons escaped; you know the story. In our days it is plain to be seen that many, many people are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; they want one more dance in spite of the flames and the flames are getting more visible. The carnal mind is death.

We are a pleasure-seeking, luxury-loving people. You have a chance to be carnal, or spiritual; godly or ungoldly; frivolous or sober minded; wise in the ways of salvation or wilfully ignorant; a believer in God or an unbeliever; you can travel down the broad way or you can walk upward in the narrow way; you can be pure or impure; holy or unholy; clean or unclean; wise or foolish. America needs you and your help as never before. "The love of money is the root of all evil." "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?"

Atheistic communism will never be stopped by silly dog racing with its unholy desecration of the Lord's day, but it will be stopped by prayer and faith in our God who has blessed us from our beginning. "The nation that forgets God shall be burned into Hell." We need God's protection now to keep the foot of the terrible, ungodly, atheistic, Red horde off our neck. Nations have been humbled in the past. It can happen again. How can dog racing help us spiritually? With God we are invincible. You can drift sleepily downward with the careless, luxury-loving, pleasure-seeking, God-forgetting part of modern America, or you can pick up a paddle and help to propel the ship of state back up the stream to the moorings where our forefathers kept it safe through their faith in God and simpler living. God help us to see it before it is too late. An "emotional appeal" will be more effective now. Let's stand with Venn and the editor of the Guard. No dog racing and there are other things we should stop doing.

W. W. WHEELER

Poetry

EUGENE — (To the Editor)—The following bit of nonsense was written after reading the Rev. Gottleib Schmitt's poem, "Nutshells," in which he expressed Regrets that he had eaten the nuts instead of planting them.

TOO MUCH SHADE

Supposing that Schmitt had of planted a nut
That sprouted and flourished and finally grew up
And shaded his house to such a degree
It kept out the light so he scarcely could see
His house grew so gloomy it affected his mind
And his mild disposition became most unkind
His wife she grew cranky, his children grew mean,
And then he grew worried, 'twas plain to be seen,
For his wife had accused him of wanton and greed,
And life was just misery, a misery indeed.
And now they do say he scarce stays to home
His feet have grown itchy, he longs for to roam
His wife has grown careless, she doesn't dress neatly,
And just for that reason he's went nuts completely.
He hardly knows whether his name is his own,
One day he was heard to lament and to moan,
"If only I hadn't of planted that nut,
That sprouted and flourished and finally grew up."

MRS. WILMER WALTON
1640 Beacon Drive
Eugene, Ore.

Bret Law

To the Editor:

IF I HAD ONLY KNOWN
(Retrospect of 1954)

If I had only known what you were thinking,
Or could have read your heart aright, I know
I would have shared your many joys and sorrows;
I would have read their message long ago.
If I had only known how deep your sorrows led you,
I would have been more careful for you dear,
I would have tried your life more pleasant
And caused those heart-aches all to disappear.
If I had only known the road you had to travel
And those many pit-falls you'd encounter there,
I know I would have tried to be more thoughtful
And to lend a helping hand, your load to share.
If I had only known the road you had to carry;
Could have read the grief and sorrow in your face;
I know I would have tried to share the burden,
And have added warmth and gladness in its place.
We see so many things we could have done for others,
When occasions seemed to be within our grasp,
We can always see them much more clearly
When the opportunity lies within the past.

BRET LAW

Son Transferred

EUGENE — (To the Editor)—According to your Question and Answer column of December 31st, Napoleon's son lies buried in Vienna. In 1953 my mother and I were in Vienna at the Imperial Tomb. We were looking for the burial place of Napoleon's son. We were informed that by order of Hitler his body had been removed to Paris.

QUENTIN LEE BREEN
Roosevelt Junior High

FREDERICK C. OTHMAN

Beaten-up Acres' Mortgage Gets Liquidated This Year

McLEAN, Va. — From where I sit, 1955, looks like it'll be a first-class year. It's even starting out kind of extra special.

One of the big moments in a little man's life comes tonight when I write the check that makes the final payment on the mortgage on my beaten-up acres. From now on Mrs. O. and I live there free. Nobody can take the place away from us, except maybe the tax collector.

This was Hilda's idea; pay off that mortgage as quickly as we can, said she. The accountant, who makes up my income tax forms (because I'm no good at arithmetic), urged that we let that mortgage ride.

It was a four percenter and every cent we paid in interest, he explained, was a tax deduction. Let the mortgage stay big and those deductions would bring us into a lower tax bracket and make that borrowed money cost us only about two per cent.

"So long as you live," he said, "You'll never be able to rent money so cheap."

FANCY OUT

He suggested that we invest it in something profitable. Or even that we spend it on luxurious living. He said why not buy one of these fancy new automobiles? Or even just two of 'em? They'd cost us very little in actual money.

My bride said she was sorry but she supposed she was an old-fashioned woman. She said she didn't understand this deficit financing idea and no amount of explaining would cause it to make sense to her.

She said she'd always been taught that people should pay their debts as soon as they could and a mortgage was a debt, wasn't it? The tax man said it was and then again—it wasn't. Mrs. O. didn't understand that, either.

So we kept on paying on that mortgage as much as we could afford (and a couple of times a little too much) and now it's done, Ge—finished, and as of now I fear we're feeling smug. No more payments. Gad!

FUTURE PLANS

All this, of course, isn't going to help the poor, old bank account. Mrs. O. has plans. For one thing, says she, that super-duper push-button kitchen of which we were so proud when we built it only seven years ago is out of date.

Those white cupboards, she says, are no good. They've got to be pink. So's the icebox and, she adds, it should hang from the wall, not stand on the floor.

The fancy stove that does practically anything but play phonograph records, she continues, is a relic, too. It should be in two parts. The oven should be built in the wall; the regular burners should be sunk in a handy counter top. The kitchen chandelier has got to go also, be replaced with indirect lighting and if all this comes to pass (you want to take any bets?) I fear I'll not save any money this year either.

NEW MOWER

The trouble seems to be that after 30 years of making stoves and refrigerators white and also square, the manufacturers thereof have taken a tip from the automobile makers. They're changing styles and changing 'em radically so that a lady will be discontented with her kitchen long before it begins to wear out.

Still and all, I suppose I'll enjoy a pink kitchen, too. The one thing I ask of 1955 is a rotary lawn mower that really rotes, without spewing small but vital pieces in the grass. Other developments of the year I hope to take in stride.

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