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Politics in an Eclipse

Candidates for public office this spring are finding it difficult to get the ear of the people in competition with the all-absorbing topic of war and its daily developments and their preoccupation with their own affairs. For the first time since 1929 the public is too busy to give serious heed to political cues for its economic ills.

Nor do the remaining five weeks of the primary campaign hold promise of much stimulation of interest, with the world keyed up in anticipation of the opening of spring offensives on the European battle fronts and Americans counting the hours until our own forces take the initiative in the Pacific. Once major movements get under way it will take a masterful persuader to make himself heard from the political arena.

Already the candidates, particularly the little known self starters, are showing signs of desperation and the seasoned campaigners are concentrating their efforts more on getting out their known vote than recruiting new supporters.

Seasoned and experienced observers are almost unanimous in forecasting a light vote of May 15, few raising their sights above the 40 per cent mark in either party. The general apathy toward all else except the war accounts chiefly for this, but there are other factors. Thousands of voters have joined the armed forces and, while they are eligible to cast absentee ballots, few will take the trouble. The same applies to other thousands of workmen who have been attracted to war jobs outside the precincts in which they are registered.

The fact that few of the war industry workers evidence any interest in the election is demonstrated in Portland where, despite the influx of thousands of shipyard hands, the registrations are materially less than they were two and four years ago.

Personal popularity and the possession of a well known name will be the most valuable assets of a candidate for public office this year, for the people neither have nor will take the time to acquaint themselves with the qualifications of the various contenders—if they ever do. All pledge themselves to full cooperation in winning the war and they probably mean it, and, whether or not they have had any hand in boosting taxes to their present high level, all are agreed that they must come down.

Talk as they will, the politicians can't drown out the war. And that is as it should be.

Hitler the Chief Enemy

The Oregonian's "front door ballot," which consists of ringing the door bell and asking whoever comes what they think on any subject, and tabulating the answers, reveals a big majority of those quizzed think the nation's war efforts should be centered against the Japs rather than the Nazis. That is natural perhaps for the Japs constitute a real invasion menace to the Pacific coast states. Hitler, however, constitutes an even greater menace to our Atlantic coast states as well as the nation.

Germany induced Japan to enter the war to divert our lend-lease supplies, materiel and men from Britain and Russia, and avert a second front in Europe by centering attack upon Japan. That is the Axis strategy and so recognized by the president, our general staff and military strategists as well as those of our allies. Japan has forced us to divide our fronts, but the main object of the struggle is the defeat of Hitler, after which it will be easier to take care of Japan and regain lost territory. The Axis strategem has failed, as shown by the arrival of General Marshall in London.

The Pacific will continue an important naval and aerial theater with large forces of Americans engaged defensively. But the chief land operations will be in Europe rather than in winning back the Philippines. Britain and Russia must be aided in this crucial period.

The defeat of Hitler means the collapse of Germany and Italy. With Russian aid and Siberian bases, Japan's dominion will speedily crumble. Russia is exhausting Hitler's man power as well as planes and tanks and sapping the morale of the Germans. War weariness has gripped his allies, Finland and the Balkans. The people of the occupied lands are seething with revolt. With the almost limitless supplies of tanks, planes and ships coming, air and sea superiority will make possible a successful Allied invasion, either through Italy or France and speed Hitler's doom.

Proves "War Is Hell"

The Yamhill Migratory Camp News Bulletin, published by the labor camp staff, March 6 issue, contains "Manager's Comments," by Raleigh Searle, from which the following is an excerpt:

"Your job and my job is to face the facts: facts, whether pleasant or not, and for a long while there are going to be more unpleasant facts than pleasant facts. It's going to be hard to turn from wasteful habits to frugal habits, requiring complete sacrifice of all luxuries and many of the things heretofore regarded as essential. But believe me when we become aroused, we will resolve to aid in the production of food, by having a garden or aid in caring for a community garden, and also resolving to put in every day possible working in the fields, helping plant and harvest the crops."

It will indeed be an unpleasant fact if these "workers" whom Uncle Sam is paternalistically providing with homes, food and conveniences as well as luxuries, have to really go to work and "turn from wasteful to frugal habits" and really "aid in the production of food by having a garden and working the fields; helping plant and harvesting crops." This is what many of them have studiously avoided hitherto, being freely supplied with food stamps. It will be a very real hardship for such to have to really work, but it all proves again that "war is hell."

Welcome, Mr. Cochran

Chosen by the board of directors to play an important role in the restoration of the Chamber of Commerce to the leadership it should occupy in community affairs, the city of Salem today welcomes Clay Cochran to the newly created post of promotional manager of the chamber.

It will be his job to interest and attract new industries to the city, encourage and assist others to expand, and to otherwise promote the best interests of the community.

It's a big job, complicated by the peculiar problems growing out of the war and the location of what will be one of the largest army training camps in the country in our dooryard, and the presence in the area of other concentrations of troops for whom proper recreational facilities must be provided.

Mr. Cochran comes to Salem with a record of several years of enterprising direction of the activities of the Corvallis chamber behind him and the reputation of being one of those chiefly responsible for securing the Camp Adair cantonment for this area. He is entitled to and assured of the community's undivided support in his work here.

Actions You Regret

By Beck



Sips for Supper

By Don Upjohn

The question of potato planting in the light of the moon or not is one that is troubling more than the usual number of people these days due to the acceleration of interest caused by the victory garden program.

We haven't had a chance to discuss this weighty subject with Bob Rieder, our county agent, but we remember a guy who once planted at the wrong time of the moon and had an abundant crop, which indicated that year, at least, that nature had gone to sleep and not kept track of the moon situation. Probably holding a hoe by the right end and handling same properly is quite an adjunct to the effect of the moon, one way or another.

We hear that our old friend Grover Hillman has half way pushed himself along the high road to our PT & BA and orders soup at the service clubs. He is still awaiting his clackers with considerable expectancy. Grover is of the high

Novelties In the News

(By the Associated Press)

No Disguise

Pittsburgh — One mustache was the price Shields Manson paid to become an American.

Manson, a native of Scotland, was clean-shaven when he filed his citizenship application and photograph. Since then he sprouted a mustache. To obtain his final papers, he had to look like the original photograph.

So Manson shaved his way to citizenship.

Long Distance Call

New Britain, Conn.—The Pulaski democratic club has devised a telephone plug for its members running for office in the municipal election tomorrow.

Anyone calling the club hears this: "Elect Dobrowski, Sadowski, Kotowski, Zapalka and Wojack—hello!"

Wants Air Conditioning

Denver—What would you say if several tons of gravel caved in on you? That is, if you could talk. The world came tumbling down on C. Edward Overholt while he was working in a 15-foot hole.

The rugged one passed it off with: "It was kinda stuffy down there."

Back to Normal Now

Kansas City—Patrolmen Art Bennett and Joe Carboneau just sat there and watched the cars creep by—some one put up a sign: speed trap ahead.

Then the cops, who don't have to show up at court today to prosecute speeders, looked up the boys who installed the sign.

"Thanks, pals," they commented. "All we wanted to do was slow them down."

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Kelly Says:

Procurement Division Does Strange Things

Story of Thrilling Voyage Not Revealed

Forest Service May Be Sent to West Coast

By John W. Kelly

Washington, April 13.—First of the new plywood training planes has been delivered at the Washington navy yard for experimentation, operation and, finally, to be ripped apart. Army and navy have been slow in adopting wood in planes, although in the first World War the British purchased millions of feet of spruce for fighting planes and have, in the present war, been taking cargoes of spruce from British Columbia.

Plywood (thin slices of wood peeled from a log and glued together) is at its best in the northwest. The industry has forged to the front in recent years and the best technicians in the business are on the payrolls of the scores of factories in the forest areas. They have made discoveries, such as the best method of treating the plywood with glue; they have invented a glue that can stand anything; the method of pressing the sheets together. Despite the "know how" of using plywood, the procurement offices have not considered awarding a contract to build wooden airplanes to any of these mills. The source of the raw material is ignored.

Funny Things Done

Procurement does such queer things. Eighteen million tent pegs were needed for the army. Tent pegs are of wood, nothing else. Did procurement make inquiry where the stakes could be purchased in the lumber markets of the north-west? It did not. The order was given to an "intermediary" in a large eastern city. "Intermediaries" are individuals or firms which have nothing, only a determination to grab a contract and make a commission. The intermediary shopped around and finally placed the order. Army wanted some wooden chairs and tables. Large manufacturing companies specializing in chairs and others in tables could not submit bids, for each carried a single line. Instead of breaking the order into two items, army gave the contract to an "intermediary" and the latter bought the chairs from one plant, tables from another—which the army could have done.

Some day the story will be released how a well known vessel on the west coast sailed out of a Pacific port into the south Pacific with supplies for General MacArthur in the Philippines. The story, of course, is the manner in which this ship ran the Japanese blockade successfully and discharged much needed material. Incidentally, the blockade runner was almost to the islands while people in the United States were asking why no relief was being sent to the boys in the foxholes of Bataan.

Two prominent citizens were called from life today, W. T. Rigdon and Douglas Minto, names dating back to the beginnings of things here. Mr. Rigdon was born in the year of the California gold rush and Mr. Minto's father was one of the most distinguished of all of the early Oregon pioneers who made his way across the plains in 1843. The sons of old Uncle John Minto carried on the name. Mr. Rigdon himself not only lived a lot of Oregon history but he left a valuable book on the subject.

Fishing season is pretty high here, a time awaited with interest by a lot of people but not much appreciated by the fish. In fact, we doubt if they even know it—yet.

Salem high school track team went to Eugene the other day and captured 26 out of a possible 35 points in the state championship tourney. This is interesting no end, inasmuch as Salem wasn't the host team and could have away without getting cussed out for being the same.

School Districts Can Accept Gifts

A school district is authorized to accept gifts of money as trust funds to be used for school purposes. Attorney General I. H. Van Winkle ruled today.

The purposes for which the money may be used includes promotion of the welfare of the pupils. Van Winkle said in the opinion requested by Rex Putnam, state superintendent of public instruction.

The gift, the attorney general ruled, may be of the capital or of the earnings from investments.

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In war production board there are 38 dollar-a-year men who are maneuvering to obtain control of foodstuff. Insiders predict that eventually there will be a food administration with an administrator, but the administrator will not be Herbert Hoover, despite his experience in World War No. 1.

Political Note—Wendell Willkie has been trying to out Representative Joe Martin as republican national chairman. Willkie was trying to organize his forces in the committee to displace Martin with Ralph Cate, republican national committeeman for Oregon, who is serving his first term as a member of the committee and who didn't make too good a job of his own state in the presidential campaign of 1940. This purging by Willkie flopped and Martin will continue to serve as national chairman until 1944. Mr. Willkie is not too strong with the republican leaders and, in fact, stands better with the White House than with the party.

Policies Poorly Formed

One of the deep dark secrets of the national capital is that underground efforts are being made to send the forest service to the far west. Most of the operation of the forest service are in the Pacific Northwest, just as the grazing division has its field of work in the west and has been sent to Colorado. If these scheme is successful the forest service will be sent to some city, not in California. The shift would make no difference to the rangers but would cause consternation in headquarters where the "liberals" wish to remain in the capital. Timber owners have no trouble with the field men, as they know their business, but there is growing dissatisfaction with top officials who direct the policy from the department of agriculture.

Land Calls for Labor Policy By Congress

Washington, April 13 (AP)—Chairman Emory S. Land of the maritime commission today called on congress to enact a national labor policy that would freeze existing management-labor relationships.

Testifying before the house naval affairs committee, Land said a voluntary agreement between management and labor would be preferable to legislation.

Then, under questioning by committee chairman Carl Vinson (D. Ga.), Land said he felt it now was the duty of congress "to stabilize relations, and permit employees and employers to stabilize production."

"The simplest and best thing to be done to increase production," he said, "is some form of freezing relationships—a stabilization of labor-management relations."

Land's testimony marked resumption of hearings by the committee on the bill sponsored by Vinson and Rep. Howard Smith (D. Va.), which would outlaw the closed shop for the duration, suspend the 40-hour work week and limit profits on war contracts.

Vinson plans to offer a substitute which would extend the basic work week to 48 hours and freeze closed shop conditions.

The labor hearings were resumed following an informal two-week recess of the house.

Land recommended that closed shop agreements already in existence be permitted to stand for the duration, and indicated that no new ones should be allowed.

"That would do away with agitation—agitation by labor agitators and capital agitators," he said.

Salem Sketches By Will Danch



"Wow! Whatta drive! It looks like Harry Gustafson has gotten rid of his slice since the shortage of balls began!"

Libelous To Call Official Anti-Semitic

Washington, April 13 (AP)—The supreme court upheld today a circuit court decision which was interpreted by opposing litigants to hold that under New York law a published charge that a public official holds anti-Semitic views is libelous.

The high tribunal divided 4 to 4, with Justice Jackson not participating. Under such circumstances, the action of the court appealed from is affirmed.

The litigation involved a suit brought by Representative Sweeney (D. Ohio), against the Schenectady (N.Y.) Union Publishing company, charging that he had been libeled by statements published in the Schenectady Union Star that he was opposing the appointment of Emory Burt Freed as federal district judge at Cleveland on the ground that Freed was a Jew.

Now the case goes back to the northern New York federal district court to determine whether, under principles enunciated by the federal circuit court in New York, the newspaper had libeled Sweeney.

In a brief filed with the supreme court the newspaper said the circuit court decision "interprets the article as charging respondent (Sweeney) with racial prejudice and upon that basis holds it to be libelous per se."

Sweeney's brief said "the sole and determinative question is whether the circuit court of appeals correctly stated the law in holding the words complained of to be actionable per se."

The circuit court ruling applied only to New York, since it was interpreting the law of that state. Other courts throughout the country have reached different conclusions in similar suits brought by Sweeney.

Dismissal of Sweeney's complaint was ordered by the New York federal district court. This was reversed by the federal circuit court, which ordered a new trial on the merits of the controversy.

Justice Jackson did not participate in today's action, which was taken without a written opinion. How the remaining eight justices divided on the question was not announced.

In a brief filed with the tribunal, the newspaper said that what the circuit court's decision "means in practical effect is that comment on matters of public interest, and particularly on public officials, is now—of all times in American history—to become a dangerous thing."

The newspaper contended that the reasoning of the circuit court

"The problem your are studying is vital; technology is the key to production; production is the key to victory. I trust that your committee will study the problem and help the government to formulate a wise patent policy to guide us toward that victory for democracy which we all so devoutly wish. I know that it will be motivated as all of us are during these critical years of the world's history by the highest ideals and patriotism. I am going to be following your hearings with a great deal of interest."

"It is fitting you should open these hearings on April 13, the birthday of Thomas Jefferson who was our first superintendent of patents. No surer guidance for your now—of all times in American history—to become a dangerous thing."

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