Capital Journal

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Too Much Haste

Speaking dispassionately and from the standpoint of cold logic, the armed forces of the United States are being demobilized too rapidly for the good either of the nation or the individual. Evidence of this fact is developing almost daily in the nationwide housing shortage, the congestion of home coming servicemen in Pacific coast ports, in the difficulty some veterans are experiecing in securing jobs and in the large number of casualties growing out of transportation accidents.

During the war any delay in the offensive tactics of our armed forces which might have resulted in the saving of a single American life was considered worth while and roundly applauded by the folks back home. But since V-J day there has been a loud and insistent clamor for speed in getting the boys back home and out of uniform at whatever cost. It is understandable that the men should wish to be freed of military duty and rejoin their families at the earliest possible date; that their fathers and mothers, wives and sweethearts and close friends should feel outraged at their detention in the service for more than a few days or weeks. Likewise it is easy to explain why congressmen and other elected officials should try to make capital out of delays by joining in the popular insistence for speedy demobilization. Neither is it any mystery why military officials should seek to humor an aroused public sentiment of such proportions, even though they knew that compliance meant disintegration of the armed forces at a time when it might be risky and with full knowledge of the hazards involved.

For weeks now both the army and navy have been mustering every available ship to bring men home from the wartime battle areas, piling them up at seaports on both the east and west coasts in numbers they knew the railroads could not handle expeditiously. The railroads, bent on doing their part, have, in the face of an acute shortage of manpower and rolling stock, performed a miraculous job, but at a cost of many lives in wrecks caused by the tremendous pressure under which they were operating with inadequate equipment. There is no question but what many of the planes carrying military personnel which have crashed were being used to augment other means of transportation in getting the boys home.

The machinery for taking care of the veterans and their families, which were being designed to provide jobs and homes in which to live, was not geared to the size of the task nor ready to function when peace came so suddenly. The orderly reconstruction plans we were formulating have been swamped with the deluge of unexpected demands which have smothered them. It is nice to know that the boys are home or well on their way. But the fact remains that a lot of them would have been better off and the nation in a far better shape to absorb them had their discharges been delayed a few more weeks.

Wards Offer Problem

In working out the details of their plan for remodeling and modernizing Salem's system of city government the mayor's special committee faces an unforeseen task in reconciling the traditional ward system of representation on the city council. The city's growth, both in population and areas, requires either a regrouping of the voting precincts which comprise the seven present wards, or an addition to the number of wards.

At present each ward is represented by two aldermen, making a council of 14 with a mayor elected at large and exercising the powers customarily vested in any presiding officer, including the right to vote in case of ties. But one of the principal criticisms directed at this system is that it is too cumbersome and unwieldy to function smoothly and efficiently; that it permits of too much buck passing and lacks centralized responsibility. It has often been suggested that representation of the wards be reduced to one alderman each, which would reduce the council to seven members, and adapt it to the city manager form of government functioning through a single administrative officer. Even a seven-man council is generally regarded as too large. Few cities operating under this form of government have more than five members of the legislative or policy forming body.

While changes in the boundaries of six existing precincts and the addition of three new ones inside the present city limits will not necessitate any new wards, the annexation of around 650 acres of business and residential territory just north of the city boundaries, which will likely be approved at the May election, will demand the creation of a new ward. Unless a change is made in the system of representation, this will increase the council to 16 members —too large to function successfully under any plan of government.

The most satisfactory results from the city manager or commission forms of government have been those where the ward system has been abolished entirely and all members of the council elected at large.

But the prejudice for sectional representation on the city governing body is too deep rooted in Salem to warrant an attempt to abolish it at this time. The most feasible plan to be followed by the committee in revising the charter is to reduce the number of aldermen to one from each ward and limit the number of wards to not more than nine, leaving it to the future growth of the city to force abandonment of the ward system entirely, or to reduce the number of wards through the regrouping of precincts.

Our Community Christmas Tree

Symbolic of "peace on earth," at least to the extent that all major warring nations are not engaged in combat, is the illumination of the huge conifer on the courthouse grounds. Lights were turned on at 9:38 o'clock last night and will remain through the holiday season.

Each year when the first "living Christmas tree" was bedecked in 1913, the Salem Cherrians have had charge of the yuletide ritual with the task increasing each year in pace with the growth of the tree. It is a far cry from the string of 50 colored electric lights that first year to the 950 red, blue, green and sprinkling of gold ones that appear this year, topped by a large blue star giving forth rays of hope and cheer for better years to come.

Equipment, particularly wiring, has been increased from year to year to meet the growth of the tree and stored during the war years, to be checked and patched to meet the requirements this year as replacement by new materials was impossible. Because of the dimout the first war year the tree was not decorated in 1941, remaining unlighted later in the war after the dimout was raised because of the need to conserve electric power.

Christmas eve of 1913 found the Salem Cherrians marching through the streets in white uniforms, following the official band of the organization. George Rodgers (deceased), first King Bing, made it known that there was a bag of candy and an apple for each child of the community with clothing and baskets of food for distribution to the needy. Choirs of various churches sang Christmas carols. The Rev. H. E. Marshall came 1000 miles from a vacation in the south to be the speaker for this first occasion.

Since that first Christmas eve a third of a century ago the illumination of the tree each year has had its influence upon the life of the community and as such has been accepted as a community contribution and custom to bring the spirit of the season to countless thousands rather than merely an activity of the Cherrians. All this was probably far from the thoughts of County Judge J. J. Shaw when he planted a little Norway spruce on the courthouse lawn in the early '80s.

What to Do

By Beck

Sips for Supper

By Don Upjohn

While Capt. McVay of the cruiser Indianapolis has been freed by the board of inquiry into his handling of the ship which was sunk by a Japanese torpedo or torpedos, we suggest now it might be a good idea to launch an inquiry into the act of the person responsible for bringing the Jap submarine commander into this country to testify at this inquiry against the captain of the United States warship. If it's reached the point where the word of a United States commander has to be put up against that of a lousy Jap it looks as though maybe it is time something is done about it. We wonder if the Jap got 10 cents a mile both ways for travel expense so as to also get him up in the congressman class?

As we stand waiting for the street lights to change under the new system which gives a chap time to do a lot of thinking it's quite natural to have that book, "Forever Amber" come to mind. At any rate it seems that long.

Item in our favorite paper advised that O. M. Pierson, while working at the Rainbow Inn on Commercial street was attacked by "some unidentified parson." A meticulous reader writes in and wants to know if the "parson" was unidentified how in the heck the reporter knew it was a parson? Well, anyway, we're pretty sure it wasn't any of the parsons around here.

Have received a letter from a chap in North Dakota who seems to be somewhat of an astrologist and he advises that the folks have been all wrong in fixing the date of December 25 as Christmas. He says his researches show that the nativity occurred on October 4, instead, and backs up the assertion by revealing there was a conjunction between Saturn and Jupiter in the sign of Pisces, that later these planets were reinforced by Mars and that these three planets were seen together in the east as if they were only one star which sent the Magi to Bethlehem. However, we've huffed and puffed too far along to buy Christmas presents now to change over. Besides, we doubt if the tree we have on hand would hold over until next October.

Some of the boys have started their annual pilgrimages to the coast to freeze and fish for steelhead. Some of them go over there and just freeze.

Novelties In the News

(By the Associated Press)

Short on Stamps

East Rochester, N. H.—Here's a shortage you can't lick.

The postoffice reported itself out of postage stamps.

Officials said heavy Christmas mail exhausted both the regular and an emergency stamp supply.

Dusty Wedding Witness

New London, Conn.—Alice Kripps Wiggins and Frank P. Hollis thought it would be nice to have someone serve as witness at their marriage even though none was required by Connecticut law. So they settled on Dusty, their black cocker spaniel. Justice of the Peace Jacob Sherb pressed one of Dusty's paws on an ink pad and then on the marriage certificate.

Truman Near Open Break With Southern Democrats

Washington, Dec. 21 (AP)—President Truman's relations with congress took on a new air of tension today, particularly among southern democrats. One of the latter, Rep. Gibson of Georgia, declared "an open break" now exists with the chief executive. Others, who preferred not to be quoted directly, echoed his remarks. Some of these sources also said they saw little hope for improvement in the situation when legislative work is resumed next year.

The note of discord was prompted by these three White House developments yesterday as members began heading home for the holidays:

1. Mr. Truman's news conference assertion that he would express himself forcibly soon on legislation calling for returning of the U. S. employment service (USES) to the states within 100 days. Several congressmen interpreted this as meaning either a veto or another verbal blast at congress is in the offing.

2. Release of letters to key lawmakers in which the president termed "unacceptable" a house substitute for the so-called "full employment" bill the senate has passed.

3. Issuance of an order authorizing the fair employment practice committee (FEPC) to investigate and report on employment practices in private industry until next June 30.

Mr. Truman's actions were termed "a political blunder" by Gibson.

Talking to a reporter Gibson added:

"It was just like waving a red flag in our faces. He should have left well enough alone. Now we have an open break, just like with the late President Roosevelt."

Xmas Candy Shy in Salem

Christmas candy? There isn't any. Or, more properly speaking, the very small dribble that has been spread out of the country is but a drop in the bucket to the tons of "satin mix," "commerical mix" and the old familiar "commercial chocolates" with their glucose centers that in years before the war were as plentiful as the demand required. "This year the situation is the worst since war curtailed the supply of sugar," one dealer declared. However, this grocer had been a bit more fortunate than others for he had a few pounds of really high grade pre-war mix. "It will soon disappear," he admitted since the candy was out in plain sight.

Another dealer said he had received but 90 pounds when in normal times a half ton was handled during the Christmas season. And that 90 pounds had been grabbed up quickly by customers who were on the lookout for merchandise of this nature.

Nevertheless, a persistent shopper can pick up candy of a certain type, entirely unknown before the war. There are small candy bars of an unfamiliar name, lemon drops, a few jelly beans and a small quantity of brightly colored gum drops. Dates are virtually out of the picture although figs and a few large sized prunes are available.

Nuts are in generous supply, but the price, like virtually every commodity has risen to unusual heights.

Covell Appointed Food Specialist

George Covell, Portland, has been appointed food specialist for the state department of agriculture's division of foods and dairies, it was announced today.

He was discharged from the army recently after more than a year's service. Before that, he was stationed in Seattle and Salem with the U.S. department of agriculture's processed foods division.

MACKENZIE'S Column

London, Dec. 21—I have just had my first private conversation with the head of Britain's new labor (socialist) government, Prime Minister Attlee—and I like him.

Now of course this is a wholly unorthodox way of beginning our article, but it's deliberate. Naturally it doesn't matter a pot of small beans whether I like Mr. Attlee—except for one reason—an interviewer's first and most important task is to size up his personage. During the instant between crossing the threshhold and shaking of hands, the reporter must have determined the character of his man. It's partly training but mostly intuition. I like Attlee because he looks honest.

Won't Be Quoted

The prime minister received me in his office at No. 10 Downing street—not the first time I've interviewed a premier there, by the way. There's the same rather Victorian setting of rich old mahogany and red plush, but the surroundings are blacked-out by your interest in the quiet, almost retiring man who is the leader of England's leftist swing. Bald, bespectacled the paleness of his face accentuated by a black moustache, he looks like an intellectual—and is one.

Mr. Attlee responded thoughtfully but freely to blunt questions. Because he has made it a rule not to give interviews for publication, I can't quote him here. However, it is permitted for me to give my understanding of the government's attitude on some major issues. So I'm going to mention briefly a few points in which readers of this column have expressed special interest.

No Regimentation

The labor party has come out categorically against any form of totalitarian government. But what about regimentation of the workers under the nationalization of industry such as is being inaugurated?

Well, I believe Mr. Attlee has said in effect on the floor of the house of commons that there will be no regimentation—that labor will be free to pick and choose its jobs without dictation by the government. In fact, should the government attempt to dictate, the trade unions would block it.

That is the attitude of the moderate socialist group headed by Mr. Attlee. I should be stating only a partial truth, however, if I didn't report that they might welcome an experiment in totalitarian government. They are a very small minority and the moderate majority feels that this minority is only the stub of a tail which can't wag the dog.

Warren Erwin Raps Lethargy

Portland, Ore., Dec. 21 (U.P.)—Warren Erwin, democratic member of the senate legislature and one-time candidate for congress, today flailed the democratic state leadership for failing to put democrats in congress.

He also predicted that Harold E. Stassen, former governor of Minnesota, would be the "man to beat" in the 1948 national elections.

Erwin labeled the recent democratic nominating assembly in Salem a "disappointing affair."

In an address before the Willamette Democratic Society, Inc., Erwin declared the party leaders had known for weeks "what was going to happen" and said "someone should be blamed" for the failure to turn out the necessary 260 voters required to nominate Bruce Spaulding, Salem attorney, as the party candidate for congressman from the first district.

Past Noble Grands Guest Mrs. Mason

Mill City—Mrs. Mae Mason, outgoing noble grand of the Santiam Rebekah lodge of Mill City, was hostess at an afternoon tea honoring the Past Noble Grands of the Mill City lodge.

There are 34 past noble grand members of the Mill City lodge, some of them residing at various points in Oregon and California who were unable to attend because of the distance.

Those present were Gertrude Mason, Blanche Syverson, Mable Knutson, Myrtle Hessaman, Susie Haynes, Mable Schroeder, Gladys Lake, Mel Robinson, Elsie Potter, Blanche Dean, Martha Bowes, Jessie Heath, Ruby Horner, Belle Hawkins, Nellie Ward, Marietta Smith, Lois Andersen, Ida Fleetwood and the hostess, Mrs. Mason.

2 Percent Dividend To Savings and Loan

Portland, Dec. 21 (AP)—As of December 31, all Portland federal savings and loan association accounts will benefit from a 2 percent dividend, directors said today.

President Guy E. Jaques said the total would exceed $29,000. It will be the 23rd semi-annual dividend paid by the association.

Santa and the White Bunny

Chapter 15

The Magic of the Zany Flower

When David threw the pepper shaker into the bowl holding the Zany flower the lid came off and the pepper showered every leaf. Then a remarkable thing happened! The Zany flower began to grow!

The stems grew tall and each leaf pushed out further and further until, in a moment, the amazing Zany flower was spreading over the banquet table, pushing aside the astounded gigmies and pressing against the windows and walls and ceiling of the room.

"Stop it! Stop it!" roared the king, leaping frantically from one side of the room to the other to escape the flower that now had grown larger than an oak tree.

"Throw it out!" screamed the gigmies.

But it was too late. No one could possibly have seized the now gigantic leaves and the huge, pushing stems. Just in time David and the gigmies rushed from the hall. The walls of the dining room crashed behind them and the ceiling came down on the richly laden banquet table.

"Into the courtyard!" shrieked the king, dashing out of the castle. "The whole building is going to collapse!"

Indeed, he was right. The monstrous Zany flower pushed down wall after wall as it grew and grew until it was pushing against the highest ceiling of the highest room.

The gigmies huddled in the courtyard and watched in disbelief as their beautiful castle crumpled and crashed before their eyes. Not till the last beam had fallen did the magic plant stop growing. Then it stood a huge and ugly tree swaying in the midst of the wreckage.

David ran to the little cage which held the white bunny. He tried to open it but he could not break the lock. He tore at the bars which caged the terrified creature but before he could loosen them the king gigmy snatched at his hands.

"You will pay a terrible price for this," screamed the king, yanking David to his feet.

"You did not keep your word," shouted David, though his legs were trembling with terror. "Break the spell which holds my sister or even worse things will happen to you!"

He did not know where he got the courage to speak this way and he surely did not know what further harm he could cause these evil creatures.

"But, surely," he thought, "Santa will come in time to save Mary."

But the gigmies, for the moment, had forgotten the bunny who was to turn into the hippopotamus in so short a time. Filled with rage they swarmed around David, urging their king to kill him, tear him apart, to throw him from the top of the mountain into the sea that roared on the rocks far below.

"No, no! We will have sport with him," declared the king.

"Good," exclaimed a gigmy. "Shall we turn him into a worm and have him crawl the earth for the rest of his days?"

"Better to change him into a mongrel dog so that boys will stone him wherever he goes," offered another.

"Or a rat who must live forever in a hole," suggested another.

David bit his lips hard to keep back the tears. His knees shook with fright as he expected any minute to be turned into a worm or a dog or a rat or something even more hideous. But he put his hands in his pockets and glared at the gigmies as fiercely as he could.

And just at that moment the hand in his right pocket fastened around a handkerchief and inside the handkerchief there was a hard lump.

"The star!" he thought. And he was filled with intense joy for he remembered the rainbow keeper had told him never to look upon the star or some terrible thing would happen.

He pulled the star wrapped in the purple spotted handkerchief from his pocket and held it toward the king. "You forgot your star," he whispered, too agitated to speak out loud. "Here it is. Open and see."

The king snatched it. "We'll have a look," he said. "And afterwards have our sport with the boy."

And with every gigmy peering over his shoulder, the king slowly unknotted the purple-spotted handkerchief that held the star.

Tomorrow: Never Look on a Star.

Fod Maison Rejoins Force

Col. H. G. Maison, who was deputy superintendent of state police before he entered army service with the national guard in 1940, will rejoin the department on January 1 as assistant to Superintendent Charles P. Pray.

In making the announcement, Pray said Maison's job will be to conduct the in-service training program for state police officers. This program was suspended during the war.

Lee Bown, deputy superintendent who succeeded Maison, will remain in his present job, Pray said.

Maison resigned as deputy superintendent when he went on active duty with the army on September 16, 1940. At that time, he was captain of the Salem company of the 41st division.

Maison was overseas during most of the war, seeing service in New Guinea and the Philippines, and rising to the rank of full colonel in command of a regiment of the Sixth division, a regular army division.

1842 Cards Sent Navy Hospital

A total of 1842 Christmas cards was sent out last week to the men at the U. S. naval hospital, Corvallis, by members of the Marion County Junior Red Cross, reports Mrs. Carmalite Weddle, chairman for this division in the Marion county chapter, American Red Cross. The Junior group had sent out a large number previously, too. Furnishing these cards was the major Christmas project for the Junior Red Cross here, the cards being used by the patients to send out as their greetings to relatives and friends.

Leslie junior high school contributed 1000 cards for the project; Parrish junior high, 700 of them; Pratum grade school, 11 boxes of the cards; Keizer school, block print cards; Rosedale school, a large number.

With the completion of the Christmas project, the Junior Red Cross now will work to furnish more of the educational boxes to be sent out to children of other countries, especially in those areas devastated by war. There are now 71 schools enrolled in Junior Red Cross work in Marion county, the organization being an enrollment for service.

Mayor Moves Again In Newspaper Strike

Seattle, Dec. 21 (U.P.)—Mayor William Devin will make another attempt today to mediate the Seattle newspaper strike, now in its 34th day.

Devin, just back from the annual conference of United States mayors in New York City, has asked publishers of the Post-Intelligencer, Star and Times, and officials of the striking (AFL) printers' union to meet in his office at 2 p.m. today.

The mayor has expressed hope that means will be found to end the International Typographical union local strike, which started November 18 with printers striking to back up wage demands for a $2.95 daily increase.

Tompkins Withdraws In Congress Race

Portland, Ore., Dec. 21 (U.P.)—Morton Tompkins, master of the state Grange, withdrew as a candidate for congress from the First district to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the late Rep. James Mott.

Tompkins' decision to stay out of the race leaves the field to Walter Norblad, republican, and Bruce Spaulding, democrat.

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