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4 Salem, Oregon, Tuesday, August 30, 1949

War Contract Frauds

The senate five-percenter investigating committee has turned up some interesting facts regarding methods utilized to secure government contracts through the connivance of officials in exalted positions who were silent beneficiaries in the form of rake-offs for the use of their influence with those in the seats of the mighty.

At the most the committee can only scratch the surface of what is and has been going on in our spendthrift government. Only petty deals can be publicly exposed, for the big profiteers and grafters are too clever to be caught without long, secret investigations.

Such investigations as those by the intelligence and law enforcement division of the treasury department, such as sent Capone, Pendergast and other super-crooks to prison for income tax violations, are necessary, for great criminals are too smart to be caught otherwise.

Quizzing of principals while exposing petty vicious practices for lining pockets through moral turpitude do not touch the big boys, though they are beneficial in exposures of the system employed. There is a big field that cannot be reached by public hearings.

For instance, in a recent report to congress, Lindsey C. Warren, controller general of the United States, charged that more than \$11.5 million has been overpaid to government war contractors through fraud and waste.

'Improper payments' of more than \$6,280,000 were 'induced by fraud,' and of this only the insignificant sum of \$107,882 had been recovered so far, Mr. Warren also stated. Further, he added, it was 'unlikely that any substantially approximate amount will ever be recovered.'

An additional \$2,340,000 was paid out to the contractors through 'improper or excessive payments not involving fraud,' he reported. In sharp language he told how he had endeavored to recover some of this by voluntary refunds. In most instances, government agencies that made the overpayments 'devoted their efforts to defending the excessive settlements instead of attempting to recover them. Voluntary refunds had reached \$474,717.'

The Warren report was based on a study of 9,195 settlements covering payments of 2,815 contractors of a total of \$1,165,000,000 for the termination of 26,484 contracts. It was in 'at least' 472 of these settlements that the \$6,280,000 was overpaid as the result of fraud, the report said. This excluded over-payments through 'error or carelessness.'

Mr. Warren blamed the situation on the contract settlement act of 1944, which permitted government agencies to settle contracts in full before they had been audited by any outside agencies—a law that invited collusion and fraud. It 'paved the way for improper payment of many millions of public funds through fraud, collusion, ignorance, inadvertence or over-liberality in effecting termination settlements.'

The facts have been turned over to the department of justice, which faces 'a herculean problem' in prosecuting frauds at this late day, 'all but impossible,' Warren concludes:

'There were numerous instances' where government employees were supposed to have accepted 'entertainment, lunches, dinners, liquors, etc., from contractors who, in return, seem to have been favored with government contracts and liberal termination settlements.'

Mayor Should Act to Avoid Time Mess

Salem will become time-happy next Monday unless Mayor Elfstrom acts in advance to put the city clocks on a unified basis.

The trouble lies with the shift back from daylight saving time, effective since May 16, to standard time. A council ordinance calls for the ending of daylight time early Sunday morning. However, already pending is an ordinance, sponsored by Alderman Gille, to extend daylight saving time so as to return to standard time when Portland does.

Alderman Gille's bill to extend daylight saving time to conform to Portland can not be acted on until Monday night. Portland and some other Oregon cities will not go back on standard time until September 25.

So, from early Sunday to Monday night, Salem will be in complete confusion over the kind of time the city has.

The Capital Journal has not favored daylight time for individual areas, because of the constant confusion that results. However, under the circumstances a special two-day continuation seems in order. The most logical way to correct the mess that is bound to result for the two days starting this coming Sunday morning is for the Mayor to act.

He can issue a proclamation asking city officials to remain on daylight time during the two-day period until the council decides. Although the proclamation would have no legal effect, it would set the schedule for city officials and this in turn would be followed by the city generally.

The legislature at this year's session authorized the governor to keep the state on standard time unless the bordering states of Washington and California changed to daylight saving time during the summer. However, a referendum has held up operation of this law. Furthermore, the law has been interpreted by some as only a declaration of state policy. This particular law will be voted on at the general election in November, 1950.

So there appears no other alternative locally, at the moment, except for the mayor to issue the kind of proclamation as suggested. Then the council can decide Monday night on the extension question, and the city generally will be spared additional headaches on juggling of clocks.

Gets Stolen Car Back Easy Way

Potsdam, N. Y. (AP)—Gerald Smith got back his stolen automobile the easy way.

One hour after the car disappeared from a parking lot, a man drove it to a garage where Smith was working and asked him to put some air in the tires.

The thief beat it when Smith started firing questions.

BY BECK

A Dog's Life

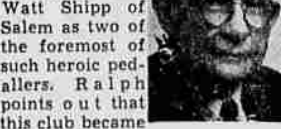


SIPS FOR SUPPER

The Pioneers

By DON UPJOHN

There's a nostalgic note in a release just issued by Ralph Watson, public relations consultant of the state highway department, in which he briefly recounts the history of the 'Century club,' an organization of cyclists around the turn of the century who had to do 100 miles in a day peddling on their bikes to be eligible for membership and he mentions Fred Merrill of Portland and Watt Shipp of Salem as two of the most heroic of such heroic peddlers. Ralph points out that this club became so strong that in 1901 the legislature enacted a bill providing for bicycle paths along the highways to be financed by an annual tax of a dollar on each bike. Each cyclist was given a tag to be securely fastened to his bicycle and anyone riding his bike after April 1 of that year without such a tag on it was subject to having his wheel seized and sold for the amount of the tax and costs. So, it was these old boys who were responsible for the numerous imposts and taxes, operator's license, motor vehicle license, gasoline tax, et cetera, which we all have to dig up these days. The simple idea of a buck a bike to build narrow paths along the roadsides has grown into quite a fat baby. We don't know how many contributed a dollar each for bicycle tags but last year motorists dug up well over half a million dollars to finance the bicycle paths of today.



Don Upjohn

Notice some workmen today brushing the dust off the streets. We note it's planned to try to keep this fantastic nonsense about daylight savings in effect on another prolonged spree of it after it is supposed to die September 12. Why not forget that and go in for something sensible, like an ordinance providing for dollar saving time, such as between now and Christmas making a dollar worth a dollar and a half, or some such thing. This no doubt would meet with universal approval.

Hold Your Breath—Los Angeles (AP)—Longshoreman Jose Venegas, 48, was only smoking a cigarette, but the judge gave him 180 days in jail. The reason: He was smoking aboard a ship, the Grace Line freighter Santa Juana, loaded with 7600 cases of dynamite, 2000 kegs of blasting powder and 14 cases of dynamite caps.

The immensely wealthy mahaja of Jodhpur has taken on another wife, a Scottish blond, he has advised the world. Maybe he got this one so he'd save some of his dough.

MacKENZIE'S COLUMN

English Channel Presents Challenge of Conquest

By DeWITT MacKENZIE

The annual parade of aspiring English channel swimmers is under way, demonstrating again that mankind's spirit of conquest—especially against the forces of nature—never dies. The difficulties of this channel feat are staggering. One can understand Leander's desire to swim the Hellespont.



DeWitt MacKenzie

I've sailed those relatively placid Hellespont waters on a starlight night, and they were entrancing. They would have been doubly romantic to Leander, with a lovely girl awaiting him on the far shore. But deliver us from the English channel!

It isn't merely a question of swimming the approximately 18 bee-line miles between France's Cap Gris Nez and Britain's Dover. The cold and inhospitable waters of the channel are filled with wicked cross-currents and tides which tear at the unhappy swimmer until he or she is compelled to cover not 18 but some 40 miles. But that isn't all. Frequently seasickness settles over the wretched contestant, who already not only is weary but chilled to the bone despite the heavy coating of grease used to keep out the cold. That seasickness is nature's last trick to defeat the swim, and often it works.

All of its hazards are known by aspiring swimmers, but still they keep coming, though few win through. It isn't so much a test of skill in swimming as a trial of strength and ability to withstand cold and seasickness. A person who is well padded with healthy fat has a better chance than does a skinny contestant who is likely to succumb to cold. Of course, it's because the channel presents such a challenge that swimmers of both sexes keep on picking up the gauntlet. They are impelled by the same urge that sends adventurers out to scale dangerous mountain heights, or to hunt fierce beasts in the jungle. It's what through the cen-

turies has made great explorers. And this spirit isn't characteristic of the 'tough guy' alone. As often as not you will find it hidden beneath the mildest of surfaces. Such a one was my friend and late C. E. Montague, distinguished British writer. He was a mild mannered, gentle individual and yet he was one of the few men I ever have known who appeared to be utterly fearless in the face of physical danger. At the outbreak of World War I the famous Montague was over the British enlistment age but he dyed his hair black, put on a sporty suit and told the authorities he was 35—which was true, only he forgot to say how much more than 35 years he was. Anyway he blinked and passed him, and he went into the front-line trenches as a private. Later he was given a commission and was attached to British general headquarters as press censor. It was there that I became acquainted with him. Montague used to seek out the most dangerous places he could find along the fighting front, not because of necessity but because he loved the thrill. He was impelled by the same urge which in peace times sent him out to scale precipitous mountain faces, or work his way up and down rocky clefts with his back against one wall and his feet against the other. He would have been a channel swimmer if he hadn't got a greater kick out of something else.

That's the spirit of private initiative and free enterprise which keeps the world turning. It's the spirit on which great nations have been built. When sturdy souls stop trying to conquer the English channel this will be a dull old world to live in.

WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

Marine General's Order Starts Rumpus on School

(Ed. Note—While Drew Pearson is on vacation, the Washington Merry-Go-Round is being written by his old Partner, Robert S. Allen.)

By ROBERT S. ALLEN

Washington—Now the marines seem to have caught the public-furor fever.

The famed fighting corps has been serenely out of the lime-light while army, navy and air force brasshats have starred nervously before sensational congressional probes. But Marine Maj. Gen. Graves B. Erskine has changed all that down in San Diego.



Robert S. Allen

He has succeeded in stirring up a furious tumult in the area. The scrappy San Diego Journal is gnashing its teeth at Erskine in boxcar headlines. County and state officials are blasting him as a high-handed martinet. Congressman Clinton D. McKinnon is demanding a public investigation.

Alarmed Defense Secretary Louis Johnson has rushed an assistant to the city to check on the matter.

Cause of the uproar was Erskine's order to use navy funds to set up a private grade school in Camp Pendleton, which he commands. Local and state educational authorities hotly contend this is contrary to California law. They also charge Erskine with being rude and autocratic.

He argues he has acted within his rights. To this, Dr. John S. Carroll, county superintendent of schools, retorted, 'General Erskine is nicking the public purse to set up an independent school system in a state whose constitution already provides a public school system. His action is basically un-American. The general apparently carries too much brass to waste his time on mere civilians.'

Adding fuel to the noisy clash is the fact that this is not the first time Erskine has rowed with local authorities. They crossed swords last year over a bus franchise.

Oceanside, which adjoins Camp Pendleton, established a bus line to serve families of the post living in the town. Under arrangements imposed by Erskine, the bus line operated in the red for months. Then, abruptly, he barred the municipal buses entirely and granted an exclusive franchise to an outside private company.

Erskine's legal officer at the time was Marine Capt. William H. Daubney. Two weeks later, Daubney appeared before the Oceanside city council as the civilian attorney of the private company. In this capacity, he offered to buy out the municipal system on condition his concern got a 10-year exclusive franchise.

NOTE—Chief credit for the administration's smashing victory on the power issue belongs to Sen. Lister Hill (D-Ala.), who masterminded the smart parliamentary strategy, and Sens. Robert Kerr (D-Okla.) and Lyndon Johnson (D-Tex.) who led the floor battle.

RENOVATED CAPITOL—Despite a protracted local building workers' strike, renovation of the senate and house chambers will be completed by December 15, the deadline date. Under spurring of capitol architects, the lost time has already been made up.

Also, Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge (R-Mass) who was critical of proposed changes in the senate chamber, has become convinced everything will be all right. Capitol architects explained the chamber has been remodeled four times since it was completed in 1859, and each time there were far-reaching changes. Lodge visits the chamber frequently to check on the progress of the work.

RAILROAD PEACE—Robert R. Young, perennial gadfly of his fellow railroad moguls, has undergone a change of attitude. He is on friendly terms again with his one-time rivals, the Association of American Railroads.

OPEN FORUM—Civil War Boys' Last Camp—To the Editor: I am enclosing a poem I wrote several years ago in anticipation of the day when the Civil War boys would hold their last camp. This was written in memory of my grandfather, who was a captain in that war...

LAST CAMP—They sat before the open fire together. Two life-long comrades, utterly at peace. While fragrant smoke from logs of oak and maple Was wafted up the chimney without cease. Once upon a time these friends had parted. When one had chosen the blue and one the gray, But difference of opinions was forgotten As they sat before the open fire this day. It didn't matter now that in the 'sixties One had fought for Sherman, one for Lee, For faded eyes no longer saw the visions Of falling men and charging cavalry. They sat there, side by side, their dreams forgotten, For, as a gust of wind blows out a lamp, An angel came and stood between them, And bade them pitch that last and final camp. It must have been just my imagination. As they sat there, old hands folded in their laps I thought I heard from far off in the heavens The angel Gabriel softly blowing, taps.

ROBERT L. GREER 475 Ratcliff Dr., Salem.

BY GUILD

Wizard of Odds



POOR MAN'S PHILOSOPHER

Dog Lovers Attack Ed For Piece on Pooches

By ED CREAUGH

New York, Aug. 30 (AP)—Some day, I do not guarantee when, this reporter is going to learn to keep his big yap shut. About dogs, anyway.

A few days ago I committed a piece for the papers to the effect that dogs are not what they used to be. I said they were somewhat on the sissy side nowadays, that they weren't getting in the headlines much, that the cats seemed to be taking over.

It seems some dog-dolers-on in Jackson Station, Mr. Chula Vista, Calif., and points between disagree. Also, they write letters. Nice letters. Suggesting a friendly sort of way that when I wrote my piece I was probably drunk, under ether, or in the pay of the international association of dog-catchers.

Some newspapers also reacted. The Utica, N.Y., Observer-Dispatch squandered half a page of perfectly good newsprint, with pictures, to demonstrate that sand was running out of my ears. Well, horrible as the thought maybe, I could be wrong.

A couple of the more constructive letters lead toward that conclusion. There is, for instance, the case of Jetty, reported by Dick Johnson of Tampa, Fla. Jetty is a Texan. (Why a man from Florida should be boosting a dog from Texas puzzles me, too.) Anyway, Jetty, a black mongrel, is one leap beyond a seeing eye dog. She's a hearing-ear dog. She telephone-listens for Mrs. J. D. Ingram of Dallas, who is hard of hearing.

When Mrs. Ingram's phone rings, Jetty cocks her head to the right. When it rings a second time, Jetty cocks her head to the left. The third time, Jet-

ty decides Mrs. Ingram hasn't heard it and starts barking like crazy. Mrs. Ingram can hear Jetty barking and she can hear on the phone. What she can't hear is the telephone bell. Jetty knows that. How? The man from Tampa doesn't say.

Then there is Pat, a collie. Pat came to live with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Douthitt of Darlington, Pa., as a pup. Fine pup, too. His favorite job was waking Douthitt each morning, and he sulked if his master got up unassisted. Well, one day Pat was missing. No one knew why. No domestic trouble. Accounts all in order. Just another case for the bureau of missing dogs. Seven years later a dog turn-patch squandered half a page of perfectly good newsprint, with pictures, to demonstrate that sand was running out of my ears. Well, horrible as the thought maybe, I could be wrong.

Experimentally, they took him home. He ran all around the place, sniffing, as if he weren't sure, either, but: 'The next morning,' Mrs. D. writes, 'I said to him, 'Pat, go upstairs and get Dick up.' 'He went charging up the stairs, barking his head off. 'He jumped right into the middle of the bed, in his excitement. 'We have never doubted for a minute after that that he is our pup, Pat.' All right, I'm convinced. Dogs are still wonderful. Nice doggie. Have a lamb chop. Have a piece of thigh. But if you have a dog which plays Rachmaninoff's prelude in C sharp minor, while conducting the band with his tail, do me a favor, will you? Don't let me hear about him.

Student Crashes Teacher's Door—San Jose, Calif. (AP)—Ernest Galindo, a student pilot, missed school by a city block and went calling, instead, on a teacher. He knocked her front door in with his airplane. Galindo, 23, was soloing over San Jose when his motor went dead. He picked the Roosevelt junior high school yard for a forced landing but overshot. His light monoplane went through Miss Thel Boyd's front door. The teacher was in the rear of the house and escaped injury. O'Connor has head wounds.

SPANISH BROUGHT ANIMALS TO INDIES—The Coming of the Horse—By OSWALD WEST—A definite link in the equine family tree that connects the earliest true horse with his North American ancestors, which lived just before the last ice ages, has been reconstructed by Dr. C. Lewis Gazin, a Smithsonian Institution paleontologist. His findings (1938) were based upon his examination of a great many fossilized skulls obtained by a number of Smithsonian expeditions to the Snake River basin near Hagerman, Idaho. The creature is known scientifically as Plesippus shoshonensis. As Dr. Gazin points out, Plesippus was not actually a horse, but represented a distinct genus of the equine family, no member of which is still extant. His bones are almost indistinguishable from those of the large African zebra of today. The Plesippus was extinct before the coming of the Spaniards. The early Spanish conquistadores and explorers brought horses to the West Indies, where they thrived and multiplied. This island stock was drawn upon freely for the exploring expeditions later carried on on the mainland. Cortez, Cordova, Narvaez, DeVaca, DeSoto and Coronado all looked to the island for horse flesh. These Spanish horses, while small in size, carried the blood of the Arabian, the Turk and the Barb. Indians impressed into servitude soon learned to care for, and