

Washington Digest

U. S. Presidents Respect Members of Fourth Estate

By BAUKHAGE
News Analyst and Commentator.

WASHINGTON.—In this post-election calm which has settled over the domestic political scene, many a vest, shirt, blouse, or slip in the capital conceals a palpitating heart.

What about my government job after the glad (?) New Year?

The regular classified civil servants haven't much to fear. They can't be fired without cause, and no matter how thorough a new administration's housecleaning may be, most of the furniture lands right back where it was before, although here and there, you may at first fail to recognize an old friend in a new slipcover.

Long ago most 100 per cent New Dealers in high places displayed the wisdom which they felt was the better part of valor and va-mooseed. Others assumed new colors. Some who had not been too careful previously to keep the right hand from knowing what the left hand was doing gradually began to grow ambidextrous and soon were able to write the lesson on the blackboard without exposing the wedding-ring finger.



Baukhage

There is however one class of permanent Washingtonians which goes on like the brook. But even individuals in this class may find the nature of their daily tasks differing slightly as administrations change. I refer, of course, to the Fourth Estate which now includes commentators (since radio newsmen as well as newspapermen are eligible to the National Press club), thus establishing at least a minimum standard of merit.

Naturally we who cover the White House always wonder what manner of man we are going to have to handle. While a new incumbent is learning the art of getting his name favorably inserted into a Washington dispatch or broadcast we have a chance to learn the care and feeding of the source of news which feeds the news to us.

Once Dewey had a bad reputation in this regard. But then, most candidates are suspect before they start, since it is taken for granted that they all are subject to the disease of presidentialitis which affects victims differently.

Coolidge, for instance, was perhaps least afflicted with this malady that attacks the strongest individual when he walks under the white-pillared portico of 1600 Pennsylvania avenue to stay for at least four years. And Coolidge was about as rich in front page material of his own making as the clam he sought to emulate.

I remember a remark William Hard, now an editor of Reader's Digest, once made to me:

"Cal never seemed to suffer from presidentialitis" (Hard invented the word, I believe)—"he is the only occupant of the White House I know of who, when he lay down to take his daily siesta, didn't think when he awoke that the world had gone to pieces."

No newsman, except toward the last, could complain about Franklin Roosevelt's news conferences. Regardless of what one might think of his views, his news was always printable. It will be hard to produce another such.

The heavy majority of those who traveled with Dewey on his campaign trips had nothing but praise. But a few of those who had experienced his press conferences, and had enjoyed—or otherwise—his press relations in earlier days were cynical.

"Wait," they said, "until the honeymoon is over."

I found it hard to get concrete predictions. I myself had seen a vast improvement in Dewey's press relations over the years since his first campaign. And I see no reason why a person can't and doesn't learn.

On the train, whenever he could (and that is the way most of the correspondents described it—"could," not "would"), Dewey went into the press car attached to his train, chatted individually with the fellows, learned to connect names with new faces, answered questions, and at least appeared to be frank and free with his "off the record" remarks concerning Republican doubts and fears, real, imagined, or assumed. He sometimes took time for a game of chess "with the boys."

There was, however, much less informality in the atmosphere of his entourage than there was in Truman's. The Dewey affair moved so smoothly that a creek or two would have been welcome. Like the farmer in the poem "so even ran his course of life the neighbors thought it odd."

There was one man who made press relations on the Dewey campaign train a joy—well, two men. One was Jim Hagerty, trained reporter himself, who is expected to

be the public relations secretary in the White House. The other was a man who probably won't be in Washington at all—Dewey's veteran political adviser, Edwin Jaecle.

There was no conflict between the two, a rare situation indeed. Jaecle supplemented Hagerty.

This would seem to contradict the sharp charges of Warren Moscow, author of "Politics in the Empire State" which came out this fall. Moscow, one of New York City's top-rank political reporters, who also covered Albany, claims that Dewey shut down news sources during his governorship in an attempt to thwart any criticism. That he even tried to lay down a press conference rule that a question was "off the record," thus covering up the fact that an answer had been given not to be made public or had been refused. Moscow asserts that Dewey wanted to be the oracle, the one and only, the sole source of what should be reported.

If that was true earlier in Dewey's career, the dapper New Yorker who has been widely-touted of late for being able to take advice and for being able to pick people who know how to advise, has had some good advice. If he should revert to methods such as Moscow describes, two things would happen: first, he would suffer; second, he would fail in his attempt, and the effects of the effort might be permanently disastrous.

Some presidents have tried to conduct government by disturbing the "checks and balances." It never works long and the freedom of the press is one of the checks—a principle that is part and parcel of the American concept of government.

A notable example of how the very weight of the news, legitimate news, breaks through any wall, was the case of the financial conference called by President Hoover just before the end of his regime—1931, to be exact. Hoover had no intention whatever of deceiving the public. He simply didn't understand that you couldn't have a gathering like that without making an adequate explanation of some kind. At any rate just a bare announcement was issued.

Free Press Is Best Check

The next day at the White House news conference, Hoover said he would not comment on the meeting (though the notice had appeared in the papers), and that he considered it the duty of the press, not to print anything which was only partially true, or else incomplete.

Richard Oulihan of the New York Times, one of the most beloved and respected correspondents who ever covered Washington, and an outstanding leader, made a typically dignified, but very emphatic protest then and there. He said it was out of the question to ask the reporters not to get as complete a story as they could. It was pointed out by another well-known reporter that the press would have to have the story, and the reporters would have to get it, regardless of the President's wishes.

The President refused at first, but the reporters insisted. Finally he agreed to give out an official statement after the conference.

I have known other examples of short-lived gag rules. One which Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau tried to establish on the treasury. He issued an order that none of the treasury officials could talk with newsmen. He might as well have told reporters not to read the market quotations. It failed. Legitimate news continued to be reported as it always had been.

Franklin Roosevelt had, at one time, at least 80 per cent of the newspapers "against" him. He knew he couldn't change their editorial views by giving out news to their representatives. He also knew that if he tried to withhold news, the American people would be far less likely to support him. And because he understood the meaning of the freedom of the press, he wouldn't have thought of trying. And he knew how to make it appear as favorable as possible.

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

By DREW PEARSON

Famous Sons Arrested
CHIEF Justice Fred M. Vinson is not going to Moscow and his name, therefore, will not become a by-word with the Russian people. Down in Virginia, however, his name is so well known that it caused a Virginia traffic cop to rub his eyes.

Among the students at Washington and Lee university happen to be the grandson of a late famous Virginia senator, the great grandson of a famed Civil War hero, and the son of a chief justice. All three were riding together near Lexington, Va., when arrested for speeding.

The policeman, proceeding to book them, asked their names.

"Robert E. Lee IV," replied the first student.

It happened that he was telling the truth. The traffic cop looked up quizzically, but wrote the name down, then asked for the next name.

"Carter Glass III," was the reply.

The cop wrote the name down, then queried the third student.

"What's yours?"

"Fred M. Vinson Jr.," replied young Vinson.

"Then my names' Napoleon," exclaimed the flustered cop, and let all three boys go.

NOTE—Mrs. Vinson, wife of the chief justice, suggested to her son that after graduating at Washington and Lee he might want to take his law degree at Yale. A Yale degree, she intimated, might give him a better springboard into the legal fraternity. Replied her son: "Little Old Center college (Kentucky) was good enough for dad, wasn't it?"

Taxes Go Up in Smoke

Brass hats have kept it hushed up, but the air force wasted thousands of dollars taking worthless movies of the Bikini atomic-bomb tests. For some unexplained reason, the job was turned over to inexperienced officers.

Brig. Gen. Paul Cullen, then a colonel, had charge of the air force camera crews at Bikini. His masterpiece was a glorified, technician training film called "Able Baker Day," which he sent over to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to be edited. But even after the Hollywood experts added their touches, the picture was such a flop and so hostile to the army and navy that it couldn't be shown.

Instead of the top brass ordered all the extra prints burned, and only two copies kept for the files. Since Cullen had gone ahead and ordered 48 prints, this made an expensive bonfire—paid for out of the taxpayers' pocket. Cost of the film alone that went up in smoke: \$86,000.

Since the atomic energy commission had called upon all the armed services to cooperate in filming the Bikini explosions, the navy was working on a similar picture at the same time Cullen was making "Able Baker Day." But Cullen was in such a hurry to finish the air force picture first and scoop the navy that he sent an air force technical adviser under the pretense of helping the navy, though with secret instructions to obstruct and delay the navy picture.

The air force also made another \$50,000 technicolor extravaganza of Bikini, called "Phantom Wings." This smelled so that it also was never shown again.

It was produced by Maj. James L. Gaylord whose total photographic background, up to that time, had been as a personnel officer.

And here is how the air force has rewarded the two officers who wasted so much of the taxpayers' money: Cullen was promoted from colonel to brigadier general, and Gaylord—in spite of his first flop—was placed in charge of filming the recent super-secret tests at Eniwetok for the atomic energy commission. He was supposed to have finished 24 films by October 1; so far, has delivered only five.

U. S. Army's Prisoners

Unfortunately, several thousand U. S. prisoners still remain in U. S. prisons for desertion, crime, or violation of discipline during the recent war. Even more tragic, some prisoners have suffered "permanent physical impairment" in solitary confinement. This was confessed in a recent circular issued by the air force inspector general.

Meant only for the eyes of the top brass, the circular warned grimly that regulations governing the treatment of these prisoners were "not being complied with."

Farm Topics

Poultrymen Advised To Retain All Pullets

Culling Hens Is Means Of Increasing Returns

To assure top poultry profits during the winter season, keep an all-pullet flock. Pullets lay in the fall and winter when egg prices are high. At the same time, old hens are going through their fall molt and consuming 25 to 30 pounds of feed while producing no eggs.

In the spring, when old hens resume laying, egg prices are down, thus necessitating a very heavy layer to pay the \$1.50 feed bill which was amassed during the winter months.

Old hens may be sold at once or they may be culled individually as they go out of production. A weekly check of the old hen flock will enable the poultryman to cull out the loafers.

If an old hen flock is maintained over the winter months, separate housing for pullets and old hens should be provided for best management and disease control.

As another step in culling the poultry flock, old roosters also should be eliminated. They serve no useful purpose and eat lots of feed.

Some pullets also may have to be culled if the flock is to be maintained at the desired size for profitable operation throughout the winter. In this case, only the best potential layers should be retained. A good ready-to-lay pullet is one that is smoothly feathered, plump in body and carries richly pigmented shanks.

Pullets so developed can be brought into 50 per cent egg production without crowding by the time they are six months old. Pullets, however, never should be forced into high production during their first two months of laying.

Innovation for Farmers



Marking another step forward in the advancing standard of living for the American farmer, the first radio designed and built expressly for use on farm tractors now is on the market.

The new radio, introduced by a Kansas City manufacturer, gives the farmer access during his working hours in the field to whatever he desires in the way of entertainment, news reports, crop information and weather forecasts.

Equipped with a universal mounting, this set is readily installed on any make or model farm tractor. Cabinet and chassis are weather-proof and shockproof. Eight tubes, including two rectifiers, a superheterodyne circuit and telescope antenna comprise the power unit.

Fertilizer Is Valuable For Succeeding Crops

Farmers who think fertilizer costs should be charged off in one year are overlooking carry-over assets that pay long-term dividends in bigger crop yields, according to Middle West Soil Improvement committee.

A good feed of fertilizer gives the soil a backlog of plant nutrients that benefit succeeding crops. Well-fertilized legume-grass crops in any good soil building program leave behind them important carry-over values. Legume-grass mixtures fed with plenty of phosphate and potash will add to the soil's organic matter and build soil structure. They will improve tilth, drainage and ventilation.

Because of these carry-over benefits, agronomists recommend a minimum of three years for charging off the cost of fertilizer applications.

Thorough Check of Silo Will Prevent Wastage

Silos will help to assure good use of this year's bumper crop of corn-stalks. To prevent waste of the ensiled crop, however, the silo must be in good condition.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

Do not use shellac on a window sash. It is not recommended for wood which is exposed directly to sunlight.

Crackers spread with peanut butter and broiled until bubbly make excellent appetizers.

Remove any meat that is to be broiled or roasted from the refrigerator and let it reach room temperature before putting in the oven. It not only saves fuel but results in a better flavor.

You can handle thorny plants easier by getting a pair of ice tongs and using them instead of your fingers.

Beware Coughs From Common Colds That HANG ON

Creomulsion relieves promptly because it goes right to the seat of the trouble to help loosen and expel germ laden phlegm and aid nature to soothe and heal raw, tender, inflamed bronchial mucous membranes. Tell your druggist to sell you a bottle of Creomulsion with the understanding you must like the way it quickly allays the cough or you are to have your money back.

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