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A Need for Morals

Oregon's newspapers in recent weeks have carried a number of stories about the high divorce rate in Oregon, the number of broken homes, absconding fathers who fail to support their children — and so on and so on.

There are many facets to this situation. There is the enforcement problem, for failure to support a family is a crime. There is the tax problem, for public welfare funds must be used to support mothers and children whose fathers fail in their responsibilities.

BENEATH it all, it seems to us, there is a question which is essentially one of moral values.

Our civilization still adheres, on the face of it at least, to a system of morality which is an outgrowth of the puritan era, reinforced by the Victorian age.

And if America is slowly, by default, abandoning a code of morals to which it has held for most of its existence, what is to take its place?

THE two great wars of the past 40 years and the strain resulting from the threat of the atomic and hydrogen bombs, undoubtedly have something to do with this breakdown of the moral fabric of society.

Perhaps the individual, the little guy, the confused, unhappy, bewildered joker who no longer is quite sure what is right and what is wrong, can blame his world for the mixed-up motives which lead him to "run away from it all."

Perhaps this confusion, on top of the normal stresses and strains which beset every family, no matter how rational and well-balanced, causes him to crack.

BUT society still owes this little guy something. Some rather interesting, though tentative, experiments along these lines have been popping up lately. In Portland, the "Pacific Northwest Conference on Family Relations," was conducted recently.

THEY may help. Other experiments, similar and more extensive, may do much to patch up dissolving marriages, or, better, to prevent bad ones from being contracted.

But until America can find its way to a set of basic values — either those of our forefathers, or those which may develop in response to society's need for moral guideposts — it seems to us we will have the confused and bewildered, like the poor, always with us.—E.A.

Mental Hospital Delayed

A dispatch from Salem reveals that the Ways and Means committee (which handles all appropriation measures for the state legislature) has tabled a bill calling for the expenditure of \$3,000,000 for a start on a new mental hospital in the Portland area.

IT wouldn't be strictly accurate to say that this action runs counter to the mandate of the people — when, last November, a vote of the people on the question was taken, the proposal was modified by a "when-the-money-is-available" provision.

THE committee, in voting to table the proposal (thus putting it on ice as far as this session is concerned, unless members reverse themselves), pointed out that the money simply is not available.

It's available, all right — in the pockets of the taxpayers, who are also the voters who approved the hospital. Extracting it is the thing that's causing all the difficulty.—E.A.

Vote Due on Emergency Clause

If you are a registered voter, you'll get a chance to vote on an important constitutional amendment at the general election in November, 1956. Senate Joint Resolution 4 passed the last hurdle in the Oregon legislature last week, and will go on the ballot next year.

AT present, the legislature is prohibited from putting an "emergency clause" on tax legislation. This means that any tax measure cannot go into effect immediately. It also means that any group can sign a referendum petition, and uphold the measure until the following general election.

THE proposed constitutional amendment would permit the legislature to put the emergency clause on tax legislation, putting it into effect immediately.

OPPONENTS of the measure say it deprives Oregon voters of a chance to vote on tax legislation. It doesn't. They can still vote on it, at the same time as before. But in the meantime the law would be in effect — raising needed revenue and showing citizens whether or not they like it.

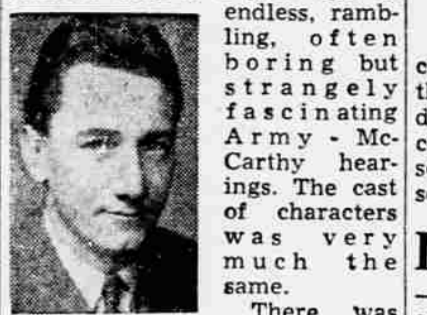
The present system allows a small minority (5 per cent of those who voted for supreme court judge in the previous election, or actually about 1 per cent of the voters, according to some estimates) to hold up legislation which the majority might well approve. And they thus deprive the state of needed revenue in the meantime.

Sponsors say it will permit the legislature to legislate taxes, which it cannot now do.—E.A.

Matter of Fact

WHO DID PROMOTE PERESS? Washington — There was something strangely ghostly about the recent hearings, before what used to be the McCarthy Committee, on that earth-shaking question: "Who promoted Peress?"

A visitor to the hearing suddenly found himself transported back in time to a year ago, to endless, rambling, often boring but strangely fascinating Army-McCarthy hearings. The cast of characters was very much the same.



There was Sen. McClellan, and the handsome Stuart Symington, looking bored; and Mundt, looking as much as ever like a melting mushroom; and Irwin, of South Carolina, every inch the judge. And of course there was McCarthy himself, mangier and fatter than last year, and somehow at the same time visibly deflated. And there were the familiar witnesses — Gen. Zwicker, and Army counsel John Adams, and Army Secretary Stevens.

THERE WERE moments of rather nostalgic drama, especially when McCarthy asked one of his brilliantly loaded questions, in his ponderous, threatening, oddly halting voice. But somehow the show never really got off the ground. There was even a sort of sadness about it, as there is about most dramatic failures — perhaps especially because this was so surprisingly pale an imitation of what had gone before, and everybody is a year older so surprisingly quickly.

And yet there were certain lessons to be learned from these hearings. Take the case of Army counsel John Adams. A year ago, the Adams face — at least the upper half of it, as it appeared in the famous picture of him leaning his nose on a chair — was one of the most famous in the country. Yet at the Peress hearings Adams looked even more ghostly than the rest of the cast — almost disembodied. And with good reason.

THE PERESS hearing is the Adams swan song. As of April 1, he will no longer be counsel of the Army. It is not certain whether he resigned or was fired — at any rate, it was made clear to him that he was "too controversial," and that his departure would be welcomed.

Adams will merit a footnote in history. The detailed record which he kept of the pressures brought to bear on the Army by McCarthy, Cohn & Company, started McCarthy down the long road he has travelled since. But for present and practical purposes, Adams is "a poor player, who struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more." The poor player is worried. He has been in military or government service since 1942, and in the circumstances it is not easy to find a job. There is no job on the horizon. Adams is intelligent, and no doubt he will land on his feet. Yet his fate should serve as a warning to all government servants under no circumstances to show any imagination or initiative, lest they be labelled "controversial."

WHAT WAS not interesting about the Peress hearings, however, was that they were so boring. The caucus room of the Senate Office Building, full to bursting a year ago, was two-thirds empty, and the press tables had yawning gaps.

One reason was that the hearings were a McCarthy show, and the sullied demagogue is not really interesting any more. A year ago most of the Senate feared McCarthy — most of the country too, it often seemed. Now (thanks in part to the about-to-be-unemployed Adams) McCarthy is boring rather than frightening.

But there was another reason why the Peress hearings aroused so little real excitement. The hearings had to be held, as insurance against McCarthy's screams of "whitewash." Yet long before the hearings started, everybody concerned knew the real answer to the question, "Who promoted Peress?" The answer lay, of course, in the endless, tedious testimony about how the "form 390" was not in the "201 file" but in three other places where it ought not to have been — and so on.

NO SINGLE individual, but the army system — impersonal, massive, ponderous, a law unto itself — caused the Peress mess. Every army in the world has its bureaucracy. But none can even begin to compare with the American army, in mountains of paper work, miles of red tape, and rich profusion of typewriters and mimeograph machines.

It might have been a lot more useful to ask, indeed, why it was necessary for as many as 60 high and medium officers and officials to concern themselves with the firing of a left-wing dentist. The answer might reveal a lot about why we must recruit more than 60,000 men for every division in the field, while the Russians need only 22,000.

Meanwhile, it is at least reassuring that the Peress hearings

By Stewart Alsop

were so tedious, in their ghost-like way. For the very boringness of the hearings suggests that the country has recovered a lot of its sanity in the last year. (Copyright, 1955, New York Herald Tribune Inc.)

In the Day's News

By FRANK JENKINS

In this space Sunday I was discussing fabulous Las Vegas. I think I'd like to continue the discussion today. When you come to think of it, Las Vegas is something new in the American scene.

IT HAD its beginnings in the characteristic American way — in a boom. The boom arose out of the building of the first big Western dam.

They named it Hoover dam, after a great American engineer President. There came then the New Deal, one of whose objectives was to smear Hoover. So they changed the name and called it Boulder dam. Came, after many years, a Republican congress, and the name was changed back to Hoover dam.

I think we're all glad by this time that the name was changed back to Hoover, who — through the years when his name was made a political by-word and a hissing — conducted himself as a patriotic American and in doing so won the respect of everybody. It is quite fitting, I think, that this great engineering achievement should bear the name of a chief executive who is one of the world's great engineers.

BUT let's get back to Las Vegas and its beginnings. The building of Hoover dam brought a tremendous boom. At the dam site, the Nevada side of the Colorado was more accessible than the Arizona side.

Besides, American booms are raucous affairs and Nevada's somewhat unusual legal climate lent itself nicely to the things that grow up around boom sites where money flows freely. Gambling, for example.

THE boom lasted a long time — for huge dams in mighty rivers aren't built in a day. But, in the course of time, it began to fade. Meanwhile, quite a community had grown up at Las Vegas — and nobody wanted to see it go back to the status of a desert ghost town, such as Tonopah and Goldfield and Rhyolite and so many others.

Meanwhile, also, Las Vegas had become a somewhat bawdy rival of older and more dignified Reno. Instead of wilting with the passing of the construction boom it continued to thrive as an entertainment spot. It was about that time that the Vogue of the Desert began to get its start in a big way. Las Vegas had plenty of desert, and it capitalized this asset shrewdly. As the free and easy spending construction workers dwindled, their place was taken by free and easy spending tourists who came seeking thrills.

And, as sports clothes began to predominate on the streets over the less glamorous garb of the construction workers, a new era was born in Las Vegas. Fabulous caravanseries were built to house the thrill-seeking newcomers. Whereas, a simple shower-head at the end of a water pipe had sufficed for the construction staffs when they needed a bath, the newcomers clamored for swimming pools around which they could display themselves in fancy clothes — in the desert sun.

AND, whereas the hard-rock men and the cement hogs and the rest of the dam builders had been content in the way of entertainment with burleyeuc of the ruggeder sort, these new arrivals wanted something more high toned.

FURTHERMORE, it was discovered that after these dudes had watched a top-flight floor show at the dinner hour they were inclined to stay up the rest of the night bucking the tiger in the casinos.

That completed the metamorphosis of Las Vegas from a construction camp honky-tonk to a combination of high class American night spot — which outbids Broadway and Hollywood for entertainment talent — and the type of European gambling casinos that line the Italian and French shores of the Mediterranean.

FROM there on out, Las Vegas had it made. For years it has been building luxury hotels for the big shots and fancy motels for the rest of us at a dizzy rate, but it can't keep up with the demand. It's still building them just as fast as ever — and no matter how fast it builds the crowds keep coming faster.

SHUCKS! I started out to describe Las Vegas as an economic contradiction — a spot totally lacking in what the economists term NATURAL RESOURCES that goes on booming endlessly while thumbing its nose at economic laws. But I'm running out of space. I'll have to put that off until tomorrow.

An average American 50 years old can expect to live to 75 years, according to present life expectancy estimates.

Is That So? Big Four Talks Seen Moving Closer; China Showdown Said Closer

By Eugene Burns, Ranger-Naturalist

Did you know that... some sea catfish eggs measuring half an inch across are the largest fish eggs in the world? Some birds can change their eating habits drastically during the year. Adult partridges, for example, eat a good number of insects — that's meat — when the young are born and before; during the summer they subsist largely on grains — barley is their favorite; and in winter they are virtually vegetarians, living almost wholly on the tips of weeds and grasses.

Some crabs have "breaking joints" where injured legs and claws are normally snapped off to prevent bleeding to death. Then new ones are grown.

The barracuda, a fearsome fish, herds its prey. The herded fish may number 150 or more and consist of gray snappers, yellow tails, parrot fish, grunts, angel fish and cockeyed pilots. The rate of a rattlesnake's rattle depends upon the animal's temperature. At 100 degrees Fahrenheit it will rattle six times as fast as when just above freezing.

Most snails are both male and female — hence, the correct gender is "it."

The beak, skull, feet and all other bones of a 25-pound pelican weigh only 23 ounces.

The short-tailed shrew is the only warm-blooded mammal with a poisonous bite. Large size in mammals usually suggests a long life but... an 80-ton whale probably dies of old age when it is about 20. The male whidah bird has such a long tail that on dewy mornings he cannot get off the ground until the sun has evaporated the extra weight from his trailer.

The African catfish has developed the remarkable habit of swimming upside down — and it's been doing this for so long that the normal coloration has been reversed: the belly (topside) is dark-brown, while the back (downside) is pale silvery-gray.

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M'Carthy 'Shocked' By Ike's Statement On Yalta Records

Washington — (U.P.) — Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy (R-Wis) said he is "shocked beyond words" at President Eisenhower's attitude toward the Yalta Conference records. McCarthy's latest attack on the President was provoked by Mr. Eisenhower's news conference remarks this week about publication of the 1945 Yalta Conference documents. Mr. Eisenhower had said he favors making public all pertinent documents of all wartime secret conferences. But he added that, "There is nothing... to be gained by going back 10 years and showing that, in the light of after-events, that someone may have been wrong, or someone may have been right. People that are so sure that we could do this, forget one thing: You can never recapture the atmosphere of war."

Atomic Processes May Allow Conversion of Sea Water

Sacramento — (U.P.) — Conversion of sea water into fresh water soon may be accomplished in huge quantities through new atomic processes, Assemblyman Harold K. Levering (R-Los Angeles) said Saturday. Levering said the University of California was working on the process. He said a university scientist told him the conversion could be made at practical cost, about \$13.50 an acre foot. Progressing Fast

The university scientists had not explained to him how they would convert the sea water, he said, but added they are "progressing fast." He said a new atomic process might well make "the Feather river and other conventional water supply systems obsolete." The university president, Robert G. Sproul, has named a committee to coordinate university research on the problem. Included on the committee, Levering said, was famed nuclear scientist Edward Teller, who played a major part in developing the hydrogen bomb. Seeks Appropriation

Levering said he had been asked by Sproul to seek from the state an appropriation "substantially less than \$1,000,000" to help finance the sea water conversion study.

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