

Seaton Told Support by Democrats Hinges on Type of Officer He Becomes

O'Mahoney Asks Definition of Partnership Power

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Mail Tribune Correspondent
Washington — Western Democratic senators served notice on the new Secretary of Interior, Fred A. Seaton, this week that they will either support or vigorously fight him and his policies depending on what kind of cabinet officer he turns out to be.

In the hearing on his nomination held by the Senate Interior Committee, it became clear they were seeking his views on all of the issues that had become controversial under ex-Secretary Douglas McKay. Seaton, without a misstep, lived up to his advanced billing as "a real political pro" by sidestepping every trap laid for him which might have helped Democrats draw a sharp contrast between him and McKay.

But on the power issue Democrats bore down, for Seaton had endorsed the administration's "partnership" power policy within an hour after President Eisenhower announced his appointment last week.

Neuberger Assists
Sitting across the long oak committee table from the new secretary, one of the Democrats' most able and senior senators, Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Wyo.), conducted the cross-examination, flanked by two willing junior assistants, Sens. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), and Richard L. Neuberger, (D-Ore.).

Noting that Seaton is rated as a liberal Republican, O'Mahoney asked him to "give us your definition of a liberal." Seaton acknowledged the liberal label and said he best liked the President's definition of one who is liberal in his attitude toward people but conservative in the use of their money.

What did Seaton mean by the "partnership" power policy, O'Mahoney asked. Seaton said cooperation between the government and local utilities to assure local control. He said he would be "very wary" of the government dominating dam building.

Domination Investigated
As chairman of the Senate antimonopoly subcommittee, O'Mahoney said he had investigated extensively the extent to which many western private utilities are dominated by eastern investment interests instead of being locally controlled.

"I've checked Idaho Power Co. to see if it could be called by any stretch of the imagination a locally-owned company," O'Mahoney told Seaton. He said he found that of the utility's 3,320,000 voting shares of stock, 1,115,927 were held by 10 large investment houses and insurance firms with headquarters in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago. He said that of the 1,530,000 votes cast in the last meeting of the company's stockholders at Bangor, Me., where Idaho Power is incorporated, 1,047,000 votes were cast by these large stockholders.

O'Mahoney recalled the abortive efforts of New York investment houses to force a merger of Puget Sound Power and Light Co. of Seattle with Washington Water Power Co. of Spokane against the wishes of many local interests in Washington state.

Attempt at Control
"This is all an attempt by New York investment firms to regain control of the water re-

source-development of this country," declared O'Mahoney. "That control was smashed once by Sen. George W. Norris of Nebraska."

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this water for western people will happen unless we watch out and the industry of the west, for the great life work of George W. Norris of Nebraska."

The effect of O'Mahoney's commentary to Seaton was: you can be a George W. Norris type of Nebraska Republican and win our backing to the hilt, or you can be a Clarence A. Davis type of Nebraska Republican and win our eternal opposition. Take your choice!



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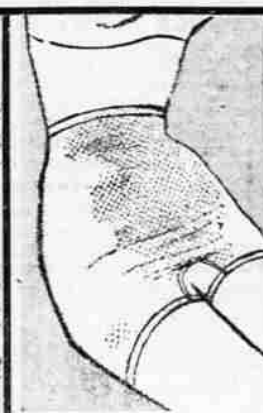
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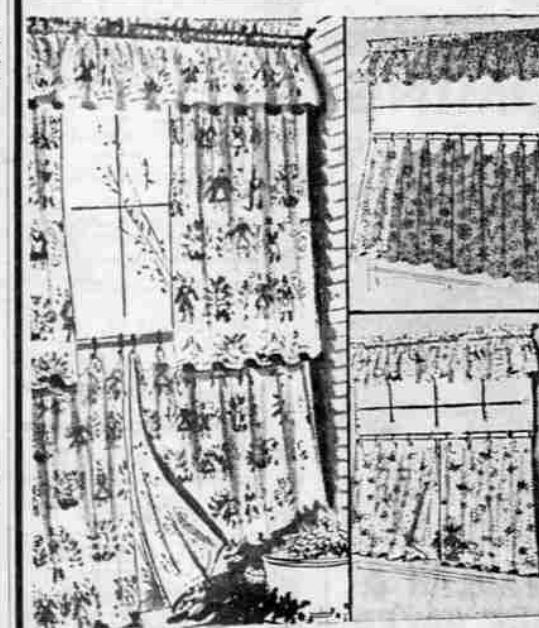
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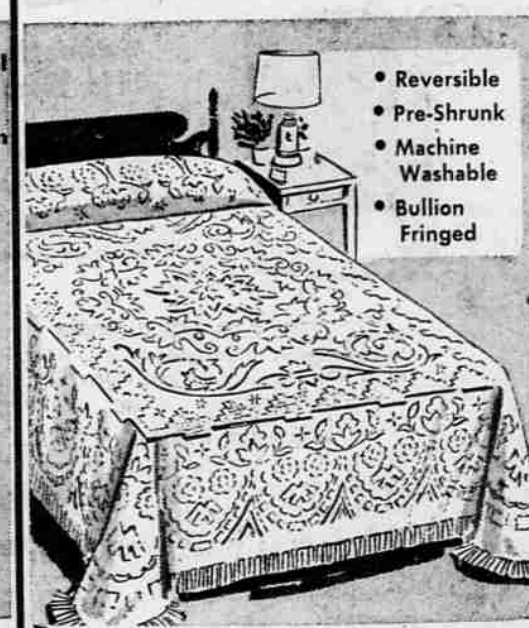


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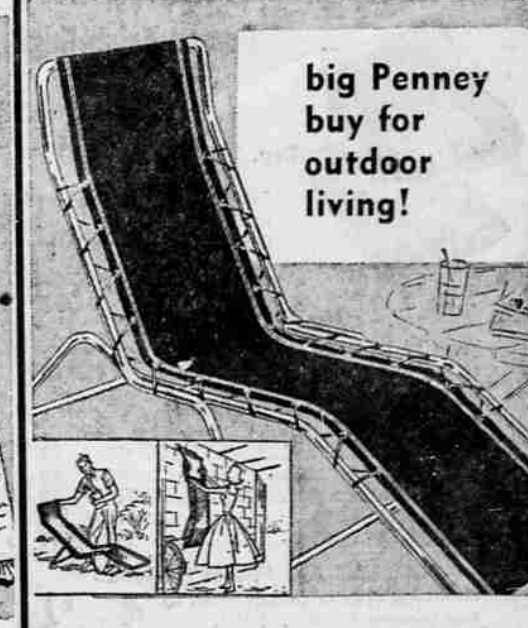
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