

Public Image of Charles Porter is Tribute To Work of Former Eugeneans in Washington

By A. ROBERT SMITH
 Mail Tribune Correspondent
 Washington—As Rep Charles O. Porter (D-Ore.) makes his way up and down the big fourth congressional district, making and handshaking in communities as far north as Albany and as far south as the California line, he periodically makes an announcement of a hitherto unknown development in Washington, D.C.



A. Robert Smith
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He may have been having a series of tea-time or coffee-hour visits with voters in western Oregon about local problems, but simultaneously he will be able to announce, as he did recently, that the Federal Communications commission has decided to open Eugene's TV channel 9 to commercial use. Or that the Army Engineers, at the highest level in Washington, had just increased funds for stepped up construction of Hills Creek dam.

If this ability to electrify the electorate with enlightening elocution contributes to the formation of a public image of Charles Porter as an "on the ball" congressman, it is perhaps a tribute of no small significance to the work of two Eugeneans here in the nation's capital.

Key Persons on Staff
 They are Jack Billings and

Miss Barbara Burke, who left successful positions in Eugene to come to Washington after Porter was elected to Congress almost a year ago. Billings, as administrative assistant, and Miss Burke, as personal secretary, are the key persons in Porter's eight-member congressional staff.

Billings was new director for KUGN with regular morning and evening news broadcasts. After being graduated from the University of Oregon in journalism, where he was editor of the Emerald as a sophomore (as was Sen. Richard L. Neuberger) Billings taught journalism for a year at the university before entering radio.

Today, as he describes his responsibility under Porter, Billings is a combination office manager and personal assistant to the congressman. "I run the office almost entirely," explained Billings. "Charlie doesn't have time for that."

By this he meant he sees that what Porter directs his staff to undertake is carried out, whether it involves lining up appointments for Porter with government officials or visiting constituents, mimeographing of a speech scheduled for delivery that afternoon on the House floor, or getting action on stymied local problems.

Most Sought Skill
 Getting action in the maze of Washington bureaucracy, where red tape is often much longer than local patience, is the most sought skill needed by any congressman and his staff.

A major in the Marine Corps reserves, Billings served in World War II and the Korean war. In a sense he had good experience for his current job with Porter because he served as an adjutant to commanding officers. Last month he served 19 days active duty with the fleet on maneuvers in the Atlantic.

Barbara Burke had a public stenographic business in Eugene, which frequently got some work from the law firm of Porter and Skelton. She sold her business to come to Washington last year.

Although a registered Democrat and active in the League of Women Voters, she had never done party work, or helped in Porter's campaign for office. "This is not a patronage job," she will have you know.

Nor is working for a congressman loaded with glamor as some folks seem to think, said Barbara.

Eats Lunch at Desk
 "It's a lot of hard work. I try to get to the office by 8 o'clock every morning. If I don't Charlie gets in first and goes through the mail. I try to beat him because when he's through with the mail it looks like a mouse has been at it."

"I usually eat lunch at my desk and it's 6 or 7 before I get away at night," she added.

Is Charlie Porter a slave driver?
 "He doesn't drive the staff," replied Miss Burke. "He just gives us so much work that we have to work long hours. He has lots of ideas and we carry them out. But he's never unreasonable."

Throughout government, from what she has seen, people seem to work hard in Washington. As she put it:
 "Contrary to what people around the country seem to think, people here work harder than anywhere else. We don't know what a coffee hour is."

"But it's fun and exciting," agreed Barbara. She has found some new friends through friends at home, such as Mrs. Mary Alice Baldinger, sister-in-law of Prof. Wallace S. Baldinger, history of art professor at the University of Oregon.

This business of calling the congressman "Charlie" hasn't changed, she explains, because he's just like "an old shoe."
 "To me he's still just Charlie Porter in the law office down the street."

Congressmen are allowed to employ up to eight staff members unless they represent a district with a population of more than 500,000. Then they can have nine. But in any event,

they must stick within a total payroll budget which Congress itself sets.

Base payroll for the smaller districts is \$17,500 and for the larger \$20,000. The maximum any one employee can receive is \$7,000 base pay. But, when the various cost-of-living allowances added since the war have been computed this comes to \$12,131.47 per year. A \$5,000 base salary works out to \$9,128.92.

Porter has employed eight staff members, two in Eugene. They are Keith Skelton, his former law partner who acts as Porter's local representative on a part-time basis on a monthly salary of \$150; and Miss Virginia Wysong, who handles filing in the local office, also part-time.

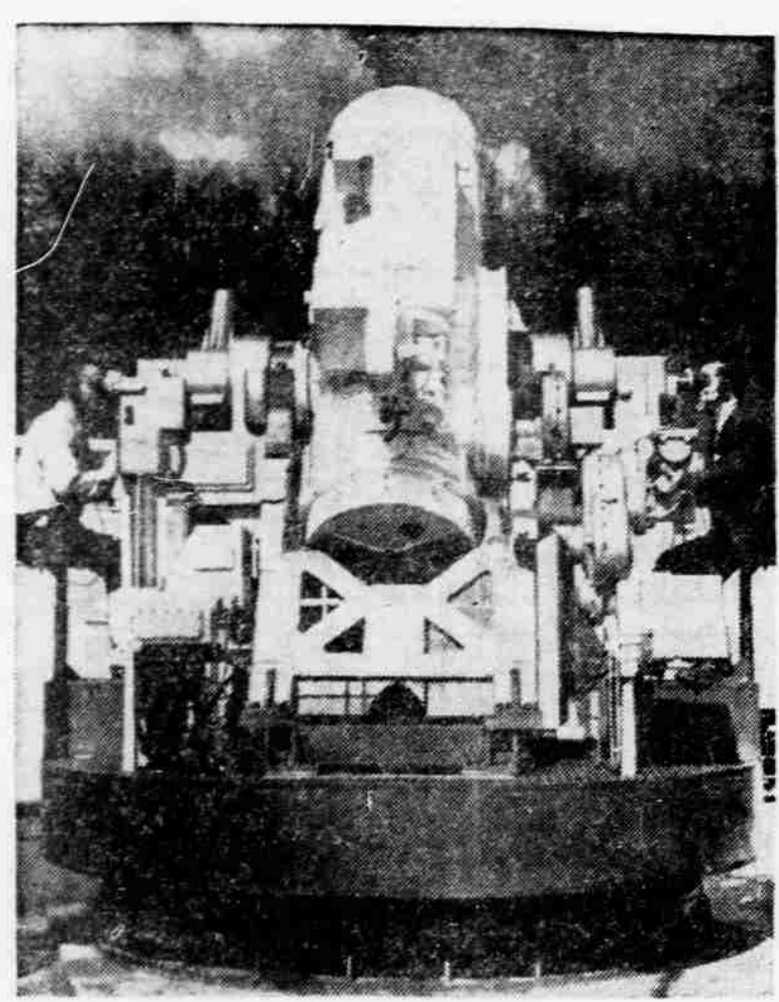
During the recess of Congress, Porter moved one of his key workers, Miss Laura Olson of

Roseburg, to the Eugene office. When Congress is in session, Miss Olson, formerly a reporter for the Roseburg News-Review, specializes in researching problems that constituents may present or gathering background facts for Porter on specific issues.

In addition to these Oregonians, Porter hired two experienced Capitol Hill staff members, Miss Vineta Clair, who previously worked for Delegate Farrington of Hawaii, and Mrs. Lou Ann Rowe, who was with Sen. Wayne Morse and for a time divided her work between Porter and Oregon's other freshman, Rep. Al Ullman, whose office is just across the hall in the Old House office building. The eighth member is a law student from Portland, Mike Walsh, who works part-time while attending law school here.



WILD SPREE ENDS—State Police Lt. A. B. Nogo searches Montana State Prison escapee Willard Brown, 23, after his capture near Lava Hot Springs, Idaho. The convict went on a two day spree after escaping prison and held several kidnap victims whom he later released. A phone call to his mother back east convinced him he should surrender.



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