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It's Quite a Business

To the uninitiated, a barrel of crude oil is a barrel of crude oil and nothing more or less.

But it isn't to the refiners who turn the crude into useable products. The experience of a California refinery shows why. For many years, it had obtained its crude from a field some miles away. Then oil was discovered right beneath the refinery itself. As Petroleum Today puts it, "This appeared to be a most happy case of carrying oils to Newcastle."

But, alas, that wasn't the case. This particular refinery specializes in the manufacture of lubricating oils. But the crude found on its own premises is of a kind which isn't suitable for that transformation. So it continued to bring in the right kind of crude by trucks and pipeline and sells its home-grown product to refineries elsewhere.

This casts a little light on the many complexities that are involved in converting crude into petroleum products. Each product represents its own problems and its own technological requirements. And what appears to be the same product may vary from region to region and season to season. That is frequently the case with gasoline where such variables as climate may bear on its efficiency.

Yes, oil is quite a business. There's nothing simple about it.

Iron Horse Still Lives

The ordinary human mind cannot possibly envision 18.5 billion miles. Nor can it digest such a figure as 310 million passengers.

But these statistics are part of the railroads' record for a single year, 1963. In that brief span they carried those 310 million passengers 18.5 billion passenger-miles. And they did that huge job with only 13 passenger fatalities—their best record in four years. By way of comparison, 28,900 people died in automobile accidents.

The 13 fatalities included only three resulting from major accidents. The other 10 stemmed from passenger carelessness such as trying to board or leave a moving train.

This is a remarkable record. And it was not just the result of chance or good luck. "Safety first" is always at the top of the list of railroad operating rules. Every workable step is taken to eliminate the causes of accidents—and the spectacular results prove the efficacy of this policy.

Beyond that, the 310 million passenger figure certainly shows that—contrary to the thinking of many people—railroad passenger traffic is neither dead nor dying. Great numbers of us like to ride the trains. We like the leisure, the service, the chance for a pleasant rest while vacationing or between business appointments. And railroads are responding with better passenger service on runs where patronage shows that it is justified and wanted. The Iron Horse is right in there pitching.

IT'S NEWS TO ME by Herb Caen

Doctors, Dentists, and Lawyers Make a Profit

Cartoonist Charlie "Peanuts" Schulz, who had his big Sebastapol layout on the market for \$400,000, has decided to keep it—and add a small pied-a-terre in S. F. to his holdings. He bought a \$70,000 house in St. Francis Wood, and will commute back and forth for a month or so. . . . Mothers who want their sons to be doctors, dentists or lawyers are simply showing good business sense.

We are indebted to Internal Revenue for the news that 143,000 doctors who filed returns in '62 only 8,000 lost money. Of 82,000

dentists, only 2,000 didn't turn a profit—and of the 124,000 lawyers, all but 12,000 were in the black. Physicians and surgeons do the best, averaging \$20,000 a year (down with Medicare) . . . Count lost that day during which you learn nothing new: The earmuffs worn by most competition pistol marksmen are manufactured by the American Optical Co. (but nobody seems to know why) . . . The death of the noted actor, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, reminded me of the time a lady reporter asked him whether baldness is truly a sign of virility. "I have no idea, my dear," smiled the bald Sir Cedric, "but I do know that it cuts down on a man's opportunity to find out!"

La Triviata: If you're in a hurry to write somebody in Pago Pago, Tutuila, American Samoa, the Zip Code is 96920. Always glad to be of service . . . And as long as we're in the Far Pacific, herewith three exactly-as-written items out of the Flight Log on a Pan Am run from Singapore to Saigon: "Two ladies unhappy because we have no diapers

My Neighbors



"Lord knows where I'd be today without her, probably president of the company."

Atlantic City Bored Walk



HERE AND THERE by Royce Brier

Red China Holds Key to 'Accident' in Vietnam

In a critical moment like the recent one in Indochina, you have to go out on a limb, so the guess here is that it will blow over.

An opposite guess, of course, is quite as valid. No estimate has much substance due to the possibility one of our naval craft might in future be lost to a mine or torpedo, or attacked by Red Chinese planes. But barring that, the reasoning here is as follows:

The North Vietnamese have little offensive capability. Defense Secretary McNamara declared that the torpedo fleet and its fuel base were badly crippled by our air strikes. Hence, the danger of an "accident" seems to lie largely with the Red Chinese, who also have small warcraft in the Gulf of Tonkin area, and some airplanes.

But if they intend to use their limited offensive power is another matter. They can't win with a naval battle in the Gulf, or an air battle, either. A serious thrust would necessarily be a sacrifice, while they mo-

bilize for war with the Americans.

But it is hard to believe, despite their menaces over 16 years, that they want that war at this time, in this place.

A foremost factor with them must be that they cannot count on Soviet help, or even sympathy, as they could in Korea. The Soviet Union is not about to embark on a logistically insane war, which could become a world war, to make Indochina safe for communism, particularly for Mao's communism.

If you will grant that, what have the Red Chinese to gain? They can't drive the Seventh Fleet from their coastal waters, and would only double its striking power. And they cannot drive the Americans from South Vietnam without a massive thrust of Red Chinese infantrymen southward, requiring X weeks of preparation. They can't mount an air war without opening a hornet's nest of carrier-based planes, and possible long-

range bombing in the whole Hanoi theater.

President Johnson doesn't want that, the American people don't want it, no people or government on earth wants it, unless it be the Peking government.

How can the Peking government want it, unless it has gone crazy, because it can't win such a war. The United States can do as it did in Korea, saturate South Vietnam with mechanized troops, to make a little conventional war out of it. This time we might or might not get the moral support of the United Nations, but we don't need it.

We have a moral case in the unprovoked attack on our naval craft in international waters, and in the pronouncement of the President and Secretary McNamara that no further action is intended if there are no further attacks. We might even perfect our moral position by withdrawing our naval units to a line angled from the South Vietnam frontier. Then let the holler "paper tiger" again. Who cares?

BOOKS by William Hogan

Famous Suicides Story Has Hard-to-Beat Cast

Why do people kill themselves? There seems to be no uncomplicated answer, medical or otherwise. Suicide is tragedy; in some cases it is fascinating tragedy. "Sudden Endings," by M. J. Meaker, a lady who writes suspense fiction under the pseudonym Vin Packer, looks over the complicated lives that led to 13 particularly interesting suicides. There was Virginia Woolf, who so often wrote of drowning before she drowned herself. And the poet Hart Crane, who leaped from the deck of a liner because she was never anything but a "masochistic child."

This morbid, if eminently readable collection of vignettes reminded me of Dorothy Parker's old refrain: "Razors pain you; rivers are damp; acids stain you; and drugs cause cramp. Guns aren't lawful; nooses give; gas smells awful; you might as well live."

An awful lot of people do not agree with Dorothy Parker. Upwards to 15,000 to 20,000 Americans did away with themselves last year. How many were sudden endings? Miss Meaker suggests that far from being sudden, the tragedies she

deals with here built up slowly and inevitably.

This is by no means a scientific approach to suicide. There is no effort to draw the cases together into some general hypothesis. While reading it, I wondered why it was written at all. And yet, Miss Meaker has a bit of Scheherazade in her makeup. It is a hard book to put down.

Also in Miss Meaker's makeup as a narrator of true tragedy is the touch of the fiction writer. In the case of Marilyn Monroe, she suggests that Marilyn did not kill herself. It was Marilyn's former self, Norma Jean Mortenson, who murdered her. And Hemingway? Miss Meaker recalls the dialogue in "Death in the Afternoon" where the old lady asks if this is all the story, and the narrator replies: "Ah, Madame, it is years since I added the wow to the end of the story." She suggests that Hemingway's act added the "wow" to the end of his own story.

These are interesting literary flourishes to Miss Meaker's profiles in tragedy, but tend to underscore the basic superficiality of the whole project. Among other endings observed: Harriet Westbrook Shelley;

AFTER HOURS by John Morley

Politicians Abuse Jobs Even More on Campaign

Millions of us are being fleeced by some politicians who don't appear to know right from wrong, or care what we think.

With few exceptions, they do things which they know are unethical, but for some unknown reason they assume they can get away with it indefinitely.

No other segment of our society gets by with such flagrant violations of recognized ethics. During this campaign again some of them will espouse grave concern for honesty and morality in public office, while at the very moment of their espousing they are violating one of the most sacred ethics of our society—that a man is expected to do an honest day's work for a day's pay.

Long before political campaigns, too many politicians are simply not performing duties they were elected to perform.

They leave their elective or appointive jobs and barnstorm the nation, or their own state, either trying for re-election, or for higher office—all at taxpayers' expense.

And that's not all. They use facilities provided for public business, utilize their staffs, secretaries, public relations experts and hire extra help—all at taxpayers' expense, for political purposes. While this goes on, very important responsibilities are being neglected or relegated to subordinates, for weeks and months on end.

One senator actually missed 65 per cent of Senate roll calls while campaigning—and these extracurricular activities eventually landed him in the White House.

He was using his high office and taxpayers' time, including that of his staff and other hired promotion experts, to create the political climate which ultimately made him president. All this without pang of conscience.

This practice appears to us to be unethical. An incumbent was elected to perform certain specific duties. He is expected to represent all the people, not just Democrats, Republicans, or independents. He takes an oath to do just that.

But as soon as the formalities are over, he becomes a divided personality, between serving the country and serving his personal political ambition.

We consider it unethical for any incumbent to leave his job and campaign for

higher office, no matter who he is, and to use tax-supported airplanes, cars, or rubber bands, for his personal gain. It's unethical to utilize transportation provided for public business for his private business under the pretense of "inspection tours" which turn out to be 1 per cent inspection and 99 per cent politics.

The honorable thing for all who want to campaign and improve their political lot is to resign first and then campaign to their heart's content with a clear conscience. Public officials are elected, or appointed, to perform specific jobs full time, not part time. Taxpayers have a right to expect the same ethical standards from their public officials as stockholders expect of their business officials.

For instance, the vice president of General Motors would be fired on the spot if it became apparent that he was out "campaigning" on company time in an effort to gain the presidency of Ford.

The discouraging thing about these abuses is that hardly anyone calls the bluff. On the contrary, the public flocks to banquets to cheer their political "heroes," who at that very moment are fleecing them of salaries and expenses for work they are not performing.

The whole practice is a bad example, especially for our youth. Many college students raise this question at our campus lectures. They refer to it as a racket—and a racket it is.

The way out is, of course, a public denunciation of such unethical practices. Not toward one party or another, but clear across national and state boundaries, and with a vengeance, for such abuses have got out of hand.

Public opinion should force the resignation of all elective officials who seek and accept a nomination for higher office.

The excuse that our political system condones such wasteful and unethical political by-play is passing the buck. Some politicians impose on the system and on the public.

We are living in a nuclear, trigger-happy world. Communism is running rampant abroad and socialism at home. We need our public officials on the job full time, not part time.

It is dangerous and wasteful for such divided loyalties. In a political season high government officials look as though a plague has passed through.

Costs of government are today at an all-time peak. High official salaries were again substantially increased recently. In the coming campaign the oratory will again emphasize the need for morality and ethics.

May we suggest that they begin with the basic ethic—that a man give an honest day's work for a day's pay.

Why, my very first night in Havana, the bellboy shows me to my room, opens the drapes to reveal a view of the Caribbean and says: "Miami is 120 miles that way." Then he grins and adds "And one day soon I'm going to start swimming."

Right away, I could tell with that sure instinct we ace newsmen have that a counter-revolution was brewing. And my suspicions were confirmed day after day by repeated rumblings of discontent.

True, the peasants and workers seem happy with their new schools and houses. The Negroes are glad to see the end of racial discrimination. And the new middle class of factory managers and bureaucrats Mr. Castro has created is naturally content with its lot.

But you ought to hear the cab drivers: "Always the Government is checking to see you charge the right fare. How can you make a decent living that way?" Or the handsome night club singer: "Where are the tourists? What is Havana without tourists?" Or the old man who stops you on the street and takes off his shoe to show you the big hole in his sock: "What good is a revolution if it cannot produce decent socks?" What indeed? Yes sir, grouching and grumbling from one end of the island to the other about Mr. Castro's bumbling, despotic government. And I figure I'm lucky to get out before the bullets start flying.

So on the plane up from Mexico City I was sitting next to an American businessman in the import-export field. And we had a very interesting conversation about the idiotic forms he had to fill out for U.S. Customs, the confiscatory income taxes he had to pay and the highhanded, dictatorial attitudes of all those inefficient bureaucrats in Washington.

Yes sir, it's certainly going to be great to get back to the good old U.S.A., a country with a solid, safe, secure government. Beloved by one and all.

Opinions of Others

"Incompetent drivers are not limited to teen-agers. They are in all age brackets. But the statistics show that highway accident fatalities involving teen-age drivers are far higher proportionately. . . . The fact that insurance companies require higher premiums for cars driven by under 25-year-olds is public evidence of the extra hazards created by young drivers." —La Grange (Ill.) Citizen.

Quote

"The person who has everything should be quarantined." — Lee Call, Afton (Wyo.) Star Valley Independent.

"A fixed opinion merely means that the gate, open to allow a thought in, has slammed shut." — Douglas Meador, Matador (Tex.) Tribune.