

-Comment and Opinion-

TORRANCE, CALIF., WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 1968

Trouble With the Mails

Probably no other case in the long history of man can compare to the bungled mess which has developed in the postal system.

One of the nation's most vital communication facilities, and the only one easily available to millions of Americans, is nearing the point of floundering in its own sea of confusion.

If one of the modern think factories set its most creative team to work trying to devise a worse system, the project would surely fail.

And when the money gets too thin to subsidize the minimum level of service now offered, the only cure appears to be a further reduction in mail service.

The first major impact of the reduction in postal service will hit this weekend when Saturday window service at all first and second class post offices will be discontinued. This means that thousands of us in the Southwest and Harbor areas and millions of Americans who have been obliged by employment or other obligations to do our post office business on Saturday will now have to find other means of mailing packages, buying

stamps, and of registering, certifying, or insuring mail.

It also will mean, probably, that many thousands will react to this curtailment of service by writing to their Congressman—which is just what the top echelon postal officials must expect.

In most such cases, it appears that the agency involved always makes the cuts where it hurts most. Congress is abused by the citizens, and the cuts are restored.

Many have offered what they feel is a better suggestion: Give up the boondoggling, inefficient, wasteful, and costly government operation of the postal system and turn it over to a chartered corporation. Such a corporation should then be given a free hand to introduce automation and such other improvements as needed to rescue us from the current plight.

Whatever, the nation cannot continue to run a constantly deteriorating mail service on a parttime basis (there is now talk of cutting deliveries to four a week). The mail system is too important to all of us and must be salvaged.

Summer's Added Perils

With summer in full swing, community fire departments are facing increased problems, and problems peculiar to our hot, dry weather.

Needless grass fires endanger homes and cost taxpayers dollars for the manpower and equipment needed to protect lives and property from this type of blaze.

As the grass lands diminish with community growth, and with working weed abatement programs, the hazard may be reduced but it is not yet eliminated. A blazing grass fire Sunday evening on Western Avenue near Lomita gave billowing evidence that the fire season is with us.

Each property owner should be aware of the hazards presented on his own parcel of land and take steps to eliminate those hazards. Tall, dry

weeds, scrap lumber piled against a building, and other such conditions pose a particular threat at this time of the year.

If fire poses one threat to us in the summer heat, water poses another.

Living as we do in communities within a short distance of excellent beaches and in a climate where home swimming pools are a common item, the area's firemen are called frequently for rescue or resuscitation services. Excellent classes are offered through area fire departments and persons interested in learning skills in first aid and fire safety are urged to contact their nearest station.

The fireman is always our friend, but with the extra peril of summer's hot dry weather and the inviting cool water, the fireman takes on a special role. We can make his job easier by cleaning up our own fire hazards, and adhering to safe practices in the water.

Morning Report

For those who like things as they are, the American Communist Party has to be the most reassuring institution around. Other groups and parties show great change as conditions change. But the Communists go right on doing their not-so-sly business as usual.

At their national convention in New York City the other day, the New Left was given its lumps for indulging in "petty bourgeois radicalism." Whatever that means.

In keeping with clandestine tradition, the capitalist press was barred from hearing the major address. So nobody listened except already dedicated party members and FBI agents, whom I trust were present behind the closed doors with their tape recorders. Just in case anything new in the disorder line was being peddled.

-Abe Mellinkoff

Help Open the Gate



An Afterthought

As one thinks over the present condition of the nation's mail system, it occurs that it is about the only business that comes to mind where the top executives and all the branch managers are picked—not because they are experts in the business—but because of favors to their Congressmen, past or promised.

From Our Mailbox

Liked Story

To the Editor:

Your charming and well written article of Dr. and Mrs. Baxter's wedding was immensely enjoyed by the couple, our residents and staff. Thank you four your time, pictures and for being here on the Baxter's wedding day. You added that special air of importance with your presence and we want you to know we appreciate it.

I was very much impressed with your friendly welcome your Mr. Fisher and your office gave me when I picked up the extra pictures and the newspapers.

Thank you, Miss Cloyd, and Mr. Fisher and your company.

MRS. JANET SWAIN
Recreational Director
Golden Hours
Convalescent Hospitals

Profanity Hit

To the Editor:

Dick Tripp's editorial, "Public Profanity, a Protected Right," is the best article I've read in quite a while.

As soon as the public is enlightened to the fact that the Congress can override a Supreme Court decision by a two-thirds vote, the public will be rid of one-sided rulings.

GENE TRINKLER, Lomita

Another School Door



SACRAMENTO REPORT

State Gun Control Bill Given Strange Handling

By HENRY C. MacARTHUR

Capitol News Service

SACRAMENTO — Some highly peculiar antics were engaged in by the Assembly ways and means committee in connection with the amendments to the Shoemaker gun control bill it amended and then recommended for passage by the Assembly.

Theoretically, at least, bills are sent to the ways and means committee for the express purpose of determining whether or not there are sufficient funds available to fund the measures if they are adopted. Many times it has been emphasized that policy is set by the original committee to which the bill was sent, and that approval of ways and means is only an indication that monies are available to pay the bills.

Originally the gun legislation, authorized by Assem

blyman Winfield A. Shoemaker, D-Santa Barbara, was sent to the assembly criminal procedures committee. This committee eliminated the clause in the Shoemaker bill calling for registration of all guns in the state. It approved licensing of gun owners, and thereby set the policy to be submitted to the entire Assembly for approval, provided ways and means found there were sufficient funds to finance the licensing, or determined licensing would pay for itself.

All of which was distasteful to Author Shoemaker, who wanted gun registration in the bill. But he recognized the fact that for him to propose an amendment in ways and means to bring the bill back to its original intent, would have been "unethical."

So instead of Shoemaker

proposing the policy-making changes in the measure, for which policy was affixed by the criminal procedures committee, Assemblyman Charles Warren, D-Los Angeles, took on the job. Warren happens to be chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, an organization intensely interested in seeing Shoemaker returned to the Assembly to help maintain the Democratic majority.

Warren and Shoemaker had an ally in the chairman of the committee, Robert W. Crown, D-Alameda. Earlier in the session Crown lost a reasonably tough gun control bill in the criminal procedures committee, whose chairman, W. Craig Biddle, R-Riverside, had his own measure affecting firearms, making penalties on illegal use heavier.

Thus the stage was set for a Democratic-Republican battle, with the Democrats having sufficient votes to put the Shoemaker bill back in virtually its original form. After hearing arguments pro and con, the committee retired into secret session with the measure under submission, and shortly went back into open session, where it approved the measure by a voice vote.

Considering a bill in secret session deprives the public of knowing how their representatives vote on the measure, and outside of educated guesses, the public will never know how the members of ways and means voted on Shoemaker's gun control measure. With elections coming up, it is only natural for the politicians to seek secrecy on controversial issues, which may have a bearing on whether they return to their plush jobs in Sacramento.

In any event, the ways and means committee transcended its duties and violated some accepted tradition in going into the policy-making field which clearing was the obligation of the criminal procedures committee.

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HERB CAEN SAYS:

These Hikers Going by Bus

Barney and Irene Mayes, who own Meigs Wharf, are fond of hippies—but, when they commute daily from Sausalito in their Continental, they refuse to pick up hippie hitchhikers. Instead, they had out Greyhound communte tickets, which they buy by the roll. Explains Irene prettily: "I may be my brother's keeper, but I don't have to be his chauffeur." . . . Meet the new owners of Del Vecchio's on B'way: Joe the Toe Vetrano, the Condor's Pete Mattiolo, Topsy's Pee Wee Ferrari. I think it will remain Italian. . . . Everybody's a comic these days. Agnes Flynn, wife of Col. Tom Flynn, phoned all the airlines for her son, Tom, who wanted the cheapest flight East. After hearing TWA's fare, she cracked: "Well, how much if we just nail him to a wing?" Deadpanned the voice of TWA: "Sorry, ma'am, that throws the plane off balance and increases fuel consumption." Which is probably true.

The texture of San Francisco is subtle: a sudden amalgam of great wealth (largely plucked from the earth) and prideful poor (the South o' the Slot syndrome), a tolerance for "characters" that is only now threatening to stop short at the hippies, an Oriental-French-Italian-bohemian blend of eating and living, a taste for extremes that could only have been born in a seaport town that became a gold-gorged metropolis overnight.

It is almost impossible to explain the fabric of the city without digging into the past; this is one of the city's strengths and one of its hang-ups. There is enough evidence that our predecessors built and lived well to make us try to emulate them while sensing that we never can—and anyway, where do the legends stop and the fables begin? We should be grateful that we have reputation for "tolerance"; the Chinese of Dennis Kearney's time knew the ugly truth, not to mention the Chinese in the gold fields who were killed for sport. We didn't have a "Negro problem" until recent years because we had so few Negroes, and as for the Japanese, the memories of "relocation centers" are all too fresh (the few San Franciscans who protested at the time may still feel proud). Certainly there is a greater awareness of complexities around us, and a firmer resolve to confront them. We know now that there is more to San Francisco than the naive, non-ironic, fog-through-the-harpstrings-of-the-bridge approach.

It is impossible to "explain" San Francisco, in the end, without acknowledging the "foreignness" of the city—the Italian of North Beach, the Chinese and Japanese, the Irish of the Mission, the Russians of Clement, and, definitely yes, the Negroes and the hippies. The San Franciscan, no matter how waspish, cannot help but be continually aware of diverse voices, viewpoints and life styles—they surround him daily and daily smooth his square edges. The true voice of the city speaks in many tongues, from the Italianate lisp of the Mayor to the Australian lilt of Harry Bridges, from the French-Canadian roar of Trader Vic to the Irish brogue of that great old red-faced Police Sergeant who scoots around town on his three wheeler, bullying and beautiful.

Or maybe there is no explaining San Francisco, just as there is no accounting for tastes. Let's put it down as a happy accident, this conglomeration of reasonably sympathetic souls thrown together at one of the pleasanter ends of the earth.

The talktail lounge: Frank Dunnigan means to asperse no aspersion, "but why is it every time Fire Buff Arthur Fiedler comes to town, we have a four-alarm fire?" . . . Donald Bennett of Benicia: "Can you tell me how to get some of the wonderful waters the beer people all advertise? I don't care much for beer but the water sounds good." . . . Charles Anderson of Sacramento, Calif.: "If you think the front of the dollar bill is hip (George Washington wearing a Nehru and jabot), what about the back? Straight surrealism! An eye in a triangle floating above a truncated pyramid. Personally, I think it's an ad for a new rock group, the Novus Ordo Seclorum, at the annuit Coeptis ballroom." . . . Charles Pierce at the Gilded Cage: "If Candy Bergen married Herb Caen and then Lane Bryant, would she be Candy Caen Lane? . . . Alex Bergman, as his doctor was reading the slip produced by the electro-cardiograph machine: "Just one question, doctor do you call that a ticker tape?" . . . And Philip Oakes found this sign in the Tokyo IBM office: "Man—slow, slovenly, brilliant, IBM—fast, accurate, stupid." . . . Via AP from Ventura, Calif.: "Richard G. Mendex, 26, escaped from the Ventura County Hospital in his motorized wheelchair." One can only wish him luck, especially on the freeways.

Other voices, other rumors: The Lake Tahoe betting parlors will no longer make book on the major league races. They figure that it's allover but the shouting for the St. Louis and Detroit rooters. (However, Atty. Jack Ehien, game to the end; thinks a single trade would brink the Nat'l League pennant to S.F.—the Giants for the Cardinals). . . . As a veteran bumper strip pollster, I would have to say that Eugene McCarthy has tied up the Volkswagen vote. . . . Wildlife note: A wolverine that escaped from the S.F. Zoo a couple of weeks ago has now been sighted several times by early-morning joggers in Golden Gate Park ("Orangy-brown and very fast," is the report). Wolverines like bird's eggs, small mammals, and to be left alone.