

Your Right to Know

A four-year study of the legal basis for the people's right to know shows it is becoming more and more difficult for the nation's newspapers to fulfill their basic function in a democratic society and tell the people in the cities, towns and villages what is going on in their federal government.

Growing restrictions are imposed on the flow of facts by huge government agencies which claim the legal power to decide how much information newspapers can print about the expenditure of billions of tax dollars.

The most recent example of government by whim rather than government by law is the refusal to honor the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 which established the General Accounting Office under the comptroller general. This law makes the comptroller general independent of the spending agencies of the federal government so he could audit the expenditure of tax dollars for Congress and for the American public. The law also states the comptroller general shall "have access to and the right to examine any books, documents, papers, or records of any department or establishment."

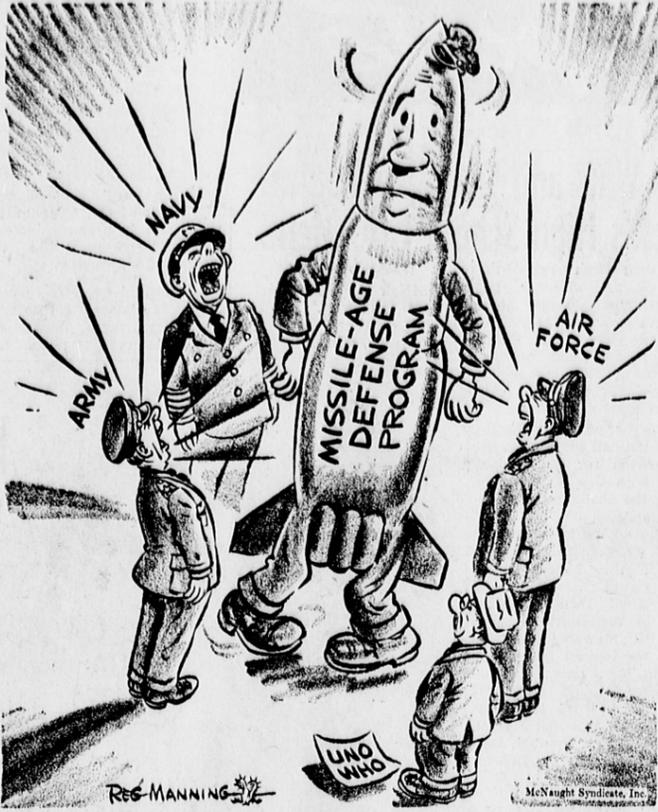
In 1925 the government's top legal experts decided the law means just what it said—that the comptroller general could audit all of the government's books. But just last year the Defense Department decided to change the law. Without any reliance on statutory authority and without any legal opinion or court case to support the position, the department issued a regulation hiding many types of reports from the auditor's eyes.

In June, 1958, the regulation was used to cover up a report on the Air Force management of the billion-dollar missile program. When hearings were held by Congressman John E. Moss of California, chairman of the House Government Information Subcommittee, the Air Force did not base the refusal of the report on military security or even on the claim of "confidential sources." The claimed authority for secrecy was a new doctrine called "Executive Privilege," based upon the "Constitutional power of the President."

In November, 1958, the Navy refused to let the comptroller general see a report on the Military Sea Transportation Service. In new hearings called by Congressman Moss, the House Government Information Subcommittee received the same responses it had heard earlier from the Air Force. The claim of "Executive Privilege" was held up to violate a clear law granting the comptroller general access to all the government's records.

Many of the nation's leading lawyers agree that "Executive Privilege" cannot legally be used as an excuse to hide information from the people and from their elected representatives in Congress. But there are great legal difficulties to be overcome before the matter can be settled in the courts. The strong force of public opinion, marshalled through the nation's free press, may be the only method to require secrecy-minded bureaucrats to recognize the laws guaranteeing the right of the people and the Congress to know.

Too Many Commanders



Law in Action

Confidential Communications

Under the law what you as a client tell your lawyer in confidence he may tell no one else without your consent.

Nor can a judge order him or his professional employees (like secretaries) to reveal such communications in court.

Why such a privilege?

Chiefly, to do justice; it encourages clients to tell their lawyers what they have to know to help and to advise them fully; things about their family, business and private affairs, their hopes, fears and ambitions.

No lawyer may speak of certain things, even after a client dies. For a client may well have to give his lawyer details which, if revealed, might harm those he most wanted to protect.

Yet, in some very rare cases to help carry out the client's desires after death, a

lawyer may have to reveal a confidence, under certain safeguards, to uphold his client's purposes.

Anything a client tells his lawyer when he seeks advice about his personal, business, or legal affairs—talks, and letters, photographs, charts, and other documents and records.

Confidential communications belong to you as the client, not to your lawyer: If you break the confidence, a lawyer may also have to talk, for the communication is no longer confidential. You may break a confidence by testifying about it or by having unauthorized persons hear or see what was communicated.

An ordinary eavesdropper may testify in court about anything he overheard.

Electronic eavesdropping

(bugging) is still an unsettled problem in the law of evidence, differing from state to state.

No lawyer may keep quiet about a crime or fraud a client has told him he plans to do. But afterwards, an accused person may talk freely to his lawyer. Even if guilty he has a right to have his side of the story presented to the court as it may affect his punishment. A person in trouble needs to talk to someone without fear that what he says will become public.

Generally speaking, no man or wife, for example, may testify about their confidential talks without the other's consent, unless they oppose each other in a lawsuit such as a divorce action.

Certain other people such as physicians and clergymen may receive privileged communications.

Food Price Trends Explained

By REYNOLDS KNIGHT

Today's housewife, using convenience foods, can prepare a day's meals for a family of four in about an hour and a half, whereas only a few years back it took five and a half hours.

She wants her spinach chopped and frozen, her chicken cut up and ready to pop into the oven. These groceries with "built-in maid service" often are blamed for higher food prices. But an Agriculture Department study now shows that convenience foods increase the consumer's food bill by only a little over one-half of one per cent.

Then why have food prices risen during the past decade in the face of falling prices for farm products?

The retail cost of a typical family's market basket of farm-food products today is put at \$1065 a year, versus \$940 10 years ago. But the farmer received only \$427 of today's retail total, an 8 per cent drop from the \$466 he received a decade ago. And the net profit margins of food producing or processing corporations—the "middle men"—were smaller in 1958 than in 1949—with the exception of meat packing, which was unchanged.

One major cause of rising food prices is the higher cost of moving crops from farm to table. Labor, shipping, supplies, fuel and power, and taxes have all gone up, but thanks to the distributive economies developed by the industry, food price increases have not been as great as those for many other "necessity" goods and services such as clothing, shelter and transportation.

Companies using electronic data-processing systems—the "brains" that handle intricate business record-keeping jobs—now can have more flexibility, time-wise, in the use of such systems.

A new leasing plan, announced by the Datamatic division of the Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Co., is a departure from the industry's established 8-hour-daily rental pricing methods in that it allows use of its new Honeywell 800 system for 176 hours a month on any time schedules required to fill the customer's needs.

Heretofore, users have paid rent on their systems on a conventional basis of 22 stan-

dard weekday shifts of eight hours each, and have been charged overtime for work done outside these periods regardless of whether the user had employed his computer fully during the regular shifts.

Walter W. Finke, Datamatic president, explained that frequently companies have peak loads of work, usually toward the end of the month, requiring use of a computer for more than eight hours in any given day. "The Honeywell 176-hour plan will enable many users to eliminate complex and costly scheduling and re-scheduling difficulties in handling their normal work," Finke said.

Synthetic coffee costing much less than the real brew may be ready for market in a year or so. . . . Frozen bars of natural fruit juice will debut soon in several test marketing areas. . . . Garage doors made of glass fiber are one-third the weight of wooden doors and are claimed to be weather-resistant, shatter-proof and warp-proof.

Cats call the tune when it comes to feeding, and the next hit song may be "Give Tabby a Treat." Because cat owners are generally quite indulgent of their pets' likes and dislikes, a big business in canned supplemental or "treat foods" may be in the offing, the American Can Co. reports.

A company study disclosed that taste tests by more than 350 cats confirmed that "cats enjoy an occasional change from a regular balanced diet.

and respond affectionately to special food treats."

In the tests, cats were faced with side-by-side dishes. When a canned all-tuna red meat was offered as an alternative to regular food, 85 per cent of the cats turned to the tuna first. In another test, 74 per cent went for a special mackerel treat.

"Owners of most of the cats tested said they would buy the new foods, if available, mainly because the pets enjoyed them so much," said J. H. Sunley, director of market research for the company's Canco Marketing Division. The owners recognized, however, that treat foods should not be served exclusively, he added.

Some 7.5 million people and 500,000 businesses have written Washington for plans for building low-cost fallout shelters, and Federal officials are urging builders to include them in new housing.

A Denver builder recently sold five shelter-equipped homes in their first week on the market and plans 50 more units. In Miami, a firm specializing in underground shelters reports a flood of inquiries.

But a Long Island builder says many women find his \$250 optional shelter "distressing" and won't look at it. So he plans to camouflage them as wine cellars.

Automatic pin-setting devices, now in use in 97 per cent of the nation's bowling alleys, have cut the membership of a Chicago bowling alley employees' union to 11; ten years ago there were 1,700.

Mailbox

Editor, Torrance Herald:

Why are Torrance officials interested in a defunct, 50-year-old and run-down water system such as Narbonne Ranch Water No. 2 and serving parts of North Lomita and a small area in Torrance proper?

The answer is plain. It is not interested in the water system, but is interested in getting a foothold in Lomita with the hope of adding the territory to its already large area.

The petitions for joining Water District No. 13 are in the hands of the board of supervisors and still Torrance

officialdom toys with the idea of buying the water company.

The majority of people have indicated their desire to join County Water District No. 13 by signing the petition but a little thing like the wishes of the people is no deterrent to the power-hungry Torrance politician.

Torrance is always deficient in funds. How then will it be possible to buy the company and run it successfully? A good point to remember is: The people would pay more with no guarantee of improved service.

DESSIE MYERS Lomita

VIRGIL

By Lew Kleis



RIVETS

By George Sixta



SUPERMAN



RED RYDER

By Fred Harman

