

The Numbers Game

Home Savings, which lays claim to being the biggest in the United States, had an advertisement a few weeks ago that is worth noting. Theme was the announcement that those who do business with Home will still be known by their real names and won't be called a Mr. 615-143-2706.

How far this or any other nation can go toward living with numbers and still retain a vestige of dignity for the individual is anybody's guess. For the sake of efficiency a man's good name is giving way to numbers because names are not palatable to the computing machines by which we are being made to live. Of course automation is an inevitable development, but, it certainly points up the fact that all progress is not all good.

Howard R. Bowen, president of Grinnell College in Iowa, recently referred to the "tyranny of numbers" in American Higher education, tending to reduce everything about a student to a few key numbers.

"In describing a particular student," said the Iowa educator, "we often say something like this: Steve Martin, oh yes, he was the 35th in a high school class of 280, he scored 553 on the verbal and 610 on the quantitative College Board tests, his college grade-point average was 2.85 and he scored 575 on the Graduate Record Examination. There you have the biography of Steve Martin reduced to stark essentials. No nonsense about his curiosity, his moral fiber, his dreams and his aspirations, his social consciences, his human decency, his imagination, his philosophy of life or his aesthetic sensibilities."

There seems to be an obsession for numbers carried to absurdity in many fields, including banking and business. So far as education goes, some corrective steps seem to be indicated. And businesses dealing directly with human beings (and all are if they have employees or customers) might bend every effort to in the future offset some of the eroding effects of a numbers system that threatens to dehumanize the nation.

How? Just ask the computer.

American System

A variety of phrases can be used to describe this country's economic system. It is called a free economy—meaning that producers and consumers have freedom of choice in deciding what to make and what to buy. It is called a private enterprise economy—meaning that private individuals and organizations, working voluntarily, supply the spark that keeps the nation going.

There's still another term that covers important ground. Ours is a profit and loss economy. And both of these elements can play a more important role in determining what will happen to employment, investment and growth than is generally recognized.

The taxes on profit, to begin with, go a long way toward supporting government—all the way from multi-billion dollar missile programs down to municipal functions. Then, a much smaller proportion of these profits goes to investors in the form of dividends or interest—and this attraction is what keeps investment funds growing. Finally, much of the profit is plowed back into the enterprise, for new machinery, new buildings, new developments of a thousand and one kinds—and the results are more and better jobs, new products and higher living standards.

The function of losses is more subtle. A steadily losing business, generally, is a business offering something or other which consumers don't want. Investors shy away from it. Then, ultimately, the end comes because the wants of the people changed. When the market for buggy whips disappeared people stopped putting money into buggy whip factories. They put it elsewhere, where it produces desired goods and services.

What has this system produced? To sum up in a few words: More good things for more people than any other system ever devised.

Opinions of Others

Post mortems of the Berkeley housing law defeat have been many and diverse. One basic conclusion should be obvious, however: even in an environment most propitious to very liberal views on minority welfare, people still are unwilling to grant government complete veto power over their fundamental constitutional right to own and manage property.

Berkeley is no town of bigots. It is no Greenwood, Mississippi. As the site of the University of California's main campus, with its many foreign students and professors, the city is thoroughly and sympathetically acquainted with the problems of interracial relationships. It has one of the highest percentages in the state—approximately 20 per cent—of non-white permanent residents. Its citizens discussed the anti-discrimination ordinance with a remarkably small amount of emotionalism and prejudice.

The election had been hailed as a weathervane for state and national anti-discrimination legislative proposals. So the defeat of the ordinance—which was a sincerely, if unrealistically, drawn effort to supply legal answers to what must be primarily human problems—should stand as a significant expression of thoughtful public opinion; that depriving one group of its basic rights (in this case the right to own and control property) is not the proper way to enhance the rights of another group.

The solution to the very real problem of minority opportunities for good housing, education and so on must be found. But to base that solution on the continuing erosion of all our fundamental individual rights is not the course of wisdom, nor of realism.—California Feature Service.

MOVILLE, IOWA, RECORD: "The difference between Rip Van Winkle and the merchant who doesn't advertise is that Rip finally woke up."



ROYCE BRIER

Singing National Anthem Can Be Dreary Custom

On television the other day an English town crier gave a sample of his work, a perfectly unintelligible chant ending in five intelligible words: God Save the Queen.

As literate Americans know, this is the title of the British national anthem, an altogether inept composition somewhat worse than the Star Spangled Banner.

God Save the Queen may be an appropriate sign-off for a town crier who has encountered footpads and such on his rounds, but as a song to be sung by every bilgeater ushering in a cricket match or closing a bad television show, it's a turkey, as we say.

So said, more elegantly, Mr. Cecil King, the British press magnate, in a Belfast speech. He followed with an editorial in his Mirror, calling it a "dreary custom" which should only be observed in the presence of the monarch. Even so, he doesn't like the music, and he thinks some of the words are ridiculous.

Line by line, our anthem may have more dignity, but the idea of celebrating a minor skirmish in an unpopular war we were losing, seems a trifle pointless.

Every singer who has ever tried the music says it is impossible, and ten thousand untrained voices can make it ghastly. In grammar school the flag must wavy-ave, and the score is such that "the home of the brave" is anticlimatic.

Thus the Star Spangled Banner strives to soar but keeps grounding, like an eagle with a broken wing. We have known some good songs, like Columbia the Gem of the Ocean and Battle Hymn of the Republic. Dixie has a stir, but is preempted, and one of the most inspirational in tune, though the lyric is limited, was Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight, which the Spanish-American War Jingoists doted upon.

Most American patriotic songs, and British too, have attempted to capture the uplift of the Marseillaise, and have failed. A mass of Frenchmen singing it will make your hair stand on end, and they apparently overlook the starkly revolutionary words, for they had their barricades long ago, and don't want any now.

Unhappily, while you can order a dirge of young unrequited love for Ricky Nelson, you can't order a national anthem. If they are born, they must be born from some seemingly high moment, like the Star Spangled Banner, or attached to some tradition, like God Save the Queen. The result is the Western world has few anthems expressing the inner feelings, or dreams, of the several peoples.

We might, however, try to compose one on a computer, which, we are assured, will solve all the hard problems one day.

TALK OF THE WORLD

THE DYING BLUE HOUR
"L'heure bleue is disappearing from France."

The Blue Hour is the late-afternoon period after business hours that a Frenchman spends with his petite amie before going home to his wife.

Women blame the disappearance of 'heure bleue' upon the Frenchman's new preoccupation with business.

"Now that the European Common Market is rolling at full speed, he no longer has time for romance, curricular or extracurricular," explained mannequin Lulu Geste.

Men counter that the new emancipated woman is responsible for the deterioration of the Blue Hour.

"The beautiful girl of 1963 prefers to work and keep herself in more splendor than a French lover can afford these days," declared octogenarian dandy Rene Lefevreau.

The housing problem has been no help. It is almost impossible for most Frenchmen to find love nests for their mistresses.

Such spots can be rented in the suburbs, but commuting is so slow there is no time left for illicit romance during the prescribed hours from 5 to 7 p.m.

With the gradual extinction of l'heure bleue, the traditional Paris mistress is dying out, too.

"It is too bad," said philosopher Henri Laure. "France has always had more women than men. The wife and mistress situation gave everybody at least a part-time partner."

Now the ladies work and support themselves, but they lack male companionship. The men are lonelier, too.

"Psychologically a mistress does something for a man that no other woman can," explained Anne Marie Carriere, author of "Dictionnaire des Hommes."

Without his l'heure bleue the Frenchman is liable to become frustrated. These days you can find him wandering around Paris not knowing what to do when the office closes.

Wives are not completely happy either.

"A guilty husband brings home gifts and seldom complains if his wife has bought herself a new hat," declared Genevieve Bertrand, three times a widow.

And if hubby can't be depended to stay out of the house until 7:30 p.m., wifey cannot feel free to carry on her flirtation with a younger man either.

Many French parents believe these flirtations are a necessary education for their sons.

Young Frenchmen learn how to be great lovers by having alliances with older women who teach them a great deal," reported Monsieur Lefevreau. "My father arranged for such training for me as a young man. The experience was most valuable."

Training from a prostitute is not a satisfactory substitute.

"It lacks tenderness," he said.

Mlle. Carriere added that it also lacks the tentative, uncertain approach to love that a woman desires from a man. "A young man in the training period should not be able

to hold an older woman," she insisted.

If he does, he is liable to become conceited and to use women as mere accessories to his social standing.

Quote

HERBERT HOOVER—"The disintegrating forces in the United Nations are the Communist nations in its membership."

LENNY BRUCE, Comedian, commenting in L. A. on Chicago narcotics conviction—"I'd rather get the gas chamber in Los Angeles than spend a day in jail in Chicago."

VANCE PACKARD, social critic on California tour—"America is so profile conscious. This is carried so far that one meat-packing company is pushing a low-fat dog food."

DR. DANIEL BLAIN, retiring director of the State Mental Health Department—"Any man who continues in boxing for any length of time will suffer some brain damage."

ALAN EICHMAN, Monterey, explaining climb to top of Golden Gate bridge—"You get an urge, you look at it, you want to do it."

In the past, law enforcement has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to serve our nation above and beyond the call of duty. In the fight against crime and subversion, we cannot afford to do less.—J. Edgar Hoover.

You Have Within Yourself Power to Change Things

DALLAS—In our lectures across the country, concerned citizens constantly ask, "What can I do about it?" . . . referring to Cuba, Khrushchev, nuclear crisis, disarmament, inflation, high taxes, delinquency, socialism, etc.

Practically speaking we can't just pull a switch and reverse any trend.

Such matters creep up on us by forces mostly of our own creation . . . sprinkled with indifference, apathy, selfishness or worse. We get the kind of government and policies we create, directly or indirectly.

For example, how many voters elect a man by virtue of his qualifications . . . and how many elect him for his curly hair, personality and what he promises to get for them.

So long as the majority of voters are mainly concerned with what they're going to get out of it, the minority will have to be satisfied with what is left.

Many of those who say, "What can I do about it?" . . . don't really mean it. What they probably mean is, "What can I do to stop what bothers or hurts me, or how can I reduce my taxes, or what gives me a break over the next fellow?"

And the next fellow is thinking the same thing. It all depends on what "next-fellows" have the most votes.

Most People Don't Care

Only a small minority of Americans really care beyond their own self interests . . . and it is this small, but active, group which keeps us from going all the way over the deep end.

But the majority have a detached attitude on everything, until it begins to hurt them, or worry them. This is true from Castro to a doctor's bill. They don't seem to realize that other forces, in addition to communism in Cuba, made Castro possible . . . or that government inflation increased the doctor's bill, as it has increased everything else.

People do not realize that it takes as long to get out of an unpleasant situation as it did to get into it in the first place . . . and usually longer.

You Can Change It All

As an individual you are like a passenger on a jet plane. If anything goes wrong 35,000 feet up, you rely on the pilots. You can't do anything about it at that moment. You hope they can land you safely.

But are you equally convinced that the public officials you elect also know their business? Do you care whether the pilot is bald or has curly hair?

Do you appraise the pilot's personality? Or are you mostly impressed when the airline ads inform you that "our pet pilots are veterans of millions of air-miles?"

To you who ask, "What can I do?" . . . an answer could be . . . start at the right place at the right time . . . not when you're 35,000 feet up in the air.

There Is A Way

Those who say "There is nothing I can do about it," are just as wrong as those who ask too late, "What can I do?" . . . and expect miracles overnight. Both can do something about it. There is a way.

The state of the nation . . . the drift toward more and more socialism . . . the discriminatory taxes . . . the favoritism of political tax cuts to lower income groups . . . inflation . . . all these are due, for the most part, to a breakdown of the moral fiber of a lot of our people . . . not just a few.

Khrushchev didn't do it. We helped him and his communism by default.

If the nation is to get back to the traditions of a free people with a free choice . . . a lot of individual Americans have to get back on course, first.

Individuals make nations. Nations are people. Politicians are people who came up from our society. We helped to make them after our own image. They are our image.

They didn't come from Mars. They are like you and me . . . the best or worst of you and me. They were trained in our schools, in our institutions. So start there.

Each of us has within ourselves a great creative energy. We have the power of honesty and fair play . . . love or hate . . . greed or sacrifice . . . the highest or the lowest motives. This is true of the rich or poor among us.

Each has equal power to reverse the trend. It starts with a majority of one. The place to start is inside, in your own brain.

A person freed from indifference cannot project indifference in others. A loyal American projects loyalty.

He does ask not what my country can do for me, but what can I do for my country . . . and mean just that.

To those who ask, "What can I do about it?" . . . I need only suggest that all external things, all political decisions, all discriminations, all crooked politics, all statesmanship, all honesty in government, all crusades . . . well

nigh all human actions, begin in the minds of men. There will never be peace, love, sacrifice, understanding in our families, communities, state, nation, or world . . . until the minds of men are first purified of evil. There is no other way.

There is not much you can do about Cuba, high taxes or inflation now. But there is a lot you can do to prevent them in the future. This is your only role of the moment . . . the hard road ahead, and pray there is still time.

Those you elected, wisely or unwisely, are carrying out your mandate as they see fit. To change the trend tomorrow you must change the society of tomorrow. The place to start is with you . . . and with young Americans who will some day lead the nation.

You say this is too far-fetched? Maybe you can submit a better idea.

Our Man Hoppe

Can Bankers Be Buddies?

—Art Hoppe

Have you noticed how friendly our bankers are getting lately? In their advertising? Isn't it heartwarming? Well, Mr. Edward L. Bond Jr., the distinguished ad agency executive, is dead against it.

Bankers, says Mr. Bond, president of Young & Rubican, should stop trying to project an image of "easy and casual friendliness." By advertising the "friendly loan" your "friendly banker" will humbly give you, friend. Because, he says, sternly, "banks must be something the depositor can aspire to." And thus, "the bank and the banker (must) symbolize the ultimate in self esteem and security."

I'm sure Mr. Bond is right. From the Depositor's point of view. But what about the forgotten half of the economy. Us Borrowers? Oh, the change Mr. Bond's grim warning has wrought in our plight!

It wasn't a month ago I saw this funny, little cartoon figure on television, jumping gaily up and down in his eagerness to tide me over my financial worries. And as the tide was over my head at the moment, I popped right down to the sponsor: The good old Jovial Neighborhood Bank.

Things went great. I said, "Money." And the president himself, good old Jud W. ("Call me Icky") Ickles, vaulted over the rail and threw his arms around me.

"How much can I give you, Pal," he chortled, fumbling in the hip pocket of his Bermuda shorts. "A couple of C notes? If you need over a grand, Pal, I'll have to get the cookie jar down. But you name it, Pal. And don't worry about paying it back. It's only money, Pal. And with us at Jovial Neighborhood, it's palship that counts, Pal."

So I didn't worry. Then Mr. Bond made his speech. And the next thing I knew I got a notice from The Frosty National Self-Esteem and Security Trust, Ltd. ("formerly Jovial Neighborhood Bank). Suggesting I drop in at my earliest convenience. Or else.

The gentleman in black vest and gold spectacles behind the railing (to which barbed wire and broken glass had been added) looked vaguely familiar. And then I recognized him. "Icky!" I said, throwing wide my arms.

"Our name," he said coldly, "is Mr. J. Wellington Ickles. You may call us 'Please, Sir.' We see you are delinquent \$293.04, including interest compounded quarterly. Quarterly-hourly. And it is therefore our duty to inform you that we are repossessing your electric can opener, front lawn, wife and seven of your nine children. Now excuse us while we go sack the assistant cashier for having a twinkle in his eye."

So it's been very hard on us borrowers. (I really miss that old electric can opener of mine.) And it just shows that our whole Banking System is run by Depositors. Who else gets to speak out on the financial pages? Nobody. Is this fair? No.

And I'm sure I speak for us borrowers everywhere when I say that what we want is a kindly, jovial banker. A banker who is a pal. A banker who puts palship above crass money.

And if I ever find one, I'll let you know.

Morning Report:

For a long time it was the "missile gap," and now we are faced with the "plumber gap." President Kennedy is still trying to get enough of them to keep 20 toilets at the White House in operation. And Premier Voronov, of the Russian Republic, maintains there is a shortage of hot water in Moscow.

I am happy to see the high and mighty of the world are in the same boat with the rest of us.

Meanwhile Defense Secretary McNamara says we can level Russia. And Russian Defense Minister Malinovsky is equally sure they can level us. Before either of them is proved right, I'd like to report a faucet that only leaks at nights and on weekends—when plumbers are on time and a half.

Abe Mellinkoff