

Press-Herald

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How Much Profit?

We are often told that the American people, by and large, are woefully deficient in their knowledge of economics. And that seems to accurately apply to just about every area where an economic question is involved.

Take, for instance, a question which comes home to every family and which was asked in a recent survey: "For every one hundred dollars spent at your food store, about how much profit do you think the store makes after paying all expenses?" The answers ran a wide gamut—the peak figure being 60 per cent and the lowest, provided by 9 per cent of the people answering, being less than 3 per cent. A quarter of the respondents, which made up the largest single group, guessed that profit in this case ran from 21 to 40 per cent.

This survey indicates that "... most people have a vague and often distorted idea about food store profits." A major food chain reprinted these findings in its house organ adding that its own profits on each dollar of sales runs to 1.21 cents.

That figure just about fits all the other food chains and numbers of independent food stores as well. And stores selling goods other than foods commonly earn only three or four per cent on the sales dollar.

The fact is that the great part of any sales dollar, no matter what it is spent for, goes for stocks of goods, for rents and taxes, for wages and other payroll costs, and the other expenses that are a necessary part of doing business. The share that winds up as a profit, it is clear, is vastly exaggerated in the minds of most of us.

IT'S NEWS TO ME by Herb Caen

Beatles Taking Over Shirley's Claim to Fame

SHIRLEY TEMPLE'S most lasting claim to fame—the bartender's soft drink named in her honor—is, I regret to report, gradually becoming a Beetle... Shirley Berman discussing the difficulty of adopting a child in California: "First you have to prove that you really tried!"... Godfrey Cambridge, the stout Negro comic: "I only weight 120 pounds. If you think I look fatter than that, you're prejudiced!"... Edie Adams, who chain smokes cigars, lost the finger ring gadget she holds them in to a souvenir collector while visiting here... U. S. Travelers abroad report that JFK half-dollars are selling for \$5 in West Germany and Italy... CBS's Walter Cronkite introduced his beautiful 16-year-old daughter, Nancy, to NBC's David Brinkley—and stood by with a pained look as Nancy gushed: "Oh, Mr. Brinkley, I NEVER miss your program!" To her pop Nancy apologized later: "Well I didn't say I LIKED it, did I?"

MORE OF SAME: Whenever playmate people complain, "But Pierre Salinger doesn't LOOK like a Senator." I think of Warren G. Harding, who looked like a President... The Greyhound bus people are "studying the possibility" of installing seat belts in all their buses, but no decision has been reached. What's to study? I mean, seat belts saves lives, don't they?...

Will Rogers, in a 1935 film ("Life Begins at 40") on the late late show: "Americans feed everybody that don't live close by"—and 30 years later the line still rings true... Dick Gregory, philosophizing on TV: "In the South, they don't care how close you are as long as you don't get too big. In the North, they don't care how big you are as long as you don't get too close."...

Young John Sherlock, whose first novel, "The Ordeal of Major Grigsby," got well off the ground, has finished his second, "The Instant Saint"—based on his experiences as houseboy in one of our toniest mansions. "I spare no one," he reports darkly, and if you read "Grigsby," you know the blood spurts on every page.

STAN FREBERG, reading that Senator Goldwater is "very happy," shrugs: "Naturally he looks at the world through rose-colored bombights."... News to me: That Atty. Melvin Belli has a 23-year-old son (Mel Jr.) who's a Trappist Monk... I never see a girl wearing a beehive hairdo without recalling Arthur Godfrey's description of one: "She looks like she was still expecting a reprieve when the warden threw the switch!"... People who climb escalator steps two at a time use cheap vermouth in their martinis... Men who wear plaid socks don't know how to tie their ties so the ends come out even... Seven out of ten men are so near-sighted that when the barber holds up the mirror they can't see the back of their heads anyway... When you board a plane without a magazine it's even-steven that you'll have to read every one the stewardess offers you... The same day you get a manicure, you'll discover your typewriter ribbon needs changing.

Editor Press-herald: The Press-Herald has the admirable reputation of impartially reporting matters concerning Torrance city government. This trait has made the citizens a far more informed people. This paper's quest for pertinent information to bring to its readers attending prompts this letter.

Many people may not be aware of some rather undemocratic decisions being made in the City of Torrance Planning Commission. An example of such policy was evidenced at the Aug. 5 meeting concerning the final hearing of case 64-53.

The case in point involves a commission-proposed zone change of 3-1, R-1, and C-2 property to C-5 and M-1 lands. Approximately 100 persons were in attendance protesting the undesirable change. Those opposed to the measure presented their points, both collectively and individually. Reasons were cited as to why this pending change was financially unsatisfactory for the area as well as to the individual property owner.

Words to Fit Any Occasion



HERE AND THERE by Royce Brier

Khrushchev's Hope for Salvation Is Nitrogen

The pilgrims knew so little about planting that the Indians had to teach them to put a fish head in each cornhill to increase the yield. Since then the Americans have done well in food-stuffs, but today probably nothing is less interesting to urban Americans than fertilizer.

Yet the modern fertilizer technique is, with the automobile, the foundation of a good share of their well being and world economic preeminence.

Premier Khrushchev recently talked of his dire need of building a fertilizer industry. We don't have figures for Soviet production, but there is a goal of 10-12 million annual tons in the next five years. This would be about 1/5 of the fertilizer per tillable acre, that the United States now produces. Our current production is around 30 million tons, with an annual growth rate of 9 per cent. But our nitrogen production has increased 70 per cent in four years.

The three major chemical fertilizers are phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen, with the latter far ahead. It is made by combining atmospheric nitrogen with the hydrogen in natural gas, forming anhydrous ammonia.

Khrushchev has the air and gas, but the machinery is complicated and tech-

niques cannot be developed overnight, and that is his trouble. He is trying to buy whole plants in Japan and western Europe. Our nitrogen plants run around the clock.

Consequently, Khrushchev can barely feed his people while we, with half the tillable soil, have immense food surpluses. Soviet grain production is half ours, and so is meat production, which depends on fertilized fodder.

You hear of Japan's rapid rise in steel and electronics, but the real rise is in fertilizers. Japan uses 100 pounds of nitrogen per annum, per acre, and feeds six people from that acre.

At the other end, India uses one pound per acre, and its subsistence food production has hardly changed in this century.

Some have advocated that the United States in foreign aid should forget tractors, technical teams and power dams, and spread the whole \$3.5 billion in fertilizers. It is argued this would get the mass of the people on the land in low-production countries and in two years fill tens of millions of bellies now empty. The writer wouldn't know, but considers it worth a thought.

BOOKS by William Hogan

New James Cozzens Book Rated 'Dishwater Dull'

Seventeen stories of assorted length by James Gould Cozzens, "Children and Others," are professional literary exercises that project an old-fashioned atmosphere. Or maybe just middle-aged. In a time of li-

terary turmoil—literary extremism, if you will—they represent the literary status quo. They are, in fact, dull as dishwater when read one after another. Yet I suppose that members of the old Saturday Evening Post audience, who would not be found alone at night with a novel by Terry Southern, Warren Miller or James Baldwin thank their lucky stars that writers like Cozzens are still practicing. This is their sort of book, competence personified.

This is Cozzens' first book since "By Love Possessed," his controversial novel of 1957. "Children and Others" is an interim book, for his publishers assure us that another big Cozzens novel is in production, if not in sight.

"By Love Possessed" brought warm critical praise when it was introduced (a major huzzah was sounded by Brendan Gill in The New Yorker). The novel suffered later from a critical backlash when Dwight MacDonal and other heavyweight Establishment icons clashed to it apart unmercifully, and I think unfairly.

These fashionable attacks relegated the author of "Guard of Honor" and other first-rate novels to the company of Book-of-the-Month Club members. He rested, as a result, in a fiscally comfortable purgatory, along with Irving Stone and Leon Uris, rather than occupying a niche in the American literary pantheon. Cozzens is a better writer

The United States, Canada and Australia have grain and other surpluses. Japan's scant acres, and western and middle Europe produce well, but some foods are imported. The remainder of the world is short in many basic foods, and production steadily falls behind population growth. It is this phase of the population explosion which many world economists consider dangerous.

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Candidates and voters join in singing "God Bless America" and then leave it all to God. Shirk responsibility by shifting the blame is a political hoax as old as the hills. Voters have limited access to political facts, which make them vulnerable to political fakes.

Public office is still the last refuge of many incompetents, or the rich. Vote-hungry politicians are violating the Constitution for a doctrine of conformity by coercion and street mobs. The politician who offers the same rewards to the man who loafs as to the man who works is stabbing America in the back.

Some people must wonder why it is that columnists, who pontificate and pretend to expose the evils of politics, become columnists instead of politicians and practice what they preach.

SOCIALISM—You have two cows and they make you give one to your neighbor.

COMMUNISM—You have two cows, the government takes them both and gives you the milk, maybe.

FASCISM—You have two cows, the government takes them both and sells you the milk.

NAZISM—You have two cows, the government takes them both and sends you to prison.

PATERNALISM—You have two cows, Washington takes both, shoots one, milks the other and throws the milk away to hold up prices.

CAPITALISM—You have two cows, you sell one and buy a bull.

AFTER HOURS by John Morley

Presidential Campaigns--More Curiosity Than Hope

CHICAGO—I begin to report each presidential campaign every four years with more curiosity than hope.

It's a matter of partisan interpretation. The Democrats claim their policies are sweeping the country, while the Republicans retort that we are being taken to the cleaners.

These appear to be "prosperous years" because both government and a lot of people are living on-the-cuff. But they are actually "lean years," for more and more of our people are leaning on the government than ever before in history.

It used to be that American patriots would shout "Give me liberty..." Now millions of Americans leave off the last word.

Things would be indeed dark for the nation if our freedom depended on the votes of the illiterate and uninformed minorities or majorities.

Candidates who claim the country is being ruined are trying mightily hard to get hold of the wreck.

What we need is more politicians who love the people between political campaigns.

By next Christmas it's a foregone conclusion that the children will start writing to the White House instead of Santa Claus.

Politicians in recent years have invented more ways to go to jail than ever before in history.

It's still the people who corrupt government—not government the people.

Trying to solve the nation's problems with political oratory is like trying to untangle traffic by honking the horn.

The most critical hour in our history is usually while a politician is making a speech.

Too many politicians confuse the power politics of their districts with the power politics of Vietnam.

Candidates and voters join in singing "God Bless America" and then leave it all to God.

Shirk responsibility by shifting the blame is a political hoax as old as the hills.

Voters have limited access to political facts, which make them vulnerable to political fakes.

A black conscience, not a black complexion, should be the yardstick for voting or running for public office.

Charity used to be a private virtue, until politicians turned it into a billion dollar government institution.

This or any other "poverty program" will destroy more than build, for it does not allow for the weakness of human nature.

We seldom hear a politician complain about the take-home pay of a white collar worker.

In the horse-and-buggy days government at least allowed those who worked to keep pretty near all the money they earned.

It is an old American custom to pick our officials and then pick on them. Losing an election is far worse for some politicians than losing our freedom. The modern interpretation of reality is a senator's 15 relatives on the government payroll.

We sure have "advanced." It used to be that the only contact we had with Uncle Sam as a rule was through the post office.

Many Congressmen mainly represent the constituents who scare them most.

It appears that the success of a political campaign depends on the ability to make the majority hate something.

Our Man Hoppe

Third Hour Was His Best

By Arthur Hoppe

SANTIAGO, CUBA—I went out to hear Mr. Castro read a 1000-word declaration to the people. It was a very nice speech. I thought the third hour was the best.

The first hour, frankly, was a little slow. As a speaker, Mr. Castro takes his time warming up. It was 6:28 p.m., the sun still high and hot in the western sky, when he unbuckled his gun belt, stepped to the rostrum and accepted the roar from the ten acres of humanity stretched out below with a languid wave of his hand.

He frowned, delicately adjusted each of the five microphones with thumb and forefinger, shushed and began. Naturally, he didn't want to begin with the declaration itself. So he began with a history of the Cuban Revolution. In case someone hadn't heard about it before. We had a beautiful sunset.

At 7:22 p.m. he paused for a sip of what appeared to be mango juice from a flowered jelly glass. The lights came on. He was now talking about hydroelectric power, roads and the need for more milk bottles. Twilight in the Caribbean is truly lovely.

By 8 p.m. it was dark. Mr. Castro was by now fully warmed up, as you could tell by the healthy glow of perspiration on his brow. And also by his gestures. His gestures were becoming magnificent.

As you may know, Mr. Castro is a right-handed speaker and is generally considered one of the best right-handers in the Latin American League. Actually, he depends for control almost exclusively on the index finger of his right hand.

He has one particularly fine motion which he relies on heavily. It consists of extending his arm skyward, finger downward and then rotating the finger vigorously. I think it means "We Cubans."

Other uses for the finger include pointing at himself, the people, heaven above, hell below and the past, which lies backward over his shoulder. Oddly, the future lies to his right and he points to it with the index fingers of both hands. I doubt this is politically significant, however.

He has a good crouch, an excellent up and down motion when emphasizing a major point, a vigorous nod for emphasizing a minor point, a heroic shrug of disdain and a pair of the best arched eyebrows you ever saw. Surprisingly, he never beats his chest. He beats his stomach. He also has a warm smile. But he doesn't use it much.

At 9:01, Mr. Castro finally pulled out the declaration and said he was now going to read it. But then he got off on Algeria, Vietnam, Guantanamo, U.S. politics, foreign relations in general and the value of Tarzan films. The moon came out.

It was 9:52 before he began to read. Reciting all 12 points took six minutes. He wound up crying: "Long live Marxist-Leninism! Long live the Socialist Revolution!" All the happy speech fans sang the Internationale and at 10:30 everybody went home.

Well, Mr. Castro is undeniably one of the all-time great right-handed speakers with a spectacular delivery and superb endurance. But I doubt he'd be much of a crowd pleaser in the States with his four-hour performances. Which, if nothing else, goes to show you the vast difference between the Latin and American national pastimes.