

Another Tax Shift

Another in a series of moves to shift tax collections from a general fund tax to special levies has been brought to light in a letter from the city to the Torrance Unified School District.

The new proposal, outlined in a letter from Walter M. Nollac, city engineer and street superintendent, is to establish a sewer service charge for each parcel in the city connected to the sanitary sewer system.

While the charges for this purpose would be modest, according to the city's estimates, it is a means of broadening the city's tax base. It's a way to get more money from the taxpayer.

The Press-Herald stands opposed to the growing practice of shifting this tax burden from one pocket to the next. It is a means of circumventing the legal limits placed on the city's power to levy ad valorem taxes.

The city now has a legal limit of \$1 per each \$100 of assessed valuation that can be levied on property for general fund purposes.

Establishment of lighting maintenance districts has been going one throughout the city for several years, adding the cost of street lights to the homeowners tax bill.

Establishment of a sewer service fee would be another addition to the tax bill, in effect, although it probably would show up on the water bills.

If the trend continues, it is possible to project the practice into the near future and find other service charges.

The City Council should not be able to evade its responsibility to the taxpayers by setting up the special taxing devices. We are certain that most taxpayers are unaware of the subtle tax-raising schemes. All they're called on to do is dig up the ever bigger pile of money to satisfy the tax collector.

Now is the time to question the appropriateness of such special levies—not when they show up on next year's tax bill.

We suggest your city councilmen might like to have your views on the matter.

IT'S NEWS TO ME by Herb Caen

New Game May Assist FBI

A KIDDIES' game called "Victory Over Communism (America's First Anti-Communist Game)" is now being sold in the stores—and this should make the FBI's work a little easier. All they have to do is watch the nippers playing it, and start a file on the one who tries to lose.

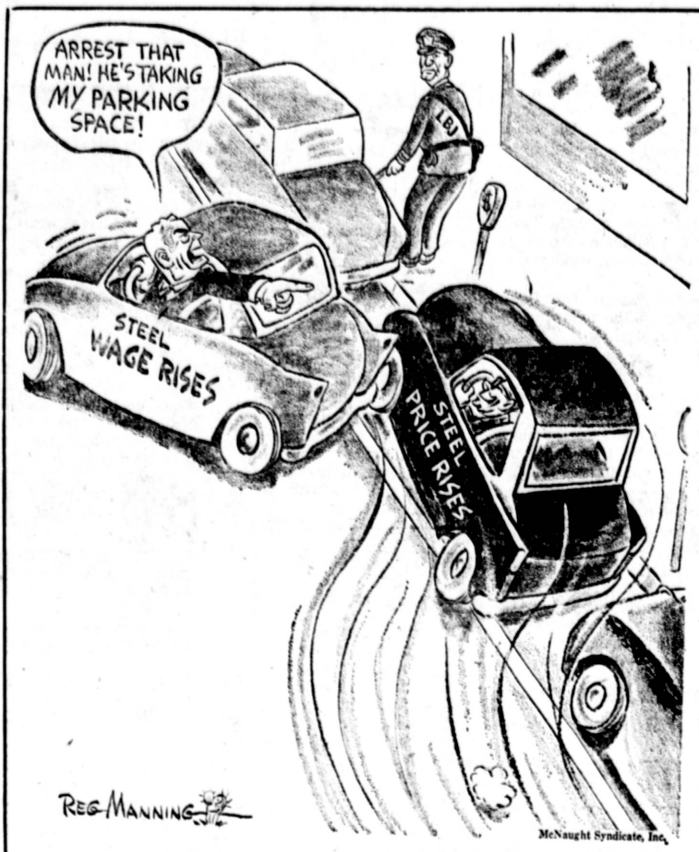
THE SIGN of the week reposes in a window of the world's biggest Woolworth's, at Powell and Market. Placed amid a display of poinsettias, holly berries and other holiday flora, it reads: "Nothing expresses the fragrance of living more than lifelike plastic flowers." Thing about it. And drive yourself mad-mad-mad. Aaaaargh.

THE OTHER DAY a local traffic cop was using a kid's dime-store plastic whistle, proving again that policemen are not overworked, they're underpaid. Poor devil probably couldn't afford anything better—for, as you might not know, our officers have to buy their own whistles. Also their own uniforms, shoes, raincoats, handcuffs, guns and even the bullets they occasionally fire to protect the generous public. They pay a \$10 deposit on the star they proudly wear and \$1 deposit on their call-box key.

In fact, only one item of equipment is issued free to our fine fellows, and one guess should do it. Right. Their traffic-tag books. YOU pay for those, page by page.

PROTOTYPE: We were sitting around the other night, talking about Little Old Ladies, wondering how the mystique started, and all that—and Ed Golden, the insurance man, told about the time he saw what must have been the original LOL. Erect, white-haired, fierce of mien and clutching an umbrella, she approached a trolley bus just as the driver closed the door. With her umbrella, she rapped angrily on the glass, but the driver ignored her—whereupon she marched to the rear of the bus, hooked her umbrella handle through the rope, and yanked the trolley off the wire. Then she stomped off, head high, triumphant smile on face, the all-time All-American LOL.

POSTSCRIPTS: Charles McCabe Esq., the former Fearless Spectator, who is now county-squaring it in England, will be thrilled and delighted to receive a Christmas card from the S.F. Giants, whom he so often lacerated; sent by Vice Pres. Chub Feeny, who confesses to "a sneaking admiration" for the old curmudgeon ("but don't tell Horace Stoneham!") . . . Atty Mel Belli won—and last—a \$250,000 suit against a surgeon whose insurance company turns out to be Russian (Ingosstrakh Moscow, which no longer operates in the U.S.). Belli's lachrymose reaction: "I may have to get on the hot line to appeal this one" . . . Drop-dead dept. (from the N.Y. Times' review of Doris Muscatine's new "A Cook's Tour of Rome") . . . "Although Mrs. Muscatine is a San Franciscan, her book shows enormous industry and taste." Even for a Berkeley-yan, which she is?



HERE AND THERE by Royce Brier

Eisenhower Misses Main Point of FDR Demand

Late in 1942, President Roosevelt was casting about for something electric to say about the allied objectives in the war. . . . So at Casablanca, January, 1943, he said: "The elimination of the German, Japanese and Italian war power means the unconditional surrender by Germany, Japan and Italy."

The President derived the term "unconditional surrender" from General Grant. The General was hardly a sparkling phrase-maker of the Churchill type, but he could deliver plain English of unmistakable meaning. In this case, February, 1862, he meant the enemy had better surrender right now.

General Eisenhower lacks Grant's flair for plain English, but in Chicago recently he managed to say he thought Mr. Roosevelt's use of the term "unconditional surrender" was not very happy.

In his roundabout way, Mr. Eisenhower did say the phrase made the enemy fight harder. He said in effect that Hitler seized it to warn his people of their fate if the war was lost—if used at all, the phrase should have been directed at governments, not nations.

General Simon Buckner, the Confederate commander, hoped to save his army and wrote to Grant asking for terms. But Grant had no time to fool around, as his superior, Halleck in St. Louis, was as jittery as a jaybird and might raise the siege.

So Grant wrote: "I have no terms but unconditional surrender. I propose to move on your works immediately." He did, and Buckner surrendered. As the Union had not in 10 months seen a victory of consequence, they rang all the church and school bells in the North, and the General was on every tongue as "Unconditional Surrender (for U.S.) Grant."

While Mr. Roosevelt's use of the term seemed apt on the surface, it dealt with whole peoples at war, while Grant was dealing with a fortified enemy in the field. Moreover, he could make good his resolve (or lose his shirt) in 24 hours, and Mr. Roosevelt couldn't. History is a capricious mistress, particularly when she talks.

Books by William Hogan

Last Brilliant Days Of the Dial Retold

The impish Max Beerbohm admitted that The Dial no doubt was the century's most influential American magazine of arts and letters. But he refused to write for it. Sir Max said that while his works were few and chosen with care he could not afford to dispose of them at the rate of two cents a word.

Through the 1920s, The Dial was an aesthetic triumph, a literary journal of taste and intelligence. If not Max Beerbohm, just about every other member of the literary elite was a part of its monthly show — D. H. Lawrence, Hart Crane, Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Mann, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Yeats, Santayana, Cummings, even Proust. T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" was published serially in The Dial. Its illustrators included Picasso, Chagall, Matisse and Brancusi.

While this editorial rebellion against the genteel tradition had a relatively small audience (10,000 or so), its readership was a profoundly influential company which helped keep an American intellectual flame glowing through that era of wonderful nonsense.

A full-dress, scholarly rundown on The Dial's story from its Chicago origins in the 1880s through its New York heyday appears as "Scotfield Thayer and The Dial: An Illustrated History" (Southern Illinois Press). This is by Nicholas Joost, a Midwestern professor of the humanities. While the book carries some unnecessarily straight-faced professorial overtones, it also bubbles with literary gossip which makes absorbing reading.

Scotfield Thayer, a rich New England esthete and idealist, underwrote the publication's perpetual financial losses. Thayer demanded editorial excellence

for his investment and was rewarded with a cosmopolitan, urbane and uncompromisingly honest editorial product.

In retrospect, The Dial made its share of mistakes. On at least three occasions it rejected contributions from Ernest Hemingway. The poet Marianne Moore edited The Dial in its last years. When Thayer submitted some work of his own, Miss Moore returned it, explaining it was not of publishable quality. This, Professor Joost comments, perhaps was the final small factor in Thayer's decision to pull out of The Dial.

More in fact, the journal's function had been performed by the summer of 1929. It suspended publication as an age was just ending, just three months before the famous stock market crash.

This work, printed in an elegant limited edition, is something of an art as well as a literary history. More than 50 illustrations include engravings originally used in The Dial, as well as art from Thayer's collection (Picasso to Rockwell Kent). If The Dial's story seems literary - artistic costume drama today, it reflects exciting times in the arts. Certainly nothing quite like "The Dial" has come along since.

TRAVEL by Stan Delaplane

Silver Dollars, Kennedy Coins Just A Curiosity

"I have some silver dollars and some Kennedy half dollars. Would these be an advantage in tipping in Europe?"

No. They're a curiosity. But coins don't exchange from one country to another generally. So if you don't unload before leaving a country, you've got souvenirs.

"You mentioned recently that freighters do not serve dinner after six. However, on our French Line freighters, dinner is served up to 8 p.m."

I meant on American freighters I have been on. It's a matter of union time on and off.

"Is it possible to drive to La Paz in Lower California?"

I know people who have done it. But on most primitive roads. No accommodations. You have to be able to make roadside repairs yourself. However, there is a new car ferry from Mazatlan. Reported to be absolutely excellent by that Mexico expert, Dan Sanborn, who will write you all about it if you ask him. Just address Sanborn Travel Service, McAllen, Texas. No charge.

Random thought for the New Year: Most of the mail I cannot answer is from teenage girls. And the reason is they don't give their addresses. For instance, who is Donna Todd? And where do you live, Donna?

"We are planning to stay in England for awhile. And if our money runs out, we will work . . ."

Not likely. Your passport will be stamped by British immigration — "not permitted to enter any employment, paid or unpaid."

"We will be staying at Waikiki and wonder if we should plan on renting a car."

No. Take the sightseeing bus for trips around the island. You can walk everywhere in Waikiki. Or take a taxi. A car just makes a parking problem for you.

"We would like to send a present to an American couple in Rome. I understand there is some way we can send them to a good restaurant for dinner. Can you tell us and recommend the restaurant?"

This buy-the-dinner service is called "Be My Guest." Get it through any American Express Office. I'd say this time of year, George's if you want it elegant and quiet. Or Hostaria dell'Orso which is the "21" of Rome. (For summer, try Tre Scalini.)

Everybody gets whipped up about the wine and mushrooms and pasta in Rome. Not many people find a real sleeper — the ice cream. The best in Europe. Maybe the best in the whole world. And the best place for it is the ice cream place right alongside Tre Scalini in Piazza Navona. Maybe it's part of Tre Scalini, but it is a separate place.

"What type of clothing do we need in Mexico?"

Same as you'd wear in any big city in the U. S. for Mexico City. Dark suits and cocktail dresses for evening. No formal wear. Women don't wear hats in

Strength for These Days (From The Bible)

Let the weak say, I am strong.—(Joel 3:10).

There is never a time when we do not have available to us all the strength, all the power, all the help we need to cope with anything. God, in His infinite mercy provides all these things. All we need do is seek His assistance.

Mexico. (But you need a scarf for your head going into churches. Even while sightseeing.) In the country you can be quite casual. Some Mexican women are beginning to wear slacks and stretch pants. But very few. I'd avoid those except in Acapulco. During winter, Mexico City can get near freezing sometimes. Take an overcoat.

"Would it be a saving to buy a car in Europe? Or is the shipping cost so much I might as well buy in the U. S.?"

Roughly, I think you save money if the car cost in Europe is more than \$2,000. If it is less than that, the eventual will be just about what you'd have to pay here. There's one factor depends on your plans: If you are spending quite a bit of time and renting a car, then buying becomes more attractive.

Shipping it home will be about \$200. Duty will be 6½ per cent of a value assessed by Customs. (The more you drive it, the less its value.) And this is pretty tricky: The car must be bought "as an incident of foreign travel." Meaning you can't go abroad just to buy a car. It seems you can make payment on the car. But you must not take title to it until you get there or it is not "an incident of foreign travel."

Our Man Hoppe

This War Is Just too Small

By Arthur Hoppe

I'm glad to see where all the ace experts finally agree on how come we're losing that war in Vietnam: It's too small.

Naturally, this is terribly frustrating. To examine the problem in depth and explore possible solutions, I called in my military affairs analyst, Corporal Homer T. Pettibone, U.S. Army Flying Corps (retired).

Q—Corporal, is it really true we're losing in Vietnam because the war is too small?

A—Yes, quite so. The Viet Cong enemy now number only some 25,000 regulars. We have, as you know, some 22,000 U.S. military advisers in the field, plus more than 100,000 loyal Vietnamese fighting men. Who are mostly fighting loyally among themselves.

Q—But with five-to-one odds on our side . . .

A—Oh, yes, we should be able to lick the Viet Cong with one arm tied behind our backs. After all, we have the most modern fighting force the world has ever seen. Take anti-tank warfare. Our best military minds, as the result of a 12-year study, have at last devised computer-oriented anti-tank tactics which guarantee a 97.2 per cent chance of victory against tanks no matter what their deployment. But in Vietnam we faced an unexpected problem.

Q—The problem is terrain?

A—No, the problem is the Viet Cong don't have any tanks.

Q—I see.

A—Similarly, our advanced work at the War College in massed artillery barrages, armored division maneuvers and nuclear missile deployment has all gone for naught in Vietnam.

Q—A shame. What can be done to crush the Viet Cong?

A—Obviously, we have no choice. We must launch an all-out recruitment drive and send every available tank, gun and plane to Vietnam.

Q—To our American boys in the trenches out there?

A—No, no. To the Viet Cong.

Q—You mean we ought to recruit more enemy soldiers and give them better weapons?

A—Yes, of course. Once the enemy has a good-sized, well-equipped, modern army, we will regain the advantage our superior military skill gives us. We'll smash them in three months!

Q—But . . .

A—Ah, to wage a decent, full-scale war once again. Ah, the battlefield maneuvers, the aerial dogfights, the intriguing challenges of strategy and tactics.

Q—But . . .

A—Oh, I can't describe the bitterness and frustration our keenly-trained military leaders have undergone the past 15 years. First Korea, now this. As General Sherman said: "Limited war is hell!" But now, with this new plan . . .

Q—But, Corporal, the public will never approve sending tanks and guns to the enemy.

A—Damn civilians! Always dragging their feet.

Q—I understand the problem, Corporal. But, really, there must be some other way to overcome this handicap of this being too small a war.

A—Have faith in the military, son. We'll think of something.

Morning Report:

It seems to me the AFL-CIO is missing a good bet. If any group of laborers needed to be organized, it's college football coaches. These fellows rarely make more than 25 per cent more than the college president and only about twice the pay of a top-flight philosophy professor. Yet along with this pittance they have no job security.

At the end of each season those who have lost more than half of their games are fired to make room for those who have won more than half.

I foresee a national conspiracy among them. We'll wake up one day to see every university ending its football season with a perfect score: half won, half lost. That way a coach will stay on forever. Nobody around to replace him.

Abe Mellinkoff