

Press-Herald

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The Threat of SCAG

One of the hottest political arguments in Southern California at the moment is over a four-letter word that few people had heard about before the just-ended football season opened last fall.

The word — SCAG — has excited city and county political leaders as nothing else has in recent memory. SCAG stands for Southern California Association of Governments, and is being organized as a six-county planning and advisory body.

Several arguments have been advanced against such an organization, but the most urgent appears to be the expressed fear that it will soon move from a voluntary association to one of compulsion.

Opponents of the idea, who have been using terms like "super-government" to describe the proposals, see in the formation of such groups as SCAG the threat of a federal blackjack.

Los Angeles City Councilmen were told last week that federal funds in many programs would be allocated only on the application of such an organization.

As it currently stands, SCAG now has signed up each of the six Southern California counties mapped out by its organizers — Los Angeles being the last to join a week ago. Others who joined last fall are Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Imperial. Also eligible to join are 142 cities within those six counties.

Los Angeles City Council decision on joining has been delayed several times since last fall and was delayed again for 40 days when it was considered last Monday.

According to reports made to the Los Angeles City Council during the months-long study, SCAG will be administered by an executive director who will have the power to appoint, direct, or replace any SCAG employee; and it will be able to make and enter into contracts, acquire and hold real estate and personal property, and incur debts, liabilities, and other obligations.

From our vantage point the association is frightening. We already have lost much of our municipal sovereignty through the pre-emption of powers by the state. To add another layer of government to the snarled jungle of red tape would be a "benefit" most of us don't need.

We commend the Los Angeles City Council for its hesitancy on this important decision. We could suggest the same careful checking for other cities — including Torrance — who have yet to make the decision.

Maybe all that "free" money from Washington isn't worth the price.

OTHERS SAY:

No Ukase Is Needed

During the last session of Congress, there was a good deal of discussion over proposed measures that, allegedly, are needed in the name of "consumer protection." And during the coming session this matter promises to be a prominent one.

The proposed "protection," in almost every instance, consist of giving a federal bureaucracy sweeping powers over the goods from which the consumer may pick and choose. They involve labeling and the size and kind of packages. The whole idea is to impose a dull and sterile uniformity on a long list of consumer wares, including foods.

No one objects to laws which demand honest statements of weights and measures and what is inside the package. These laws are in effect everywhere, and in some instances they need to be strengthened that certainly can be done without lessening competition and arbitrarily restricting the consumers' freedom of choice. There is no conceivable need, for instance, for a ukase from Big Brother which will tell a producer what kind of a package he may use in an effort to stimulate sales, and what a retailer can offer.

These proposals, it seems, are predicted on the idea that consumers are generally incompetent and just aren't able to look out for their own interests. Actually, as just about any storekeeper can tell you, the situation is utterly different. The housewife is a wily shopper. She compares, judges and selects. If she ever feels she has been deluded or exploited, she is through with that particular brand of merchandise—and, possibly, with the store which sold it. She is her own best policeman. — *Industrial News Service.*

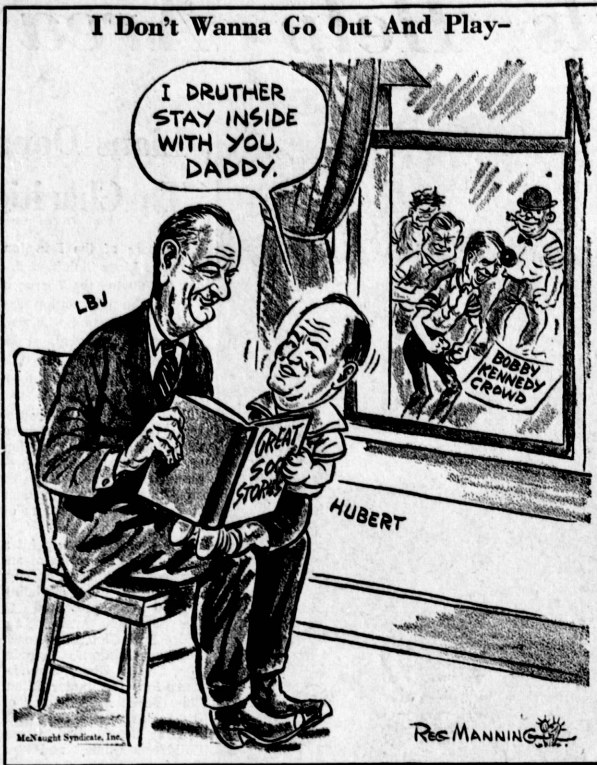
Morning Report:

To increase your cigarette smoking pleasure in the new year, don't read the package. It says: "Caution: Cigarette Smoking may be Hazardous to Your Health." That's a new law to save us from ourselves.

I figure it's just a beginning. Soon, there will be signs at all freeway entrances: "Driving Here May Be Hazardous to Your Health." (A head-on crash at 65 mph is painful.) Similar warnings should also appear on all dashboards and along the fuselages of airplanes. Not to mention bathtubs (a slip can kill you), and tennis rackets (tennis elbow is a fright).

Men, the only solution is an all-purpose warning tattooed on your chest: "Living May Be Dangerous Today" — backwards of course so you can read it while shaving.

Abe Mellinkoff



STAN DELAPLANE

Trinidad Good Base for Hopping About Caribbean

PORT-OF-SPAIN, TRINIDAD — Columbus lost an anchor here. And replicas, from watch chain size to full-blown dinner table displays in brass, are offered in every tourist shop. A warm and flowery island. The startling prices of the upper Caribbean haven't arrived here — going up, but still moderate. A ticket from here lets you island-hop the whole Windward and Leeward chain, the Virgin Islands and Jamaica en route home. Pand-O-Orient Lines has an attractive cruise-down, fly-home package.

"Do you get any income tax advantages by living overseas? Say for a year in our camper?" You should ask a tax lawyer. But I run into people living overseas who are improving their tax picture — they say it takes 18 months. So if you are going to be there a year, it might be of value to extend it to 18 months — if the lawyer figures it that way.

"We'd like to exchange houses with someone in Hawaii for a summer month. Is there anybody that does this kind of business?"

"We are buying a camper in England and intend to do some extensive touring. Is there any restriction on the time we can stay without paying taxes on it?"

The camper sales people should tell you exactly. But I'd imagine it's the same time you can stay with a car — one year in England. After that you'd have to pay the purchase tax which is a real buster. On cars it runs almost half the price of the car.

"How should we get the camper over to the Continent?"

Again the British auto people are very helpful on such arrangements. I used to fly my car over quite often — only \$16 for me and the car. You drive down to Lydd Airport, three hours south of London on the coast. They put you and the car in a Bristol air freighter. And it's a 10 minute ride to Le Touquet in France.

If a camper truck won't fit in a Bristol, there's a boat and train ferry — I think from Folkestone. But British Railways can tell you.

"Do European hotels have twin beds when they list the prices for double or what?"

Usually there are two beds jammed tightly together so they look like a double bed. The Hiltons and other American-style hotels have our usual twin beds.

"I've heard these hotels have extra charges above the quoted rates . . ."

True. There's always a service charge of 10 to 15 per cent. Usually a tax.

"I don't know of any such business. But I'd do this: Write the Honolulu Advertiser and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin for classified advertising rates. Then run an ad for a few days."

"Wonder if we wouldn't do better to buy a used car in Europe?"

The trouble with used cars is the original, local buyer has already had to pay the local sales tax. You absorb that. So it's likely that a new and tax-free car (to you as a non-resident) would be cheaper.

"As India proved, the way to resist communist aggression and to maintain peace is to stand firm and be willing to fight if necessary." — Charles N. Lee, Berkeley.

(France has 15 per cent service, 9 per cent tax. So your bill comes up 24 per cent higher than the quoted rate.) In snow countries there's a heating charge. In hot countries (Spain), an air-conditioning charge.

"For a trip to Europe, is there a currency converter we can buy?"

Many of them. Usually sold on newsstands in the New York air terminal. Several airlines give them to you free.

"I've heard it is possible to get a discount when buying a watch in Switzerland."

The Swiss are very exact on prices and give no discounts to casual buyers. They are permitted to give 10 per cent discounts (or commissions) to tour guides and airline employees. If you know someone in the airline business, let him do the actual buying. (I could be wrong. But I've never been able to get a discount on anything in Switzerland. And I always ask in all countries. Many tourist shops set prices so that they can give discounts to anybody who asks.)

"The Old Farmer's (1966) Almanac." Old Abe's long-range predictions are based on a secret formula, conceived in 1792 by the original editor, Robert B. Thomas. Abe Weatherwise predicted the recent droughts in the upper East two years ago. He is quick to point out that the weather he is talking about, from his headquarters in Dublin, N.H., is concentrated on one small plot of land, the summit of Blue Hill just south of Boston. But there is a formula in all this that a reader can adapt to other sections of the country, if he is up to it.

WILLIAM HOGAN

'Old Farmer's Almanac' An Exercise in Nostalgia

We have the solemn prediction of "Abe Weatherwise" that the summer drought in the Eastern states will be less severe this year. "Droughts suspended, rain's intended," notes Abe Weatherwise, who is really Robb Sagendorph, publisher of "The Old Farmer's (1966) Almanac." Old Abe's long-range predictions are based on a secret formula, conceived in 1792 by the original editor, Robert B. Thomas. Abe Weatherwise predicted the recent droughts in the upper East two years ago. He is quick to point out that the weather he is talking about, from his headquarters in Dublin, N.H., is concentrated on one small plot of land, the summit of Blue Hill just south of Boston. But there is a formula in all this that a reader can adapt to other sections of the country, if he is up to it.

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HERB CAEN SAYS:

Foreclosed Contract Has Comedian Sahl Up in Arms

Mort Sahl, who was supposed to do a 26-wk. series on a New York TV station and was cancelled after two (James Wechsler of the New York Post: "He set satire back 50 years") is planning legal action, charging breach of contract. But that won't make the reviews any kinder. . . . Joe Slavsky, who's losing his hair (too): "I don't really mind—I'm always the first in my crowd to know when it's starting to rain." The Playboy Club, which opened here with 19,000 members, has escalated to 29,000—adding up to a cool clean \$725,000 in the Bunny. I mean, kitty. . . . If you were thinking of inviting Willie McCovey and Orlando Cepeda to the same party, forget it. . . . Principal decoration in the Willie Mays Insurance Co. office: one of Willie's old gloves, gilded. . . . What do they talk about at breakfast these days? Well, young Neal McDonnell asked Papa Jim: "Dad, what's a butfish." Dad: "A bonefish?" Neal: "No, a butfish—a little butfish." Dad, grabbing: "Give me that newspaper." And there it was: "Penguins eat little but fish."

a woman and saying "Hey, gimme those stockings you are wearing and I'll buy you a new pair." (She agreed). His name: Rich Quetter, a carpenter. His explanation: "A guy and I are working in this building and we needed some nylon to strain the paint through. So I came down the street and started looking for the first girl I could find with a run in her stockings. . . . Why didn't you just buy a new pair yourself? "Aw, that'd be a waste. . . ."

THE WAY IT WAS: You keep reading editorials inveighing against "the growing disreput for law and order," right? The other day, I started browsing through an old newspaper, compulsively. Midwest farmers were on strike, destroying property, defying the law. Salinas farm hands were on strike; in the San Joaquin Valley, growers and workers clashed, with loss of life. Negroes were lynched by "mobs of thousands" in St. Joseph, Mo., Nashville, Princess Ann, Maryland. In San Jose, a mob stormed the jail and lynched two kidnaper-killers, and then Gov. "Sunny Jim" Rolph commended them for "a good job," adding sardonically: "I might parole all kidnappers to such groups." The year: 1933. Last year was no bargain, but would you trade?

FUN GAMES: Erskine Caldwell thinks you should know that every married couple, everywhere in the world, has one thing in common — a magic number. This year it's 3931, a sum you arrive at by adding your present age (to the nearest birthday, the year you were married, number of years married and your year of birth, if it doesn't come out right, try again. . . . The reason I stroll a lot is that sometimes I see things like this: a man walking up to

CHARLIE BRISTOL, the roly-poly doorman at the St. Francis, who has said "Good day, sir," to seven Presidents: Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, FDR, Truman, Ike, and JFK. The biggest tipper? — naturally? — was FDR, who had an aide give him \$20. Coolidge — also naturally? — was the only one who stiffed him. "I was working at the Waldorf in New York when I met him," recalls Charlie, "and he was so economy-minded he wouldn't use the room phone. Said it was an unnecessary expense. Always came down the lobby and used the pay phone."

LAWYER Melvin Bell, who is in a divorce battle with his wife. She and her mother-in-law are occupying the big, seven-bedroom house on Twin Peaks, with all the furniture. He is living in his Telegraph Hill flat with one (1) bed, one (1) TV set and one (1) electric toaster. "MAN, am I ting tired of toast!"

I MEET A million people — among them these:

Curtis Gilbert, the widely-known Pan American pilot who lives in Sausalito when he isn't flying around the world. While he's away, his wife, Elsa, get lonely. So she phones him in Tokyo.

ROYCE BRIER

Built-In Conflict Helps Sustain Self-Government

Secretary of State Rusk was interviewed on television recently and came up with some valuable realism. He said: "I think there is a built-in conflict of interests between the news media and the Secretary of State. You are interested in the drama of news. We are working for solutions and peace. Diplomacy is committed to bringing about a situation which many people would find dull. Our business is to get foreign policy off page one, back to page eight."

Excepting the last passage, which will be discussed presently, Mr. Rusk's candor is refreshing. Town councilmen to Presidents

and Prime Ministers, this deep division between newspapermen and public officers is seldom posed. On the contrary, public officers and too often newspapermen subscribe to the delusion, to wit, that they are all chums in a common cause. When evidence of the falsity of this relation crops up, the parties frequently try to hide it on the dubious ground that both are intrinsically gentlemen.

The art or science, or both, of government is very old in human society. But the art or science of gathering and publishing news has existed for only two centuries at most.

The rise of independent news media is attendant on, and rooted in, the rise of self-government. It was obvious that if self-government was to be effective, the people governing themselves must know what their representatives, elected and appointed, are doing. They must know if they are being wisely or unwisely led (leaving corruption out of it for this writing).

It is often the case that the only force which will, or can, cope with unwise leadership is the news media. This does not mean those engaged in the news are necessarily more virtuous, perceptive, or impartial than public officers. It does mean that the news media have a viewpoint and goal inherently different from those of public officers as to what constitutes wise leadership and wise public action.

A public officer has his pride to save, a quite human trait. Those dealing with news have comparable human feelings, but it is not their primary obligation to save the pride of a public officer.

It is manifest that what Mr. Rusk says has a direct bearing on the historical situation he, his President, and all of us are in. It is also manifest that the news media are duty-bound to present any and all criticism of the foreign policy prevailing and to join in that criticism if they elect to do so.

Hence, Mr. Rusk's hope to switch foreign policy from page one to page eight is not only unrealistic, but unwise. Foreign policy touches the lives, fortunes, and honor of every American citizen. To remove it from full light would be an ostrich act. Doubtless it would be more convenient for a Secretary of State to minimize foreign policy. But it would not be more convenient for the free citizenry. It would be a dangerous refusal to examine developing historical reality, and it would be a default by the news media.

Mr. Rusk, however, is to be commended for raising the issue when it is urgent.

We Quote . . .

Nobody ever said that local control of our own affairs was more economical than statism, or more efficient, or more honest, for that matter. It isn't. It's just freer.—Dr. Max Rafferty, California Superintendent of Public Instruction.

When Americans come out from under the free ether administered by the Great Society, the withdrawal pains will be intense, perhaps fatal.—William F. Maher, Los Angeles.

Women in jobs are not striving for top positions. They want to work, not run the works.—Sally Tinsley, San Francisco student.

Sooner or later something's got to give, and it might be the value of our dollar at home.—Robert M. Bleiberg, national financial editor on a California visit, on the danger of inflation.

If the marchers, demonstrators, and rioters are allowed to continue, they will pull our Republic down over their heads and communism will take us over.—Edythe Rekarst, El Cerrito.

As India proved, the way to resist communist aggression and to maintain peace is to stand firm and be willing to fight if necessary.—Charles N. Lee, Berkeley.