

Press-Herald

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Salute to the Chamber

Designation of the week of April 4-10 as National Chamber of Commerce Week marks the second time such recognition has been given to the Chamber of Commerce movement. Proclamations have been made by Governor Brown and Mayor Isen which have called particular attention to our own local Chamber of Commerce. We believe these tributes are well-earned, and we cannot help but wonder why this recognition has been so long in coming.

Perhaps part of the answer lies in the fact that, as someone has suggested, sometimes the Chamber does its job so well that it is taken for granted by both members and the public. Also, too often the Chamber of Commerce movement is thought to be concerned solely with the advancement of commerce and industry.

Even if this were true, then the Chamber would certainly deserve our accolade, for a healthy business climate is essential to the welfare of a free society. Actually, Chambers of Commerce in communities throughout our state and nation have exhibited a remarkable diversity of interests. To quote Mendall M. Davis, president of the American Chamber of Commerce Executives, "Businessmen cooperating through their local Chambers of Commerce have been in the forefront of every major civic, cultural, educational, and philanthropic advance that has been made since the establishment of communal life."

The many good deeds and worthy projects undertaken by the Torrance Chamber of Commerce certainly lends substance to Mr. Davis' words.

The people of Torrance join Mayor Isen in saluting our Chamber of Commerce. Best wishes from your friends and neighbors!

JAMES DORAIS

Voters Against Many Programs

Popular attitudes on voting rights have changed drastically since the Founding Fathers drafted the U.S. Constitution. President Johnson's almost universal approval last week on the unrestricted right of suffrage would have amazed 18th century Americans who believed the right to vote should be limited to sex, property ownership and other considerations.

In due course, when the voting rights of Negroes in southern states have been made secure, perhaps attention will be turned to granting voters at the national level rights which Californians have enjoyed since 1913: the privilege of initiating legislation and confirming or rejecting legislation passed by the national Congress.

If referendum procedures had been established on the national level, how many laws and programs adopted by Congress over the years would have been turned down by the people?

Recently California Congressman Craig Hosmer conducted a mail poll on current Administration legislative proposals among all constituents of his district, an urban, middle-income area of Los Angeles County reasonably typical of the country as a whole. Registration in the district is 57 per cent Democratic, 41 per cent Republican and 2 per cent miscellaneous.

Responses to the Hosmer questionnaire would indicate that many of the President's proposals are unpopular, some so decidedly disliked that they would undoubtedly be rejected if passed and subjected to referendum.

Medicare financed by increased social security taxes, for example, was favored by only 35 per cent of the respondents, and opposed by 58 per cent.

Maintaining foreign aid at last year's level was approved by only 10 per cent of those answering the Hosmer questionnaire, disapproved by 82 per cent.

The President's war on poverty program was opposed by 63 per cent, favored by only 29 per cent.

Increased aid to depressed areas hit by unemployment, on the other hand, was favored by 49 per cent of the respondents, opposed by only 38 per cent.

Increased federal aid for urban housing projects was rejected by a 54 per cent vote, favored by 34 per cent.

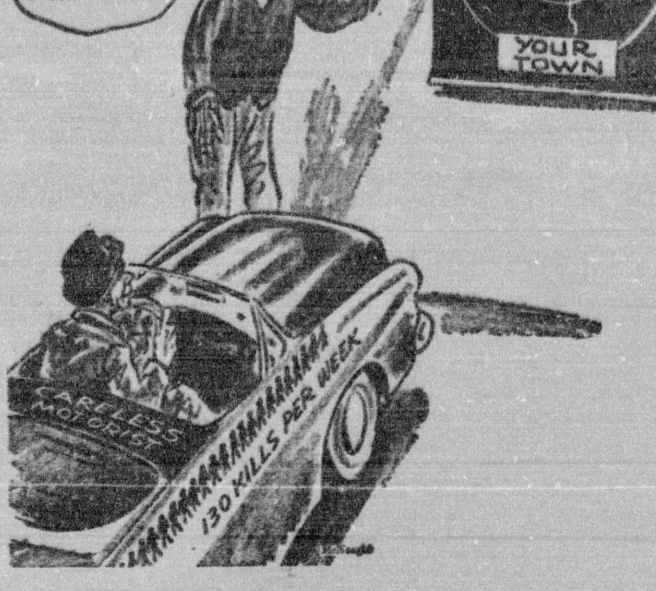
The President's proposal to abolish the quota system of immigration, based on countries of origin, was disapproved by 60 per cent of the respondents, favored by only 28 per cent.

Removal of excise taxes on cosmetics, furs, telephones, transportation, etc., was approved by a 53 per cent vote, with 39 per cent voting disapproval.

The President's position against pulling out of the war in Vietnam was endorsed by 52 per cent of the respondents, opposed by 31 per cent.

Obviously, the people can't vote on all the issues of the day. That's what legislators are elected to do, it is just as obvious that if provisions existed for subjecting occasional national issues of over-riding importance to referendum the people wouldn't always see eye to eye with their chosen representatives.

CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU'RE NOW
AVERAGING ALMOST
1000 AMERICANS
KILLED
EVERY WEEK!



ROYCE BRIER

Four Years Have Passed, There Are More to Come

For many years it has been evident that the anti-trust machinery for government regulation of private corporations is capricious and clumsy.

It is not of course evident to the regulators, who can take interminable delays in their stride, nor to the courts, which are indeed clogged with complex cases and the invulnerable prolixity of government and corporation lawyers. It is only evident to the poor wights comprising the citizenry.

So there is a New York case — there are similar cases in San Francisco and other big cities — but the New York case glares at you.

Four years ago in January, directors of Manufacturers Trust and Hanover Bank approved a plan for merger. Applications were filed with state and federal authorities, and September 6, 1961, the Federal Reserve gave its consent.

Two days later the merger was effected, creating a \$7 billion institution, fourth

largest in the nation. The very same day, Justice Department brought suit, charging the new Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company with violation of the Clayton Act.

Oral testimony did not start until December, and final papers were not filed until April, 1962. Over a year later the Supreme Court decided in a Philadelphia bank case, involving Section 7 of the Clayton Act, prohibiting mergers which may substantially lessen competition, or tend to create a monopoly.

In the light of this, the bank reopened the case to present new evidence, and there was another round of months, with oral arguments completed in January, 1964. Almost 14 months later Federal District Judge MacMahon in New York held the merger in violation.

In a 247 page opinion, he said the merger tended to create an "oligopoly," economic jargon for a market

dominated by a few companies.

Now this columnist would not know an oligopoly from a Jabberwock, and what is written here cannot go to the merits of the case. It deals rather with four years consumed in uncertainty, and more particularly with the manifest cross-purposes within the government regulatory machinery. Moreover, it is a fair guess that several more years will be consumed in getting a final decision.

From the viewpoint of the bewildered citizen, it would seem that a modest measure of coordination could be achieved between the Federal Reserve Bank and the Justice Department. Here we have four sets of lawyers, one private, one public, consenting, one public, lying in wait to dissent, while a fourth set sits in the courts to listen.

The bewildered citizen may be pardoned if he suspects this is hardly an efficacious way to run an economy.

WILLIAM HOGAN

Harding Was 'Available,' New Biographer Contends

To be available, a man must be fit for a given purpose or end. He must be usable, or at least thought to be in the eyes of a 30-year-old English author, Andrew Sinclair, lecturer at University College, London, Warren G. Harding qualified by the definition when the Republicans were looking for a presidential nominee in 1920. After 40 years, the Harding papers are open to research, Sinclair has studied them as well as the published Harding record for a book to prove the theory.

For such a young investigator and an alien to the folkways that produced the controversial President, Sinclair has done well in "The Available Man." Though his explanation of the Marion, Ohio, politician, found himself in the White House confronting the awesome task left by Woodrow Wilson will be rejected by some informed readers, many will find it credible. It certainly will whet appetites for definitive biographies and the release of the papers will make them possible.

Sinclair sees Harding as the creature of powerful colleagues in the Senate who traded on certain encouraging, but tragically misleading American myths that survived the first world war. The most widespread myth exalted the genial

neighbor across the street in the mythical mid-Western town, the boy who had left the farm to make a moderate business success and had gone through political apprenticeship in the lingering atmosphere created by that other provincial Ohioan, McKinley.

Then there was the Ohio legend. Ten of the previous Republican nominees had worn the Buckeye label. Ohio had stripped Virginia of its title, Mother of Presidents. Again, the myth of native genius helped the under-educated Harding profit by the postwar aver-

sion to the scholarly Wilson. Distillate of all the myths was "America First." That took care of Wilson's demand for a treaty tied to the League of Nations covenant. Article Ten was made to order for exploiting the myths.

Primarily, Harding's backers made hay with the yearning to return to the good old days — "Back to Normalcy." It doomed what was left of the Progressive movement, Leonard Wood's forlorn hope in the Chicago convention when California's Hiram Johnson and Frank Lowden of Illinois also smothered it in not one but several smoke-filled hotel rooms. On the tenth ballot, the nominations went to the safe, available man. The heat-weary delegates balanced the ticket geographically with another provincial, Calvin Coolidge, and ran for the trains.

Harding's enigmatic wife and the two other women in his private life are touched lightly, as are the fun and games of the Ohio gang that magnified government by crony. In this and other phases Sinclair is admirably fair, considering his premise. Toward the end he shows a man badly handicapped by associations but struggling to be a strong President, with some success.

Quote

Isn't it possible that most Americans would prefer less government, lower taxes and more money left to jingle in their jeans? — M. C. Hull, Ontario.

Ah, spring . . . that wonderful time when Democrats spurn panty raids for party raids. — State Controller Alan Cranston.

Through physical education children learn to win and lose graciously, to work together as a team, to share experiences. — Joan Pedersen, former physical education teacher.

Assessor's Figures Are Reflection of the Value

By Philip E. Watson
Los Angeles County Assessor
(Third in a Series)

We've all heard about the man who finds a stranger at his door asking the price of his house. "That all depends," says the owner. "Are you interested in buying, or are you the Assessor?"

To most people, it's just a story. But it also points up a general misconception of our appraisal process. The Assessor doesn't make the value of a piece of property—he merely finds out what the current value is in the market place.

Last year more than 250,000 pieces of property changed hands in Los Angeles County. That's approximately one of every seven of the 1,800,000 parcels in the County. With such a lively market, it's safe to assume that most of the people reading this have been a party in a real estate transaction sometime in the last four or five years.

Each transaction involves a selling price that was agreed to by both the buyer and the seller. How was that price determined? Not by the Assessor. It was determined by the going price in the market place for property of similar age, size, location, quality, etc.

And how was the going price in the market place determined? Again, not by the Assessor, but by the prices paid by all the other buyers and sellers. In other words, by you, the people.

In the growth economy Los Angeles County has enjoyed in the last 15 years, property values have generally increased. If the Assessor is doing the kind of job the law requires, he must keep his appraisals up-to-date to reflect accurately what the market says property is worth.

In order to do this job, our appraisal work is divided into two programs.

What we call "maintenance" is the program of keeping up with new construction and with additions or alterations which add or subtract value to a piece of property. Our department receives copies of all building permits. Those which indicate a new building or an addition or alteration that will change the market value of the property, such as adding a room or putting in a pool, are assigned to our appraisers for new appraisal.

In the department we keep a very complete record of every structure in the County—we know the area, floor plan, built-in fixtures, quality and kind of construction of the exterior and interior, etc. If the permit indicates that work is being done merely to keep the structure at its present value, no assessment change would be made. For example, if you replace an existing roof with the same quality construction, we would consider this normal upkeep. However, replacing it with a much better quality roof would increase the assessed value because it would increase the over-all market value.

Most people understand that they can expect an assessment change when they spend money to add value to their property. When people ask, as they frequently do, when to expect an assessment change, they are usually talking about the second part of our appraisal work—the "update" program.

Here we are dealing with reappraisals made to reflect changes in market value, regardless of whether any changes have been made in the property. This is the kind of value increase that has occurred simply by virtue of the fact that the property exists in the midst of the phenomenal growth of Southern California.

Before talking about our present system for measuring value changes, it is necessary to go back a few years. Before I became Assessor, the department had separate land and building divisions, each making separate land and building assessments. Since the basic value of property as a rule

is in the land, it was the former policy to make increases in the land assessments about every five years. Only at 10 or 15 year intervals were changes made in the building values. It is easy to see how, under this system, land and building assessments could get far out of balance and

why, since changes were made so infrequently the new assessment increases were generally high.

When I took office, one of my first acts was to combine the former land and building divisions into a single real estate division, so

(Continued on Page C-8)

HERB CAEN SAYS:

Today's Lesson Is Only a Dime

CHAT OUT OF THE BAG: "A Tribute to John F. Kennedy," the emotion-packed collection edited by Pierre Salinger, turned out to be a real seller; it has already netted \$100,000 for the Kennedy Memorial Library. . . . As for what's new in Hawaii, we can tell you that transvestites—especially fellers dressed as girls—have been arrested and convicted on charges of "dressing to deceive." So now they wear buttons reading "I'm a Roy" and everything's okay. In a way. (In the trade, by the way, a transvestite is known as a "TV," and now aren't you glad you paid your dime?) . . . S.F.'s Ronnie Schell, who gets a fat paycheck weekly out of the "Gomer Pyle" show on TV, reports he's investing his money in a company that makes foam rubber heels for flamenco dancers with kidney problems. . . . The ultimate tribute to Phyllis Diller: soon to be marketed is a Phyllis Diller Doll—you wind it up and it cackles that insane Diller laugh. . . . Judging from the number of times it has been phoned to this office (complete with names and addresses), the most widely circulated fable of the moment concerns the teen-age girl who steals her mother's Enovid pills and replaces 'em with aspirin, and let's hope this is the end of it, okay?

MEMO TO ROBERT McNAMARA: Adman Niels Mortensen has what I think is a splendid hydra-headed idea to (1) solve the problem of Red China, and (2) keep the domestic economy spinning at a record rate, while (3) permitting a massive cut in defense spending. His plan is simplicity itself. Since he drives several times daily through Chinatown, thereby observing at first-hand the motoring habits of these otherwise good people, he suggests that the U.S. send a million cars annually to Red China—absolutely free—for the next few years.

"We can forget about missiles," he predicts. "If we get enough Red Chinese behind the wheels of cars, that country will be a complete wreck by 1970."

AND WHAT else is doing on the far-flung campuses of the University of California? Well, on the Davis agricultural campus, Dr. Hubert Heitman Jr. has been experimenting with pigs. He has raised the troughs so that at feeding time, they have to stand on their hind legs. Not only that, they stand on a treadmill, so that they have to walk as they eat. This way, their hams are becoming much bigger than average, and that's what's going on at the other campuses. No sparing the rod THERE, by golly.

CAENFETTI: Eugene Burdick and his old collaborator, Bill Lederer, are working tandem again—this time on another expose-ty-novel about American blunders in Southeast Asia. "Son of The Ugly American" . . . Author Jessica Mitford Treuhaff took S.P.'s "City of San Francisco" to Chicago, the "20th Century" to New York and the SS "United States" to Europe, and postcards: "Isn't it amazing in these modern days that one can leave Oakland on March 17 and be in Paris in time for dinner on March 27?" . . . At Jack's, Joan Fontaine asked a boy columnist: "I hear you're having a baby—how long have you been married?" Columnist: "Two years." Joan: "Hell, then it wasn't a shotgun wedding—unless it turns out to be an elephant." . . . Sentimental Sterling Hayden, who has been house-hunting in Europe, flew back so he and Kitty could celebrate their fifth wedding anniversary together in Belvedere; they leave shortly after April 1 for their new haunts, wherever they are.

FIRM STAND: Atty. Melvin Belli figures he has now donated—plenty—to The Cause. He has been involved in representing the survivors of a disastrous bus crash in Huntsville, Ala., "a case worth at least two million dollars," he says. Last week, he was talking long-distance with Atty. Jerry Stapp of Huntsville, also in the case, and Stapp asked: "By the way, how do you feel about the stuff that's going on in Selma?" Belli told him, in no uncertain terms. Later that day, a telegram arrived from Stapp, reading: "You are no longer associated in this case."

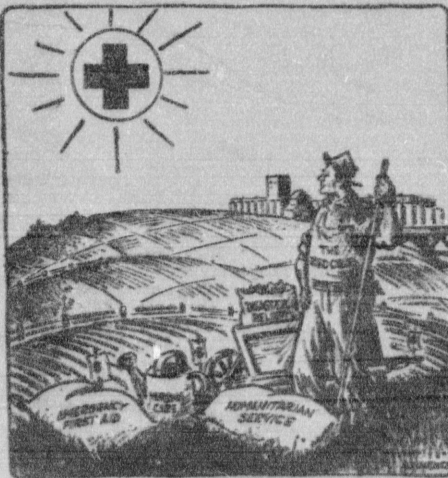
Morning Report:

There are some reports out of London that the British are annoyed because they don't know what President Johnson is going to do next in Vietnam. They should relax. No one is discriminating against them. We don't know, either.

What is more, the President made it clear the other day that he's not about to tell us, either. He can't tell 200 million Americans without telling 200 guys in Peking.

The puzzling fact is that although people are dying, we are not waging war in Asia. They are negotiating with bombs on the ground. We are negotiating with bombs from the air. It's a new sort of bloody diplomacy. The old kind doesn't seem to work.

Abe Mellinkoff



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