

EDITORIAL

Is This Necessary?

After hearing recommendations passed by Dallas School Directors at the last board meeting, one would think the current economic situation which has caught us in both inflation and recession has effected everyone but the Dallas School District. The board approved payment of bills totalling \$640.64 for hotel accommodations and other conference expenses; it approved proposed conference expenses, not including transportation or substitute teacher fees for \$357.57; and in the next breath, bemoaned the fact that the cafeteria lost \$4,392.53 in October. The board agreed it might be necessary to raise the prices of school lunches to cover the loss.

Contrary to the general consensus, not all residents of the Back Mountain are wealthy. Most are middle class, sacrificing citizens who are struggling to see that their bills are paid, their children educated and fed, and that they have a roof over their heads. Members of the school board also fall into this category. The teachers and most of the staff of the Dallas School District should also be so classified. It has been necessary for most of us to make cost of living adjustments, and it seems time that the school district adjust its budget also.

After reading a letter from the Dallas Education Association, board members agreed that the conferences and meetings are an asset to the district. No one will disclaim the fact that some of them are necessary and advantageous to the district. What benefit they have on the student is another question.

Members of the DEA and the staff are also taxpayers and consumers, and they know what personal financial adjustments have been demanded of them in the last few months. The question arises—would the teachers and staff members attend these conferences and meetings if the money had to come directly from their own pockets? Teachers must pay for courses and credits. It seems plausible that if they are to gain educationally from these conferences, they should share part of the burden of the expense, especially now when a spiralling inflation is so drastic.

This is not a one-month deal with the Dallas District. Each month there is a list of proposed meetings, and bills to be paid for previous meetings. No one doubts that it will be necessary to increase taxes when the board prepares the next budget. Taxpayers can understand this, but will they understand the continuation of uncontrolled spending by our elected officials?

These conferences and meetings may be good, but are they really necessary at this time? Could the participants share part of the expense?

It is time for teachers, staff and school directors to sit down and take a good look at the whole picture. It is time for them to remember what financial adjustments they have had to make in their own lives, and to apply them to the business of education.

—Barbara Evans

Dirty Politics

Dirty politics in this month's election failed to descend to the mudslinging level of two years ago, according to the non-partisan Fair Campaign Practices Committee, a non-profit group that monitors ethical conduct in politics. And most of the complaints were filed against Democrats, particularly in the hotly contested races of Indiana, Kansas and Pennsylvania.

Fifty-eight percent of the complaints were filed against Democrats, and 38 percent against Republicans. More importantly, 61 percent of dirty campaign complaints were filed against challengers and only 39 percent against incumbents. And 53 percent of candidates against whom complaints were filed met defeat election day.

What this all means is that candidates, at least, haven't learned very much from Watergate. "We are in no way out of the sewers," commented Samuel J. Archibald, director of the Fair Campaign Practices Committee. "Rather than attacking candidates on their loyalty and patriotism, as in the McCarthy days, they now attack each others' honesty and morality."

This leaves one to surmise that modern politics, despite the lessons available to all politicians everywhere from Watergate, simply means that a candidate shouldn't be any dirtier than he used to be.

J.R. Freeman

Conservative View

by James J. Kilpatrick

A week after the election, conservatives still are picking their way through the smoking ruins. The palpable fact is that we got clobbered—but the clobbering, as such, is not the most disturbing aspect of the vote.

If the clobbering were all that mattered, one could go along with President Ford's cheery observation that the GOP has come back from disaster before. On the historical record, a loss of 45 seats in the House is not a fatal blow. The Republicans lost 96 seats in the swing of 1874, 85 in 1890, 57 in 1910, 75 in 1922, 101 in 1932, 75 in 1948, and 47 in 1958. The Democrats have survived their own matching ups and downs. Last week's numbers, in themselves, are not so bad.

Far more depressing, in the conservative view, is the substantive prospect for the 94th Congress. Labels and numbers are not so important. Issues are important. Given a lopsided majority of liberals, regardless of party label, the next Congress reasonably may be expected to pass bills that would (1) provide for national health insurance, (2) nullify state right-to-work laws, (3) vastly increase costs of public welfare, (4) make dangerous cuts in outlays for national defense, and (5) create a Consumer Protection Agency with sweeping powers of intervention in the work of other government agencies.

Every congressional observer could add a dozen titles to that list. The "Byrd Amendment," which permits us to buy vitally needed chrome from Rhodesia, may now be repealed. In the name of tax reform, incentives for the accumulation of capital may well be destroyed. National no-fault insurance lies ahead. Industry could be saddled with further unrealistic burdens for environmental improvement. The old conservative coalition may be mustard in Congress now and then—some of Ford's vetoes will be sustained—but let us face it: Liberals will be running the show.

Why did it happen? The standard explanations have to do with Watergate, the Nixon pardon, and the state of the economy, but these explanations overlook a deeper cause. The Republican Party, as a national political party, consistently is failing to provide a constructive alternative to the liberalism with

which the Democratic Party now is so well identified.

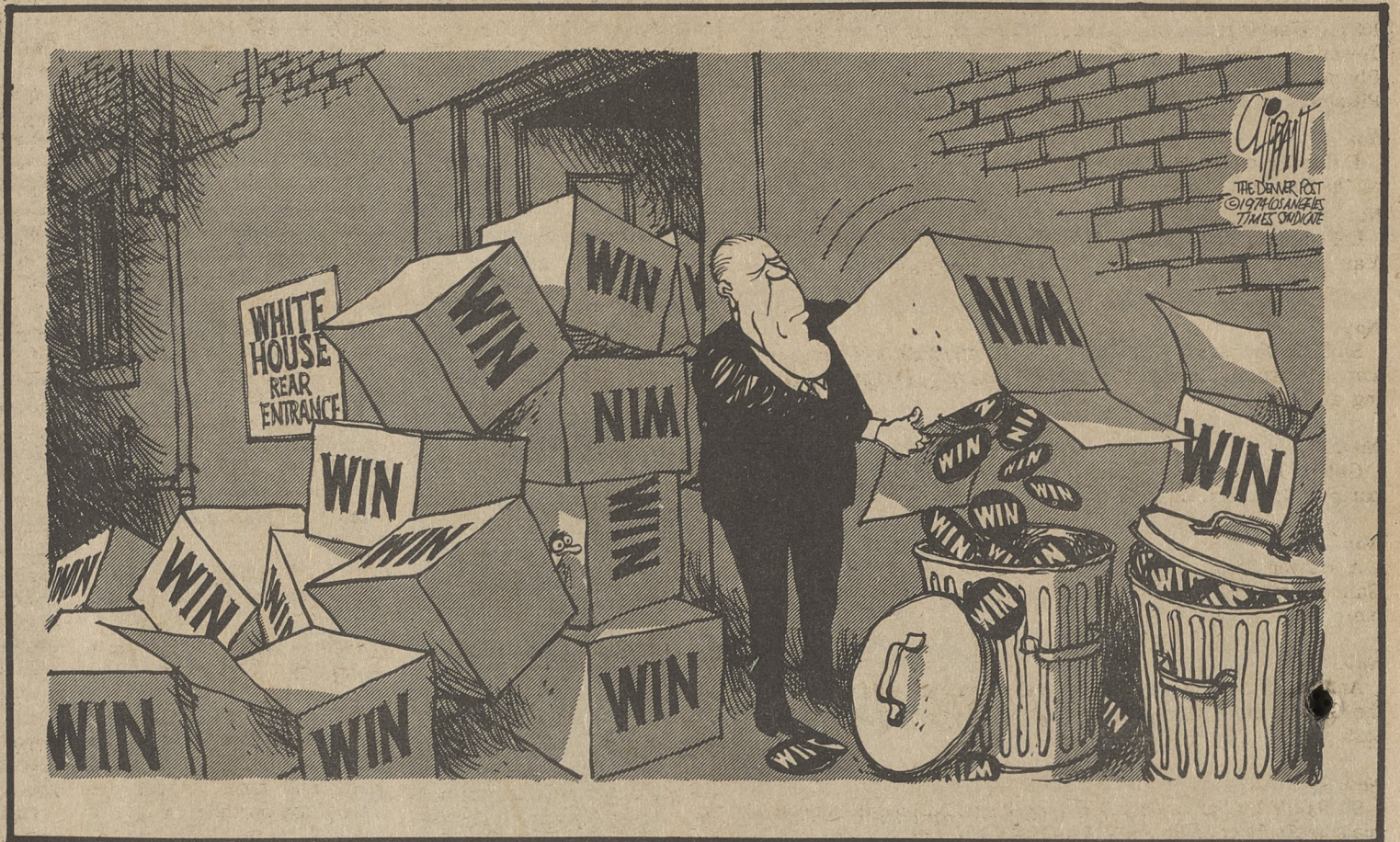
This failure is all the more remarkable when one gives account to the public opinion polls. Every time the Gallup or Harris pollsters study political attitudes, they find far more "conservatives" than "liberals" with the electorate. Granted, the labels are only generally and not precisely understood. Even so, the ideological predisposition is there—and it is not being served. When only 39 or 40 percent of the eligible voters bother to vote, this con-

servative appetite plainly is not being served.

The two-party system has contributed immensely to the stability of American institutions. To abandon that system in favor of the chaotic conditions one observes in Italy, France, and in Portugal would be utter folly. Yet to defend the system is not to defend its present operation. Nowhere is it divinely decreed that the Republican Party, as it now is disorganized, must forever be one of our two major instruments of political action.

A commitment to ideals is far more important than a commitment to party. The

GOP's trouble is not merely that its image is stained by corruption, or that it is unfairly saddled with blame for our economic distress; the larger trouble is that the party no longer is strongly identified with any particular ideas. The party is not unprincipled; in the popular view, it is unprincipled. It is small wonder that the Democrats have become the first party in Congress and in state government across the country. The time may be at hand not for the formation of a new third party, but the emergence of a new second party instead.



TRB from Washington

by Richard Strout

Unemployment is growing and more unemployment always means more crime. Six percent are out of work, with twice as many blacks as whites, and the figure will probably reach seven percent before long. Crime will tag along.

One of the most astonishing changes in the United States in the past half century is the spread of city fear. I think it is what our ancestors, if they returned, would mark most in America after they got over their shock at technological change. "You mean the streets aren't safe!" they would ask. It would be hard to explain that to Benjamin Franklin.

It isn't so bad in other democracies. Back from Europe, a friend told of asking the London hotel clerk if it was safe to "explore" after dark? The clerk's puzzled look followed him out of the hotel. "Safe?" he repeated. "Safe?" Police don't wear guns in London.

The other day some European graduate students answered a *New York Times* editorial that decried conditions abroad. Well, they responded, "Our streets are safe at night. Your civilization has made it impossible to go for a walk at night in your cities."

In June, 1968, Lyndon Johnson set up a 13-member Commission on Violence and made Milton Eisenhower its head. It reported 91 recommendations to Richard Nixon in July, 1969. Time passed and there was no comment from Mr. Nixon. "The White House was absolutely silent regarding our commission's study and recommendations," says Milton Eisenhower sadly in a new book, *The President is Calling*. "Evidently our report, like many others, had been filed and forgotten."

On Modern Crime Fighting

You can see how this was, of course: Mr. Nixon was elected in 1968 partly because he promised to solve the crime problem, and re-elected in 1972 partly because he said he had solved it. A little embarrassing to have a blue-ribbon commission report that crime wasn't solved and wouldn't be solved easily! "Violent crime has increased about 100 percent in the past 10 years," Mr. Eisenhower now reports.

While the commission was starting its research in the presidential election of 1968, Atty. Gen. John Mitchell kept telling the nation that poverty is "not a cause of crime." Mr. Eisenhower says this irritated him because his commission was coming to just the opposite conclusion. It is true, they unanimously reported, that the nation should launch an all-out attack on the faltering system of criminal justice but it was just as important to cure the root causes of crime in the social structure.

Day-to-day crime doesn't bother the nation much, Mr. Eisenhower indicates. What stirs the country is when "a President, a senator, and a great civil rights leader are assassinated in a few years. You have to kill somebody prominent." Last week a Louis Harris poll showed that among the humble people of Harlem, N.Y., the thing that worries them most is not inflation, not unemployment, not drugs nor housing: it is crime; 51 percent of the total report that; the next highest anxiety is housing, 31 percent. When President Kennedy is shot you get a commission on violence; after the commission's great social document is filed and forgotten urban crime goes on much as before. Nobody

greatly bothers, we are used to it.

The U.S. with 200 million people averages 50 times as many gun murders a year as do England, Germany and Japan combined, with their total population of around 200 million.

Crime is now spreading into the suburbs and the subjects may rouse interest again. Mr. Eisenhower recalls that our rate of violent crime is five times that of Canada per person, 30 times that of Great Britain and 90 times that of the Netherlands.

The most sympathetic European coming to the United States cannot understand one thing, try as he will: why do we allow free access to hand guns? There are 30 million lethal hand guns loose in the United States, Mr. Eisenhower recalls. He says he was perplexed by the "blind, emotional resistance" to any effort to curb the senseless excess of hand guns. When he urged control "vitriolic mail poured into my office, nearly all of it instigated by form letters and cards distributed nationally by the rich and politically powerful National Rifle Association." Yet every poll taken on the subject over a 10-year period, he notes, favors the kind of control that the Commission recommended. Mr. Eisenhower can't understand it.

May I make a modest suggestion? I think the gun is a sex symbol of male chauvinism. The gun shows masculine superiority, makes even the weakest equal to the strongest. It flatters the ego of men who have nothing else to be vain about. Someday Womens Lib will discover this and picket the National Rifle Association. It is high time for some new Carry Nations of gun control.

But guns alone don't cause crime; they escalate its violence. Crime has complex causes—the commission decided. There has been, for example, a vast urbanization in America with a new criminal subculture in ghetto slums; Crime is not due to race, they say, but to poverty and environment. In ghettos "the realities of American life have made a mockery of the American dream", bookless, jobless, possibly fatherless, the boy feels the constant lure of the TV set." By the time he has reached 18 he has spent more time watching TV, mostly programs of violence, than he has spent in school," Mr. Eisenhower notes.

In the 60's established verities—country, church, school, home—were under attack. They still are. And it is axiomatic "that in a period of rising expectations on the part of masses of people, followed by a period in which there is little realization, violence is certain to follow."

Mr. Eisenhower is just as strong in denouncing the other problem of crime: weak law enforcement. Yes, he says, without qualification, "failure of the criminal justice system is a crucial fact". He would double the annual expenditure here, an additional \$5 billion. He would also ultimately spend \$20 billion to fight the social causes of crime, for schools, houses, job opportunities, slum clearances.

A lot of money, of course! Repression is cheaper.

So, support the Pentagon and skimp on welfare; bolt your window, bar your door, buy a gun and stay indoors.

Capitol Notes

by William Eckenbarger Philadelphia Inquirer

The Pennsylvania General Assembly returns to the Capitol this week to wind up its 1973-74 session; this is the time in every two-year legislative cycle that public concern turns to "unfinished business."

There's certainly enough of that around, but the teeth of time have hardened Legislature-watchers at this time of year to be as concerned about what the lawmakers shouldn't do as what they should do.

Voters are notorious for their short memories, and legislative elections are as far away as they'll ever be. Thus, the lawmakers may be tempted to do now what they wouldn't dare have done a month ago.

Letters expressing readers' views are welcome, and will appear on the opposite editorial page. They must bear the signature and address of the writer, be in good taste, and are subject to condensation. Anonymous letters will be discarded. All letters become the property of the newspaper, and are not subject to individual acknowledgment.

Temptation in Harrisburg

There are a number of bills that quietly were consigned to oblivion earlier in the session for many reasons—chief among them public indignation. These kinds of measures have a way of springing to life in late November of the even-numbered years in Harrisburg.

A representative sampling follows: **BIG TRUCKS:** Legislation has been slumbering in the House Transportation Committee for 18 months that would permit 65-foot "double-bottom" trucks (two trailers hitched to a tractor) on most Pennsylvania highways.

Despite widespread testimony that the longer rigs would be safety hazards to the average motorist and further contribute to the deterioration of road surfaces, the bill still is being lobbied by the trucking industry and the Teamsters Union.

LIMITED LICENSES: A measure that would allow truckers and other professional drivers to continue to operate their vehicles after their regular licenses have been suspended for moving violations needs only a quick Senate vote to clear the legislature and go to Gov. Shapp, who looks kindly upon it.

The bill is inherently asinine. For example, if a Greyhound bus driver loses his license for speeding in the family car, he could still take 80 passengers down the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

EXPOSITION BUILDING: The scheme to build a \$150 million agricultural exposition center is down but not out in the Senate—despite the fact that a businessmen's study group called it a waste of money. This would be the largest public works project in state history.

TEACHERS' RETIREMENT: The Senate can give final legislative approval to a bill providing pension increases for retired school teachers. It would raise state and local tax burdens by \$22 million each. State Auditor General Robert P. Casey has denounced the measure as extravagant and a catalyst for increases in local property taxes.

LEGISLATIVE COPS: There is a bill

before the Senate that would create a special legislative police force of unannounced strength and with frightening powers. The same proposal would place chilling restrictions on the rights of Pennsylvania citizens to dissent from legislative activities.

SPEEDERS: A package of three bills that would curtail the power of State Police to arrest speeders is in the House. Its sponsors include three legislators who have themselves been stopped by State Police for speeding this year. The legislation would forbid State Police to conceal radar speed traps and require troopers to wear their conspicuous hats while patrolling in unmarked cars.

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