

# Battalion EDITORIALS

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 1947

## To Vote Or Not To Vote...

Every war brings in its wake many demands for social and political change. World War II was no exception. One important question growing out of that conflict was "Should 18-year-olds be allowed to vote?"

This is a question to which everyone should give thought, but it is of special interest and importance to a great number of college students.

As in most major issues, there is much to be said on either side. The experiment in Georgia is too young to justify the drawing of conclusions. Those opposed to the lowering of age of suffrage state that the 18-year-old is emotionally unstable and immature. He might easily be misled into the folds of subversive organizations.

To this, it could be replied that the political muddle our country is in doesn't evidence much maturity and sober judgment on the part of the older voter. Then too, the 18-year-old of today is better educated than was his forefather at the age of 21. Also, the fact that boys not yet old enough to vote successfully filled highly responsible jobs in the armed forces seemingly belies the charge of immaturity.

The conservative side in turn charges that the present rate of juvenile delinquency is sufficient evidence that the 18-year-old is not fit material for the exercise of full citizenship. In addition, many teen-agers, even those in the armed forces, have displayed an utter lack of interest in political matters.

The most potent argument of those favoring the extension of suffrage is, "Old enough to fight, old enough to vote." This one is

hard to answer. More than half the members of the armed forces during the war were less than 21 years of age. Many volunteered, but many more were drafted without reference to their wishes.

Participation in war is the highest expression of the responsibilities of citizenship. Then what of the rights of citizenship? Does congress have the moral right to draft a man and send him to his death when he has no part in the selection of that congress? It would seem not.

If the age of suffrage were to be lowered, then the age of legal responsibility would have to be lowered accordingly. Everyone agrees on this point.

From this conclusion, the "cons" draw their best argument. It would be virtually impossible to maintain laws excluding 18-year-olds from drinking establishments. Therefore, a lowering of morals among young people would be almost certain to follow this removal of legal restraint.

These are only a few of the many arguments which immediately come to mind. The conservative attitude, "Let things ride as they are," will probably prevail. Perhaps this is the safest course.

On the other hand, might it be possible that the untainted idealism of youth is just the tonic needed to enliven and cleanse American politics? The young citizen might fail to see the "practical" necessity of tolerating certain political evils. Political expediency and selfishness have too long masqueraded as public necessity and "practicality."

—The SMU Campus

## Military Reactionism

A recent article in "The Nation," liberal weekly magazine, brought to light the actions of Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson regarding recommended reforms in military courts. The report was presented to the War Department by the Advisory Committee nominated by the American Bar Association.

After receiving the report from the board chairman, who is the dean of the New York University Law School, Secretary Patterson announced that the army had accepted the "principal recommendations." However, "he rejected the substance and approved only the trimmings."

While investigating the entire system, the Advisory Board found, among other facts, that:

1. Commanding officers, through their direct and indirect power over members of the court itself, often influenced decisions of the court;
2. That sentences were frequently too severe, often to an extreme;
3. That counsel for the defense was frequently incompetent;
4. That there was some discrimination between officers and enlisted men.

In order to remedy those evils, the board made one general recommendation, from which many corollaries were drawn. The general recommendation was that the function of command should be separated from the function of appointing general courts-martial and reviewing their sentences.

Among other recommendations, stemming directly from the general one, were that the defense counsel and the law member of each court-martial be trained lawyers; that commanding officers be prevented from influencing decisions of the court; and that

enlisted men be eligible for appointment as members of the court at the discretion of the judge advocates, who were to have the appointing power.

According to Leonard Wallstein, author of the article, and a New York lawyer, Secretary Patterson has approved only one of the above recommendations: he agreed that unit commanders be prevented from influencing the actions of the army court. It is obvious, of course, that this was the weakest of all recommendations, for influence is, after all, a very intangible quantity.

The other recommendations were flatly rejected or simply by-passed through army double-talk and meaningless reorganization. Mr. Wallstein lamented every move by which the army sought to escape from the more democratic suggestions of the Advisory Board. However, his most pertinent point concerned the condition and powers of the Judge Advocate General's office.

The most outstanding defect of the Judge Advocate General's Department, according to Wallstein, is the fact that it is in control of the regular army. In order to strengthen and introduce new thought into army legal procedure, Wallstein would place civilian components and an advisory counsel of distinguished lawyers within the frame of the Judge Advocate General's Department. Also, he would allow any man sentenced to more than 10 years to appeal to Federal Circuit Courts of Appeal. These are his own suggestions; some have been included in other reports and articles dealing with the question of army justice, however.

It appears that eventually army justice must embrace the principles of true justice. Mockery of democratic institutions, whether by our army or any of our courts established by the Constitution of the United States, must not be tolerated.

## Clean-Up! . . .

A woman worker for the American Red Cross in London, who was helping British war brides of American soldiers to make their arrangements for migration to the United States, was bowled over by one nervous young bride who appeared to be quite apprehensive over the reception she would get from her American in-laws.

"You know," she said tearfully, "I'm afraid my husband's family in America must think that I'm terribly dirty."

"What makes you think that?" the Red Cross worker asked.

"Every since my marriage, my husband's sister has been sending me soap. And now—" and at this point she broke into sobs—"and now she writes me that as soon as I get to America she's going to give me a sh-sh-shower!"

## Costly Strawberries . . .

Rel Brown, of London, stopping at a hotel at Los Angeles, couldn't remember whether his diet permitted him to eat strawberries. His copy of the diet was in London. So before ordering his breakfast, he put in a trans-Atlantic call to his wife. She informed him that he could have the berries. Mr. Brown breakfasted sumptuously on eggs, toast, coffee, cream, and fresh strawberries. Cost 1.29, plus \$94 in telephone tolls.

—New York Herald-Tribune

Our Brooklyn correspondent reports that a bar across the street from Borough Hall sports this sign right back of the beer spouts: "Bartender's Measure—four quarts equal one gallon; one gallon equals one argument; one argument equals one fight; one fight equals one cop; one cop equals one justice; one justice equals 30 days." —TIDE

## The Battalion

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## 80th's First Session Over

By A. D. Bruce, Jr.

The first session of the Eightieth Congress closes with the Republican majority retaining its accomplishments and the Democrats expounding on the failure of the GOP to carry out all of its campaign promises. The final hours of a session that forced many momentous postwar problems and debated everything from peanuts to displaced persons, brought the usual rush of last minute legislation. In this final rush toward recess, the Senate moved so rapidly that it passed forty-one bills in fifty-one minutes and approved 175 presidential appointments in three minutes.



World turmoil following the war, the attitude of Russia, and the urgent need for relief in stricken countries played an important part in legislation and debate. Bipartisan support was given the new Truman Doctrine, and money for foreign aid took a big bite of federal funds. President Truman vetoed two four-billion-dollar income tax cutting measures and had both of his disapprovals sustained.

Some of the major bills passed are:

1. Taft-Hartley labor-management bill, enacted into law over veto.
2. Unification of armed services under a single cabinet officer.
3. Permitting holders of terminal leave pay bonds to cash them after September 1 instead of holding them five years from the date of issue.
4. Designating the speaker of the house as successor to the presidency in the event of simultaneous vacancies in the office of president and vice-president.
5. Limiting future and nullifying most past claims for postal-portal pay.
6. Continuing wartime excise tax rates.
7. Continuing the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Commodity Credit Corporation for another year.
8. Continuing rent controls until next March 1 but permitting "voluntary" increases up to 15% on leases extending through 1948.
9. Continuing export and import controls on strategic commodities.
10. Ending curbs on installment buying effective November 1.

The following are some of the

### PALACE

BRYAN

FRIDAY - SATURDAY

"The Egg and I" with CLAUDETTE COLBERT FRED MACMURRAY

SUNDAY - MONDAY

"Trouble With Women" with RAY MILLAND

COMING: Aug. 6th - 9th

"The Hucksters"

### QUEEN

FRIDAY - SATURDAY

"Vigilantes' Boomtown" with LOLA LANE

SUNDAY - MONDAY TUESDAY

"The Chase" ROBERT CUMMINS

WEDNESDAY - THURSDAY

"The Bowery" with WALLACE BEERY GEORGE RAFT

## : Letters to the Editor :

(Ed. Note: The following letter was sent by C. E. Lennon, Jr., student at A. & M. to Governor Beauford Jester, a copy of which was forwarded to The Battalion.)

The Honorable Beauford Jester Governor of Texas Austin, Texas Dear Sir:

I am one of the Texans to whom you recently referred to Secretary of State Marshall as ready. If the Dallas News quoted you correctly you told the Secretary "if you should need the Texans again, you know where we are."

I believe that your statement was uncalled for and not funny. While it is a fact that most of us would fight (even "against" if it were the last resort to protect ourselves and our loved ones, I am quite sure that your attitude suggested that the time has already come to even consider such a solution to the grave problems concerning world peace is shortsighted and shows a definite lack of understanding and an ignorance of the real down to earth horrors of war.

I wish to state here and now that I am not for peace at any price, nor am I for unlimited appeasement in our international relations. I do have faith enough in my convictions, however, to believe that a policy of positive and even aggressive effort to work out the peace is still possible, and that today it is not yet time to even hint to our people that the situation has come to so sad and disastrous an end as to volunteer our lives "if you should need the Texans again."

You may feel that I am overlooking the fact that you yourself have been a soldier and that I am making something of nothing. The true facts of the case are, however, simply this, I found from observing the basic feelings of my fellow infantrymen and the infantrymen of the German army, which we took as prisoners, that all our desires are peaceful and quite the same.

1. We simply love our homes and loved ones.

2. War is an insult to civilized mankind, and a poor excuse for trying to settle manufactured differences.

3. War only postpones the true solution.

Under the most horrible of conditions I believe that we who were fortunate enough to be spared, came to realize that peace is worth sweating, working, and, yes, even dying for. But war is not worth dying for.

Since we chose a representative type of government and elect you who must necessarily lead us, we rely very seriously on you to speak the feelings of the people. Please be more thoughtful of us 7,000,000 Texans.

Sincerely yours,  
C. E. LENNON, JR.

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SATURDAY PREVIEW SUNDAY & MONDAY

"BOOMERANG!"  
DANA ANDREWS  
JANE WYATT LEE J. COBB

"The Bowery" with WALLACE BEERY GEORGE RAFT

## Increased Birthrate Gives US Gain Of Four Million Babies

A million more babies were born last year in the United States than would have come into the world had the 1933 birthrate continued.

The total gain in babies for the country since 1933—over the 1933 birthrate—is four million, statisticians of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company calculate.

Economic recovery, war-induced prosperity, and special psychological notices connected with the induction of men and their later release are credited by the statisticians with the sudden baby boom. Especially interesting was the rapid increase in births during the last six months of 1946. In the first six months after VJ Day, the number jumped to 284,000 and a peak was reached in December of 248,000.

The statisticians do not expect the baby boom to last. The marriage rate already shows signs of returning to normal, they point out, and the birthrate, they believe, is bound to follow. However, they do not expect a return to the low of depression years.

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