

Battalion EDITORIALS

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 1947

Army Promotions Streamlined . . .

After 170 years the army has finally streamlined its promotion system. On August 7, the old system of promotion by seniority was thrown out the window when President Truman signed the legislation setting up a permanent promotion-by-merit program for the army and navy.

The legislation is intended to eliminate the less capable officers from command, and to encourage the younger, better qualified men to work harder, with a goal in sight. Heretofore the army has promoted its officers largely through a seniority system rather than through the individual qualifications of its officers. Through the use of this system many top-notch men kept in the background during the most useful period of their careers, merely marking time until their names came high enough on the seniority list to warrant a promotion.

This act will not only bring to the top youthful officers with proven ability, but will also offer careers satisfactory enough to attract capable men from other occupations, and will retain in service men who would otherwise choose mufti over O. D.

The new plan provides for promotion of officers by selection in the low ranks, with boards of officers determining the qualifications of applicants for advancement. Failure to meet the advancement qualifications twice in succession, authors of the bill said, will automatically drop an officer from the service. Officials said the navy has followed a system of selection, with modifications, for years.

In addition to setting up a new promotion system for the army and tightening the

navy's existing advancement system, the bill cuts down on the number of high ranking officers in both services, and abolishes in peacetime the wartime rank of five-star officers. However, it does not affect the rank of the eight officers now holding five-star rank. Four-star officers will be limited to five for the army, four for the navy, four for the air force, and one for the marine corps. There will be 62 three-star officers. The army will have 122 major generals and 202 brigadiers.

For the navy, the legislation introduces for the first time the selective system of promotion in the grade of admiral. Hereafter, an officer of admiral rank must justify his retention in that rank after each four years of service.

The new law provides also for commissioning of all officers in the regular army rather than in a branch of the army, such as the infantry or the artillery.

It will take several years for the entire new program to get into full operation, for some parts of the new law do not become effective until after 1951, though most are effective immediately. Until such time as the armed services' strength reaches the levels prescribed by permanent law, the new law continues the present system of temporary promotions for temporary-duty officers.

It took a war and the induction of millions of civilians to bring the armed forces out of their lethargy. Now they are awakening to the fact that the horse and buggy should be taken out of their administrative as well as their tactical functions.

The Atom And Society . . .

During the past century and a half, science and invention have been making changes at an accelerated pace in the conditions under which men live. This great revolution in the actual conditions of life has not, however, been accompanied by any corresponding change in man's behavior tendencies nor in his concepts of what his relationships with other men should be. As a matter of fact, examination of the history of our popular concepts of social, economic, and political relations reveals relatively few important changes during the past three thousand years. Here we are, in the middle of an extremely complex and difficult modern world, attempting to find our way by means of social concepts and ideals that were none too adequate in a much simpler primitive society. Instead of improving our techniques of social relations, to make them more adequate for meeting complex modern conditions, it appears that we are allowing the obvious inadequacy of these ideas to lead us into weakening them still further.

Let us look, for example, at that sense of responsibility for the welfare of our fellow men which developed in primitive communities. The young members of the community participated in food gathering and other vital activities, under the sympathetic guidance of older members. If some individual or family in the community met with misfortune or accident, everyone was sympathetic and practically helpful. The occasional person who appeared unwilling to help an unfortunate neighbor was immediately criticized and disciplined by the community. Those who were most generous and helpful to others were held in high esteem by all.

Suddenly, about a century and a half ago, science and invention began to enlarge our communities very rapidly. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, men could not travel any more rapidly than had their ancestors at the beginning of recorded history. News of what had happened in any given place could not spread more rapidly than a horse could gallop—ten or twelve miles per hour, perhaps. News of a catastrophe in Cincinnati could not be known in Columbus in less than a day's time, and then it would have taken at least another day or two to get any help to Cincinnati. With the invention of steam engines, railroads, telegraph instruments, automobiles, airplanes, and the radio, however, we can now be well informed within a few minutes of the needs and distress of persons in all parts of the world. As far as knowledge of need for outside help is concerned, the whole planet has suddenly become one great, complex, and confusing community.

Effects of the Machine Age

In a similar manner it would be possible to trace the effects of modern developments in physical science and invention upon our

other standards of social values and behavior. The change from hand craftsmanship to machine production has shifted our attention and interest away from the quality of product a man can produce to the number of things he can buy. Human beings are, I fear, gradually becoming more acquisitive and self-centered. The number and size of one's possessions are apparently becoming more important to us than his social character and services. Under our modern machine production program, jobs have been simplified and made more and more repetitive. Fewer skills are required of a worker. Each worker has become a part of a machine-like organization, with less and less opportunity to express his own originality or initiative on the job. Greater mechanization of production processes is shortening the hours of labor and increasing the hours during which the worker will engage in other activities that will make his community either a better or a worse place in which to live.

In earlier days, the employer and his employees knew and respected each other. Each understood the other's personal problems and needs. Today most of the stockholders of a corporation have never met any of the employees. The stockholders leave the selection of officers to the board of directors, who in turn leave the development of personnel and production policies to administrative officers, whose terms of employment require them to produce a maximum volume of goods with a minimum expenditure of money. Many of those who own the plants now feel little or no responsibility for those who work for them. The laborers therefore organize to protect their rights, which management is paid to restrict. This conflict between labor and capital frequently endangers the common welfare of both, and of the public.

All of this, of course, is an old story. Rapid developments and inventions in the physical sciences have suddenly made our world infinitely complex and confusing. There have been almost no corresponding developments or inventions in the social sciences. Man now finds himself in the midst of a new and utterly confusing practical situation in which he must act, with nothing to guide him other than some natural tendencies that were developed to meet primitive conditions centuries ago and a few rapidly weakening ideals of human relations that were invented to serve a very simple community life.

M. R. TRABUE
Dean of Education
Penn. State

Our Greenwich Village operative reports that a Mexican restaurant there is displaying a sign with the letters LS/MFT in bold type, with the explanation in smaller type below it: "Lolita's Means Fine Tabasco."
—TIDE

You're Off the Track, Sherlock



Letters

AGGIE ETHICS?

Dear Editor:

During the war I came to know and admire two Texas Aggies who were officers in my outfit. These young men finished school in the middle '30's, and to me their actions were a living tribute to this fine school. In matters of ethics, friendliness, and reliability, these two men were regarded as models by the men of the organization. Due to their influence I chose Texas A. & M., because I wanted to become a part of anything that was so high in its ideals as this school seemed to be.

Last week I had a terrible disappointment, not in A. & M., as a school, but in a so-called "Aggie." On the morning of July 29, I placed my books in a window of the Academic Building. Less than five minutes later I returned to find that the books were missing. There was no doubt that the books were missing. Here at A. & M., a student should be able to leave his books anywhere and expect to find them there when he returns.

Aggies are supposedly trained for the trades and professions and to take an active part in the community life where his work takes him. There is no room among Aggies for a person whose ethics are so low as to permit thievery.

I hope that honesty will continue to be a virtue for which Aggies are known.

Sincerely,
F. W. SHEPPARD

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MAUREEN O'HARA in
"Homestretch"

QUEEN

SUNDAY, MONDAY and TUESDAY

JOAN BENNETT in

"The Woman on the Beach"

Expiring Dollars . . .

Exports Down—What Now?

By H. W. Spencer

Since the end of the war, the U. S. has been experiencing an extremely favorable balance of trade. In May the export-import ratio was 8 to 1. The export boom is feeding the business boom.

Then something happened in June—something that economists have been expecting for some time. June exports declined 15 per cent below those of May. The downturn is underway. Foreigners are earning, through sales of goods to the U. S., only about one-third the dollars needed to pay for goods received from the U. S. Almost two-thirds of the bill must be paid out of loans, through sales of gold and securities, and by gifts.

Foreign countries are feeling the pinch of their rapidly expiring dollars. Britain and France are fast using up U. S. loans and are unable to replenish dollar supplies by large exports of their own. Some of our best customers, the Latin American countries, who emerged from the war in a very healthy financial condition, are now reaching deep into their waning reserves.

Europe needs U. S. exports to reconstruct their war-wracked economies. Expansion and progress in Latin America is still in the incipient stage, and U. S. exports are

needed to continue current building and expansion programs. Britain's conversion of current sterling accounts into dollars, under her loan agreement with the U. S., will aid her position somewhat. France is experiencing serious inflation and business is primarily black market. They are pinning their hopes on the Marshall Plan, as are other European countries, to help them in their dilemma.

For Latin America there is no Marshall Plan, although one is proposed. Currently our south-of-the-border customers are banning purchases of non-essential and luxury items.

Changes in U. S. prosperity are to be expected as the dollar famine curtails foreign orders. Industries which will be primarily affected See SPENCER, Page 4

'U. S. Has Enough Coal Reserves For 1,500 More Years'

The United States has enough coal reserves to supply all this country's requirements in heat, light, power, and other uses for 1,500 years, an engineer reported at the meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Dr. Harold J. Ross, vice-president and director of research for Bituminous Coal Research, Inc., Pittsburgh, said that at our present rate of consumption, there will be enough coal for another one and one-half millennia.

Pointing out that coal can now be used to make almost any type of fuel or synthetic chemical product, Dr. Ross said that coal is the one bright spot amid threats of shortages in many minerals.

If petroleum and natural gas could be produced fast enough to supply both their present markets and the present uses of coal, the supply of the two products would last only eight and one-half year, Dr. Ross declared.

He said that \$15,000,000 or more is spent each year in this country on research and engineering work related to coal.

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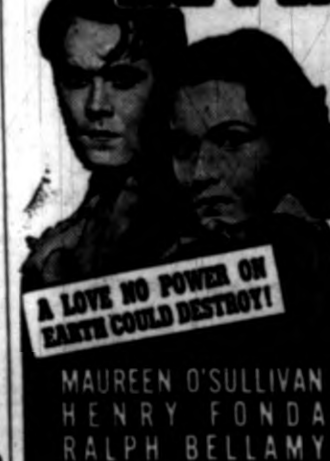
"Inside Job"

with
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SATURDAY PREVIEW
SUNDAY & MONDAY

LET US LIVE



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