

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Thursday
September 1, 1977

Panama issue not political hay

By announcing that he will work for Senate rejection of the new Panama Canal treaties, Ronald Reagan endeared himself to the right-wing Republicans who are expected to dominate the GOP presidential nominating convention in 1980.

If the Senate does vote against ratification, however, we think the former governor will quickly discover that his decision was bad for him, his party and his country.

Reagan opposed a new canal treaty in his Republican primary challenges to President Ford last year. There was a lingering hope that he might be persuaded to change his mind. Within hours after receiving a detailed briefing from the new Administration's canal negotiators Thursday, though, he issued a call for rejection of the agreements that will be signed Sept. 7.

On the surface, it would appear that the

Californian has seized the winning side of a good issue. Polls indicate that three of every four Americans are against handing over the canal to Panama, and mail is running heavily against the new treaties both at the White House and on Capitol Hill.

We think the appearances are deceiving.

Most Americans still are not familiar with the terms of the proposed new arrangement. Most of what they have heard is the charge by opponents that the treaties constitute a "giveaway"; they have the impression that the United States is running from the canal with its tail between its legs. Public attitudes will shift, we believe, as people learn that this is not the case.

Although legal jurisdiction over the Canal Zone would pass to Panama within three years, the United States would retain responsibility for operation and maintenance until the year 2000.

Panamanian personnel would take over more and more jobs during the time, but an American would head the body running the canal until 1990, at which time a Panamanian would move into the top job. The governing board would have an American majority for the life of the treaty.

Under terms of a separate agreement, the United States would maintain the right to defend the canal even after the turn of the century — in fact, in perpetuity.

Businessmen, diplomats and others familiar with the situation in Panama think that rejection of the agreements would set off bloody and possibly large-scale violence in Panama — with peril to the security of the canal — and a wave of anti-U.S. agitation throughout Latin America.

Were that to happen, it would be tragic for the country, and do little good for the political careers of those who blocked the treaty.

Los Angeles Times

Canal treaty lost in static

Lance debate hurting Carter image

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — On the two issues that have dominated the late-summer agenda, there is a discernible difference between Washington's priorities and those of the rest of the country.

Returning members of Congress almost unanimously report that the proposed Panama Canal treaty has really stirred up the folks.

Little of the emotion of that debate has yet rolled over Washington, but it will. Meantime, this capital is considerably agitated over the affairs of budget director Bert Lance. But that question, probably because of the complexity of the allegations and defenses, has been much slower in catching on around the country.

The two issues converge on President Carter in a very special way. It is now apparent that Carter will need the moral authority of his office to persuade the American people that the sacrifice of American control in the Canal Zone is truly in the national interest. And that moral authority is in jeopardy as the White House fights its dogged defense of Bert Lance against the cascading charges of impropriety.

The link between the two issues has been well-described by James M. Wall, the editor of the Christian Century and the chairman of Carter's 1976 campaign in Illinois. In an article in the current issue of his magazine, Wall notes that what he calls "the religion factor" has been central to Carter's leadership. He says it durability "depends heavily on presidential character and consistency When President

Carter faces an issue like the tangled bank affairs of his close friend and adviser Bert Lance, he has no fall-back position. His public image of "goodness" is tarnished if he permits "politics as usual" to prevail in this case.

The moral dimension "or religion factor" in Carter's leadership, Wall says, "faces its strongest test in the next few weeks as he seeks to persuade members of the Senate to support the Panama Canal treaty."

Wall's emphasis on the moral aspect of the coming debate is appropriate. To be sure, there are issues of national defense

and hemisphere security. But on those issues, Carter has powerful support from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, former President Ford and former Secretary of State Kissinger.

The public mind is unsettled as to whether the renunciation of American privilege in Panama is an act of cowardice, part of the retreat of American power, or an act of generosity and historical wisdom, which does not compromise American interests but vindicates America's devotion to principle.

It is on the ultimate historical-moral interpretation that Carter must be heard,

where he alone can contest for public opinion with the skilled persuaders like Ronald Reagan who are arguing the opposing case.

In this context, the Lance affair is at least unnecessary static on the screen of the public's attention. It dominated Carter's press conference last week and it occupies almost every waking hour of his press secretary, Jody Powell, who has become the leader of the Lance defense squad.

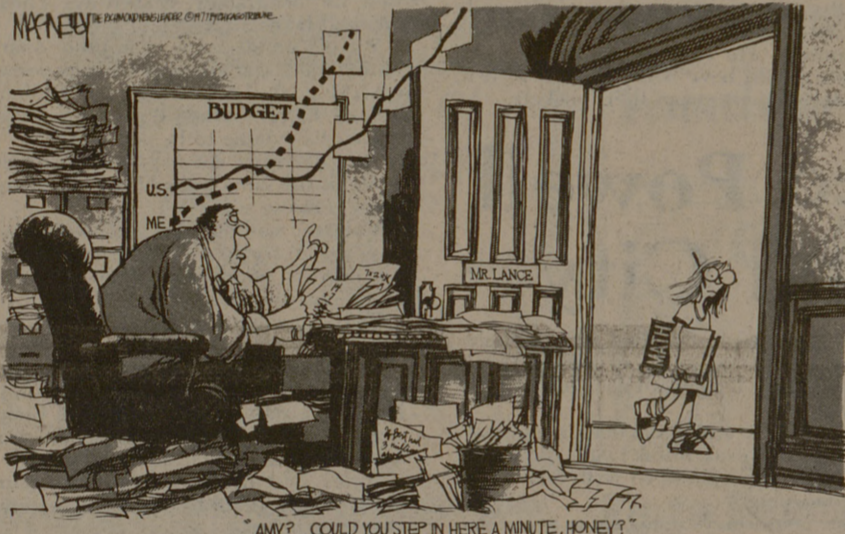
Powell is a skillful and persuasive advocate in his own right, and his talents are needed for the treaty fight. But it was painfully reminiscent of the Watergate endless hours and uncounted quantities of his own and the President's credibility explaining and defending Lance's infinitely complicated financial maneuverings.

The proper forum for these discussions is the upcoming Senate hearing, and the proper spokesman is Lance, not Carter or Powell. But the timing of that hearing, on Sept. 7, illustrates the problem. It will occur on the same day as — and compete for attention with — the signing ceremony for the Panama treaty.

No fair-minded person would suggest that Lance resign or be fired just because his problems come at an inconvenient time for the President.

But the link between the Panama treaty and Lance is inextricable, as Jim Wall pointed out. And a prudent President and press secretary would keep their priorities straight — which is not what they've been doing this past week.

(c) 1977, The Washington Post Company



English 'peasants' returning to soil

By RUDOLF KLEIN
International Writers Service

LONDON — Evening time produces a strange transformation in many of London's most respectable residents. Doctors, lawyers, engineers and bankers shed their business suits for work clothes, and they till the soil of symmetrically laid-out plots squeezed in among the city's buildings.

These are Britain's urban peasants, and they are raising vegetables on so-called "allotments" provided by the municipal authorities.

About 250,000 of these gardening plots now exist in cities and towns throughout the country. And it seems likely that the government, under pressure from various back-to-the-land groups, will expand the area available for part-time farmers.

The system of furnishing people with plots dates back to the 17th century, when peasants were permitted to cultivate patches of ground as compensation for the loss of common fields. During the industrial revolution two centuries later, underpaid factory workers were also accorded parcels of land to help them meet their need for food.

Local governments are theoretically supposed to guarantee land, usually in the suburbs, to anyone seeking to grow vegetables for his own requirements. But the law is worded so vaguely that this obligation is often dodged.

As a consequence, the demand for plots vastly exceeds the supply, especially in London. The waiting list of those who have applied for parcels has doubled within recent years. Vacant lots around the city are usually snapped up by gardening enthusiasts without much regard for legal details.

The shortage of plots has also been compounded by the fact that they can be handed down from father to son, and some are known to have been in the same family for nearly a century.

Since the municipal authorities pay little attention to the disposition of this land, it is usually controlled by an oligarchy of old-timers, and a newcomer often must ingratiate himself with this council of elders to acquire a bit of soil.

One reason for the sudden popularity of these plots has been the double-digit inflation afflicting Britain. The traditional par-

cel is 300 square yards in size, and estimates are that a family can cultivate the equivalent of \$300 in vegetables for an annual rent of \$10, plus the cost of seeds and fertilizer. Thus the soil represents a solid investment.

The conversion to vegetable gardening also stems from widespread reaction against processed food. People here are not only discovering that home-grown tomatoes and lettuce and carrots taste better than the packaged variety, but they take pride in having produced them by their own labor.

This trend is consistent, moreover, with the general drift in Britain toward health improvement. Vegetarian restaurants are currently mushrooming throughout London, and, among other things, a new passion has developed for cycling.

The trend is also apparent in the kinds of people who are now cultivating vegetable plots. Increasing numbers of professional men and white-collar employees are going in for vegetable gardening. Even the Times of London, once the staid newspaper of the upper classes, has devoted space to the subject.

The present drive to urge the government to open more land to vegetable cultivation is reminiscent of the Dig for Victory campaign inspired during World War II, when Britain desperately needed to reduce its dependence on imported food.

Among the groups agitating for expanded allotments is one called the Friends of the Earth, which points out that an additional 20,000 acres open to cultivation would yield 160,000 tons of carrots or 100,000 tons of potatoes.

To demonstrate its argument, this group has taken over an empty lot opposite the former London site of Britain's National Theatre. Its activists are vigorously growing food in what might be called a model urban farm.

There is probably not much to the claim that do-it-yourself agriculture will appreciably cut Britain's bill for imported food. But it is certainly relieving the pressure on family budgets, and for that reason it is likely to be encouraged by the government.

(Klein, a senior fellow at London's Center for Studies in Social Policy, writes on social issues in Britain.)

Slouch

by Jim Earle



ANY WORD ABOUT WHEN WE'LL BE GETTING OUR

Letter to the editor

Check solicitor's 'ID'

Editor: We have been confronted recently with solicitors for a "Christian" organization. They are offering carnations and suckers for donations to their cause. We are concerned that many students are not aware of who they are contributing to. This particular organization to which we have referred is the Unification Church (The Moonies). Although we may personally disagree with the foundation of this group and their tactics for recruiting young adults, others may not feel so strongly. What we actually would like to do is to warn people to inquire what group they might be contributing to, so that they might be able to decide if the organization is worthy of their gift. Otherwise the group may get by with the identification of a "Christian" group, which it may or may not be!

—Carol Staten
—Ronda Edrington
—Scott Turner
—Greg Hidalgo

Editor's note: The 1977-78 University regulations specify that anyone soliciting on campus, including religious organizations, must receive advance clearance

from the University student affairs office. The regulations state that:

"Soliciting or selling on campus, including residence halls, is prohibited except by those who have been granted permission by the Concessions Committee. Those who have been given permission to sell can be identified by the 'Concessions Card' which they must carry with them at all times. Violators of this regulation should be promptly reported to the Office of the Director of Student Affairs."

"Canvassing or soliciting by religious organizations is subject to the same regulations pertaining to other student organizations."

Correction

The name of a Texas A&M University student was inadvertently left off the list for last night's Silver Taps ceremony in the Monday, Aug. 29 Battalion.

Richard Frank Miller, a freshman biology major from Conroe, Tex., died June 12, 1977 after a brief illness.

Top of the News

Campus

Student Government jobs open

Applications are currently being accepted for positions on the Student Government Judicial Board. Two seats are open for each of the following: sophomore, junior senior and graduate student. Applications will be accepted through Friday, September 2 in the Student Government office — 216C of the MSC.

Applications are being accepted through Friday for the position of Director of Information for Texas A&M Student Government. The director will be responsible for all aspects of public relations with the Student Government.

A meeting for anyone interested in becoming a Student Government aide will be held on Monday, September 5 at 7:30 p.m. in 410 Rudder Tower.

State

Sarah joins Ag. Department

Rep. Sarah Weddington, D-Austin, will resign her legislative seat Friday to become general counsel for the Department of Agriculture. Weddington, 32, was elected to the House in 1972. She begins her new job in Washington on Sept. 6. Gov. Dolph Briscoe will call a special election to fill the vacancy, which will probably coincide with the Nov. 8 constitutional amendment election.

Yarbrough misses civil suit trial

Former State Supreme Court Justice Donald B. Yarbrough failed to show up in court yesterday for trial in a civil suit alleging he failed to pay about \$190 to a personnel agency. County Court-at-Law Judge Hugo Touchy, after a three-minute trial, found that Yarbrough owed the money to Lyman Personnel Services, Inc. He ordered Yarbrough to pay the money, plus \$75 in attorney's fees. Yarbrough had denied owing the money.

Jobless workers may benefit

Extended benefits may be available for some jobless workers in Texas because of a rise in national unemployment rates, state officials said yesterday. The Texas Employment Commission announced a new period of extended benefits. Persons who filed an initial claim for jobless pay within one year prior to Aug. 28 may apply. Retroactive claims for extended benefits will be allowed during the next two days. Extended benefits — which are financed by federal and state funds — can amount to as much as half the regular jobless benefits.

Mixed drink revenue soars

Tipplers have paid the state, county and city governments \$15 million in taxes on mixed drinks since the legislature legalized sales of liquor by the drink six years ago, said Comptroller Bob Bullock. Bullock included the tabulation of gross receipts on the 10 percent mixed drinks tax in his monthly financial statement. Of Texas' 25 counties, 190 have bars of other facilities licensed to sell mixed drinks. Cities' share of the mixed drink revenue totaled \$21.7 million.

Judge imports doves from Mexico

A state district judge from Houston has been fined \$52.50 for illegally importing white wing doves from Mexico. Judge Jon Nelson Hughes of the 174th District Court at Houston and five other men were returning from a hunting outing in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico. When their private plane stopped in Brownsville Sunday for a U.S. Customs check, 119 dead doves were discovered aboard the plane. The hunters did not possess the required importation permits. An officer with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department filed a complaint against the six men, and they were taken to the Cameron County Courthouse. All six were fined after entering pleas of no contest.

Swine flu vaccine collected

Health officials in Houston are trying to round up and store 209,000 unused doses of swine flu vaccine left over from last winter's epidemic scare. Letters were mailed this week to area clinics, physicians, nursing homes, industries and civic groups. Such groups participate in a nationwide immunization effort inquiring about unused vaccine. The vaccine, said one official, can be stored in the area for use during a future epidemic.

Nation

He joined the Navy at age 12

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen said yesterday that he would seek an honorable discharge for a Texan who joined the Navy at the age of 12 and took part in two World War II sea battles. Bentsen said Calvin Graham, now 47, enlisted in 1942 and served aboard the battleship USS South Dakota during the Guadalcanal and Santa Cruz battles in the Pacific. Graham was dismissed from the Navy in January, 1945, after his mother sent a copy of his birth certificate to the Defense Department. Bentsen said that Graham, who now lives in Ft. Worth, would be eligible for veterans benefits for injuries suffered in a fall aboard the South Dakota.

The Battalion

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the University administration or the Board of Regents. The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting enterprise operated by students as a university and community newspaper. Editorial policy is determined by the editor.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday from September through May except during exam and holiday periods and the summer, when it is published on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester; \$33.25 per school year; \$35.00 per full year. All subscriptions subject

MEMBER

Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Congress

Editor: James M. Wall
Managing Editor: Mary Alice Wall
Editorial Director: Lee Ray Lester
Sports Editor: Paul
Reporters: John
Glenna Whitley, Darrell Lanford, Carol
McGuth, Kay

Photographer: Kay

Student Publications Board: Bob G. Rogers, Chairman; Joe Arredondo; Dr. Gary Haller; Dr. John McConaughy; Dr. Charles Phillips; Rebel Rice, Director of Student Publications; Donald C. Johnson, Production Coordinator; Sherman