

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Tuesday
October 4, 1977

Senate 'too casual' in confirmations

By STEVE GERSTEL
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Bert Lance, that genial free-wheeling financial whiz, has made a mockery of the Senate. Through his own failings, Lance has exposed a very serious flaw in the way the Senate handles the confirmation of presidential nominations. As Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, D-Conn., describes the process, the Senate too often confirms in a "casual fashion." Lance, Ribicoff said, is just "one example of a much larger problem. The present process of confirmation all too often involves very little process." And Sen. Charles Percy, R-Ill., said the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee

recent past that appointments should be more closely scrutinized, Senate committees still are pretty cavalier about handling nominations. There have been exceptions of course. When Gerald Ford and Nelson Rockefeller were nominated to be vice president, they underwent the most rigorous investigations by both the Senate and House. The Senate is also most careful in sifting the backgrounds of nominees to the Supreme Court, which are lifetime appointments. It was this type of probe that doomed the nominations of Clement Haynsworth and G. Harrold Carswell to the high court.

And the Senate Commerce Committee is sitting right now on the nomination of Florida's Donald Tucker as vice chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board. There were widely publicized conflict of interest allegations against Tucker. A grand jury dismissed those charges, but which may still sink the appointment. But those are the exceptions and never is the Senate more likely to rush through nominations than when a new president presents his cabinet for review. That goes double when the incoming chief executive and the Senate are of the same party.

There is an overwhelming inclination to give the new president the men and women he wants around him and to accept the pre-nomination investigation by the FBI and the new team that they are fit to muster. That's why the Governmental Affairs Committee didn't know much about Lance's financial dealings except that he seemed an eminently successful banker. Ironically, a month after approving Lance, the same committee proposed the creation of a new office, which would conduct an independent inquiry on all appointments and give its findings to the committees which handle the nomination.

Yet Ribicoff, Percy and Sen. Jacob K. Javits, R-N.Y., did not introduce the legislation until Sept. 8, well after the Lance affair had exploded. It is possible that if such a unit had been in existence in January, the full scope of Lance's financial affairs and activities would have been available to the committee. That information might or might not have blocked Lance's nomination. But it would have saved President Carter and the Senate a certain amount of embarrassment.



FIRST OF ALL, YOU NEED TO SET UP A DEPARTMENT OF PAPERWORK...

Washington Window

had "failed to do what we should have done in January: thoroughly review Mr. Lance's qualifications." Ribicoff is chairman and Percy the ranking Republican on the committee which recommended last January that the Senate confirm Lance as budget director. Yet, neither Ribicoff, Percy nor other members of the committee should be faulted. They were the victims of a built-in system.

British study suggests direct relation

TV seems linked to teenage violence

By GODFREY HODGSON
International Writers Service

LONDON—What is the connection between television and teenage violence? Quite a lot, according to a study of British viewing habits recently completed by an American research specialist here. The study, pursued over a period of six years by London professor William Belson, is currently stirring up a good deal of controversy in British media circles. Predictably, several television executives are skeptical of the report while psychologists support it. One question being posed here amid all the fuss is whether the Columbia Broadcasting System, which financed the study at a cost of \$29,000, will take its conclusions into account as it contemplates its own television programming in the United States. The study emerges at a time when British television audiences are being increasingly exposed to a number of American shows that play up violence, such as "Kojak" and "Cannon," which are immensely popular here. British television programs are now beginning to emulate the U.S. product with considerable success. One of the big hits here at the moment is "The Sweeney,"

whose title is derived from the Cockney term for the Flying Squad, Scotland Yard's legendary team of crime busters. Like its American models, "The Sweeney" portrays cops who are difficult to distinguish from crooks and who behave as brutally as their criminal adversaries. It is also wildly unrealistic, featuring London policemen toting guns, which they do not carry. But "The Sweeney" is eclipsing the more traditional British brand of crime series, which are long on social realism, are set in authentic locations and depict the police as imperfect yet essentially benevolent guards of troubled but basically decent society. If Professor Belson's findings are accurate, these programs and the American imports like them are contributing significantly to teenage violence in a country where the average adolescent is estimated to watch 25 hours of television per week. Starting in 1972, Belson interviewed 1,565 London boys between the ages of 13 and 16. He also interviewed their mothers, and he controlled for no fewer than 227 variables, such as family income and whether the boys had been breast-fed. Belson says that he devoted this extraordinary amount of time and energy to the study because of his sensitivity to ar-

guments of British television authorities that it was impossible to isolate the influence of violence on the tube from other social influences. He found that nearly one out of eight boys interviewed had committed ten or more serious acts of violence within the previous six months. These acts ranged from knocking another boy off a bicycle to attempted rape. Interestingly, Belson discovered, there was a direct correlation between viewing and committing violent acts. His conclusion, therefore, is that television has altered the propensity to indulge in violence. Or as he put it: "It looks as if television has reduced or broken down the inhibitions against being violent which had been built up in the child by parents and other socializing influences." Belson is backed by the weighty prestige of Sir Martin Roth, head of the psychiatry department at Cambridge University, who has categorically stated that "children exposed to scenes of aggressive and violent conduct exhibit an increase in such behavior as opposed to those not so exposed." Also behind Belson is Milton Shulman, the Canadian-born television critic of the London Evening Standard, who has been contending for some time that British

standards have been declining as a result of imports from the United States. But Belson has come under fire from television managers like Monica Sims, who is in charge of children's programs for the British Broadcasting Corporation. "If social scientists seek to blame teenage violence on television," she argues, "they must also give credit to television for inspiring children to behave thoughtfully." Her thesis is echoed by the government. A Home Office paper repudiating Belson said: "Social research has not been able unambiguously to offer any firm assurance that the mass media... exercise a socially harmful effect or that they do not. If film violence can occasionally trigger a violent response, it must be a quite unpredictable response and confined to rather unusual individuals." Since CBS underwrote Belson, it is fair to surmise that the debate that has been raging here will spill into the United States, where the same issue has appeared. The British concerned with the subject, consequently, are waiting for American reactions to what is, in effect, a worldwide problem. (Hodgson writes for the London Sunday Times and anchors a British television show.)

Letters to the editor

Silver marijuana leaves aren't illegal

Editor: I am writing in regard to an advertisement that ran in the September 27 issue of The Battalion. In this issue the High Style Co. of Albuquerque, New Mexico ran an ad promoting the sale of jewelry in support of legalization of marijuana. In this advertisement, found on page six of The Battalion, several implications were made as to the approval of the open use of marijuana. I am in support of the

first amendment to this country's constitution as much as the next person, but when people exploit their personal freedoms to an excess and to a personal advantage, such as to literally encourage breaking a written law of this country, I am afraid it is indeed a sad state of affairs. I'm not saying that I am a totally closed minded individual, but when a University of high repute like Texas A&M allows such

a clandestine operation to publish such material encouraging the use and sale of a potentially dangerous and presently still illegal drug, I am afraid it might be time to throw in the towel. It is sickening to think that this newspaper would lower its standards to approve such an ad. The advertising standards and morals of this country are indeed alarming and such things as advocating said illicit affairs certainly do nothing to sustain an already faltering national character. I just hope somebody sooner or later will be able to see their way clear of such an unscrupulous mess before The Battalion becomes nothing more than radical propaganda. I direct this letter in particular to the editor in charge of advertising, who should be more efficient in screening the applicants for advertising before allowing them to promote their products in The Battalion.

—Kevin Fox '80

Editor's note: Mr. Fox, you make some assumptions and draw some conclusions that are false. The Battalion does have advertising standards for legality and decency which every advertisement must meet before being published. Advertising Manager Polly Patranello has been doing that job probably more years than you've been alive. When we do accept an ad for publication, it's published as a message from the advertiser to our readers, without any endorsement from the Battalion. In this case, the ad contains nothing illegal. It is an ad to sell jewelry. Period. Yes, jewelry shaped like a marijuana leaf is legal. Your reference to the First Amendment is intriguing. Types of wearing apparel similar to the jewelry in the ad have been successfully defended in court as a form of free speech protected by the First Amendment. Your reference to the University "allowing publication of such an ad suggests that the University should have the power to control what does and does not appear in the Battalion. Believe it or not, Mr. Fox, the Battalion is protected by the First Amendment. The editors and advertising manager control content. You suggest that this six column inch ad

represents a Battalion decline into "radical propaganda." There were 1134 column inches in that particular newspaper. Would you call that a radical takeover?

Story confusing

The article in the Battalion on September 30 entitled "Libraries Curriculum Collection Disappears" is somewhat misleading. The story begins talking about the Serials Purchase Program and then switches to the Curriculum Collection without differentiating where one stops and the other begins. My prior statement about no volumes being removed from the shelves relates directly and only to the Serials Purchase Program. In that regard my statement is correct and can be verified if anyone would care to do so. The proposed Serials Purchase Program is still under discussion by the ad hoc committee chaired by Dean David Maxwell. The 1600 items that were referred to in Ms. Huddleston's article were all in the Curriculum Collection; none related to the Serials Purchase Program. By no means has the Curriculum Collection disappeared. It still contains most of the state adopted textbooks and a good representation of curriculum guides. It should be noted that the items removed from the Curriculum Collection were removed in the period of October to December, 1976. It should also be noted that discussions were begun this last summer with the College of Education to develop a policy statement defining the Curriculum Collection with a view toward developing a more extensive resource of curriculum materials.

Another aspect of Library operations which should not be overlooked in this matter is that items are continually removed from the Libraries' collections. This includes items which are mutilated or lost, and for which the Libraries is unable to find a replacement copy for purchase. If any faculty member or student would like to discuss either of these matters or obtain additional information, they should feel free to contact me at the Evans Library.

Irene B. Hoadley
Director of Libraries

Top of the News State

Pot plant grown by Davis child

Before she was murdered, the 12-year-old daughter of Priscilla Davis was custodian of a four-inch marijuana plant growing at her mother's Fort Worth mansion, Dana Arnold, a teen-age friend of the child testified Monday. Arnold, 15, was the best friend of shooting victim Andrea Wilborn and niece of Stan Farr, who was also killed in the August 1976 assaults at the Davis mansion. Arnold's testimony was in contradiction with that of Mrs. Davis, who testified that marijuana "was not permitted in my house." Despite objections from prosecutor Joe Shannon Jr., District Judge George E. Dowlen allowed defense attorney Richard Haynes to question Arnold about the plant. Arnold testified that she saw the plant twice and it was not hidden from view in the mansion.

Carter's plan needs 'companion'

President Carter's plan for restricting border traffic and the hiring of illegal aliens might reduce the size of the illegal alien problem, but it does not recognize the underlying cause of aliens entering the United States, Texas Attorney General John Hill said Monday. Hill, in an address to the Southwestern States Conference on Crime and the Border, said that Carter's plan treats the symptoms and not the causes of the illegal alien problem. In order for an American program to work, the Mexican government must create a "companion" program which will remove the push of economic underdevelopment which is driving unemployed Mexican workers from their native country, Hill said.

Torres verdict to be considered

A five-man, seven-woman jury today begins hearing final arguments and likely will begin considering verdicts in the trial of two Houston ex-police officers, Terry Denson and Stephen Orlando, charged with murdering a drunken Mexican-American prisoner, Joe Torres Jr. Torres was allegedly beaten for insolence following a barroom arrest and then pushed into Houston's Buffalo Bayou where he drowned May 6.

Nation

Elvis buried in family cemetery

The bodies of Elvis Presley and his mother, Gladys Smith Presley, transported in two white hearses and escorted by white limousines and police cars, were transferred quietly Sunday night from a cemetery to burial plots on the grounds of the Presley mansion. Shelby County Sheriff Eugene L. Barksdale said the bodies were buried in the garden with the singer's father, Vernon Presley and members of the immediate family were present. But Presley's former wife, Priscilla Beaulieu, did not attend the ceremony. The private cemetery, located south of the mansion and cannot be seen by anyone outside the stone wall that encircles the grounds.

World

Indira Gandhi arrested

Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was arrested Monday under the Prevention of Corruption act on charges of abusing her position during her unsuccessful election campaign. The warrant under which she was arrested said she used her position as prime minister to secure jeeps for the campaign earlier this year for herself and her party in the last general elections, which she lost. Mrs. Gandhi said in a statement that her arrest was a political one, and was intended to "discredit me in the people's eyes and the eyes of the world," witnesses said. A large crowd assembled in front of Mrs. Gandhi's house, and Mrs. Gandhi told the crowd, "I can and shall be with you all. So keep calm and peaceful, but let no person or deed subdue your spirit and determination." A number of investigations are under way concerning allegations of wrongdoing during the state of emergency imposed by Mrs. Gandhi in June 1975.

U.S.-Soviet statement criticized

The joint statement on the Middle East, issued over the weekend by the United States and the Soviet Union has provoked bitter criticism from Israel and a chorus of praise from the Arabs. The joint statement, outlining Soviet-American hopes for peace talks in Geneva in December, only served to provoke a new crisis in American-Israeli relations. A reference in the three page statement to the Palestinians' "legitimate rights," provoked the Israelis the most. American officials maintain that American endorsement of this code phrase in no way signaled a change in the U.S. position towards Israel's refusal to negotiate with an organization.

Hijackers release hostages

Japanese Red Army terrorists aboard a hijacked Japan Air Lines DC-8 jetliner released their hostages Monday and agreed to leave the plane themselves, the Algerian Press Service, APS, announced two hours after the plane had landed in Algiers. The plane was flying from Damascus, Syria, with 19 remaining hostages on the sixth day of a marathon hijack that began last Wednesday over India. The APS did not specify whether the hijackers had agreed to surrender to police or whether they would be given political asylum or would be free to leave Algeria.

Weather

Fair and mild today. High 80 with a low tonight of 60. Wind warnings in effect for area lakes. 30 per cent chance of rain tonight.

The Battalion

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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, Wednesdays and Fridays. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester; \$33.25 per school year; \$35.00 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843. United Press International is entitled exclusively to use for reproduction of all news dispatches credited to it. Rights of reproduction of all other matter herein reserved. Second-Class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

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