

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Tuesday
November 15, 1977

The price of new blood in Congress

Indications are that Congress may quietly drop the idea of easing some of its older members out the door with a \$3,000 a year going away present.

Skipping the arithmetical complications, a representative or senator retiring at the end of the 95th Congress in 1978 with 20 to 22 years service will receive a less-than-spartan pension of \$42,880 a year.

It seemed to House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill Jr. that extending that \$3,000 to congressmen retiring next year would help clear our a lot of aging wood on Capitol Hill and he slipped legislation to that effect through the House.

The measure now is before the Senate, where it is beginning to receive the attention it so richly deserves.

David Broder

A national disaster waiting to happen

By DAVID S. BRODER
WASHINGTON—The Lance affair is yesterday's headline, and as everyone knows, nothing is more outdated than that. But before you flip complacently to the next topic, note these two sentences from a just-issued study by Common Cause, the public-interest organization:

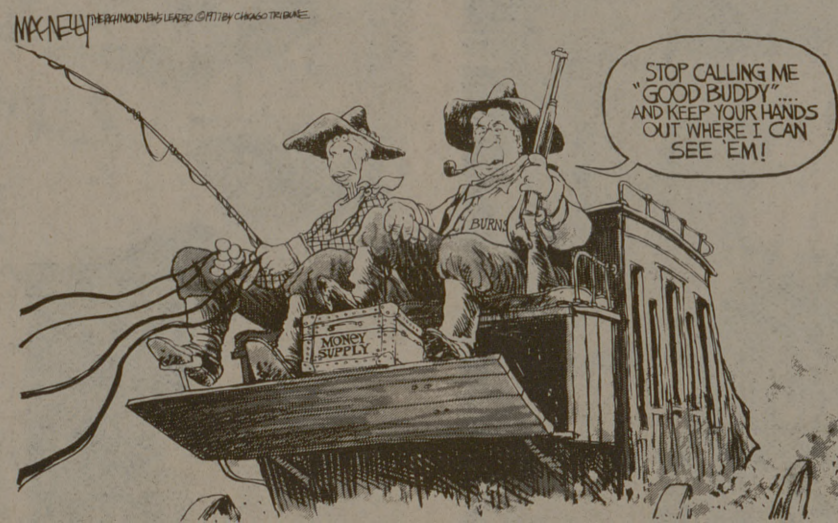
"If it had not been Bert Lance and the Committee on Governmental Affairs, it would have been another nominee and another committee. The Senate confirmation process was a national disaster waiting to happen."

Strong words, but harsh judgment would not be denied by many senators, especially those involved in the Lance affair. The common Cause study provides a powerful prod for the passage of the kind of remedial legislation proposed by Sens. Abraham A. Ribicoff (D-Conn.) and Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) to spare themselves, the Senate and the country the embarrassment of another Lance affair.

Lance was an embarrassment to the Senate, as well as the administration, because the financial practices that eventually caused him to resign went undetected in the charade that passed for a confirmation hearing last January.

Yet the Common Cause study shows that the Lance hearing was a model of procedural purity and care compared to those in which most of President Carter's senior appointees were confirmed. Lance's confirmation met six of the 11 criteria suggested for a full, fair test of an appointee's suitability. Only two of the 11 cabinet members had even as rigorous an examination as did Lance. And in some cases, the procedure can hardly be dignified with the name of a confirmation process.

If you want an example of that process, take the care of Bob Bergland, the practicing farmer and member of the House of Representatives who was named as Secretary of Agriculture.



So far as is known, Bergland has no Lance-type problems. Common Cause is careful to say it is not passing judgement on his qualifications to run the farm programs.

But the Senate Agriculture Committee, which confirmed him after a one-day hearing, did not put him under oath; did not make public his financial disclosure statement; did not require any public resolution of his potential conflict of interest as a farm

owner; did not require him to discuss in public his past or future political activities. The committee posed no written policy questions to him in advance. It issued no formal report explaining why it recommended his confirmation. It did not even make the transcript hearing available in print to other senators or the public until six weeks after Bergland had been confirmed. There was no record vote in committee or on the Senate floor on his approval.

Nor was this unusual. Of the first 50 major Carter appointees who came before the Senate, Common Cause says only 14 were required to make public financial disclosures. Only ten (including Lance) had more than one day of hearings. Only six had their hearing transcripts in print at the time the Senate confirmed them.

That kind of record merits the Common Cause comment that, "The Senate confirmation process is a rubber stamp machine. The remedies, some of which are embodied in the Ribicoff-Percy bill, are as obvious as they are overdue. The Senate needs to develop a uniform disclosure form on both finances and political activities of nominees. Only a few committees now have such forms."

It needs to conduct its own careful investigation of the background and qualifications of presidential appointees. Ribicoff, Percy and Common Cause believe this task is beyond the capacity of existing committee staffs. They propose creation of a new Office of Nominations to do this work for all the Senate committees.

Whether such an addition to the burgeoning Senate bureaucracy is really needed may be debatable. But there can be no argument about the need for an independent appraisal of the nominee's qualifications—not just a passing nod at the President's recommendations. Finally, the process of confirmation needs to be made more deliberate so that questions can be asked, reports written, transcripts read, and reactions weighed—before the Senate gives its assent to the President's choice.

Those changes will not draw the headlines the Lance affair received. But they could prevent its recurrence, and that would be a good day's work for the Senate and the country.
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Letters to the editor

How much energy will America sacrifice?

Editor:

While I was listening to President Carter last night, I decided that the reason he and the Congress were unable to agree on the energy program was their basic attitude toward the American people. President Carter believes the American public is mature enough to support a comprehensive energy program that calls for sacrifices from everyone.

Our Congressmen, now and in the past, seem to believe the public is not willing to make necessary sacrifices. These politicians would attack the problem piece meal and would not have a comprehensive solution. This is the more popular position unless the public can demonstrate a maturity that the Congressional politicians do not think we possess. Of course, there are a lot of oil company money for politicians that would agree to give the companies windfall profits on their oil.

There are many provisions of the President's energy package that will harm me personally, but I am willing to sacrifice some of my lifestyle for the welfare of our country. I believe a majority of the American people are too, even though the big oil corporations have been able to appeal to our selfish instincts and have delayed this program.

Those Congressmen that underestimate the patriotism, intelligence and maturity of the people should be wary of the next election. This includes the Senators and Representatives in this state.

—Houston Thompson

Don't live in the past

Editor:

I would like to briefly say something on the overworked issue of tradition at this university.

First, I should say that I am not a communist, and am a practicing heterosexual. I have been here four years, am a member of the fighting Aggie Corps, and therefore believe that I am no less of an Aggie than anyone else around here.

I speak against those who wish to turn A&M into a graveyard of memorial grass, trees, football stadiums, student centers, etc. I respect this university not only for what it has been, but for what it is and will be. It is alive and growing, unlike the opinions of some people.

If you hear me talking during the traditionally silent Silver Taps, it is because I have stubbed my toe on the memorial water cooler inside the traditionally blacked-out corps dorms.

—Lewis Ciochetto

Keep majority rule

Editor:

I wish to appeal today to all Aggies to consider the dangerous threat of one world government that is dedicated to destroying all that made the United States of America into a great nation. The world governmentists are actual or de facto disciples of Karl Marx. They have infiltrated every important facet of our American culture. They are dedicated to the wiping out of the middle class of Americans and their cherished right to own and manage the returns of their labor and ability. They are rapidly wiping out our representative republic form of government mandated by the will of the majority as set up by our founding fathers.

Our federal government enforces the will of various minorities upon the majority, at will. Reverse discrimination is openly supported by the government and property rights are being steadily wiped out.

We were forced out of Korea and Vietnam by pressure of the world governmentists who had already used pressure to prevent our winning those conflicts. This was not the will of the majority of Americans, and resulted in the loss of our position of world leadership when we shamefully sold out.

Now we are being propagandized that we must give up our canal in Panama, turn our backs on our close friends and allies in Taiwan, and allow the Chinese Communists to overwhelm them. This must not be!

Our government is dedicated to the forcing of citizens of South Africa to accept defeat in their heroic struggle to develop an advanced culture. This would turn them over to other Idi Amins and the resultant savagery and inhuman cruelty that we condone while supporting Uganda economically. How hypocritical can we be?

Get involved immediately and demand that our government adheres to majority

rule. That majority made this nation great. The time is now or never. The decision is yours.

—Ben F. Pritchett
Class of '49

Who losing hurts

Editor: As you read this, you will feel at first this is a typical letter promoting A&M spirit and tradition. Well, sir, it damn sure is. This letter is pointed to all the so-called Aggies at the Arkansas game who felt their worries were above those of the A&M Football team. They played their hearts out to win, and the hearts of many people were broken at the end. The team made mistakes, but many spectators had made worse.

At the game's end, people wearing maroon and other A&M insignia left during the yells. This was expected, but then

many continued to walk-out during the school song. Sure, we were tired and disappointed, but what about the football team? Those guys played and then had to sit in their dressing room and contemplate what happened. Could not we have given a little more of ourselves at the end, or do many students feel that A&M is not that important?

I have a lot of my own personal worries, but so does every one else. A&M is not your typical university, we have never been beaten, we should never give up, and many of you should leave!!

—Tom Abbott

A&M graduate student and graduate of Texas Tech

P.S.: Mr. Editor, I am not going to request that you print this next line, but please understand: I played football at Texas Tech, I did not quit, and I very much know what it is like to lose a close one in front of many people. It hurts a lot.

Slouch by Jim Earle



"WE'RE ON A VERGE OF A NEW TRADITION IN ADDITION TO KISSING YOUR DATE WHEN THE AGGIES SCORE. MY DATE SLUGS ME WHEN THE OTHER TEAM SCORES!"

Top of the News

Campus

Thanksgiving service scheduled

Student Y Thanksgiving services are planned for Wednesday at Texas A&M University's All Faith's Chapel at 8 p.m. The regular fellowship service of the Student Y will be conducted by student and will feature Dr. Ned Walton as speaker. He is an assistant dean in the College of Engineering and associate professor of civil engineering. Students and others are invited to the service.

Applications open for editorship

Applications for editor of the Battalion will be accepted by the Student Publications Board beginning November 15, November 30th at 5 p.m. is the deadline. The Battalion editor will serve during spring semester 1978. A list of qualification requirements and application forms are available at the Student Publications Office, 215 Reed McDonald Building. Completed forms should be returned to the same office.

State

Lawyers rest in Davis trial

Prosecutors and defense attorneys in the T. Cullen Davis murder trial in Amarillo rested Monday and the presiding judge said closing arguments would be heard Wednesday, sending Texas' longest murder trial to the jury. "The testimony that you've heard thus far is the testimony upon which you will decide the guilt or innocence of the defendant," District Judge George E. Dowlen told the jury. He said closing arguments for each side would be limited to three and one-half hours. Prosecutor Joe Shannon Jr., one of two Tarrant County prosecutors who will participate in closing arguments for the state, said, "This whole thing has got to come to an end sometime. I'm glad to get to the end."

Delay denied in Hughes case

Probate Judge Pat Gregory Monday in Houston refused to delay any further a trial to determine the legal residence of the late Howard Hughes and ordered jury selection to begin. A panel of six will eventually decide if Hughes, who was born and buried in Houston, was a legal resident of the state when he died April 5, 1976, during an emergency medical flight from Acapulco, Mexico, to Methodist Hospital. Texas Attorney General John Hill voiced objections to all motions seeking to delay the lawsuit. Texas stands to gain an estimated \$300 million in inheritance taxes if the state is declared Hughes' legal residence. Hill's staff has spent an estimated \$225,000 and countless man-hours, as well as traveled thousands of miles in pursuit of evidence in the case. The states of Nevada and California are also seeking to prove themselves Hughes' home state.

Nation

Carter unveils compromise

President Carter today unveiled a compromise to the Humphrey-Hawkins full employment bill establishing the "ambitious...very difficult" national goal of reducing unemployment from 7 percent to 4 percent by 1983. The bill establishes a framework for economic policymaking requiring the president to submit to Congress his five-year projection of goals for employment, unemployment, production, and income. The president's first report to Congress would require him to set a goal for reducing unemployment by 1983 to 4 percent for all workers over age 16 and 3 percent for those over age 20. Unemployment has fallen 2 percent since the recession peak of 9 percent in May '75, and administration officials now concede their original projections for 6.6 percent joblessness by the end of 1977 were too optimistic. Some 7 million persons are currently unemployed, although the economy has generated about 3.5 million jobs over the past year.

World

British troops become firefighters

British troops swung into their new emergency role of firefighters Monday in London when nearly 35,000 members of the nation's fire brigades went on their first strike. Two of the soldiers were overcome by smoke while battling a blaze in Birmingham where fire broke out on the fifth floor of an apartment block. The flames were extinguished after 40 minutes. There were no other injuries.

42 killed in Manila hotel fire

Fire raged through the seven-story tourist hotel across the street from the U.S. Embassy in Manila Monday at the height of Typhoon Kim, killing more than 40 people, including at least one American. Police said the typhoon's winds hampered rescue efforts and whipped the fire out of control. The fire apparently was sparked by faulty electrical wiring. Philippine National Red Cross Headquarters put the number of dead in the fire at 42 with 13 others injured.

Weather

Partly cloudy and mild today and tomorrow with southerly winds 7-12 mph. High both days mid-70s. Low to night high 50s. 30 percent chance of rain.

The Battalion

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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.

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