

Tidbits and Outrages

Henry's Potion

Buried in the society section of *The Washington Star* was a report of an interesting conversation between Henry Kissinger and Peter Peterson, the new Secretary of Commerce. When Peterson accused Kissinger of not deserving his reputation as a lover, Henry retorted, "What you don't understand is that power is the ultimate aphrodisiac."

A Cable to What City?

There was a big news day for cable television on February 4, and some newspapers suffered from poor reception. *The New York Times* ran a story headlined "New Rules on Cable TV Limit Growth in Cities," while *The Washington Post* headlined its report "FCC Opens the Door to Let Cable TV into Major Cities."

A Citadel for the Liberty Bell:

(UPI) The National Park Service has decided to build a new \$5 million home for one of America's most cherished symbols—the Liberty Bell.

The 2,080-pound bell has been housed in Independence Hall since the Revolutionary War.

The new home for the bell will be fireproof, and will have a closed-circuit television setup and sliding bullet-proof glass doors. The bell will be suspended from 100-foot-long steel ropes.

Joe Pilati in The Boston Globe:

The Republican National Committee's sprightly and acerbic publication, *Monday*, would have us believe young Americans have come to regard President Nixon with nothing less than adulation. . . .

Monday devotes several pages to what purport to be headlines from two dozen leading daily newspapers, such as *The Globe* ("Nixon Gives Priority to Youth," June 8, 1970) and *The New York Times* ("President Shows Admirable Willingness to Adapt to Needs," April 6, 1971).

And there's the rub. We trained our gaze on *The Globe* library's microfilmed copies of both papers last week and discovered that the headlines and news stories to which *Monday* alluded never appeared.

From the Contradiction Department:

The Justice Department is trying to lower milk prices, while the Agriculture Department is trying to raise them.

Eileen Shanahan reported in *The New York Times* that the Justice Department filed an antitrust suit against the Associated Milk Producers, Inc., a cooperative of 40,000 farmers. The suit charges the nationwide cooperative with a host of illegal practices designed to keep milk prices high.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture Department has been boosting the federal dairy subsidy in order to increase milk prices.

John Pierson in The Wall Street Journal:

The oil industry has drilled itself a loophole in the clean water bill that Congress is due to pass in its 1972 session. Down this loophole, some pollution-fighters fear, could flow enough contaminants to foul water in oil-producing states for centuries to come.

Oil's loophole is tucked away near the end of the pending Federal Water Pollution Control Act amendments in a harmless-sounding section called "general definitions." The section resembles the fine print of an insurance policy. Section 502(F) says that the term "pollutant," as used in the bill, does not mean:

. . . water, gas, or other material which is injected into a well to facilitate production of oil or gas, or water derived in association with oil or gas production and disposed of in a well, if the well used either to facilitate production or for disposal purposes is approved by authority of the state in which the well is located.

That's a lawyer's way of saying that the federal government will let oil producers continue to dump all sorts of chemicals—some of them harmful to humans—into the ground.

POLITICAL NUMBERS:

The Cities Turn a Corner

by Michael Rappoport

Nothing is gloomier these days than a conference of futurists, projecting exponential growth in social problems and calculating that there is little hope. Some recent demographic facts about American cities, however, point to a significant easing of pressure on urban governments. In fact, a confluence of statistics and court decisions indicates that the cities may have turned a historic corner.

The single most important fact is that the absolute number of school children *declined* between 1969 and 1972, with further decreases certain to occur in the future. The statistics in Table I represent Census Bureau figures projected through 1975. The 1975 numbers are highly accurate, of course, because virtually everyone who will be in school by 1975 was included in the 1970 census.

This shift is vitally important for

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city finances, because about 42 per cent of all state and local government spending goes for education. The need for rapid growth in school expenditures will slacken somewhat now that the school population no longer bulges upward every year as it did in the 1960s. (More than 40 per cent of the increase in teacher costs in the '60s was caused by jumps in enrollment and drops in the pupil/teacher ratio. The leveling off of these factors may now point toward even lower costs.) In addition, this stabilization is taking place just as teacher salaries appear finally to have "caught up" with the general level of wages. With the major portion of teachers' relative advancement almost completed (public salaries in many places are now higher than comparable private salaries), another large burden on city budgets should be lessened.

The leveling off in population, with a consequent decrease in the percentage of young people, should help city finances in areas other than education. A good part of the upsurge