

TIDBITS and... OUTRAGES

Clearing the Record

After a fire that killed nine men at Consolidation Coal's Blacksville No. 1 mine in West Virginia, the company hurried to correct erroneous reports that federal inspectors had cited the mine for 485 safety violations. Actually, said Consol president John Corcoran, there had only been 397 violations.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Mines was explaining how it punishes these momentary lapses. Since the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act went into effect, the Bureau has assessed fines totaling \$12.5 million—but has collected only \$.4 million and has completely forgiven at least \$2.7 million.

An Idle Watchdog

While congressmen complain that their meager committee staffs and three computers are no match for the White House and Executive departments with their 1400 computers, most of them ignore the investigative service that is theirs for the asking.

The General Accounting Office will run audits and send out investigators at a congressman's request. But data from the GAO collected by Ralph Nader's Congress Project, shows that over nearly a three-year period from 1969 to 1972, the GAO was asked to help Congress only 362 times—an average of 1.6 requests per Senator and .46 per Representative.

William Proxmire used the GAO the most (37 times), to figure out the Pentagon, and H. R. Gross led the House with 11 studies—on federal waste and general government suckerdome. Other congressmen put the GAO to more limited uses, like finding out about how to consolidate laundry service in two Veterans' Administration hospitals (Rep. Thomas McIntyre's one investigation), studying alterations to the U.S.S. *Puget Sound* (Rep. Charles Bennett), and probing fuse contracts (Rep. Ella Grasso).

Energy Crisis

Investor-owned utility companies, whose rates are set by the government but whose profits go to private owners, have proven once again that capitalism and regulation can get along fine.

State utility commissions usually aim at giving the utilities a six per cent return on their invested capital. In practice, prospects have been even better for the utilities. In 1970, the average return for 184 utilities grossing more than \$1 million was 11.33 per cent. Twenty-six of the companies had return rates above 15 per cent.

AMERICA COMES HOME

From Sports Illustrated's Football Preview:

Strange things are happening in Colorado. An eerie quiet, an odd lassitude prevails at "Berkeley East." The metabolic rate is low, perhaps because—students say—of a shared belief that government, environment, even their personal futures are out of control: perhaps because priorities have changed. The new student-body president is an ex-marine elected on his promise to veto use of compulsory fees to subsidize anti-war activities. When he did just that, and radicals forced a recall election, he replied briefly, "Nuts to you all." He won again by 800 votes. There seems to be a Greek revival. And, most unprecedented, football—which has always lost out to the mountains as recreation—has become a mania. "People are looking for something to lift them up," says John Keyworth, CU's intellectual tight end. "Colleges have been turning out grim pessimists. Now people want to be happier, to enjoy society more."

From a Rolls Royce ad in the September 9, 1972 New Yorker:

"It's a working day, with very important people for your Silver Shadow Long-Wheelbase Sedan to indulge. Impress. Perhaps, even intimidate. Now the Rolls Royce, ready. Ready to put prestige to work. To do the job it does best, the job thirty generations have readied it for. Elegant, imposing, the essence of fine breeding, ready for the sure hand of the chauffeur, and the august presence of Client. Customer. Statesman. Royalty."

Up the Down Coattails: McGovern and the Congressional Candidates

by Michael Rappeport

Since the Democratic convention, increasing numbers of people have adopted the Goldwater hypothesis—that if George McGovern is routed by President Nixon, he will drag the rest of the Democratic ticket down with him. A closer look at McGovern's general strategy, however, shows that his campaign may actually produce some unexpected benefits for other Democratic candidates. It may even turn out, ironically, that even if McGovern loses badly, his campaign will help bring victory to a lot of other Democrats who might not have won otherwise.

There is an increasing trend away from pulling party levers, and since voters seem disillusioned primarily with McGovern and not the Democratic Party, the ticket-splitting promises to break all records this year. A recent poll taken by Mervin Field in California shows that President Nixon's popularity will not carry over to Republican congressional candidates in that state. Because of independent voting, the coattail effect will be minimal, reducing the possibility that other Democratic candidates will

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