

Tidbits and Outrages

No Time for Petty Scandals

Readers of our stories on banking in this issue will be interested in the extra evidence we have collected from around the country to show that your banker is always working for you. West Virginia's *Charleston Gazette* reported last month that "a legislator who has been deeply involved in trying sincerely to bring about effective legislation for consumer protection has come to the conclusion that the bankers rank at the very top in influencing legislators."

The main concern of the bankers in the recent session of the West Virginia legislature was defending the "holder-in-due -course" doctrine, which the *Gazette's* fine political writer, Harry Hoffman, explained, "permits a fly-by-night operator to make home improvements, then sell the contract to a bank. . . leaving the consumer to pay through the nose to the holder of the paper, even though the improvements were not made or were faulty."

Douglas Watson of *The Washington Post* reported that the seven Maryland officials who play key roles in administering the state banking laws supporting or legislation affecting the banking industry received free vacations to Bermuda to attend the May convention of the Maryland Bankers Association.

From Virginia comes another reassuring story about the intellectual and moral quality of your bankers:

Hot Springs, Va., June 8. Rep. Joel T. Broyhill received sustained applause from about 200 Washington bankers, wives, and business associates today after a speech in which he bitterly condemned news media for too extensive coverage of the largely "petty Watergate scandals."

Maybe It's Worth It to Get Rid of Them?

John Saar of *The Washington Post* recently pointed to new evidence of the democratic thrust of our armed forces. An officer retiring after 5 years' service is eligible for \$15,000 severance pay. An enlisted man can serve for 15 years and get nothing.

Exotic Dancer

For those who think government contracting is dull business, the *Commerce Business Daily* offers evidence to the contrary:

* A—ESTABLISH ENGINEERING SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF THE HAVE HAIR PROGRAM DURING THE EXOTIC DANCER EXERCISE. Negotiations will be conducted with Raytheon Company, Norwood, MA 02062. . . . For information only RFQ F33615-71-Q-1784, S/A(P106)

Watching Out for the Little Guy

The National Observer recently revealed how it defines the word "small" in a story entitled "How Small Investors Cash In On Those Soaring Interest Rates":

U. S. Government securities are paying unusually high returns. Short-term Treasury bills, for instance, currently yield about 7.1 per cent. . . . You need at least \$10,000 to buy. . . .

The Pain of Separation

One reason the press didn't complain more about its freeze-out from the White House may have been that reporters felt they weren't missing much by not getting to see the Nixon men. Only now, as more and more of the old White House insiders are speaking in public, are we getting an idea of what quotable material we've been denied all along. At a recent press conference in Los Angeles, John Ehrlichman told reporters that "it was not until February of this year that we were given any reason for even the beginning fibrillation of doubt" about John Dean's assurances that there had been no Watergate cover-up.

And in the grand tradition of Jack Valenti, former White House Special Counsel Charles Colson gave *The New York Times* a special glimpse of what it meant to leave the inner circle: "What I miss most is the opportunity to be with the President, and talk with him every day."

New Faces at the White House

For those who had hoped the substitution of Haig and Laird for Haldeman and Ehrlichman would bring new candor to the White House, there is a discouraging word from David Wise's new book, *The Politics of Lying*. Describing the Air Force's cover-up of General Lavelle's unauthorized bombings, Wise says, "The Nixon Administration tried to cover up the scandal. The Air Force originally announced that Lavelle had retired for reasons of 'health.' Later John D. Ryan, Air Force Chief of Staff, said he had relieved the General as a result of the bombing raids. Ryan testified that he had recommended that Congress be told the truth, but was overruled—by Defense Secretary Melvin Laird."

Driving the Point Home

Washington's "Metro" transit agency has been building a costly subway system and urging the civic-minded to reduce traffic by riding buses instead of driving cars. Because its work is so important, we were glad to see that Metro has made life easier for 125 of its officials by paying them subsidies for parking spaces near Metro's downtown offices.

Taking the Pictures Off the Wall

It was just a few months ago that everyone was proclaiming his eternal loyalty to President Nixon and boasting of the time they had worked on the campaign with Bob Haldeman or John Ehrlichman. Now we have this report from Monroe W. Karmin of *The Wall Street Journal*:

In two short years, Ronald H. Walker rose from being an obscure West Coast salesman to a job close to the seat of national power in the White House. Now he's hunkered down at the National Park Service, bewildered and scared.

With the Senate's Watergate investigation being televised, with newspapers reporting disclosures almost daily, the new Park Service director knows he's vulnerable to ruin—though he apparently has committed no indiscretion worse than serving a three-year hitch as President Nixon's special assistant for travel.

"With so many people talking now," Mr. Walker says forlornly, "it's like a growing octopus. If somebody mentions my name, and it makes a headline, I'm dead." The 35-year-old political handyman feels he doesn't deserve to die because in his White House job he really was "a very little guy, very behind-the-scenes."

Indeed, Mr. Walker emphasizes that he really wasn't around the White House much at all. "I was responsible for the President's travel arrangements," he explains anxiously, "and the record will show that the President traveled a great deal, and so did I." Moreover, "I'd like to make it clear that I had no knowledge of, and definitely no participation in, any aspect of the Watergate activities now under investigation."

Nonetheless, the revelations are having their effect upon him. During an interview with a reporter, Mr. Walker perspires heavily and squirms uneasily. He stumbles over words, and he gestures erratically. But when he mentions Watergate his hands come together as if in prayer. As the visitor prepares to depart, the Park Service director consecrates the meeting by declaring, "God bless you sir."

What You've Already Read Can't Hurt You

For those who fear our internal security procedures are becoming too lax, Mike Causey of *The Washington Post* brings new consolation. The Department of Transportation has a group of employees who clip stories about transportation issues from major newspapers. The clippings are then classified "for official use only."

We are also indebted to Causey for discovering a new title at the Department of Commerce: Executive Assistant to the Secretary for Interdepartmental Liaison, Immediate Office, Office of the Secretary.

