

Tidbits and Outrages

The Future Is Now

A diligent *San Francisco Chronicle* correspondent found the following in the revised state code of the Division of Consumer Services Department of Consumer Affairs:

Tenses, Gender, and Number: For the purpose of the rules and regulations contained in this chapter, the present tense includes the past and future tenses, and the future, the present; the masculine gender includes the feminine, and the feminine, the masculine; and the singular includes the plural, and the plural the singular.

Strange Bedfellows

A constant theme of *The Washington Monthly* has been that one of the principal roots of national evil has been people's pervasive fear of losing the phony jobs they hold in the great corporate and government bureaucracies. That our efforts are not as successful as we might wish is indicated by a recent Gallup poll which shows that the number of persons opposed to the idea of a federal law banning featherbedding has risen by 40 per cent since 1962.

Capitalized Capitol

We have often observed that many of the failures of government spring from the gap that separates the responsible bureaucrat in Washington from the problems out there in the country with which he and his bureaucratic unit are supposed to be dealing. We are indebted to the *Washington Star-News* for more facts that help explain the gap:

The higher the grade level of a federal employee, the more likely it is that he works in Washington. As of 1971, about 11 per cent of all GS-4 employees and 13 per cent of the GS-9 employees worked in Washington. But Washington accounts for 27 per cent of the nation's GS-13 workers, 60 per cent of the GS-15 workers, and so on up the scale.

Plumbing Comes to Louisiana

From our old friend, the *Commerce Business Daily*, a list of U.S. government procurement invitations and contract awards:

+Y-CONSTRUCTION OF LUSH TOILETS AND BATH HOUSES at Caney Lake Recreation Area—Project site located at Caney Lake approximately 5 miles north of Minden, LA via LA hwy 159, Webster Parish, LA—IFB R8-6-72-40—Bid Opening 5 Jun 72. The estimated price range for work to be contracted is \$85,000 - \$135,000. Bid documents and specifications will be furnished prospective bidders upon written request. (P133)

U. S. Forest Service, 2500 Shreveport Highway
Pineville, LA 71360

Bring Back the Seabees

Ralph Nader recently noted that Japan's Nissan Motor Company had designed a 2,200-pound production model car (with air bag) which could take a 50-mph frontal barrier crash and permit its occupants to survive. A 50-mph crash into a fixed barrier is equivalent to a car crashing into a similar standing car at 100 mph. Crashes occurring at this speed or less are responsible for 90 per cent of all traffic fatalities. As was the case of Honda's superior pollution control system, Nissan has moved ahead of the giant U. S. auto companies who said it couldn't be done.

Russell Baker commented:

What a falling off is this. We hear it and think of the Seabees in World War II. The difficult they did immediately. Remember? The impossible took a little longer.

There were can-do guys in those days, and there used to be can-do guys in Detroit, too. America was full of can-do guys not so long ago.

Nowadays we have can't-do guys. Washington is perpetually filled with them, all looking for a government handout, or a backdoor appointment at the Justice Department, all leaning on the Congress and Pentagon and White House while their superb lobbying machines boast that they can't build an airplane, can't fulfill a contract, can't run a railroad, can't stop dumping their garbage in their own life's air.

The Wall Street Lawyers in Washington

by Paul Hoffman

There are big firms and small firms; Republican firms and Democratic firms; Jewish firms and gentile firms; "white-shoe" firms and "law factories": some trace their antecedents back to the 1790s. Let's start with Cravath, Swaine & Moore. It's not the biggest. With two hundred lawyers Shearman & Sterling is New York's largest law firm. It's not the oldest. Lord, Day & Lord was formed in 1845 and has retained the same name since. Nor is it necessarily the best. It's a subjective judgment, to be sure, but most New York lawyers rate Sullivan & Cromwell as No. 1. But Cravath is a model of how a Wall Street firm is organized and how it operates.

Seventy years ago, when law firms were casual collections of individual practitioners who combined for their mutual benefit and just as casually fell

This article is adapted from Lions in the Street, by Paul Hoffman, to be published this month by Saturday Review Press.

out again, Cravath deliberately set out to institutionalize itself, to create an entity that would transcend and outlive the influence of any one or two partners. The origins of the present Cravath, Swaine & Moore can be traced back to 1819, but the processes of institutionalization did not begin until 1906, when Paul D. Cravath took command of what was then Cravath, Henderson & deGersdorff.

A crusty, terrible-tempered tyrant, Cravath, according to the firm history written by his successor, Robert T. Swaine, "had a definite philosophy about the organization of his law firm".

First, like a symphony orchestra, it should be tyrannical; one man would call the tune and set the tempo.

Second, the firm would prosper not on *who* it knew, but on *what* it knew; it would live by merit, not by political pull. Within the firm merit would be the only qualification; lawyers would be hired and promoted on