

TIDBITS and...

Loyal Republicans

Early subscribers may recall our October, 1969, article on the Seafarer's International Union, in which Jerry Landauer described how foreign seamen who wanted jobs on American ships seemed to take a sudden interest in political philanthropy. Thus, \$500 contributions to the union's special political fund came from such people as Jintoku Toma, Jinyu Yariku, Tsubio Kohatsu, Seigi Uehara, Koichi Miyazato, Gunvald Larsen, Oddbjorn Fritzo, and Lars Alvin. We are sure these dedicated Nixon supporters will be pleased to learn that last year the SIU donated \$100,000 to the Committee to Re-Elect the President. The union's officers must have been pretty happy, too, for last May a federal judge dismissed a suit against them—accusing the SIU of using non-voluntary political donations—because the Justice Department had failed to press the case for two years. After what we are confident was careful consideration of the merits of the case, the Justice Department decided—a few weeks before the November election—not to appeal the dismissal. The SIU donation was made the first week in November.

Nuclear Hijacking Updated

In our January issue, we published Timothy Ingram's "Nuclear Hijacking," which pointed out the danger that the nation's inadequately guarded supplies of nuclear fuel could be stolen by criminals or terrorists and turned into home-made A-bombs. The story idea had been kicking around in our offices since the start of the magazine, but the dozens of writers we mentioned it to always seemed to prefer other topics. The reason, we suspect, is that many liberals resist facing problems like this one, where the solutions involve tighter security.

We are glad to see that now something is being done about the nuclear fuel problem. On January 29, the Atomic Energy Commission announced that it was tightening controls over fuel shipments and stockpiles. Under the new rules, the AEC will no longer send large shipments of fissionable uranium and plutonium on normal passenger flights and there will be stricter safety precautions for the fuel that is carried in trucks.

While these proposals are obviously an improvement, many of the dangers pointed out in our article still exist. Nuclear materials will still be carried on cargo planes and other public carriers, and there is still the risk that shipments could be stolen at transfer or loading depots. The design of many nuclear power plants makes it impossible to take proper inventories.

Meanwhile, the Airline Pilots Association has also taken up the issue, advocating banning radioactive substances from commercial aircraft—at least until the safety of mailing containers and special cargo holds is proven. The pilots provide us with another horror story of the dangers of transporting nuclear materials. This tale involved a 1972 Delta Airlines flight which contained an improperly sealed nuclear container which left radioactive residues in the cargo hold, contaminating baggage on 20 subsequent flights.

We are glad, too, that the press is finally picking up this story. On February 4, *The New York Times Magazine* published an article by Ralph Lapp describing the risks of nuclear hijacking and reproducing the Orlando letter reported in our article. In addition, the UPI carried our story, and AP reported the AEC announcement. Unfortunately, the AP article conveyed the impression that the AEC's decision was based solely on hypothetical safety considerations, rather than being a response to actual events.

Silent Majority

The scuttling of any government project brings its share of snafus, and the abrupt cancellation of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) is no exception. From Houston, Texas, we learn the fate of an OEO program designed to provide dentures for elderly Chicanos. The problem is that the Chicanos had just had all their teeth removed when the money stopped. This is certainly a way to take the teeth out of effective programming.

The Professionals and the Comedian

Last month in this space we reported that lawyers are 7.5 times more likely to commit tax crimes than the average taxpayer. Our confidence in the basic soundness of American society got another boost recently when John Emshwiller reported in *The Wall Street Journal* that doctors are at least seven times more likely to be addicted to drugs than the average man. If his reported estimates are correct, that gives us at least 5,700 physician addicts.

But there can't be anything seriously wrong with a people who can laugh. For instance, on his recent Christmas special from Vietnam and other U.S. military outposts, Bob Hope began one monologue: "The Colonel gave me a shotgun to hunt pheasants with. But I almost got into trouble. I thought he said peasants."

Rain, Sleet, and Dark of Night Department

From Mike Causey's column in *The Washington Post*, January 31, 1973:

The "plum book," a limited-edition guide to plush federal jobs for the politically plugged-in, has rolled off the presses. It is fatter than the 1969 version, and much more interesting thanks to the addition of nearly 2,000 attractive, if little-known, positions in the U. S. Postal Service.

People who think of the Postal Service as the friendly postmaster and his clerks or carriers will be intrigued with the new titles and pay scales now that the USPS is being operated like a business. For instance:

Manager of Creative Services, \$25,183 to \$33,493.

Civil Defense Coordinator, \$18,634 to \$24,783.

Social Priorities Specialist, \$18,634 to \$24,783.

Schemes Routing Specialist, \$16,872 to \$22,440.

Management Trainees, and Interns, \$16,872 to \$22,440.

Micromation Specialist, \$16,872 to \$22,440.

Fringe Benefit Specialist, \$16,634 to \$24,783.

Suggestions Award Administrator, \$22,767 to \$30,280.

OUTRAGES

Voluntarism Doesn't Come Cheap

With the volunteer army now a reality, ever wonder what each career soldier will cost the taxpayer? George Wilson of *The Washington Post* asked one of the Pentagon's most experienced budget specialists to compute the cost to the public of one typical soldier who serves 20 years on active duty and then retires. Assuming that pay and benefits continue to rise as they have in recent years, he figures the cost of the soldier to be \$1,700,000. If this does not increase support for complete disarmament, it should at least heighten interest in service careers.

One of the nice things about such careers is that as a retired serviceman you can take another government job and keep your retirement pay as well. And the rewards of government jobs are increasingly attractive. The number of Civil Service jobs at GS-14 and above (beginning salary now \$23,085 as contrasted with \$11,355 in 1958) has more than tripled in the last decade. According to the Civil Service Commission, at least 77,763 civilian government employees are also receiving military retirement pay (the actual figure is certainly much higher, since such agencies as the CIA and FBI weren't included in the Commission's survey). Nicholas von Hoffman calls these people Double Dippers and says, "Only the U. S. government would pay pensions to people who are still working for it."

Annual Political Book Award

The Washington Monthly wishes to recognize the best of those books that explore the processes and values of the institutions that govern America, the books that share our purpose of identifying where the system breaks down, why it breaks down, and what can be done to make it work.

**FIRE IN
THE LAKE**
THE VIETNAMESE AND
THE AMERICANS IN
VIETNAM

FRANCES FITZGERALD

**DANIEL
ELLSBERG**



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ON THE
WAR**

\$4.95

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Fire in the Lake
by Frances FitzGerald
and
Papers on the War
by Daniel Ellsberg