

The Texas Observer

Preston Smith's Honeymoon

Austin

It seemed that Preston Smith could do no wrong during his first weeks as governor. Acutely aware that his public image was one of a dull and incorrigibly conservative politician, Smith tried, and for the most part succeeded, in showing that he harbors both a sense of humor and some progressive ideas.

The inaugural festivities, which many feared would be a dreary rerun of the Grand Ole Opry, turned out to be truly festive. The day was balmy, perfect for the outdoor ceremony and parade. The six inaugural balls provided a variety of entertainment for a variety of people.

Many sophisticates had snickered at Smith's predilection for western music and western stars. Syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak revealed that Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes wanted Robert Goulet, a singer who starred in the Broadway play, *Camelot*, to appear at the inauguration. Smith, according to the columnists, said he had never heard of *Camelot* or Goulet and that he already had invited western types Glen Campbell and Jimmy Dean to perform. Smith's office responded with a press release insisting that the governor really was familiar with Goulet and that he had seen *Camelot*. The night of the inaugural dinner Glen Campbell sang, but Smith stole the show with a series of one-liners that poked fun at John Connally, state government and himself. He had the final words on the Goulet issue: "I didn't say I had never heard of *Camelot* . . . what I said was, I never heard of Evans and Novak."

IN HIS FIRST speech to the Legislature, Governor Smith conveyed tone of moderation and cooperation without actually committing himself on many major issues. He deferred specific recommendations on taxing and spending and called for "immediate further study" of former Gov. John Connally's controversial report on public education. He re-endorsed the state Democratic plat-

form which he helped write last September.

Smith put special emphasis on the need for major improvements in the state's vocational education program. He endorsed increased salaries for public school teachers, but he did not specify an amount. He recommended new medical schools in Houston and his hometown of Lubbock and a new dental school in San Antonio.

The governor insisted that he does not oppose constitutional revision, but added that neither the new constitution proposed by a study committee appointed by Governor Connally nor any other complete rewriting of the constitution "would be likely to meet with majority approval." Instead, Smith suggested that the constitution might first be purged of outdated language and then amended article by article.

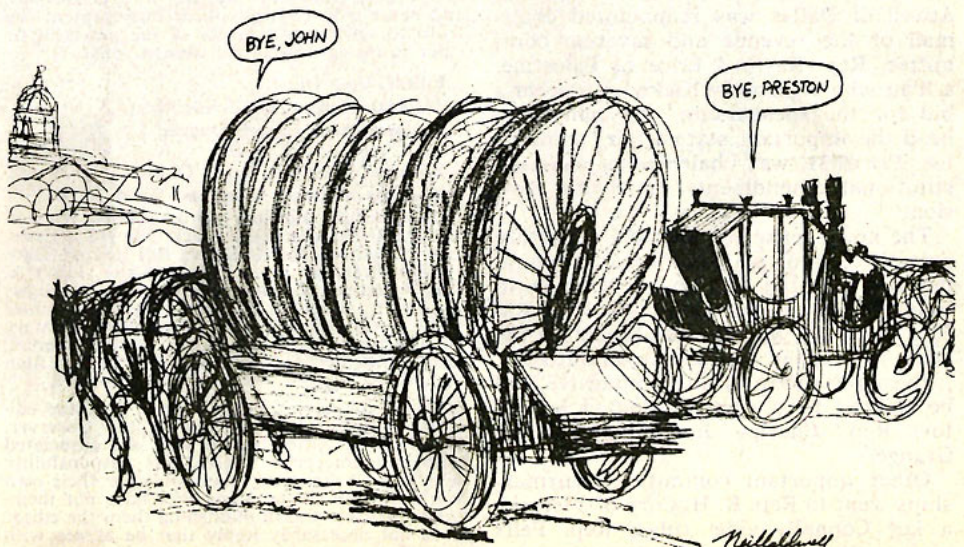
Among the constitutional amendments recommended by the governor were: the resubmission of the proposal to increase the funds available for public welfare, this time with no ceiling on the amount legislators can appropriate; resubmission

of a legislative salary increase accompanied by an amendment defining and prohibiting legislative "conflict of interest;" and a measure allowing the legislature to set by law a minimum voting age lower than 21 but not lower than 18.

The governor also proposed enlarging the three-member Parks and Wildlife Commission "to obtain better geographical distribution and broader representation of the interests of all our citizens"; replacement of obsolete and dangerous buildings now being used by the Dept. of Mental Health and Mental Retardation; enactment of the compromise workmen's compensation bill agreed upon by the Texas AFL-CIO, the trial lawyers and the Texas Manufacturers Assn.; and "consideration of a fair minimum wage requirement."

AS IN HIS inaugural address, Smith dwelled upon law enforcement without being very specific. He concluded with some words on economy. "While it may sound strange to speak of 'spending' and 'economy' in the same

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breath," Smith said, "this is what we must do. We must spend—but only within the bounds of *true economy*. True economy means financing *necessary* programs *adequately* but not *bountifully*—and certainly not *wastefully*."

Probably the most noteworthy aspect of the governor's speech was legislators' reactions to it. While speaking he was interrupted by applause 14 times. Many legislators apparently were expecting Smith to propose an overwhelmingly conservative program. His recommendations concerning welfare funds, a minimum wage and lowering the voting age were pleasant surprises for liberal legislators. The governor was hailed as "progressive" and "downright liberal."

Lawmakers on the left and the right found aspects of his speech to approve. Many appreciated his low-keyed, modest approach appeal. As liberal Sen. Joe Bernal, San Antonio, explained, "John Connally was probably much more progressive, but his arrogance kept coming into the picture. Smith is giving the senators and representatives top priority." The governor's reluctance to deal with specific proposals was interpreted by many legislators as "an open door for the legislature to move on a number of things."

The following day Smith held his first press conference. He verified that he had indeed endorsed a state minimum wage of an undisclosed sum, and he predicted that such a bill will be passed if agreement can be reached concerning fringe benefits for agricultural workers. He said he thinks the wage issue has been "overplayed. I don't think any of us oppose paying a wage commensurate with the work and what the worker needs to live on." The governor said he plans to meet with the press each time his press secretary, Jerry Hall, recommends it.

HOUSE SPEAKER Gus Mutscher gave the major committee chairmanships to conservative legislators, mainly from the smaller towns and rural areas. The powerful house appropriations committee remained in the hands of Rep. Bill Heatly of Paducah. Rep. Ben Atwell of Dallas was reappointed chairman of the revenue and taxation committee. Rep. Rayford Price of Palestine, a man who vigorously backed Mutscher's bid for the speakership, was named to head the important state affairs committee. Price, 31, was chairman of the constitutional amendments panel last session.

The new speaker divided the education committee into two committees, appointing Rep. George Hinson of Mineola to head the public education committee and Rep. Menton Murray of Harlingen to head the higher education committee.

Even the urban affairs committee will be chaired by a rurally oriented legislator, Rep. Charles Jungmichel of La Grange.

Other important committee chairmanships went to Rep. R. H. Cory of Victoria, a key Connally aide, rules; Rep. Felix



'Don't start dragging a lot of outsiders into this.'

McDonald of Edinburg, criminal jurisprudence; Rep. John Traeger of Seguin, constitutional amendments.

House liberals, or at least labor-oriented representatives, were awarded the chairmanships of only a few minor committees — data processing and printing, house administration, penitentiaries and youth.

DIVIDING legislators into conservative and liberal groupings (and into

the category of "moderate" when the other two labels seem not to apply) is a tricky business for legislature watchers. But the practice of categorizing lawmakers has proven irresistible, given the long-standing one-party nature of Texas politics, and the desire of many to make some basic sense of what goes on in Austin, which, the categorizers maintain, proceeds from such invisible realities as who is "liberal" and who is "conservative."

In analyzing Senate committee assignments the *Observer* has, at this point anyway, decided to call 13 senators "liberal," three "moderate" and 15 "conservative." Seemingly, Barnes may agree to a great extent with the *Observer's* evaluations; many times, it seems, he named his committees so that liberals either were outnumbered by moderates and conservatives by just one vote, or else controlled a committee by just one vote. The "liberals vs. other guys" margin is one vote, either way, on 13 of the 27 committees.

Liberal senators have expressed pleasure at the committee assignments, being particularly pleased at their unusually high percentage of representation on most all of the committees. This fact could mean, in certain key instances, that a minority report can be filed by liberal members of a committee, meaning that bills that in the past would not be reported to the senate floor will get a hearing there. There are eleven liberal committee chairmen on the 27 committees this year, compared to five liberal chair-

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The Case Against Frank Erwin

Austin

The *Observer* is convinced, after conversations with a number of Texas senators, that Frank Erwin's reappointment to the University of Texas board of regents is not a popular move by Gov. John Connally, and, more important, that Erwin can be prevented from rejoining the board he has so dominated if these senators who oppose his return will vote their convictions when the Erwin matter comes to the Senate floor.

It is no exaggeration to say that at least—at least—fifteen senators oppose Erwin. The votes of eleven are needed to prevent the required two-thirds confirmation of the Senate. The problem is that individual senators don't wish to be left on a limb in a losing effort—for instance, being one of only five or six who oppose Erwin and then see him returned to power.

That is understandable. To oppose such a man and then have him running some aspect of higher education in a senator's own district could only be a dismal prospect for a Texas senator these days. Yet, we persist—we insist—that those senators who believe, as does the *Observer*, that Frank Erwin has been bad for higher education in Texas, must vote against returning him for six more years to the UT board.

Erwin has, almost singlehandedly, while his fellow regents have sat meekly by, launched intemperate and baseless attacks on the UT law school, trying to use state money as a bludgeon on one of Texas' more respected educators and institutions. Due largely to his influence the regents have suddenly proclaimed that there shall be a four-year University of Texas campus to be located soon at Dallas, clouding the future of the existing UT campus at Arlington, 20 miles away. Erwin has come to embody, in the public mind, what higher education means in Texas, and the personification is not to the liking of a vast number of Texans of varied social views. His intemperance towards and indifference to student concerns and faculty unrest is intolerable. His swashbuckling methods are quite out of character for a regent of an important university system and have intimidated his colleagues on the board into inaction and deprived the state of a serious deliberative body whose task is carefully to consider the directions the UT system is to go.

One regent, John Redditt of Lufkin, resigned publicly in stated disgust, revealing Erwin's letter saying that Governor Connally, (who has been Erwin's patron and crony,) regarded university architectural contracts, other things being equal, as valuable gifts.

And Erwin's machinations resulted, in net effect, in the resignation of the highly respected president of Texas Western at El Paso after that educator's spir-

ited defense of an embattled professor Erwin was after. More recently, Erwin has been trying to foist El Paso's mayor off on the school as the new president, despite student polls showing the mayor is not wanted in that position and despite the tongue-tied embarrassment of the profs and administration out there.

Surrounded by a demoralized administration in Austin, Erwin has bullied in and run the place like a private political preserve. It is not that, and the 30,000 students there and the many thousands more in the associated institutions deserve better than that.

THE UT community does not want Erwin reconfirmed. The students do not want him, the faculty does not want him, and the administration does not want him. It is not unanimous, of course, but there is an unmistakable consensus.

He is an able, intelligent man, and he has devoted much time to university affairs and has done good things for the

An Editorial

school, but he should not be running a university. He does not understand or respect academic freedom. He goes after the hides of professors simply because he disagrees with their opinions. He reacts with irrelevant rage against the vital present realities of student life. He is out of tune, an anachronism.

It appears that there will probably be a public hearing, and what is or is not said there quite possibly could decide the matter. Upon the outcome the quality of the university's academic life and atmosphere for the next decade or two substantially depends.

Professors are always looking down on politicians. *Politicians* — you know — those fellows who compromise as a way of life. How, now, professors, where are you? Now that your university's independence of politics, its academic freedom, are on the line, where is the community?

We'll tell you where some of the professors are. They are saying, "Well, I don't want to get out there without some company." And, "What if he's confirmed? We've got to think of that." And, "I am involved in this other fight, and I can't jeopardize it by taking on this one." And "I have a lot of interests, I can't get in it." We have heard different professors say these things. They are thinking, not only of Erwin, but of his friend, Lyndon Johnson, who is reported to have returned to this area.

This week one of the senators, who has already risked a good deal going as far as he has, said, "Well, where are they? What we need is five or six really certi-

fied guys. What can they do to them? They're in, you know—I know they may want to live in Austin, but they can get jobs anywhere in the United States. This is their university now. How much do they care?"

A lot of people have made a lot of sacrifices for the academic freedom, however faulted it may be, that each professor in Texas now enjoys. Each man must be his own judge of his situation and requirements. But there is going to be a public hearing on Frank Erwin pretty soon. When you come to a river you have to cross, sometimes you cut a limb and pitch it out there to see how it lies. Someone has to go first, and then someone else. Some of the senators have cut that limb.

WE HAVE heard, from senators and many in the academic community who oppose Erwin: yes, but we'll just get someone like him in his place, so what's the difference? The difference is that whoever is named in Erwin's place—and those others on the board of regents—will understand that Texans, at last, will permit no trampling on what was becoming the good name, the very good name, of our state's most important universities. It is not to be countenanced that one man, particularly one man of such debatable views on what directions higher education should go, should be returned to power. In Erwin's case, the power is inordinate power—as "superregent," to issue statements in the name of the board, whose other members sit by while Erwin does his thing. Texas is becoming too cosmopolitan, and rather too sophisticated for this, the opinions of our state's detractors notwithstanding.

If there is to be meaning in the often-heard boast that, this year, the Texas Senate "will be different," "will be progressive," then let the proof of such claims be borne out in meaningful action, in this case by stopping Erwin's return to the UT board. □

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Bound volumes of the 1968 issues of *The Texas Observer* will be available in mid-January. In maroon washable binding — the same as in recent years — the price is \$12.

Also available at \$12 each are volumes for the years 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, and 1967 — the years of *The Observer* in its present format.

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THE TEXAS OBSERVER

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(adv.)

Some Gubernatorial Quotes

Austin

Interesting excerpts from the recent public papers of Preston Smith, the new governor of Texas:

"We will not tolerate violence, either in *breaking* or *enforcing* the law. . . .

"All Texans, both men and women, are guaranteed equal rights. . . . This is another guarantee: 'Every person shall be at liberty to speak, write or publish his opinions on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that privilege . . .' The Constitution says EVERY person. . . .

"We have not always had the money, the incentive or the will to deal adequately with human problems—problems of the young, of the old, of racial minorities, of disadvantaged economic groups, problems of the sick, the afflicted, and the mentally ill. . . .

"I will only say, in frankness as well as fairness, that the money is still a problem—but I *am* AWARE of injustice and WILLING to con-

front it with the weapons at my disposal. . . .

"Someone has said 'cowardice asks, is it safe? Expediency asks, Is it political? Vanity asks, Is it popular? But Conscience asks, Is it right?'

"I intend to heed my conscience in the weeks and months ahead."

(Inaugural address, Jan. 21, 1969. Emphases in the released text.)

". . . the Texas Constitution lists under persons not eligible to vote idiots, lunatics, paupers, felons, and persons under 21 years of age. . . .

[I]n the certain knowledge that there are many more builders than wreckers in the Texas youth community, I would like to see these young people removed from that category. Therefore, I recommend that you submit an amendment to this section providing that the legislature may set by statute a minimum voting age lower than 21 and not lower than 18, if it desires to do so." (Message to the Legislature, Jan. 23, 1969). □

men in 1967. Thus, it appears that the liberal senators' work in behalf of Barnes' primary and general election campaigns last year has had some of the anticipated results, improved committee assignments for liberals.

The caveats about labels being borne in mind, for the purposes of this discussion (and, no doubt, in future stories about the legislature in this paper this spring, pending revision if developments so indicate) the 13 Senate liberals are Jim Bates of Edinburg, Bernal of San Antonio, Ronald Bridges of Corpus Christi, Chet Brooks of Pasadena, D. Roy Harrington of Port Arthur, Barbara Jordan of Houston, Don Kennard of Fort Worth, Oscar Mauzy of Dallas, Mike McKool of Dallas, Bill Patman of Ganado, A. R. Schwartz of Galveston, Jack Strong of Longview and Charles Wilson of Lufkin.

Moderates, who could go either way on any liberal-conservative litmus test, are Criss Cole of Houston, Ralph Hall of Rockwall and Charles Herring of Austin.

The remaining senators are the conservatives.

Non-liberals control the important senate committees. The most vital of these is state affairs, which conservatives and moderates rule by 14-7. The next most important committee, finance, is 15-6 against the liberals.

Eight committees appear to be controlled by liberals; these generally are of middling to little importance: interstate cooperation, military and veterans affairs, privileges and elections, rules, state departments and institutions and three new committees—commerce and industry, federal programs and relations

and youth affairs. On all but two of the committees (state departments and federal programs) the liberals' edge is a single vote. Given past experience, cases where individual liberals have not voted as expected, this could mean the liberals' eight committees are not solidly in liberal hands.

The most important liberal committee is privileges and elections, chaired by Strong and held by liberals 6-5. Revision of the election code would be before this body, and some activity is anticipated in this area (*Obs.*, Jan. 10, p. 7). The rules committee, headed by Schwartz, is not as important as committees of that name in the US Congress. Legislation to be sent the other liberal committees will largely be routine.

BARNES said he considered urban-rural ratios of representation on committees more than liberal-conservative. He said he ignored seniority in many cases to give cities the representation he felt their growing problems demand.

Sen. Grady Hazlewood, Amarillo, is the surprise chairman of the finance committee. Hazlewood, a Barnes supporter, campaigned actively last year against the primary and general election campaigns of Governor Smith. Smith has advanced no public quarrel with Barnes' committee assignments. Barnes also will have close control over the finance committee, whose chairman is Sen. W. T. Moore, Bryan.

Liquor-by-the-drink appears to have a slight edge this year in the Senate. Chairman of the constitutional amendments committee is Sen. Joe Christie, El Paso, who will sponsor a resolution calling for voters to approve the practice of holding local option elections to permit sales

of liquor by the drink. Of the 13 committee members seven appear to be supporters of the measure.

No senator has more than one chairmanship this year; in the last Senate three senators, all staunch conservatives, had two chairmanships each. All but four senators have a chairmanship; the exceptions are the two Republicans, Sen. Ike Harris of Dallas and Henry Grover of Houston, who each were given two vice-chairmanships; and two freshmen, Bridges and McKool. Most senators are on ten committees; others are on from nine to 13.

Hopes for a minimum wage bill are improved since the session began. Governor Smith has surprisingly endorsed the measure, and Barnes has indicated he's for it. Senator Jordan, Houston, chairs the senate labor committee. There is a standoff in committee votes, two liberals and two conservatives, the deciding fifth vote that of moderate Senator Hall.

THERE WERE liberal gains, too, in the new rules adopted by the senate. Senator Strong of Longview was the floor manager for the new senate rules as well as a set of joint rules the senators passed and sent to the House of Representatives for its consideration. The main feature of the joint rules, a feature urged by Barnes, is that conference committees be limited to adjusting differences between similar legislation passed by the two houses, and not be permitted, as in the past, to write wholly new legislation.

The main change in the Senate rules is the doing away with, for all practical purposes, secret votes on consideration of gubernatorial appointments. The changes came in two amendments offered by Senator Schwartz, who for years has opposed senate secrecy. Schwartz, for a time, several years ago, told newsmen after secret sessions how he had voted. Then in 1965 a senate rule was passed forbidding that. Schwartz thereupon began telling newsmen *before* closed sessions how he intended to vote on upcoming appointees.

Last week, on the morning the senate was to adopt its rules, it was apparent Schwartz' long campaign to roll back the curtain from some aspects of the senate's operations was blessed with adequate support. He rounded up 19 co-sponsors for one of his amendments, 18 for the other before they were introduced. Before the session began that morning he was telling reporters that some of the new senators "think I'm crazy for introducing such amendments as these," they not knowing intimately the past practices in the upper house.

Schwartz' first amendment calls for open consideration of gubernatorial appointees unless a majority of senators vote for a closed session. "There are scars and some blood on the floor of the senate over this issue," Schwartz said, introducing his amendment. Senator

Moore, a conservative, who knew how the vote was going to go, twitted Schwartz, saying, "I don't know why you didn't come up with this ten years ago." The voice vote approving the amendment was not unanimous; Sen. H. J. Blanchard, Lubbock, asked to be recorded as opposed.

The second Schwartz amendment permits a senator to reveal his vote on any matter considered by the Senate at any time, closed or open session. Blanchard objected, saying the change would do away with the purpose of closed sessions. Blanchard and Wayne Connally asked what issue Schwartz would use to campaign for reelection if the change were voted. Blanchard then sardonically offered a substitute amendment: "There shall be no executive sessions of the Senate." He voted no; the vote was close, 17-14 against. The second Schwartz amendment then was shouted through, again not unanimously and again Senator Blanchard asking to be recorded as opposed.

Moore pushed through an amendment that liberals fought; it requires a two-thirds vote of senators to take a bill from the committee to which the lieutenant governor assigned it and re-refer it to another committee. Schwartz said the "rule takes from the majority of this Senate the right to conduct its own affairs." He went on to assert that both liberals and conservatives could be hurt by the rule. Moore said he didn't see the issue as liberal or conservative. "This just prevents the Senate from flipping bills from one committee to another," he said. Senator Mauzy said he remembers incidents of some committees in 1967 not meeting for several weeks. "I'll vote to re-refer a bill in such a case," Moore responded. "In the twenty years I've been here I've never had any trouble when I had the votes," he added, drawing appreciative laughter from most of the senators. "Yes," Mauzy replied, "but it sometimes is easier to get 16 votes instead of 21." Bernal and McKool joined in the debate, opposing Moore's amendment. Schwartz' motion to table failed, 17-14, and the rule was then adopted with the same division of senators.

After a few less important changes were considered, the rules were adopted, 30-1, Senator Patman dissenting, evidently unhappy about Moore's two-thirds rule on re-referral.

Eight senators voted for opening up the Senate business a bit more on all three votes at issue (voting against the Moore amendment and cosponsoring the two Schwartz amendments. They were: Bernal, Cole, Hall, Harrington, Jordan, Kennard, Mauzy and Schwartz. (Two other senators, Wilson and McKool, nearly made this list, Wilson failing to cosponsor the Schwartz amendment permitting a senator to tell how he voted, McKool not cosponsoring the Schwartz amendment requiring open meetings unless a majority of senators vote otherwise.)

Later in the week the nominations

committee held an organizational meeting, with several newsmen present. "This is the first time this ever happened," Schwartz said, of the open meeting. Blanchard, evidently mindful of the impending debate about Governor Connally's reappointment of University of Texas regent Frank Erwin, Jr., said, "I just want to be sure this new open-door policy doesn't mean we are going to have a bunch of hippies up here demonstrating against someone, and I want to say right now that I will move that we close the doors if this happens." J. P. Word, Meri-

Pecking Order

Austin

Last week, Speaker Gus Mutscher, preparing to deliver the traditional presiding officer's speech to his house colleagues, poured himself a glass of water from a pitcher which the speaker has on his rostrum in the House chamber as a prerogative of his position. As Mutscher poured, up walked Rep. W. S. Heatly, the veteran appropriations chairman and, some say, the real power in the House again now that Ben Barnes has left to preside over the Senate.

Heatly, evidently without a word, took the pitcher from Mutscher in mid-pour, poured himself a glass of water, put the pitcher down and returned to his desk on the House floor. Mutscher picked up the pitcher and completed pouring his drink.

At his desk, Heatly sat in a folding chair; his cushioned swivel chair being occupied by Gov. Preston Smith, come to hear Mutscher's address. □

dian, committee chairman, assured Blanchard that only committee members would be doing the talking and that no demonstrations would be permitted.

THE SENATORS also passed a set of joint rules which the House must now consider. The main feature of this set of rules is limiting conference committees to adjusting differences between two similar bills, one passed by the House, the other by the Senate. Usually in the past conferees have been able to do what they want, often coming up with a bill that includes features not in either bill at issue, or deleting features shared in both bills. Speaker Mutscher appears opposed to this limitation on conferees at present and evidently has the support of most of his House colleagues. Barnes, as speaker in 1967, pushed through a similar provision in the joint rules as passed by the House that year but the Senate didn't go along. Voting against the joint rules in the senate last week, in most cases because they don't like the restriction on conferees, were Senators A. M. Aikin, Jr., Bates, Blanchard, Her-

ring, Patman and Murray Watson. The other 25 senators voted aye.

Barnes was generally regarded as having won a victory in the rules adoptions. He told the Senate at the conclusion of that morning's session, "The action that the Senate has taken should not only point out to the members of the Senate but to the people of Texas that the Texas Senate is not only willing—the Texas Senate is very able—and in the frame of mind to do what I feel you are going to do, and that is to give the people of Texas the most productive session in the history of our state."

That night some senators were criticized by the House members of their district during a social function of the Texas Oil Jobbers Assn. The House members were upset that the new Senate rules banned them from conferring with senators on the floor of the upper house. The next morning the first order of business was to restore to House members the right to talk with senators while the Senate is in session. The vote was 29-1 with Kennard voting no and Wayne Connally absent.

The joint rules passed by the Senate represent the first test of how Barnes and Mutscher are to get along this spring. Mutscher appears determined, for one thing, to appear independent of Barnes, who, it had earlier been said, would run both houses of the Legislature. The assumption behind believing Barnes could tell Mutscher how to proceed was based on recollections of the new speaker's cooperation with Barnes when Barnes was speaker. Mutscher appears at pains to demonstrate his independence.

Also, he probably is under a good deal more pressure from the influential members of the business lobby here, who are concentrating on the House to stop legislation the lobby doesn't want passed. The lobby generally is regarded as wishing conferees' hands not be tied, feeling ten members (five each from the Senate and the House) can be handled in some crucial issues more easily than 181 House or 31 Senate members.

Another problem for Mutscher is posed by his appropriations chairman, Representative Heatly, who favors retaining the freedom conference committee members have had. Many persons here regard Heatly as the man who will, in actuality, run the House this year. Much of Heatly's power in past legislative sessions as chairman of appropriations accrued through his being appointed to conference committees and wheeling and dealing as he saw fit. He is known hereabouts as a man who has a good deal of sympathy for the views of Austin's lobby.

In any case, Mutscher has said of late he doubts the wisdom of limiting the prerogative of conference committee members.

THE QUESTION of who will predominate in the Senate, the liberals or

conservatives, remains an open question as legislators now go about the business of introducing bills, organizing committees and getting hearings scheduled. Senate liberals have reason to hope they can control things, given their consecutive triumphs to date in enlarging the amount of money to be available to senators for researching bills, the adoption of the new Senate and joint rules which are far more to liberals' liking than any in recent Texas history and the improved standing of liberals in Senate committees. The House, as events have proceeded, appears to be conservative-dominated, as had been anticipated, the liberals in disarray, hoping only, if at all, to engage in some guerilla activity to mar, where possible, the ruling establishment's hopes.

Former Sen. Dorsey Hardeman, San Angelo, who was defeated in last year's Democratic primary, has been appointed to a \$21,000-a-year, six-year term on the State Board of Insurance by Governor Smith. Hardeman, long the conservative power and braintrust in the Senate, was defeated for reelection last year by W. E. (Pete) Snelson, Midland. Some Senate

liberals have grumbled about the appointment but confirmation is anticipated by the necessary two-thirds of the senators. Snelson, who could single-handedly block the appointment by senatorial courtesy, says he does not object to Hardeman's getting the job. Smith has indicated he'll recommend Hardeman be chairman of the board.

The Legislative Budget Board has given to legislators copies of its proposed \$5.6 billion state budget for the 1970-72 biennium, about half a billion more than budgeted for the present biennium. The bill calls for \$1.1 billion from the tax-supported general revenue fund. The proposed budget, prepared by a committee which includes the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker and eight legislators, does not include some expensive new proposals such as a pay raise for the state's teachers. Later in the session the governor and both houses will draft budget recommendations.

The first measure passed during the new session, a million-dollar emergency appropriations bill, was rushed through both houses in one morning. The measure

authorizes transfer of \$350,000 among Department of Public Welfare accounts to provide money for the dependent children program. The maximum allocation for needy families was cut \$12 a month last September and an additional \$28 cut was imminent due to the burgeoning number on welfare rolls. The juggling of welfare accounts will allow the department to keep payments at their present rate for a few months.

The bill also provides \$335,815 for the state's public junior colleges which have had unexpected increases in enrollment.

Some \$130,000 of the appropriation goes to the governor's office for fiscal 1969. The Senate received \$325,000 and the House \$115,000 for session expenses.

The bill was passed unanimously without debate in the Senate. Four House members voted against the bill, explaining they resented having a bill of such importance pushed through without more study. The nay votes were cast by three Houston Republicans and a liberal Democrat, Will Lee, Bill Archer, Jim Earthman and Curtis Graves, respectively.

G.O., K.N.

Political Intelligence

✓ The profound effects of the Supreme Court's one-man, one-vote ruling on the Texas Senate are a matter of increasing concern to conservatives in Texas, and are causing conservatives and the business lobby to concentrate their efforts in Austin on the House of Representatives this year, as in the past two sessions. *Dallas News* reporter Richard Morehead and conservative Houston Rep. Jack Ogg recently have written in newspaper columns about the more liberal Senate.

Ogg said, in the *Houston Tribune*, that "Cognizant observers and members of the 'third house' (the lobby) can see the handwriting on the wall. They recognize that the 'torch of legislative power' and the hope of good government in the future is now largely dependent on the House of Representatives under the able leadership of Speaker Gus Mutscher."

Morehead said "One possibility is that a state corporate income tax will get serious consideration the first time in Texas history" in 1969 because of the realigned Senate. He described old-time conservatives as "practically aghast" at the changes looming in the Senate through committee appointments. Morehead notes that all four senators who represent parts of Dallas county "collectively are far to the left of George Parkhouse," the late Dallas conservative senator. He notes that Texas political power is shifting now to the cities and hence is becoming more liberal, a trend that will advance with further redistricting after the 1970 census.

✓ A study committee on state and local tax policy recommended that state and

local sales taxes on industrial machinery and equipment be frozen by law at the present levels of 3% and 1%, respectively.

This committee, which is headed by conservative Rep. Ben Atwell of Dallas, made few other recommendations. Instead it computed the revenue the state could get from various types of taxes. The state is expected to need somewhere between nothing and \$400 million. Some of the estimates included:

Eliminating the exemption on groceries from the sales tax: \$210 million.

Eliminating the exemption of farm machinery from the sales tax: \$9 million.

Eliminating the exemption of alcoholic beverages, which are now subject to selective sales taxes, from the general sales tax: \$45 million.

Removing the exemption of cigarettes and tobacco products, which are subject to selective sales taxes, from the general sales tax: \$22 million.

Adding selected services—barber and beauty services, laundry and dry cleaning, automobile and other types of repairs—to the general sales tax base: \$47.6 million.

Increasing the oil production (severance) tax from 4.6% of wellhead value to the 5% Oklahoma rate: \$27 million.

Increasing the natural gas production (severance) tax from the present 7% of wellhead value to 8%: \$23 million.

Imposing a personal income tax like Oklahoma's, one of the most modest in the nation: \$370 million. Imposing one like New York's, one of the highest in the nation: \$1.55 billion.

Imposing a corporation income tax like Oklahoma's 4% of new income: \$215 mil-

lion. Imposing one like New York's higher one: \$400 million.

✓ The House committee which has been investigating the curious financial relationships between vending machine firms and tavern operators, has recommended a number of stiff laws to regulate their dealings. Among the recommendations are:

Laws prohibiting loans to tavern operators by vending machine companies. The five-month investigation revealed repeated instances where vending machine companies gained control of taverns by loaning their proprietors money.

Licensing of all those—individuals or firms—owning or operating amusement vending machines.

Prohibiting persons owning or holding interest in vending machine firms from owning leases on taverns or private clubs.

Requiring written contracts for all agreements with tavern owners concerning the placement of vending machines in their establishments.

✓ The State Banking Board this week approved the application of two new banks for Houston. One, to be called the First Bank, has among its board members J. Doug Toole, who was Preston Smith's Harris county campaign manager last year. That bank's application had been pending before the state board since 1967.

The Coalition

✓ Status of Texas' New Demo Coalition still is uncertain. Some voter registration work was done by the new liberal organization and now attention will turn to matters before the Legislature and or-

ganizing liberals in the precincts. So the *Observer* is advised by State Rep. Curtis Graves, Houston, who is chairman of the Texas Coalition.

Don Gladden, former Fort Worth liberal House member and a candidate last year for lieutenant governor, is head of the Coalition's legislation committee. He says he plans a series of four workshops in Austin for members interested in lobbying for the liberal viewpoint at the Capitol during the legislative session. Of particular interest, Gladden says, will be election law reform and the teachers' pay increase. Those participating in the workshops will be briefed on these issues, among others, and given some idea of the workings of the Legislature. Then participants will be sent to confer with legislators.

"This is the first time such a thing has been done in the liberal community," Gladden tells the *Observer*. "Before, we've always relied on organized labor." He says it is probable that the Coalition will develop and circulate a voting record for the 1969 Legislature based on issues of liberal, as distinguished from labor, interest.

✓ Texas Coalition leaders plan a memorial banquet in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in Austin sometime in mid-April, Graves says. Big-name speakers and entertainers are being sought.

✓ Graves says the national Coalition plans a \$100-a-plate "Chicago Revisited" dinner in that city in mid-April to raise money to finance operation and permanent staffing of several task forces now being organized on such matters as party reform, civil rights poverty and peace.

What of TLD?

✓ The status of TLD, the other statewide liberal organization, remains up in the air. The group has not met since early 1968, and a meeting required by its constitution last summer was not held. Most TLD members probably consider the organization dead now and feel that they are Coalition members, or, in some cases, members of the New party, a group which is being organized as a fourth party in Texas. Texas Coalition people hope to take over the state Democratic party; New party people, a fewer number than the Coalition at this point, have given up on the Democratic party and have formed a fourth party as the best way for liberals to proceed.

✓ There is some sentiment that TLD be kept alive and that it be aligned with the Americans for Democratic Action. The idea would be that TLD could develop issues and let the Coalition be primarily a nuts-and-bolts political organization that need not face the potential divisiveness of confronting issues. Issues, particularly the Vietnam war, led to the present moribund state of TLD, many liberals believe (*Obs.*, Aug. 18, 1967, and Feb. 16, 1968).

There will be a regional Coalition meet-

ing, involving people from several states, in March or April at Houston; perhaps at that time TLD people will decide about the future of their organization.

Senator Yarborough

✓ Sen. Ralph Yarborough, elected chairman of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee, assigned himself to head the health subcommittee. Asked why he chose the health unit instead of one of the other five standing subcommittees, he said, "Because the great need is there. Five or 10 years ago, I would have chosen education. But we haven't moved as fast in health legislation as we have in education."

✓ Apprehension among those concerned about the plight of the migrant worker in Texas and the nation was eased last week by Senator Yarborough's announcement that the migratory labor subcommittee will be retained and, indeed, put on permanent status for the first time. Earlier it had appeared that the senator had decided, as the new chairman of the Senate labor and public welfare committee, to do away with the committee's subcommittee on migrant labor. Yarborough's announcements of his subcommittee chairmen included no mention at all of that group.

On Jan. 21, as Yarborough was in the rotunda of the Austin Capitol, he was asked about the subcommittee's status by liberal Representative Graves, Houston. "I confronted him about it and was greatly concerned because the migratory labor subcommittee was a window to airing the grievances of migrant workers," Graves tells the *Observer*. Graves says it remains his impression that the senator had, at that time, determined to do away with the subcommittee in the belief that its aims would better be served through activities of the whole labor and public welfare committee.

A week or so before, Graves had attended a meeting in New York City and Newark of the steering committee of the Demo Coalition. He said a number of national Coalition leaders "were all raising hell about the migrant subcommittee's apparent abolition. "This became the subject of discussion for half the morning," says Graves. A resolution was passed by the steering committee urging the subcommittee's retention.

Senator Yarborough's office has lately told the *Observer* that the subcommittee is to be retained, that its being changed to permanent status (now not having to be renewed each year) may have accounted for the delay in announcing its chairman. The chairman will be Sen. Walter Mondale, Minnesota. He succeeds Sen. Harrison Williams, New Jersey, who has served as the subcommittee's chairman since its inception. Williams has moved to the chairmanship of the larger subcommittee on labor but remains a member of the migratory labor group. Other migratory subcommittee members are Ted Kennedy, Alan Cranston, Harold

Hughes, George Murphy, Henry Bellmon, Richard Schweiker and William Saxbe.

A Williams staff member tells the *Observer* that it can be anticipated that the migratory labor subcommittee's effectiveness will be enhanced by its permanent status and the expected cooperation between the labor and migratory labor subcommittees.

✓ In commenting on Yarborough's new position, *The Machinist*, a union newspaper, described the Texas senator in glowing terms: "Although he comes from a state with the worst anti-union laws in the nation, Yarborough has not been afraid to stand up for his trade union friends. The *Machinist's* report card on the 90th Congress shows Yarborough with a 100% "right" voting record.

Other Matters

✓ Yarborough voted to end the filibuster and Tower voted to retain it in the Senate. Yarborough voted aye both times as the Senate gave a 51-47 majority vote to a motion to shut off debate on the liberals' proposed filibuster rules change and as only 45 senators voted to uphold then outgoing Veep Hubert Humphrey's ruling that this majority carried the change because a majority was sufficient to change the Senate rules at the beginning of a new Congress. Humphrey's ruling failed of approval by a vote of 53-45, Tower voting against it, as he had against cloture. Thus the cloture vote was insufficient to cut off debate under the old rule that a two-thirds vote is required.

✓ Yarborough's vote in the Democratic caucus for Senator Kennedy over Sen. Russell Long for majority whip has been criticized obliquely in Texas press accounts as jeopardizing the state's hopes of bringing Mississippi river water into the state. It is said, Senator Long of Louisiana, might now be inclined to exert influence in his home state to cripple

February 7, 1969

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hopes of Texas getting some of Louisiana's water.

✓ But if Long is bitter about Yarborough's support of Kennedy in the close caucus vote, Kennedy is described as most grateful to the Texas senator for his support. At a Washington cocktail party the night the vote was taken, Kennedy was heard expressing his gratitude for Yarborough in no uncertain terms. "He was very, very grateful," the *Observer* is told by someone who was at the party. Yarborough's support "meant a hell of a lot to Kennedy," not only personally but as a lever to be used on other senators, it is said.

About Hickel

✓ Senator Yarborough voted for the confirmation of Walter Hickel as secretary of the interior (as did Sen. John Tower). Neither Yarborough nor Tower said anything during the rather extensive Senate debate. During debate, Wisconsin Sen. William Proxmire recalled that he had opposed the appointment of John Connally as secretary of the navy on grounds similar to Proxmire's opposition to Hickel: because of Connally's connections with oil. As executor of the Richardson estate, Connally was, Proxmire said, tied with "one of the largest single oil holdings in the world."

✓ Part of the Senate's price for confirming Hickel was his disposal of \$1 billion worth of stock in a Houston-based holding company, Alaska Interstate Co., which has gas pipeline holdings in Alaska (as well as mining, boat building and other interests). Sixteen senators, liberals mostly, voted against confirmation.

✓ Yarborough may have had two reasons in particular for voting for Hickel, a man whose views on conservation vary widely from the senator's. First, senators are very reluctant to block cabinet appointments, having traditionally wanted to respect a president's wishes in such matters. Second, Yarborough may have been mindful of his hopes for a Big Thicket National Park and therefore unwilling to oppose Hickel in what, it was rather apparent, would have been an unsuccessful effort to block his confirmation, anyway.

✓ Yarborough first introduced the Thicket bill in 1966. The National Park Service has taken an interest in the matter, first recommending a 35,000-acre national monument (*Obs.*, Sept. 15, 1967), then later a 48,000-acre preserve. The senator calls both these proposals too limited and urges at least 100,000 acres. President Johnson plugged the Thicket preservation movement two days before leaving office. Yarborough, on the Senate floor, said the Thicket once was about 3½ million acres but now only perhaps 10% of that remains, being lost today, he says, at the rate of 50 acres a day.

✓ Houston Cong. Bob Eckhardt has been awarded a seat on the House

commerce committee, a significant assignment for the sophomore liberal. The appointment came in spite of Eckhardt's vote for Cong. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., in his foiled attempts to depose House Speaker John McCormack, D-Mass. Cong. Harley Staggers, D-WVa, chairman of the commerce committee, reportedly enlarged the committee to make room for Eckhardt.

In moving to commerce, Eckhardt joins another Texan—Cong. Jake Pickle of Austin. Eckhardt gave up his seat on the space committee for the commerce slot.

✓ Texas was heavily represented at a Washington \$100-a-plate dinner a few days ago to help retire the presidential campaign debt of the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Among the better known Texans in attendance were Senator Yarborough, ex-Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark and Congressman Eckhart. Some 3,800 attended.

✓ Senator Yarborough's press secretary, Bill Hamilton, who left the senator at the beginning of the year, has joined the staff of New Community Press,



'Wally Hickel is coming! Wally Hickel is coming!'

an adjunct of the Ford-financed Center for Community Change. Former RFK aide Frank Mankiewicz is chairman of NCP. Another former Yarborough staffer, David Hearne, is director.

'68 Reviewed

✓ The Democrats didn't win Texas in the presidential election, the Republicans lost it. So believes an anonymous veteran of liberal campaigns in Texas, as quoted by Washington correspondent Sarah McLendon. The Texas campaign in Richard Nixon's behalf was plagued by overworking the tidelands issue of the 1950's ("a dead issue," the liberal said, and one of no appeal to young voters)

and poor direction (said to be the fault of Ken Tower, an aide of Senator Tower).

The Yarborough man, not unexpectedly, credits Yarborough forces and faults the Johnson-Connally people in last year's Humphrey campaign. "We actually had little help from Governor Connally although Senator Yarborough has graciously given him credit for help in his press conferences. To tell the truth, we had little help from President Johnson's organization."

The liberal source is described as "a man who has conducted numerous campaigns in Texas in recent years," as "a number of Sen. Ralph Yarborough's team" and as the man who evidently is to lead the senator's 1970 reelection effort. Almost certainly these descriptions refer to Chuck Caldwell.

✓ It has gone almost unnoticed in Texas and the nation that Will Wilson of Austin has been appointed chief of the criminal division of the US Dept. of Justice in the Nixon administration, but this is an event of considerable moment.

Wilson was a justice of the Texas Supreme Court. As the Texas attorney general he crusaded against loan sharks and crime. He ran for the US Senate in 1961 and the governorship in 1962, losing both times.

Originally a Texas Democrat, Wilson evolved more and more away from the Texas Establishment, finally breaking completely to become an active Republican. He has a reputation for hard-minded integrity. On economic matters, he is very conservative. On racial matters, he is integrationist.

As attorney general, he conducted the state's original investigations into the Billie Sol Estes scandal. These were cut short by federal investigation.

Wilson has been engaged in successful practice of corporation law in Austin for the last several years. His sudden positioning at the operational apex of federal criminal law enforcement is an event of considerable interest.

Johnsoniana

✓ According to the estimate of Saul Friedman of the *Detroit Free Press*, "Johnson holdings" have increased in value from \$14 to about \$20 million since 1964. The \$14 million was *Life* magazine's estimate. The \$20 million now covers land, (\$4 million), communications, (\$12 million), banking, (\$4 million) and other investments, but is disputed by Donald Thomas, Johnson counselor and business adviser, in Friedman's series on Johnson's wealth. The \$20 million includes holdings not held by any of the Johnson family and disregards "all liabilities and debts," Thomas told Friedman.

Much of the information in Friedman's series is not new, but Friedman learned that the Southwest Livestock Sales Co., organized by Johnson associate and trustee A. W. Moursund, is the owner of a

big cattle auction building at Round Mountain, about 25 miles from the LBJ Ranch.

Reporter Friedman suggests that the Texas Capital Corp., organized six weeks after the Johnson-sponsored Small Business Investment Act of 1958 authorized federal loans to such firms, is one of the companies of the Johnson Group. Thomas told Friedman that Johnson had nothing to do with its founding. Some of its stock is now held by the Johnson City Foundation and the profit-sharing trust of the Johnson radio-TV business. Its original organizers included Edward Clark and Franklin W. Denius, both long identified with Johnson Group activities. Friedman concedes Johnson has no direct connection with the company, which now exceeds the permitted size for such federally backed small companies and also owns other businesses, contrary to the intentions of the federal program.

✓ The Lubbock daily reported last month that Austin attorney Jake Jacobsen had just joined the eight-member board of the Lubbock Savings and Loan Assn. because of the purchase of what the paper called "a substantial block of stock." The paper failed to identify Jacobsen as the man who frequently represents President Johnson in matters of high finance and as a former Johnson White House assistant. As a fellow Austin attorney was quoted recently in *US News and World Report*, "It is sort of common belief around here that everything Jake is doing in banks will eventually bring Johnson into the picture." Jacobsen has been involved in a number of transactions in Austin banking that are understood here as being in LBJ's behalf. Johnson is believed to own part of each of the city's banks. Jacobsen is listed as one of five directors of the newest in Austin, the Community National Bank, which opened last month.

✓ There has been some talk in recent weeks of an impending struggle for banking supremacy in Austin between Johnson and former Gov. Allan Shivers, who is chairman of the board of the Austin National Bank, the capital's largest.

✓ Fagan Dickson, Austin attorney who ran against Jake Pickle for Congress on a "Bring Lyndon Home" platform, then withdrew when Johnson said he would not seek re-election, told the *New York Times* he has bought 281 shares of stock in the Capital National Bank of Austin, paying \$88 a share for it, in confident expectation that Johnson will take control of the bank next spring and cause the stock to increase in value. Of the ten banks in which the Johnson circle have interests, Capital National is the one with the most thoroughgoing Johnson stamp on it.

A Discovery

✓ In the *Los Angeles Times*, Nicholas Chriss reports that a second contributor to the \$200,000 private LBJ State

Park has been uncovered. The list of these contributors has never been released despite promises by John Ben Shepperd, the trustee of the fund, that they would be. The first one to be learned about was George Brown, whose Brown Foundation gave \$50,000. Chriss reports that the Johnson City Foundation loaned \$33,500 to the park fund in 1967. (Presumably this will become a gift.)

✓ President Johnson will have the use of a military helicopter, the *New York Times* has reported. It will be based at an air base near San Antonio. Both the new Johnson Library in Austin and the Austin Federal Bldg. will have helicopter landing pads atop for the president's use. Johnson will travel by military airplane when going out of Texas, the *Times* adds, because of Secret Service fears of the possibility of a highjacking if he travelled by commercial airlines. The *Times'* story notes that the perquisites of ex-presidents have grown with each succeeding man; Johnson will, therefore, have more than any other ex-president.

✓ Johnson evidently is to keep at least some of the expensive airport and communications equipment at the LBJ Ranch, according to President Nixon's press secretary, Ronald Ziegler. A great amount of communications equipment was installed there after Johnson became president in 1963; two years earlier the Federal Aviation Administration had installed equipment at the ranch airport.

LBJ and UT

✓ President Johnson still harbors resentment towards the University of Texas at Austin despite that school's providing facilities for the LBJ Presidential Library and School of Public Affairs (*Obs.*, Jan. 24). So reports *Wall Street Journal* Dallas reporter Norman Pearlstine. Johnson "became angry when the school refused his request to be made a full academic professor, even though Mr. Johnson never planned to devote all his time to the school," Pearlstine writes. Therefore, Johnson will, for one thing, be a guest lecturer this spring at Rice University. UT chancellor Harry H. Ransom said Johnson will be a "conversationalist in residence" at Austin.

Pearlstine adds that reports persist that the new upper deck addition to the UT-Austin football stadium was put on the west rather than the east side in deference to Johnson—so LBJ's view of Austin and the university from his library would not be impeded. The cost of putting the upper deck on the west rather than the east side is much greater because of the westward slope of the stadium site.

✓ It has been indirectly announced that the chancellor of UT, Dr. Ransom, is the president of the newly formed LBJ Public Affairs Foundation. The foundation will support a professional staff to do technical and research work incidental to publication of the Johnson memoirs. Ransom said royalties and other income accruing by publishing or broad-

casting of Johnson data will go to the foundation. The formation of the foundation—and Ransom's presidency of it—were made public incidental to the announcement that Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc. are to publish LBJ's memoirs beginning sometime in 1970.

Higher Education

✓ Apprehensions among those concerned about higher education in Texas that someone without proper academic credentials might be appointed to the presidencies of the University of Texas campuses at Arlington and El Paso may be unfounded. The *Observer* understands that two leading Texas academicians were approached about the jobs in December. Frank Vandiver of Rice was sounded out about the UTEP job, and Joe Frantz of UT-Austin was approached about the Arlington position.

It has been widely thought that someone more aligned with the Texas business community might be given the two jobs. El Paso Mayor Judson Williams, who was thought to be the board of regents choice for the UTEP job, recently withdrew as a candidate, criticizing the regents for being "indecisive." Student demonstrations and widespread faculty apprehension evidently stalled the regents from naming Williams (*Obs.*, Dec. 13). An acting president has served nearly a year at El Paso now. UT officials say they'll not be hurried about choosing a permanent president, and that delays are not unusual for choosing university presidents. The Williams resignation and public criticism caused UT to issue a press statement in December that the selection of the UTEP president is expected "some time in the new year."

✓ The Arlington vs. Dallas cold war in higher education intensified a bit with the recent disclosure that Austin attorney Howard Rose had been retained to promote the views of the Dallas chamber of commerce before the legislature this year. Rose is a law partner of Frank Erwin, the chairman of the University of Texas regents; the Dallas chamber is a leading advocate, with Erwin, of 1) a UT-Dallas campus and/or 2) of making the Southwest Center for Advanced Studies (SCAS, which is financed by Dallas business interests) part of the UT system. Both proposals are viewed dimly at Arlington, which recently won status as a "UT" campus and which is now hoping to become the educational colossus of North Texas.

✓ There are signs the Dallas business community is wearying of the high costs of operating SCAS, which presently is devoted to postgraduate research in science. Last year the board of regents suddenly announced its intention to establish a four-year UT campus at Dallas (*Obs.*, Dec. 13).

✓ The ambitions of UT regents to expand their system throughout the

state pose a threat to the primary function of the Coordinating Board, which was established four years ago to remove politics from the functions of higher education in Texas. The CB is being threatened by intense UT pressure, it appears, and there is some basis to the view that prospective CB members are chosen now on the basis of their support of UT expansionism. Last month the reappointment of CB member Charles G. Scruggs of Dallas was successfully opposed by the Dallas chamber of commerce because "he opposed Dallas' program in the field of higher education," as Dallas Sen. Mike McKool said. McKool struck Scruggs from consideration for return to the CB, something McKool could do through senatorial courtesy as Scruggs lives in McKool's district. Scruggs said it is not the function of a CB member to represent a particular locale but to serve the state. "I don't feel I'm answerable to any chamber of commerce," he added, pointedly.

Los Chicanos

✓ Tension between Anglo- and Mexican-Americans, a factor that long has characterized life in South Texas, is evident now, more and more, in local government of the region. *Observer* readers have become familiar with situations at Crystal City, Mathis, and Rio Grande City and with the general question in the wake of local elections in South Texas.

The latest manifestation of growing *latino* influence in local government has occurred at Robstown, near Corpus Christi, where Mexican-Americans number about 75% of the population and in the past few years for the first time have begun to marshal electoral superiority nearly approximating that percentage.

Last year Robstown area *mexicanos* elected one of their own to replace their precinct's Anglo county commissioner. And now, this year, they are in revolt against the Anglo school superintendent in a district that, as typically in South Texas, long has been run by Anglos, often to the detriment, many *latinos* have felt, of the Mexican-American majority.

The Robstown school board two weeks ago voted by 4-2 not to extend the contract of the superintendent; the vote was strictly along racial lines, the two Anglo members voting for extension, the four Mexican-Americans voting no. The matter will be reconsidered at a future time, it was decided. The superintendent's current three-year contract has two years more to run; usually in the past at Robstown, as in other places, the superintendent's contract is brought up annually for a one-year extension so as to give the superintendent at least two years' notice of impending dismissal. Whether the Robstown superintendent, Bill Corder, is to be let go in the future is not clear. The board's majority has expressed displeasure with Corder for, they say, not keeping them apprised of what is

going on. Corder says this is the first he's heard that his services have not been deemed satisfactory.

Meanwhile, one of the two Anglo board members has resigned in protest of the decision not to extend the contract. He very possibly will be succeeded by a Mexican-American appointee, to be named by the remaining board members.

✓ Elroy Bode's essay on a poor child he saw in Juarez, "You Should Have Been There," (*Obs.*, Dec. 27), was repub-

lished in the *West Virginia AFL-CIO Observer*.

✓ The Dallas branch of the American Civil Liberties Union has asked that pledge cards which junior and senior high school students in that city are urged to sign be done away with. The cards call for students to foreswear secret or off-campus organizations. Signing the cards is not mandatory but students who do not sign them have restrictions placed on extracurricular activities. □

Krueger Fired

Austin

The Rev. Edgar Krueger, the Texas Council of Churches' minister to the farm workers' side of the upper Valley melon-pickers' strike and more recently the council's minister among the rural poor in the lower Valley, has been fired. The council has decided to drop its lawsuit on behalf of the Rev. and Mrs. Krueger against some Texas Rangers and other lawmen, a suit which alleged that the Kruegers' civil rights were violated by maltreatment during the strike. The council, an important statewide association of Protestant churches, has also decided to discontinue its sponsorship of the VISTA program among the poor in the lower Valley.

Harold Kilpatrick, executive director of the council, says Krueger was fired, after refusing to resign, because the council's leaders decided that they should make fuller use of their member churches in trying to help the poor and that Krueger "didn't relate to them." Krueger grants that he spent most of his time with the poor among the 190 or so *colonias*, or impoverished rural communities, in the four-county Valley area, and says that the churches' relating to the Establishment has not got the job done before and won't now.

Kilpatrick readily admits that there has been "pressure" within the council for two years against Krueger's militant, although quiet work among the poor, but the council official says Krueger was not fired because of the pressure. "We're hoping that our work among the poor will be greater, not less," as a result of the change, Kilpatrick says. "We're hoping to continue organizing in the *barrios* and the *colonias*, which Krueger has done a lot of, and he has a lot of friends among them," Kilpatrick told the *Observer*.

Kilpatrick's basic statement was that the council's actual resources for helping the poor are its member churches and that its work for the poor should make fuller use of these resources.

In San Antonio, Frank Gonzalez, president of LULAC Council No. 2, speaking for the city's entire LULAC council, criticized the church group for dropping its suit against the Rangers. He said this "constitutes a compromise of principles, and it further has traces of a wholesale surrender to those forces of oppression

that have kept the Mexican-American in the lower Rio Grande Valley in conditions of servitude."

Krueger was assigned by the church council to work with the union side of the farm worker's *huelga*. The council had planned to assign a second minister to the management side, but, says Kilpatrick, "by the time we got another man, the growers indicated they would reject anyone who was sent in our name." Texas Ranger Capt. A. Y. Allee frequently accused Krueger of partisanship for the workers. The strike failed.

Krueger and his wife went to work then in the *colonias*. There is one other minister in what the council calls its Valley ministry; evidently he will stay on.

KRUEGER, IN a telephone interview from Pharr, where he lives, told the *Observer* that by the compromise agreement on the lawsuit, there is to be no fixing of blame, and both sides aver their intention of getting along in good faith. This agreement, Krueger says, exonerates the Rangers, and he declined to be a party to it. He says he could see forgiving past grievances, but not saying that "things which are recorded did not happen."

While this matter was interwoven with Krueger's firing, he had not refused to sign the agreement before he was asked to resign.

What was Krueger doing in the *colonias*? "I tried to encourage the people to work together. It's really community development work, to help them defend their own rights themselves."

The minister in the Valley town where the Kruegers live is the Rev. W. A. Triggs, pastor of the United Methodist Church there. He has been quoted in the *Valley Morning Star* of Harlingen charging that the VISTA ("Volunteers in Service to America") program in the Valley entailed the volunteers in "squabbles" with the school system in Mission and the city commissioners of Weslaco over the location of a new swimming pool. He charged that the volunteers also were involved in setting up meetings and organizations that had a hand in a walkout of 200 Mexican-American students from the Ed-couch-Elsa schools in November.

Krueger denies any hand in that latter

walk-out. Did his work in the *colonias* have political consequences?

"Naturally," he says, "as the poor begin looking at their problems, they begin to understand something about the school board, they begin to notice who their county commissioner is, they see their muddy roads, they call on the commissioner to fix them. Naturally they're going to become more alert politically to their whole situation. Some people who are enjoying illicit power and privilege begin to feel threatened."

He makes no apologies for this, however, the minister says. He believes reconciliation of conflict is part of the church's mission, but that sometimes this has to be preceded by a polarization of differences.

Krueger contends that churchmen have long been relating to city hall, county courthouse and other manifestations of the Establishment "usually to the very serious neglect of the people in poverty." Churchmen so relating, Krueger says, "tend to echo the feelings and thinking of the Establishment."

TOLD OF Kilpatrick's state-

Another Texas College May Be Blacklisted

Austin

Texas evidently will have a fourth institution of higher education added to the "blacklist" maintained by the influential American Assn. of University Professors. The current *AAUP Bulletin* reports a case of alleged violation of academic freedom at Frank Phillips College, a two-year school at Borger. Publication of a report in the *Bulletin* almost invariably is followed by a school's being placed on the AAUP list of censured administrations. The matter will be considered in May when the association holds its annual meeting in Minneapolis. Texas colleges currently on the AAUP list are Sam Houston State, Amarillo College and Texas A&M.

The Frank Phillips case involves the dismissal of a teacher, Mrs. Aileene Ledford Gauntt, during her tenth year on the faculty there. Mrs. Gauntt taught women's physical education, served as assistant librarian and occasionally taught biology. In January, 1965, she requested and was granted a leave of absence until that September because of her needs for medical attention, as well as other personal problems occasioned by the failing health of her father and by mental anxiety on the part of her fiancé. Subsequently that year Mrs. Gauntt's father died and her husband committed suicide. Facing two sets of medical and hospital expenses, she contacted a placement bureau for a summer job pending her return to Phillips College that fall.

The college president, J. W. Dillard,

ment that the council's leaders hoped to help the poor more, not less, without Krueger, the fired minister said, "In a sense, power to him for trying, but the history of the past sixty years seems to indicate that the churches, as they work with the Establishment, tend to reflect the views of the Establishment, and little or no progress has been obtained for the poor."

When he was hired, Krueger said, it was distinctly understood that he would be working with farm workers and low income people. He suggested that Kilpatrick and his associate executive director, Dr. Jesse Reber, "are trying to change the policy of the Texas Council of Churches" in this respect.

Krueger said he and his wife will continue to work in the Valley, possibly earning their living as farm laborers. Persons outside the Valley are known to be interested in the potential of the Kruegers' efforts for union and political organization among the poor. Krueger said some church leaders have given him encouragement since he was fired. "We might get support," he said. R.D.

apprised of Mrs. Gauntt's wishes to secure a summer job elsewhere, wrote her in May saying it was clear to him she had become unhappy with her work at Borger. He advised her to resign from the college faculty. Mrs. Gauntt replied by mail to the president to explain the financial reasons requiring her to get a summer job. A few days later Dillard wrote back that as of September Mrs. Gauntt would be dismissed. She since has taken employment as a school librarian in Missouri.

MRS. GAUNTT contacted the AAUP national office, which instituted an investigation, sending a three-member committee to Borger. The committee was told by Ernest H. Dunning, a member of the college board of regents and an attorney, that Mrs. Gauntt had not requested a hearing to review charges against her. President Dillard had earlier told an AAUP representative that he had let Mrs. Gauntt go because of "personal characteristics [that] had been evident from the outset [and which] had worsened over the past three or four years," according to the AAUP report. Asked why there is no regulation at Phillips concerning tenure and academic due process, Dunning told the AAUP committee that the college was awaiting the action of the Coordinating Board of Texas College and University System (which since has passed such a statement).

The committee reports it found "frank-

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(Adv.)

ly . . . [no] valid basis for the action that was taken against Mrs. Gauntt." Charges against her were not set forth formally as such and were not tested through due process, says the report. The committee says that the notification that Mrs. Gauntt would not be retained by the college occurred by letter May 21, a date the committee calls "severely late for notice to a first-year faculty member, let alone one in her tenth year."

Concluding, the committee said: "Under the conditions which were found to exist at the college—no written regulations; no system of tenure; no provisions for due process; all [faculty] appointments on an annual basis and at the pleasure of the president — presumably any member of the faculty whom the administration wished to dismiss could be separated from the institution in a manner similar to that experienced by Mrs. Gauntt. The new faculty members with whom the *ad hoc* committee managed to speak indicated satisfaction with these conditions and with the administration of the college. Perhaps the faculty as a whole is quite content; the committee was not welcomed to the campus, was not able to talk with large numbers of the faculty, and thus cannot say. The committee can say that the practices at Frank Phillips College which have been discussed in this report are unreceptive to the development of academic freedom and foreign to its nature. . . . [T]he concepts of academic freedom and tenure were found to be absent at Frank Phillips College."

IN OTHER developments in Texas concerning the AAUP, the association's national office has requested a report from its chapter at Southwest Texas State College on the McCrocklin matter (*Obs.*, Aug. 9 and Dec. 27), the situation involving the similarities of the doctoral dissertation of that college's president and his wife's master's thesis.

McCrocklin, who had promised a statement about the situation at SWT on his return last month to San Marcos, has to date remained publicly silent. Word is that he has been asked by regents to withhold comment until March.

An advertising listing of books published by the US Naval Institute until recently included McCrocklin's *Garde D'Haiti 1915-1934*. The book was based on

the McCrocklin dissertation. The book was included in the institute's advertisement in last September's *US Naval Institute Proceedings* but deleted when the same ad ran in the same publication in October.

Texas A&M lately has fired the professor whose case led to that university's administration being censured by the AAUP. Dr. Leon Gibbs was dismissed after a faculty committee, appointed in the aftermath of the AAUP action, decided, by a 3-2 vote, that Gibbs had been guilty of "moral turpitude," in that he allegedly made immoral advances toward two female employees of the university. Gibbs was also said to have disparaged students' religious beliefs, impeded the activities in his department of veterinary medicine as well as in other departments and to have performed poorly in research projects.

Gibbs replied that he was unable ade-

quately to defend himself before the committee partly because three and a half years had elapsed between the time the charges against him first were made and the hearing. "I didn't have the finances to locate the witnesses to rebut the charges made against me," he said. "The witnesses they produced against me were nearly all employees of the college." Gibbs pointed out that he was promoted by the university after two instances of misconduct were alleged to have occurred. He has said he believes his problems at A&M stem largely from his divorcing a woman who was close to some influential persons on the university faculty.

"I feel my actions will give more people courage to stand up against injustices done against them by colleges like this," Gibbs said. The A&M board of directors, in a public statement, said it would support the faculty committee's recommendations. G.O.

Our Congressmen

Washington, DC

This is a new year and a new Congress sits in it, but the Texas Congressional Delegation looks depressingly the same: reactionary, establishmentarian, a gang more likely to enjoy the timid governmental reflexes of a Nixon administration than to be outraged or saddened by them.

A minimum of two and a maximum of four Texans of the 20 House Democrats are thought to have supported the reform candidate for speaker, 46-year-old Morris K. Udall of Arizona, a mod-

Larry L. King

erate liberal, when Democrats caucused ultimately to affirm the reign of 77-year-old Speaker John McCormack by a 3-to-1 margin.

The only Texan openly to go on record for Udall was Houston's Bob Eckhardt, who signed a letter inviting colleagues to a pro-Udall breakfast before the caucus.

Dick White, El Paso, is said to have promised his vote to Udall's camp; he

The writer is an Observer contributing editor who lives in Washington, DC.

apparently took no part in the pre-caucus campaign. Jim Wright, Fort Worth, is said to have privately assured Udall backers that he had been with him. However, Wright took no part in the pre-caucus campaign, nor did he go on record with any of Udall's people that he would vote for the insurgent *before* the caucus showdown.*

On the basis of moderate-to-liberal voting records, one might have expected Jack Brooks, John Young, Wright Patman and Henry Gonzalez to support Udall. There are plenty of practical political reasons why they did not, however. Each of the four outranks Udall in seniority and may have been resentful that in running for speaker with only eight years in Congress Udall was trying to "leap-frog" them in the pecking order—a consideration the Udall camp believes hurt him badly among ambitious Congressmen of middling seniority, whatever their ideological instincts. Of Brooks, Young, Patman, and Gonzalez it must be said that none are famed as knee-jerk revolutionaries anxious to arouse the wrath of The Establishment Powers. (Henry Gonzalez once enjoyed that noble reputation, especially when he served in the Texas Legislature, but the days when Henry bows his neck and runs at the Establishment billy-goat fashion are now exceedingly rare). Brooks, with sixteen years seniority behind him at age 46, has been mentioned as a potential future speaker and takes pains to remain on good terms with all the right Poobahs just as Sam Rayburn did in his formative years.** Given the Brooks ambition it does not require a genius to deduce that he was probably less than enchanted with the notion of a "power

*Udall had 73 "pledged" votes; he received only 58.

**Though he voted for McCormack, Brooks was quick to seek Udall out with the explanation that he had been pledged "early,"—i.e., before the Udall candidacy.

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grab" by a man with only half his seniority.

THOUGH IT has not been stressed in the daily papers (especially in the timid Texas dailies) the Established Powers put the heat on in Speaker McCormack's behalf—beginning with Lyndon B. Johnson. Few are eager to admit it, and those who do admit it do so only under cover of darkness, but Texas Congressmen were canvassed before the caucus and told by Johnson intimates that LBJ's sympathies rested with the speaker; Udall, the Texans were reminded, had been one of the first House members openly to declare his opposition to the Vietnam war so dear to administration hearts. When Interior Secretary Stewart Udall telephoned several old cronies with whom he had once served in the House, to boost his brother's candidacy, he soon heard from a high administration source that the president was "mad as hell" at him and the secretary should cease forthwith.

The Udall forces were not really surprised at their lack of support among Texans (though a few dreamers in his camp held out the impossible hope of "seven or eight" Texas votes), for Texas Congressmen have over the years solidified their images as routine old nose-pick politicians with little or no stomach for minority causes. There simply isn't a Che Guevara among them. The older and more slothful of the Texans were among Speaker McCormack's more avid champions: George Mahon of Lubbock, nearing 70, Omar Bureson of Anson (63), Bob Poage of Waco (69) were among the Texans using their power and

seniority in McCormack's behalf among their juniors. Olin E. Teague of College Station, who may be the original Aggie Joke, rather cuttingly rebuked Udall for some presumed audacity in challenging the speaker and the system. Texans close to Carl Albert of Oklahoma, House majority leader, and Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, chairman of ways and means, (each of whom palpitates to be speaker and has long planned for the day) played their roles in arousing Congressmen of middling seniority against Udall on the "leapfrog" issue. The issue's resentments, jealousies and fears were well understood by the power-broking old pro pols who so cleverly exploited it. The Udall camp, on the other hand, grossly underestimated the damage this issue would do their candidate.

For Udall, the pluses of his lonely candidacy are these: minor concessions granted by Speaker McCormack to the reformist insurgents, the open admiration of the nation's editorial writers and the secret admiration of some colleagues even though they voted against him, and the admission by Sen. Ted Kennedy that his own successful challenge to succeed Sen. Russell Long as Democratic whip was inspired by Udall's example. The minuses for Udall are not as clearly discernible: though with rare exceptions his conquerors are showing him day-to-day courtesy, it may be that he has so seriously offended Congressional powers that he has marked himself for the power-circle freeze for all time.

What the Udall candidacy proves so far as Texans are concerned is that the United States will have men walking around on the moon before Texas sends

a delegation to Congress harboring anything save minimal liberal or reformist instincts. It also proved that even as he packed for the final trip back to the Ranch, Lyndon Baines Johnson had time, pizzaz and bile enough remaining to punish yet another old enemy for his alleged misdeeds.

HAVING OBSERVED the Texas delegation at close range for 15 years, one despairs at how little progress has been made in its make-up. One Know-Nothing departs and another takes his place. Bob Price, Pampa Republican, is absolutely terrible but may have difficulty surpassing the reactionary record established by his predecessor, Walter Rogers. Where did we gain in trading Joe Kilgore for Eligio de la Garza down in the Valley? Austin's Jake Pickle is not as consistent as Homer Thornberry was, and Ray Roberts is certainly no improvement over even an aging Sam Rayburn, who in last years lost much of his New Deal vision. Poage of Waco, Fisher of San Angelo, Bureson, Teague and Dowdy of Athens merely grow older and more out of touch with the world's troubles. They are men of the 1940's and the 1950's in their outlooks, their cultures and their habits—and yet we have entrusted them with the staggering problems of the 1970's.

Before we end weeping let us rejoice that we are, after all, rid of Bruce Alger and Ed Foreman (though he came back to Congress this year from his native New Mexico), and on the Senate side Ralph Yarborough voted for Senator Kennedy in his fight with Russell Long □

The March of Time

Washington, DC

A friend of mine from the Southwest was through town a couple of days back. We had dinner together. He was glum.

"What's the problem?" I asked.

"Well, it's just been a bad day," he said. "It started bad and continued bad. Things started to go wrong when I woke up this morning and saw that my boots weren't shined."

"Weren't shined?"

"Yes, normally I leave them outside my hotel door and next morning you can see your face in them. This morning, didn't look like they'd been touched."

"That's strange," I said.

"At lunch, I almost got in a fight with a bartender."

"With a bartender? How did that happen?"

"I guess he was just dumb or something. I ordered bourbon and branch water, like always, and he looked strange

The writer is a former Austin reporter for the Houston Chronicle who now lives in Washington.

for a minute and then started snickering."

"Oh," I said. "Anything else happen?"

"Well, I sat down to lunch and could hardly get a waiter's attention for the people at the next table singing and carrying on."

"Singing and carrying on?"

"Yeah, they were singing 'California,

Dave McNeely

Here I Come' at the top of their lungs and were eating cottage cheese with ketchup and grapes."

"That IS strange," I said.

"So then I finally got a waiter and ordered spare ribs, like always at lunch, and people almost kicked over their chairs laughing at me for three or four tables around."

"I certainly can't understand that," I said.

"After I paid my check—had to use

cash, they wouldn't take my Neiman-Marcus charge card—I got my coat and hat from the checkroom. Damned if my Stetson wasn't crushed. First time that's ever happened in this town."

By this time, my friend was almost in tears.

"What have I done," he wailed "How can I get good service in this town like I used to?"

I leaned back in my chair and hooked my thumbs in the pockets of my Brooks Brothers vest.

"Gee, I don't know," I said sympathetically. □

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DR. LOUIS E. BUCK

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McMurtry's Elegant Essays

*"There was blood on the saddle,
and blood on the ground.
And a great,*

14 *The Texas Observer*

*big puddle of blood all around.
Oh pity the cowboy
all bloody and red,
Cause a bronco fell on him.
and squashed in his head.*
—"Blood on the Saddle"
Austin

And this judgement, as arbiters of taste will tell you, is fairly arbitrary. What I would suggest, to make literary judgement at least as fair as arbitrary, is a scoring method similar to that used in competition diving, wherein the diver's score is multiplied by a difficulty-factor according to the demands of the dive he has chosen.

Excluding professors who, being slaves to tastes more bland than theirs, must coat their tongues and follow their noses up the ladder toward administration, we all judge the books we read. If we don't there's hardly need for more than one.

If this method were adopted, the difficulty-factor for Larry McMurtry's *In a Narrow Grave* would be large indeed. Here is an honorable and self-effacing novelist who has chosen to publish an honest set of personal essays about Texas, and to publish it in Texas, thus depriving

This is the second of what will be a regular series of columns by Dave Hickey. He lives in Austin, where he operates an art gallery, writes and pursues his studies of literature and criticism.

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himself of that audience which so happily plunked down ten bucks to chart with William Manchester the stations of the cross on a Humble map of downtown Dallas. Moreover, he writes this book without once treading wittily on this state's most prominent and well-trod feet of clay. In short, McMurtry is no Uncle Clem (the local equivalent of an Uncle Tom) telling deppity sherf stories in the cloisters of the Time-Life Building. Such gallantry approaches foolishness.

Granted, some of the book is unfair and none of it is scandalous, but none of it is dull either, and even the gratuitous portions serve a certain cathartic function. Everyone, for instance, knows that Frank Dobie and Walter P. Webb were pedestrian writers, however equestrian their subject, and the neither of them—in that great string band in the sky—will ever even qualify to carry Gibson's harp, but it's nice to see it documented. Especially here in Austin, hub of the Pancho industry, where beef jerky is transubstantiated into sacred cow and served in boxed editions.

But what is most delightful about this book is McMurtry's voice, educated, indirect and full of surprising turns and modulations that are simply not in his novels. Looking back from *In a Narrow Grave* to the novels and reading a few passages here and there, the innocent bumpkins who narrate the McMurtry novels seem terribly stogy and posed. It makes you wonder about the novelistic convention which requires a writer to divest himself of half of his vocabulary and a proportionate amount of brains when he approaches a character less learned than himself. Certainly it is a feat of skill to approximate primitive speech, whether it is worth doing or not is another question. (I'm reminded of Raquel Welch's recent impersonation of Katherine Hepburn, which, assuming the com-

mon man has better taste than do literary critics, will hopefully not become part of her repertoire.) In McMurtry's book, by speaking in his own voice, he gains access to levels of irony which enable him to engage subjects charged with sentiment without collapsing, or rising (according to your taste) into sentimentality.

It has often been noted, and McMurtry notes it himself, that Texas is hell on women and horses. What hasn't been noted, probably since it isn't very important, is that there is some retribution, since women and horses are hell on Texas writers. Confronted with subjects equine or feminine or both, your average Texas writer's mind is turned to cream-of-wheat, his heart to tapioca; his wit abandons him as he enters and his prose falls back on that earliest of models: the radio evangelist, and women and horses, those two despotic servants of the frontier, are bathed more often than not in the rhetorical blood of the lamb. This is a general characteristic. It is avoidable only by keeping Old Ralph in the pasture and Dolly Sue out of the stock tank. Even Terry Southern can get smarmy about a horse, though he keeps safe distance.

McMURTRY DOESN'T completely avoid the problem, nor should he.

There is a tremendous amount of emotional energy surrounding the "bold horseman and gallant lady" myth, and the sentiment, if not the myth, is authentic. It is interesting to note, though, that

only on the subject of women and horses does the prose in this book begin to sound like "fiction" and not like McMurtry; but in this book McMurtry triumphs and laconically assures us that the gallant ladies turn brackish and bitter on occasion, and that bold horsemen have been known to get their heads squashed.

And finally, if there is anything in this book which reveals the quirks and cadences of this culture, it is McMurtry's voice. You could learn as much about Texas if the book were about Indianapolis, because McMurtry would find the same faces there, lined with contemplation of their defeat, the same droll embarrassing innocence; he would record, I believe, the same laconic conversations since his voice is half of them. As lovely as the evocation of the flat-country is in this book, the real truth of it, or so it seems to me, is in the selectivity of McMurtry's eye and, most basically, in the nature of his humor. Like all good cowboy humor it is based of self-deprecation and baroque similitude, and it is a terribly decorous form of amusement. The self-deprecation inevitably reflects a sublime and non-assertive confidence in the self, and the far-fetched similitudes display (as much as anything can) a serious desire to please rather than instruct.

But the very tact and decorum of this voice leaves McMurtry open for that most terrible of literary disasters. Having

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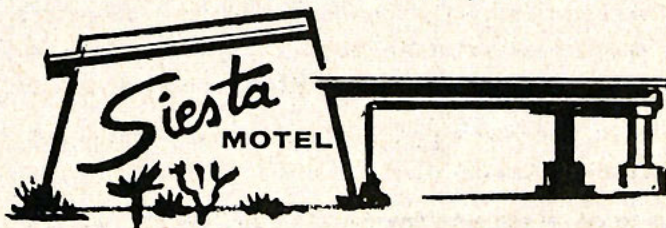
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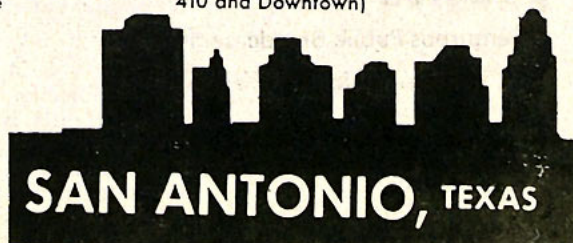
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spoken well in the Texas language and about the local soil, and having spoken truly about his own responses to it, there will be those who will praise or accuse him of have spoken the "Truth" — of, in the current idiom of sincerity, "telling it like it is," this being one of the cheapest ways a blind eye can rob a writer of his individuality and appropriate his vision.

Writers who speak in their own voice are awfully vulnerable to this kind of banditry, and the best of the self-dramatists — Byron, Wilde, Dylan Thomas — have been forced to ridiculous extremes in their attempts to make the public — truth-seekers to the man — accept their words as good but not necessarily as true. In fact, the primary attraction of the personal essay, which is hardly anything but an expanded aphorism, is that it is *not* generally true. If it were, it would hardly be worth saying.

McMurtry's voice, for instance, with its patience, its non-assertiveness and decorum is absolutely incapable of capturing or sympathizing with the bravado and energy and pure visual spectacle of a modern city. Although he is perfectly aware of this attraction, even talks about it, his ideal city is a bunch of ranch houses with streets between them and an area devoted to dark, quiet *cantinas*. Every morning every one takes the commuter train out to the number ten pasture and saddles up Old Ralph.

NOW THIS IS as good an idea for a city as any, and it enables McMurtry to generate a lovely sense of what it is like in those Texas cities which most closely approximate that idea. Those cities which *are* cities get short shrift in this book. They are guilty of "boosterism." For myself, I couldn't conceive a city more guilty of vulgar

boosterism than Elizabeth's London, unless it was Lorenzo de Medici's Florence; nor could I conceive of a more arrogant booster than Augustus, who boosted Virgil, unless it was Pope Julius, who boosted Michelangelo all the way to the ceiling. At any rate, both of them make Roy Hofheinz look like the soul of restraint, Astroturf and all, and the point is not that McMurtry is wrong, which he isn't, but that he is McMurtry, and the contradictions in the book define the strategy by which he, personally, confronts the world.

It is really wonderful, for instance, that he can deplore the puritanism of Archer county in one essay, then turn up in another deploring the promiscuity of faculty wives in Austin. (This observation, by the way, dates McMurtry's stay in Austin. Since then, either the quality of faculty wives has gone down, or the standards of philandry gone up—or, and this

A Communication

Sherrill on Yarborough

Washington DC

When Red Blount, the new postmaster general, passed through the Senate post office committee for his confirmation grilling, he was not asked a single question about his attitude toward the Negro—although the federal postal system hires mores Negroes than any other branch of the government—and was asked nothing about his attitudes relating to management-labor, although the postal unions are some of the most beleaguered in the federal government.

I repeat: not one question was addressed to him on these subjects.

Sen. Ralph Yarborough, the ranking Democrat on the post office committee, was not present during the Blount hearing. He was at the White House.

Frankly, I do not see how he can excuse his absence, even though the Great Man, LBJ, summoned him. But let us assume that he could not get out of the White House appearance; we can still ask, why didn't Yarborough raise some of the pertinent questions about Blount when the vote on his confirmation came up on the Senate floor? Yarborough was silent there also.

Blount's record on labor relations is not the best, to say the least. He is a former president of the Southern States Industrial Council, which is an outfit that would make the National Association of Manufacturers look like a communist cell.

Blount's record on race relations is also questionable. His Blount Brothers Corp. currently is faced with a case before the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, which ruled against Blount for firing a Negro employee. Negro leaders have also pointed out that Blount could not find even one Negro

is more likely than both, the number of willing distaff undergraduates has so multiplied that the wives have been left with their strawberry facials).

In any case, this is a damned amusing book, and the effect of it on me was surprisingly similar to the effect of Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night*. How amazing to discover that the novelist's life is more interesting than his dreams, that his friends are more interesting than his characters. This is rarely the case—but, then again, it is rarely today. There is a Chinese curse which goes: "May you live in interesting times." It is a curse on fiction writers, but not on writers in general, and never on writers as elegant as McMurtry. It would be ironic, but not unusual if McMurtry survived with the Astrodome rather than the high lonesome. You can't look forward to the fact, but you can look forward to the telling of it. □

engineer suitable for a position on his construction company staff of 100.

None of this was mentioned at any time during Blount's processing through the Senate. Yarborough, as chairman of the labor committee, might be expected to be interested in such matters. Apparently he isn't. And the ineptness and silence of this great labor committee chairman is, I would say, quite indicative of what is wrong with the labor movement today.

ROBERT SHERRILL

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Dialogue

I want to congratulate you most vigorously on securing Dave Hickey as a columnist—if, as it appears, you have. More Hickey! The first column was beautiful. If he keeps on like that someday he could collect them and call the volume *Words for the One-Eared Sow*. Coming from a milieu that has so far produced nothing wittier than Wonder Wart-Hog that would be fine to see.

For what it's worth I would like to contribute my opinion of the *Blessed McGill* controversy. Yawn, is my opinion of the *Blessed McGill* controversy. Shrike should scob friend and foe alike.

What with all the literary back-patting that has become so fashionable in Texas I would like to say that I am sorry to observe that so far not one single pat has been bestowed upon the back of Tom Horn, whose very good first novel *The Shallow Grass* was published by Macmillan almost a year ago now. . . .

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