

FAVORS AUSTERITY

Brown Sets Right Tone

In its brevity and sober tone, Gov. Brown's inaugural address yesterday should help create an atmosphere in Sacramento in keeping with the serious financial problems facing our state government. The times simply are not ripe for the expansive and visionary rhetoric that so often characterizes the inaugural remarks of a new governor.

A new governor can hold out in his inaugural the promise of bringing the public something it wants. Mr. Brown's emphasis on holding the line against higher taxes surely is what Californians want to hear. Our guess is that people are far less interested in innovations in government or new state programs than in preventing tax increases.

In his call for belt-tightening by state agencies, and his promise of a 7 per cent cut in the budget of his own office, Mr. Brown seemed to be echoing the effective "cut, squeeze and trim" philosophy that characterized the administration of former Gov. Ronald Reagan. Mr. Brown was critical of the Reagan economics in his campaign last year. However the new governor may find that circumstances will force his administration to be as skeptical of budget requests as the former one. It remains to be seen whether the closing of tax "loopholes" that Mr. Brown has proposed would generate enough revenue to ease the pressure on the budget appreciably.

The new administration at least will have the advantage of a surplus in the budget for the current fiscal

year, even if inflation and a decline in tax receipts due to recession reduce the surplus severely. Had the state's finances not been in such good health when he took office, Mr. Brown's problems would be far greater today.

The high unemployment rate has led the new governor to promise to exploit to the fullest California's share of federal funds for public service employment. Wisely, however, he also recognizes that the real solution to unemployment lies in the private sector of the economy, and in clearing roadblocks that stand in the way of economic recovery, especially in the construction industry.

Mr. Brown clearly has not abandoned some of the social goals that he enunciated in his campaign, but he appears already to be changing his mind as to priorities, placing his social plans in the larger context of keeping the cost of state government from exceeding the ability of the taxpayer to support it. Few could quarrel with that approach.

The new governor has told state officials and members of the Legislature that the poor turnout at the polls in November indicated a lack of public confidence in political leaders. We would feel that Mr. Brown is right, where the Legislature is concerned. Now, if he can follow through on the same pursuit of austerity and fiscal responsibility in the state government advocated by his predecessor he will have taken a major step toward regaining that confidence.

Welfare Crisis Looms

There are ominous signals of a potential "welfare crisis" confronting the federal government and all of the states. A prolonged period of high unemployment is likely to place growing demands on welfare programs at a time when neither Congress nor state legislatures are in a mood to increase taxes.

In California, state welfare officials already are predicting that welfare caseloads, which have held relatively steady since welfare reforms were enacted in 1971, are expected to start climbing again this year. It has also developed that the 1971 reforms applying to the Medi-Cal program providing health care to welfare clients has failed to achieve all that was expected in controlling costs.

Since welfare is financed by a combination of state and federal funds, and states have only limited autonomy in prescribing their own welfare policies, both Congress and the states need to anticipate the coming squeeze on their welfare dollars. This is a good time to recall the principle that lay behind former Gov. Ronald Reagan's approach to welfare reform—that strict interpretation of eligibility rules and eliminating waste, abuse and lax administration would save enough money to assure that there was enough to pay benefits to the truly needy.

It is hard to see how state and federal governments can reconcile limitations on tax revenues with rising welfare caseloads without applying the Reagan principle.

OLGA WEBBER

Old Smoking Jackets Never Die

The old clothes a man chooses to wear about the house become a topic of conversation in many households at this time of year.

"Why don't you wear the smoking jacket you got for Christmas?"

There are, roughly speaking, two kinds of smoking jackets. One is a well-tailored garment advertised and sold as a smoking jacket. The other is a nondescript sweater, usually ancient, dirty and frayed at the elbows that a man likes to wear about the house and, because he smokes while wearing it, might be called a smoking jacket.

Women will never understand the old clothes a man chooses to wear around the house. They may be dimly aware that a man's odd choice of clothing is a reaction against and emancipation from mother's control of the wardrobe. But by the time a man is middle-aged surely his taste in leisure garments should turn

more conventional.

A neighbor for the past five years has been wearing a kaftan around the house that has become a shapeless bedraggled thing with the sleeves about to part from the body, the braid hanging from the collar, the entire front side full of tiny holes from bits of tobacco tumbling from a burning pipe.

Ladies of the neighborhood are placing bets on which day the garment will suddenly dissolve into a pile of threads.

At this season when the head of the house dons his ancient "smoking jacket," the lady of the house feels that insult has been added to injury when he not only ignores the new jacket, but instead asks:

"Could you find the time to mend and patch the elbows in this fine old smoking jacket so I can wear it for a few more years?"



ED NEILAN'S ASIA MEMO

Thais Fear Burmese Communists

BANGKOK — The government of Thailand, its own insurgency problem under control, is worried about recent gains by Communist terrorists in next-door Burma.

Thai army commander-in-chief Kris Sivara has just made an unpublicized visit to Burma to discuss measures to combat further advances by the Peking-backed Burmese Communist Party.

The area in question is in North Burma, from the Chinese border to the town of Kengtung.

This is part of the tri-border (Laos, Thailand, Burma) area, also known as the "Golden Triangle," which is the source of much of the opium that is processed and sold as heroin in cities of the United States and Asia.

Thai security officials are concerned over intelligence reports that Burmese Communist Party (BCP) units, operating with Red Chinese military advisers, are guarding a highway between Taungyi and Kengtung.

The reports indicate the Chinese are engaged in an extensive road-building project, similar to earlier projects in northern Laos and along the Sino-Indian border.

In the present case, as in the previous instances, the road-building projects were carried out without observance of national boundaries and without permission of the local governments.

Leaders of the minority Karen tribe have been contacted by the government of Gen. Ne Win in Rangoon with the intention of beginning negotiations for a political settlement.

Rebel leaders have indicated they will take part in the talks because "talking is better than fighting."

But it is clear that the Ne Win government has been driven to offer negotiations because of pressures in Rangoon. These pressures include a deteriorating economic situation, rice riots and continued campus uprisings.

The recent spectacle of Burmese students "stealing" the body of former United Nations Secretary-General U Thant and burying it in a grave far away from the site designated by the government was part of the pattern of student protests.

It is important to know that the students buried U Thant's body at the former site of the Rangoon University Student Union Building.

That building was dynamited and razed to the ground by fire in 1962 because it was the scene of student protests against Gen. Ne Win's coup d'etat takeover from former Premier U Nu.

TODAY'S PRAYER

I thank Thee, O God, that Jesus is with me today to warn and encourage me. May I never forget he is my unseen companion. Amen.

The message in the student move may have been lost abroad but it was not lost in Thailand and could not have been lost on the Burmese leadership.

Thai authorities are, of course, concerned about the student pressures on the Burmese government—the same thing happened in Thailand a year ago—but their main concern is on the renewed muscle shown by the Burmese Communists in the north, along the Thai-Burma border.

Much of the shooting in the area has been over raw

opium shipments by mule pack train, truck or small aircraft.

But the latest reports of road building in the area, with Chinese advisers present, is one more warning for the governments concerned to remain on the alert.

In the case of Burma, a country desperately in need of change as its development pace lags behind the rest of the region, such Communist activity adds to the general political instability.

Copley News Service

GODFREY SPERLING JR.

Laird Sees President Taking Decisive Role

Sperling is chief of the Washington bureau of the Christian Science Monitor.

Presidential adviser Melvin Laird is warm and approving of his old friend, the President. But the man who heads Mr. Ford's informal group of outside-the-government advisers paints a picture of the Ford operation thus far that falls short of being completely favorable.

To begin with, the former secretary of defense says that Ford, as vice president, never believed he would become president.

"Jerry never saw himself as president," Mr. Laird says. "I know he felt that way before he became vice president. And I know that after becoming vice president he still somehow never believed he would become president — not until he saw those final Nixon tapes."

Laird says that while other vice presidents like Hubert Humphrey "dreamed" about becoming president and even made plans for that contingency, Mr. Ford "neither dreamed or planned."

Therefore, Laird feels that Mr. Ford by necessity has had to devote the last few months to preparatory work. Mr. Ford's transition, as he sees it, has been longer than it otherwise might have been.

The Laird thesis, built in part on frequent conversations with the President, is that Mr. Ford is ready now to move decisively on several fronts.

"I think you will see him active now," is the way Laird puts it.

Laird agrees that the President has been slow to put his own imprint on his Administration. He implies that the President has been "rained down" by several outstanding people whom he has tried to appoint to important positions, including David Packard, former deputy secretary of defense.

Laird seemed strongly critical of the President when he left the impression that he thought Mr. Ford, like some of his predecessors, was somewhat the prisoner of a palace guard

of top White House advisers.

When asked specifically if he meant to go that far, he said, "no," that he was merely indicating that the President's top White House aides were "the ones who have the greatest influence on him in his decision making."

"Henry Kissinger recognizes this," he says. "That's why he wants to keep his position as presidential adviser on foreign policy — as well as being secretary of state."

Surprisingly, Laird is of the opinion that even on such subjects as the economy and the energy crisis the White House aides have been more influential in shaping presidential policy than those Cabinet members who have been entrusted with important economic and energy-related roles.

"Just getting in to see the President and advise him once of twice a week isn't enough," he says. "The ones who see him every day have the influence."



Will, the old year is leaving us flat, plenty flat, but in reality it's been our most beneficial year. It took some of the conceit out of us.

We had enjoyed special blessings over other nations, and we couldn't see why they shouldn't be permanent. We was a mighty cocky nation. We had begun to believe that the height of civilization was a good road, bathtub, radio and automobile.

I don't think the Republicans, or even Russia, is responsible for this. I think the Lord just looked us over and decided to set us back where we belonged. — Dec. 30, 1930.

Will Rogers
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Readers' Viewpoints

Citizen Lists

Inflation Causes

Editor, The Union: The mechanism of inflation, though relatively simple, is variously attributed to rising prices, wages and profligate spending by the consumer. Purely and simply, inflation results from government expansion of the money supply.

If government increases money supply, it follows that consumer prices will rise. Too many dollars chasing an inadequate supply of goods.

The total money supply in September, 1967, was \$183.7 billion. In August, 1973, it was \$260 billion, a 44 per cent increase. Industrial production increased only 26 per cent and consumer prices jumped 35 per cent.

Cagily, government shifts the responsibility to the people with suggestions like: drive your auto less, turn your front lawn into a 'win' garden, turn down your heat, car pools, rapid transit and government work programs.

Inflation is created not by housewives, grocers, or wages but by government.
J.A.H., La Jolla

Woman Assails

Deer Hunting

Editor, The Union: He came home from the hunt proud as could be, the dead deer in the back of the camper. It was such a fair contest, you know, the powerful gun, and the experienced hunter, against the unsuspecting animal.

I've heard all the justifications—the animal can be used for food, and some have to die so the others can live. But there is a right way of doing things. It's when killing is turned into a sport, that it becomes wretched and despicable.

Animals kill only when they are hungry or frightened or angry. Man alone makes a sport out of bloodying the forests.

I hope that some who were planning to go hunting next year will, instead, spend their weekends watching the deer running free and beautiful on Chelwood Ridge, instead of wounded and dying on a spot of earth made, suddenly, ugly.

MARGARET COWLEY
Spring Valley

More Comment

On Alien Ruling

Editor, The Union: I would like to offer a rebuttal to the comments Jan. 1 from R. B. and E. G. McDowell who criticized welfare aid to aliens.

I don't deny there are problems with illegal aliens, drug traffic, and welfare. But we shouldn't close the border completely both ways. This would be an unfriendly act to a friendly neighbor and an ally.

There are many of us Norte Americanos who love Mexico, have friends there, and wish to make further visits there. We are fortunate in having a neighbor with a stable government.

Also remember, Mexico declared war on Germany, Italy, and Japan, when we so desperately needed friends and allies.

I would also like to see a revival of the bracero program.

DARRELL H. HARDIN
El Cajon

Editor, The Union: I have heard a lot of stupid things in this life but none as stupid as the ruling that aliens will receive welfare because they do not have to prove United States citizenship.

Our treasuries can be drained, and we can become a disaster area if this idiotic ruling is allowed to stand.

C.B.L., La Mesa

25th Amendment Gets Backing

Editor, The Union: Some people complain that President Ford was not elected by popular vote. Actually, many of our presidents preceding Mr. Ford were picked by several thousand politicians at the Republican and Democratic conventions, and our millions of people had very little to say about it.

Since one of the two nominees of the two major parties will surely be elected, it is specious to aver that he was elected by the people. The reason why so many people do not vote is because the power is not in the voter but in the nominator.

Sen. Estes Kefauver won most of the primaries but was not nominated. No candidate, during a nominating convention, ever received such a grilling as did Nelson Rockefeller in the Senate and House of Representatives, and I would rather have an elected Congress pick our president than a few thousand politicians.

A.T.G., San Diego

Hunter's Salary Believed Rip-off

Editor, The Union: As a Big League slave, pitcher Jim (Catfish) Hunter was worth \$100,000 for one year. As a free American for 15 days, Hunter got \$750,000 for each of five years. What price slavery?

About \$2.5 million is suspected as a tax ripoff which the average taxpayer will have to pay. This is true because the U. S. Supreme Court, Congress and the Justice Department say that pro players are not employees but are legal property (slaves). No other Americans are legal property.

And what about the pay of the other thousands of pro slaves?

STAN STRESS
San Diego

Food Prices Jolt Consumer

Editor, The Union: Considering the costs of food, fruit and vegetable prices are so shocking and jolting, it might be more accurate to read them on the Richter scale.

LARRY MARCUS
San Diego

Stores Urged To Dim Lights

Editor, The Union: I feel sorry for Jerry and Ida Blake who Dec. 22 listed seven ways to conserve energy. They must be sick at heart when they go to the supermarkets or other big stores where the lights are going full blast. The firms' electric bills must be staggering, and they should dim their lights too.

A. CHABRIER
La Jolla