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Spreading The Cloak Of Secrecy Is Violation Of Fundamental Rights

IT IS A fundamental principle of American democracy that government is the servant of the people—not the master.

The action of North Carolina's House of Representatives this week was a violation of the spirit of that principle.

Legislators, with unseemly haste, adopted a set of House rules that made the 1953 secrecy act seem feeble and old-fashioned by comparison. It is now possible for press and public to be barred from all 46 of the legislative body's committees.

In the history of the ever-old, ever-new struggle for the people's right to know about their government, it was a disquieting development.

Seventy-four representatives (three from Mecklenburg) overrode 21 opponents to write into the rules a provision permitting committees to vote themselves into executive session.

The new rules also empower committee chairmen to "keep order" by any "distance or disorderly conduct," "if the peace, good order and proper conduct of legislative business is hindered by any individual or individuals." Chairmen have the power to eject anyone they find in violation of this rule, "if significantly, no definitions are attached."

The Senate is expected to adopt similar rules.

This new and disturbing move is far more severe than the 1953 secrecy act. The law passed two years ago merely applied to the appropriations committee. Now all House committees may go underground if they wish, and the public, the press and even other members of the General Assembly may be excluded.

REPEAL of the 1953 secrecy act now will be virtually meaningless for the House rules adopted this week will probably remain supreme.

There was reportedly general agreement among attorneys in the House that the new rules, under a provision of the state constitution, would supersede and override even a general statute.

Said Rep. Clyde Shreve of Guilford, an attorney and a member of that small band of House members who upheld the

people's right to know about their government:

Any vote on the 1953 act would have no bearing on the rules governing the House at this session. The practical effect of such a vote would be nothing. Any prior act of the General Assembly, whether the statutes or not would not affect this session of the General Assembly.

There was much pointing-with-pride to the fact that the "final act" shall still be taken in an open session. But a content cloak was provided to conceal how committee arrive at their recommendations, what factors figure in the decisions, what pressures are exerted in committee rooms, what trading is done.

WHAT these legislators do not seem to realize is that this is the people's business they want to consider without the restraints of public opinion and where political privilege rules the roost.

A propaganda statement issued at the close of a meeting or a speedy rubber stamp applied on the floor of the House later is not enough to protect the interests of the people. Throughout history, secret proceedings have been the refuge of corrupt and reactionary governments.

We are particularly disappointed in the behavior of Mecklenburg Representatives James B. Vogler and Jack Love. Both had given lip service to the campaign to abolish secrecy in the General Assembly. Both nevertheless voted for new secrecy weapons this week.

Rep. Arthur Goodman, who says he is against secrecy, was not able to participate in the voting.

Mr. Vogler and Mr. Love will find it difficult to explain away their votes by attempting to distinguish between a secrecy "act" and a secrecy "rule."

Sec. 10, general statute, provides the authority for secret sessions. Both are utterly contrary to the interests of a free people.

Professor Evans asks people to step back that Horner defended the bridge. Nero fiddled while Rome burned.

Cleopatra killed herself by snakebite.

The Earl of Sandwich invented the sandwich.

Betsy Ross made the first American flag, to George Washington's specifications.

The black hole of Calcutta was a black hole.

Horace Greeley said, "Go West, young man."

That boy stopped the leak in that dike.

Enforced secrecy and suppression of public records would not only represent a dangerous infringement of the people's right to information but it might even encourage the criminal by offering him the refuge of anonymity.

We are unqualifiedly opposed to such legislation—in Georgia, in North Carolina or in any other state in the United States.

Target: The People's Right To Know

IN RECENT YEARS, the cause of freedom of the press in America has taken some severe buffeting. In 1953, Raleigh newsmen were tossed out of a committee session on appropriations and the General Assembly rushed through a secrecy law. This week, the State House of Representatives broadened its secrecy policy to cover all committees. In other states, there has been an unusual number of instances of enforced secrecy in judicial proceedings. Now, in Georgia, a bill has been introduced in the state legislature to ban publication of the names of persons charged with sex crimes and drunken driving. Criminal action would be provided for "violators" by Rep. Denmark Groover Jr. of Macon.

Ordinarily we would not meddle in the affairs of Georgia but the battle lines in the continuing struggle for freedom of the press are not so sharply drawn that they stop at state boundaries. The American press as a whole—and

thus the American people as a whole—has a stake in anything that affects basic freedoms anywhere in the nation.

The proposed legislation would indeed destroy a traditional right by denying the people of a neighboring state information they are entitled by constitutional privilege to have.

Sex crimes and drunken driving offenses do not make particularly pleasant reading. But they represent crimes against society and the people have the right to know the facts about them without delay.

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Ancestry, Posterity And The Mule

IT WAS Edmund Burke who suggested that he who will never look backward to his ancestry will never look forward to posterity.

The maxim has its limitations, however.

Consider the mule.

For an animal without pride of ancestry, he still has a grand and glorious future in the armed services of the United States.

Seeking volunteers for two mule-packer outfits at Camp Carson, Colo., the Army's Chicago recruiting office announces:

From The St. Louis Globe-Democrat

SCIENCE ON THE LOOSE

SOMEWHERE, we feel sure, are breathless millions waiting to know the outcome of a nagging situation.

It concerns the state of manhole covers. The problem is, they aren't all alike, or at least weren't. That's enough, because everybody knows manhole covers of all things should be standardized. Otherwise they won't fit all manholes.

If the cover is too big for the hole, it goes "ka-runk" as traffic rolls over. If it is too small, it goes "splash" at the bottom. Then there is the matter of dependable location and sizes of the hole in the manhole cover. The conscientious manhole coverer is apt to be disconcerted, maybe quit his job if he discovers the hole is made for the thumb when his lifting process is in forefinger.

Yet as far back as 1941 are there half a dozen scientific groups being truly vainly to standardize manhole covers. Even two years ago, everybody was making manhole covers like mad to suit him-

"The mule has more than proved its military worth in terrain that will turn back the much-touted jeep.

Bravo.

It is somehow warmly reassuring that there is a place for the lowly mule in the new super-duper, atomic Army.

The best, bless its obstinate old heart, is our link with yesterday, the old virtues, the magic days before massive retaliation, conditioned reflexes and the Oedipus complex.

Maybe it hasn't got a future in the conventional sense but it's sure got one heck of a past.

self. That was because navy yards, army engineers, airports and municipal street departments couldn't agree on what was chic. Finally a foundryman shrieked he was through carrying 134 different patterns of manhole covers, trying to find a fit like a bunch of keys. He threatened to junk the whole business.

That was it. The wheels started rolling. A fellow named Jolly designed a sort of compromise middle-road manhole cover incorporating all the best qualities of all the best manhole covers. Soon, no one wanted to be without a Jolly manhole cover. The American Standards Association got behind him and endorsed. Last week it awarded Jolly a plaque for putting harmony where chaos had once been.

So it is that today, at long last, you can buy a manhole cover with complete confidence, not to mention interchangeability. We just thought you would like to know.

Ike's Military Judgment Hit

By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON
SECRETARY OF STATE John Foster Dulles privately conceded some time ago that the Red Chinese might invade the Tachen Islands as a test of the intentions of the U. S. Seventh Fleet. Formosa dispatches say it has happened at Yikingshan, a tiny, almost uninhabitable mountain peak valuable to the Nationalist Chinese as a lookout post.

President Eisenhower has publicly limited the fleet's responsibilities to Formosa and the nearby Pescadore. The Tachen Islands lie close to the Chinese mainland.

FLEET LEASHED
The President might allow the fleet to participate in rescue missions—but that will be all.

The situation in Congress with respect to the President's vast powers to involve or not to involve this country in war is curious and quite different from the recent past.

They may be wrong but the most influential members of that body do not expect the former president of the Allied armies to be provoked into war by anything but a major incident. The fact which would lead to restrict Eisenhower's powers—it is led by Sen. Knowland—do not complain of his aggressiveness; he seems not warlike enough for them.

Congress is further in their views about the President's attitudes. They are so convinced that he is not spending enough for defense that under their leadership the new Congress will be asked to increase expenditures for the armed services.

After the military budget was explained to congressional leaders at the White House, Speaker Rayburn told the President, "I got just one question: Is it enough?"

The foundation of the Eisenhower career is his military prestige. Yet it is his military judgment which is under the heaviest fire.

The Truth At Last: Ruth Didn't Call That Home Run

By JOHN LARDNER
In The New York Times Magazine

IT'S surprising to notice, in reading "The Spoof of Spooks," a new book devoted to the life of Babe Ruth, that the author ignores sports completely in his work on sports.

It is a pity, I don't know why he does. The popular legend that he passed-as-a fact at least as richly in sports as in the field of war, love, invention and disaster.

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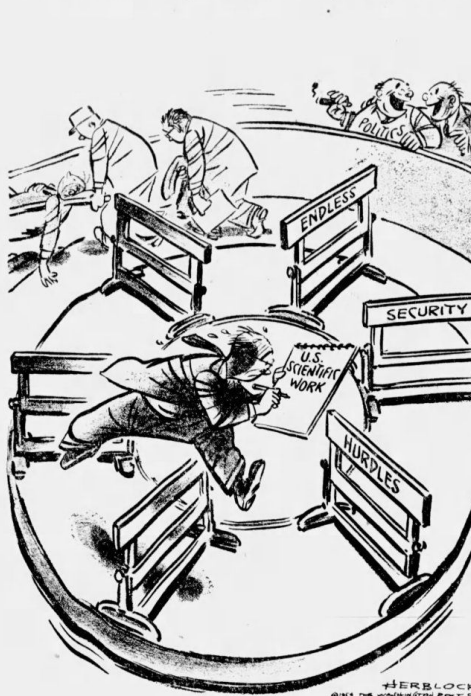
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'Odd How Many Of Them Drop Out, Isn't It?'



HERBOLACK
© 1955 THE NEW YORK POST

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Dior's Capers Must Cease

By ROBERT C. RUARK

HOUSTON, Tex.
FROM THE slightly distorted view of a man looking at his toes in a hospital bed, Mr. Christian Dior has to go. Mr. Dior has now almost destroyed womanhood with his latest ukase, which removes the knee and the elbow from women, in addition to the bust which was already dismissed as unworthy of notice.

I am weary of Mr. Dior, and I am weary of people poking and pinching at me and sticking thermometers in my mouth, and leeching off a pint of blood every 10 minutes. Twice a year Mr. Dior, the high-fashion fellow, upsets the nervous system of the ladies, ruining their wardrobes and their dispositions, as well as bankrolls of their husbands.

ENVIL GIGGLES
He is the best public relations man in the world, in his own opinion. He is a semi-annual way of choosing one particular spot in a woman's anatomy and making it unpopular. This always happens. He has always been the demagogue of what you could legally see and what you weren't supposed to see. It's a mighty pretty sideline, too, especially when dimpled. A sleekly clad knee, crossed regally over another, is one of the most quietly satisfactory sights in the world, as any fellow will tell you.

I am an elbow man, too, and a bosom man as well. I will thank this frog to quit sneering at all three vital segments of female assembly.

The great man has now decreed that the knee is the ugliest portion of a woman's anatomy, which is patently untrue, since the knee in my time has always been the demagogue of what you could legally see and what you weren't supposed to see. It's a mighty pretty sideline, too, especially when dimpled. A sleekly clad knee, crossed regally over another, is one of the most quietly satisfactory sights in the world, as any fellow will tell you.

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