

Constitutional Revision

Some of the state's most conservative forces are swinging around to support Gov. Mon C. Wallgren's recommendation, contained in his inaugural message, that the patchwork constitution of Washington is overdue for a thorough overhaul job.

Typical of reaction to the Governor's suggestion is the following quotation from the Seattle Times, continued in an editorial in the issue for January 15:

"The need (of constitutional revision) has been increasingly recognized . . . Several governors of the past have recommended that the constitution be revised by the convention method for which it provides. Numerous amendments have been adopted and some frankly evasive laws have been passed. But all this, as Governor Wallgren rightly observes, has been by way of patchwork. Durable repair can be made only by revision. . . . Constitutional revision is highly desirable, but only if undertaken without ulterior motives and with full sense of responsibility for the future welfare of the state and all its people."

The writer in the Times puts his finger directly on the great danger inherent in further unnecessary delay in bringing our constitution abreast of social, economic and governmental advance during the 55 years which have elapsed since its adoption.

That danger lies in what the Times calls "frankly evasive laws" which have been passed in order to skirt or by-pass limiting constitutional provisions.

If the process of evasion, demanded by the advancing times, is followed too long, there could come to the state, in practical effect, an end to constitutional government.

There are serious students of political economy who believe that government within the framework of basic constitutional limitations is the wrong way to approach the ideal democracy; that because constitutions are purposely made difficult to change or amend, the constrictive force of this legal straitjacket is, in effect, the ordering of the living present by the dead hand of the past.

Such persons argue that constitutions should be abandoned, or at most confined to guaranteeing certain natural human rights and perpetuation of the democratic process; that day-to-day and year-to-year governance should be left to statutes considered and enacted by the living to meet problems of the day, without having to conform to fettering boundaries drawn by the dead upon the pages of the past.

Rightly or wrongly, such change is being subtly achieved in this state because of irresistible demands made by conditions which the framers of our state constitution could not foresee.

Because he senses this dangerous drift as much as because there is immediate, compelling need of constitutional sanction for pressing requirements of legislative enactments to prepare for the post-war world, Governor Wallgren has called for revision of the state's basic law.

It is encouraging that the state's thinking conservatives see eye to eye with the Governor as they soberly consider the dangers ahead if the process of evasive nullification is permitted to continue.

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Isolationism Surrenders

The petulant, captious and indecisive Mr. Dewey must have read a speech the other morning at breakfast which curdled his porridge.

Senator Vandenberg of Michigan recently delivered an address in the upper house which formally buried the historic Republican policy of isolationism so deep its disinterment will, let us hope, not be possible in the future.

Writing of this remarkable address, David Lawrence says, in part, in his syndicated column (locally printed in the Seattle Times):

"Not a trace of partisanship or captious criticism is to be found in Mr. Vandenberg's utterance, which gains prestige because he is the chairman of the Republican conference of senators and because he is also one of the most influential members of the senate foreign relations committee. . . . It was like a breath of fresh air to have a Republican leader say forthrightly that the United States is ready and willing to lend its influence and power and indeed its physical force to maintain peace in Europe in future years."

"It was the kind of speech which, if it had been made in 1919 and 1920 by the then leaders of the Republican Party in the senate, would perhaps have prevented the Second World War."

Thus the spirit of Woodrow Wilson leads with majestic stride the forces of world peace.

Thus the courageous leadership of President Roosevelt is breaking down the last barricades of historic Republican foreign policy.

We have yet to hear from Thomas E. Dewey, titular leader of the hosts of the opposition which finally are surrendering to the logic of events.

But that really doesn't matter.

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Sometimes They Go Wrong

Study and practice of the military science lead those who follow it as a profession to depend upon hard facts as the only safe basis upon which to plan victorious campaigns in the field.

There must, of course, be theory, else the science would remain static; there must be invention and refinement of new weapons; there must be revision of strategy and tactics to employ these new weapons.

It is when theory outweighs the fundamentals, the known quantities, in the minds of military men, that plans go wrong.

Something of this sort seems to have happened in the case of the airplane and its functions in modern war.

It will require cold analytical study of the record, after the war is ended, to accord to the air arm its exact weight in the final results. That this weight was and is tremendous there can be no doubt. There is less evidence that it was, in itself, decisive, save in the sense that it may have tipped the scales in a military situation which otherwise might have evolved into an interminably long stalemate.

Even as to the relative importance of the airplane, few military men went off the deep end. None of them of consequence and high importance as leaders expected the airplane alone to bring victory.

It was the Severskys who, in the first two years of our participation in the war, kept telling us that once the United States could put a thousand bombers over Berlin, the end would be near.

Now we know that the old king and queen of battle—artillery and infantry—still rule the field, ably abetted by the lance of that young upstart princeling, armor.

The dazzling possibilities of the air arm for a time ruled the minds of our planners and led to topheavy emphasis on production of planes and consequent lessening of emphasis on artillery and shells.

However, the military leader is taught to be honest with himself, to admit his own miscalculations. Perhaps that is why we hear little now from him about the alleged failure of American management and labor to produce in quantities needed for quick victory.

When battle experience dictated change of emphasis, management and labor responded adequately to meet the requirements of victory.

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Fruits of a Wise Policy

Americans have reason not only to be proud of the achievements of our armed forces in the Pacific war which are approaching their first major objective: Liberation of and firm establishment in the Philippines.

A source of deep pride is also to be found in an enlightened policy which, pursued in our relations with the Filipinos for almost a half-century, is bearing precious fruit.

Military authorities who have so brilliantly planned and executed the campaign of liberation are unanimously in agreement that its present stage of progress could not have been reached so soon, and the road would have been far more costly in lives, if our fighting men had not had the loyal cooperation of Philippine guerrilla forces.

Never for a moment bending the knee to Japanese invaders, these sturdy, courageous Filipinos took to the hills after American surrender of the islands was forced, and have never ceased to fight to regain their freedom.



Their contribution has been great, all but decisive. Now they welcome the Americans back because, during the whole period of our control of island government, the Filipinos were given the benefit of enlightened encouragement toward self-rule according to democratic principles; American authorities helped the natives fight disease; they made education free and available to all; they aided economic development; and, finally, the American congress provided for independence.

In all the history of colonial policy among governments of the old world, there is no counterpart of the unselfishness and magnanimity of our administration of Philippine affairs, starting almost at the moment of occupation during our war with Spain and never faltering up to the coming of Nippon's hordes.

That policy now is paying rich dividends. It should be an object lesson to other nations in recasting their policies of empire toward subject peoples.

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Mercy Is Handcuffed

The brutalities of German occupation and oppression are not wholly expressed in things done by the Nazis and their puppet officialdom. The things they forbid others to do in relief are equally brutal in their effects.

Recently Swedish Red Cross offered to receive into Sweden from 15,000 to 20,000 Norwegian children whose parents are unable to give them more than the scantiest food and whose homes have been stripped of even the most necessary of human comforts.

The humanitarian plan fell through because of opposition by the Quisling government. Swedish authorities also offered to evacuate to Sweden 20,000 families made homeless by wanton Nazi destructiveness when the invaders were driven from northern Norway. This proffered act of mercy and neighborliness was made impossible by refusal of consent by German occupation authorities.

But the day of deliverance is close at hand. And what a score the Scandinavian peoples will have to add to the sum of misery brought to the world by Hitler and his doomed followers.

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In the Line of Fire

Man by nature is a social animal. He likes company, even if occasionally he is made aware of the fact that his neighbors live a little too close for comfort.

Nations, too, sometimes are made uncomfortable in the same way but, unlike the individual, the nation can't move away from its irritant.

Consider the case of Sweden: Flying bombs flash and swish across the country with alarming frequency. It is speculated that the Germans are testing new V-weapons, and Sweden chances to be in the line of fire.

Perhaps if we of America were situated on a Nazi firing range we would better understand the hectic life of a people who must stand by while the Germans are engaged in target practice.