

January 4, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW
BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

The House of Representatives has given up its temporary quarters in one of the committee rooms and now meets in the renovated chamber. Western Michigan made its contribution to the Capitol's reconditioning with new seats from our own American Seating Company. Some don't like the changes at all, preferring the dull, well-worn surroundings rather than the shiny new walls, bright carpets, etc. However, the argument about the furnishings isn't half as vehement as the complaints from the Congressmen from Rhode Island and North Carolina.

Stars for 11 states line the marble mantle behind the Speaker's new desk in the House chamber, one for each of the eleven original states of the Union. My history books always told me there were 13 states in this group but according to present day historians Rhode Island and North Carolina should be left out. Apparently Rhode Island never called a convention to ratify the Constitution and North Carolina did not ratify until the Bill of Rights had been passed.

* * * *

From time to time all of us have seen a good many newspaper pictures of high United States administrative officials being sworn into office. Prior to last week I had never actually seen the procedure first hand. Consequently I accepted when invited to attend the ceremonies when John Gibson of Michigan was made Chairman of the Displaced Persons Commission.

John Gibson became head of the Commission when the oath of office was administered by the Attorney General of the United States, J. Howard McGrath. The ceremonies were simple and rather quickly handled. Several hundred friends, government officials, plus John Gibson's mother and family were present in the high ceilinged, portrait covered office of the Attorney General. Several members of the President's cabinet were there to congratulate John and the photographers got pictures galore of this handshaking, but the highlight of the ceremonies in my estimation came when John's young son gave his Dad a big hug and kiss of sincere admiration.

* * * *



Has the government of the United States ever been debt free? Several days ago I checked the records of the Treasury Department on this matter. The answer is NO. In 1835 and 1836 the nation's debt was reduced to \$38,000 which is the lowest amount in our history. In contrast on December 21, 1950 the federal debt amounted to \$256,667,014,969. On a per capita basis, with 150,697,361 people reported in the 1950 census, this means each citizen owes as his share \$1,703.

This is a dangerous situation. What can be done to prevent the bankruptcy of this country? The best solution is a cutback of nondefense expenditures. Senator Byrd, an expert on federal appropriations, says 7 billion can be lopped off domestic spending. It may pinch a good bit, but it will have to be if Uncle Sam is to build and buy enough planes, guns, ships, etc. for the adequate protection of our homeland.

* * * *

Recently the Minister of Transport for the Canadian government said, "Consideration has been given and will be given again to the construction of an all-Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway if a joint development with the United States proves to be unobtainable. . .Canada had already spent nearly \$300,000,000 on improving the St. Lawrence waterway but the construction of a twenty-seven foot channel was essential to guarantee an all-water route for Canadian wheat, iron and other products. This was so vital that Canada must, if necessary, do it alone."

The construction of the combined waterway-power project should be a joint United States-Canadian effort. It would be tragic shortsightedness for the United States at this late date to back out of this self-supporting and self-liquidating project. At the present we need it more than ever before, inasmuch as there is the real threat of Russian snorkel type submarines cutting off our ocean shipping.

* * * *

GUESTS: Clayton and John Bazuin, Dr. Henry A. Bruinsma, and John W. Knecht, all of Grand Rapids.

* * * *



January 11, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

Back in the harness! From the Pentagon Building to the Congressional Library the big capitol looks just about the same. Congressmen could come and go but the wheels of government keep churning. The army of stenographers, clerks, bureau officials keep the revolving doors of Washington spinning. We are temporary members of government; they are permanent. I often think there are plenty of government employees who would just as soon we didn't come down here except to sign their checks. I suppose we are a thorn in their sides sometimes, but we can't oblige them by staying away.

* * * * *

I am told this note appeared on the bulletin boards of a certain government office recently: "Too many workers have been throwing half-empty coffee containers into waste-baskets, thus staining rugs and clothing. The last employee out of the office at night is supposed to turn out the lights. The official working day begins at 8:45 AM--not 9:AM."

If George Washington had read a notice like this I'm sure he would have dropped dead.

Oh, well--let's not be old-fashioned! Mr. Truman assures us 20 years from now we'll all have straw-berries and cream for breakfast and like it.

* * * * *

The New Deal in the Thirties...

The Fair Deal in the Forties...

But surely in 1950 we ought to have a change in titles. That's what everyone expected the President to come up with--a new name for his social program. But he surprised us by being relatively conservative. He only asked for the passage of those schemes which failed to pass during the first session.

Will they go through? That's a sixty four dollar question.

* * * * *



Personally I wouldn't be surprised to find the Senate and House even less tractable than during the earlier session. The nation-wide cry for economy will not be ignored.

* * * * *

The cleavage between Republicans and Democrats appears to be becoming sharper. In the realm of foreign policy a strained note was added by the pow-pow over Formosa.

Like any ordinary citizens of these United States, I can't help confessing that it throws me a little to attempt to dope out the "where and why," of some of our actions when I reflect on things past.

This vivid recollection comes to mind: Steaming along on the carrier USS Monterey practically within gun range of the shores of that desolate island; launching planes; making desperate attempts to blast Jap installations and sacrificing ships and men, for what?

We won the war--yes--but the peace? Keep our fingers crossed, friends. We've got to keep this old world on an even keel somehow!

* * * * *

In the next few weeks there will be much to report and plenty of action on the Washington front. Congress begins its deliberations pretty much in the tense atmosphere of a world heavy-weight championship bout. It must be very clear to everyone that the issues at stake--nationalized medicine, the Brannan Plan, repeal of the Taft Hartley Law--are issues which will have lasting effects on the character of our nation for years to come. The proponents of these changes feel that they must pass this year. Those on the other side of the fence are just as convinced that they must not pass. When flint strikes flint--sparks!

I'll try to keep you posted round by round. There's the bell. See you next week.

* * * * *



January 18, 1950

Your Washington Review

by Gerald R. Ford, Jr.

This week the column is mainly for the ladies...an inside picture of the temporary White House, better known as Blair House. Mrs. Ford attended a tea there last Thursday.

She takes her pen and writes: As Blair House is rather small, Mrs. Truman is holding a series of teas and this was a gathering of about 50 wives of men in the Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches of the government. It was raining and parking facilities are limited, to say the least, in that section of the city, so I hailed a cab and told the driver I would like to go to Blair House. He informed me that this was his first trip to the famous Blair House and I had to admit it was my first also. "Oh, well," he philosophized, giving us a mutual feeling of understanding. "I guess there are firsts in everything for all of us, even going to Blair House."

* * * * *

It was truly a delightful experience. On arriving at the canopied awning over the sidewalk there were two Naval aides to collect our cards of invitation and a newspaper reporter taking notes on some of the notables attending.

As I approached the entrance a butler bowed low and swung wide the door leading to the entrance hall, simultaneously motioning to a gentleman at the end of the hall who in turn bowed low and motioned to a room at the right. Entering this room, two attendants were on hand to help me remove my coat. I was immediately ushered on to the left to another handsome young Naval aide who murmured "Straight ahead to your right and please give your name to the aide with Mrs. Truman."

As I swerved to the right, breathless with the efficiently conducted routine, I practically bumped head-on into Mrs. Truman and her aide. It took me what seemed at least five minutes to take a deep breath and get out a mere "Mrs. Ford," but then all was resolved to normal for Mrs. Truman graciously received me and we chatted for a few minutes about how nice it was of her to have us all out there today and she in



turn about how nice we were to come out on such a bad day. I couldn't help thinking that such formality and ceremony must sometimes seem strange to a plain Missouri house-wife like the President's wife.

* * * * *

Blair House was given to the government by the Blair family and Lee House was bought by the State Department. The two houses were then joined together by huge wide archways so you were not conscious of going from one house to the other as you moved from room to room. These combined residences have been used many years for the visiting royalty and dignitaries. It was interesting to note the difference in architecture between the two homes. Lee House is very simple in design while Blair House is quite ornate with heavier, more elaborate detail.

* * * * *

As we left it was pleasant to take our time going back through the mass of attendants and aides and to glance about trying to picture just how the first family of this great country lives. I am sure they find the small and beautiful but home-like rooms far more comfortable than the huge formal rooms of the White House. And, of course, Blair House being as confining as it is in size, they have been able to live a comparatively private life there without the public demands of receptions and visitors, which there always was at the White House..

* * * * *

Visitors in Washington last week, Mrs. O. K. Marshall from Coopersville, Mrs. Bessie Bartlette, Mr. Silas Albert, Mr. Stephen Dunn, Mr. Ike Blandford, and Mrs. Huntinger, all from Grand Rapids.

* * * * *



January 25, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

The Administration took one licking and ended up with one victory in the House last week. The State Department under Secretary Acheson, despite its willy-nilly policy on China, wanted approval of a multimillion gift to Korea. The voting was close but the Administration was licked, 193 to 191.

* * * * *

I voted against Korean aid because south Korea cannot be defended militarily from the Russians to the North. Principally, however, my vote resulted from a complete disgust with the Secretary of State's over-all Far Eastern policy. Formosa can be defended by the military yet we abandon our Chinese friends and break our pledge with them. At the same time, the State Department wants to give at least 120 and probably 385 million to Korea which can be conquered by Russia in ten days.

* * * * *

Will Rogers, had a comment which seems to fit our policy in China today: "In an international egg laying contest--our State Department would do more cackling than any other country--and lay more eggs."

* * * * *

The other legislative battle concerned an important proposal to change the House parliamentary rules. A year ago I voted to prevent the bottling up of proposed legislation in the Rules Committee and this year I again took the same stand. The Rules Committee shouldn't be used as a shield to hold up legislation, whether the bill be good or bad. A Congressman and the Congress should be willing to vote Yes or No on any legislation and leave the wisdom of the decision to the citizens of this country.

* * * * *

Received this terse verse in the mail last week:



TO THE TAXPAYER

2 + 2 made 4
so we were told.

2 + 2 make 5
the "Planners" hold.

2 + 2 make 6
say demagogues slick.

But you have found
when both were thru

That 2 + 2
has come out 2.

Experiments
at your expense

Has shrunk your dollar
to fifty cents.

Wm. Ewald
Montclair, N.J.

* * * * *

The Administration, last year, pushed through changes in the Agriculture Act which will prove very harmful to our wheat farmers in Western Michigan. The new law, which had the Democratic party's blessing, will help the big wheat farmers in the plains states. The middle Western Congressmen are working on some amendments that should remedy the unwise Administration policy of last year.

* * * * *

Visitors this week: Willard Wichers from Holland and West Point Cadet Gerald J. Nabor, also of Holland, who was here with his regiment to attend the funeral of General Hap Arnold. From Grand Rapids, Alphonse Lewis Jr., and J. Howard Aldridge.

* * * * *



February 3, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

Yes, you saw it--cherry blossoms in January! Winter sports enthusiasts in Washington are having just about as tough a time as folks back home. No snow; no ice; no mufflers or mittens. Well, if there was we'd probably crab about that too.

* * * * *

And speaking of weather, here's a fact I never knew. It seems the original ground hog hails from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.

Representative Gavin called this to the attention of House members the other day when he arose to say,

"I want to register objection to West Virginia's effort to grab the fair name and fame of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Punxsutawney is the home of the great prognosticator of the weather, the groundhog, and you will hear from him on February 2, Groundhog Day."

We heard, yes, but after a winter as unpredictable as this it seems to me it will take more than a groundhog to say what's coming next.

* * * * *

Advocates of the postal card primary in Grand Rapids will be interested to know that an organization known as the United Republican Minorities of Newark, N.J. appears to have adopted a similar technique. Received recently a ballot headed "Tax Money Belonging to You" listing the names of possible Republican nominees with the slogan over the GOP elephant's head saying, "It's due in 1952." Listed were the names of Stassen, Eisenhower, Dewey, Driscoll, Taft, MacArthur, and Warren, This is probably the first of many attempts that will be made to get a pre-convention showing of the truly popular candidate. The GOP can't afford another convention railroad. They're got to pick the man with ballot-box appeal.

* * * * *



On two occasions last week Grand Rapids put itself on the Washington musical map. Senator Vandenberg's daughter, Elizabeth, was heard with Myron Sands, baritone at the National Gallery of Art and Joanne Tornga, daughter of the George Torngas made her singing debut. Mrs. Ford and I enjoyed both concerts. Miss Tornga will be remembered by many who worked on the Ford-for-Congress campaign as the lively young lady who served as chief secretary at headquarters. It was a pleasure to see old friends going ahead with such fine careers.

* * * * *

As one of my colleagues put it, "like a wet and penetrating fog, FEPC drifted around Capital Hill" last week.

The FEPC issue puts a lot of legislators on the spot not the least of whom is Speaker Sam Rayburn, a Democrat from Texas ordinarily in high favor with Mr. Truman.

"Hot spot?" More to the point would be, "Hot seat." Mr. Rayburn's sitting on it.

Back in Texas where he comes from they haven't much sympathy for the President's Civil Rights program. If it passed they might not have much sympathy for Rayburn; if it doesn't, he'll hear from the White House.

What a spot to be in!

* * * * *

Letter of the week: "Dear Mr. Ford, So you're going to be a Pop! Please allow us to be among the first to offer our congratulations. And indeed they are heartfelt congratulations..." Signed: National Institute of Diaper Services, Local Chapter Dy-Dee Wash.

* * * * *

Visitors in Washington: Mr. and Mrs. Jim VanZylen and daughter from Grand Haven; Ronald Rus and Father Joseph Walen from Grand Rapids; Mrs. Kirkpatrick from Cooper-ville. Also Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Padnos from Holland and Evie R. Boysen from Spring Lake. Both the E.W. and W.G. Mawbys from Grand Rapids stopped in.

* * * * *



Feb. 8, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

"Frustrate," according to the dictionary means, "to hinder," to "make useless," "to prevent progress." That makes "frustration" the WORD OF THE WEEK in Congress.

The fillibuster goes on. The Civil Rights issue has us all tied up. Strange that a question supposedly settled nearly 100 years ago still plagues a nation. As they say, the wheels of social progress turn exceedingly slow--legislative wheels were stuck in a bog last week.

* * * * *

Here is an account of a typical day's routine:

Business of the House is to hear the President's tax message and consider Alaska and Hawaii for statehood. As soon as we convene, the anti-Civil Rights delaying tactics begin. Purpose is to drag out debate so that the business cannot be disposed of and FEPC given its turn. Rankin of Mississippi demands a quorum call. This consumes 45 minutes. Then the Clerk starts reading the President's message. After a few paragraphs Colmer of Mississippi demands another quorum (45 minutes more). A few more paragraphs of the message and Rankin obtains another quorum call. The message is again interrupted when Davis of Georgia tries for another, but a quorum is present.

As soon as the message is over, Colmer moves to adjourn and gets a roll call on his motion. The House refuses to adjourn.

A Committee Chairman starts explaining the Alaska bill. Rankin interrupts him on a point of order, complaining that the clocks in the House Chamber are not coordinated. He demands that the Speaker do something about it right now. The Speaker replies that he is not a clock fixer. The Chairman continues his explanation. He is soon interrupted by Andrews of Alabama, who demands a quorum call, but a quorum is present. As the debate continues, however, many Members leave the floor, so Rivers of South Carolina catches them napping and gets another roll call. Then Williams of



Mississippi moves to adjourn and gets a roll call on that. The House again refuses to adjourn. By this time it is well into the evening. Peterson of Florida moves to adjourn and on a final roll call a weary and hungry House throws up its hands and adjourns. Such was the stalemate last week. Here's hoping it will break soon.

* * * * *

The question of what to do with our potato and other agricultural surpluses has plagued the Administration for some time. Twenty-four Republicans in the House, including myself, have introduced legislation authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to make surplus food commodities available to Federal, state and local welfare agencies. This type of program makes more sense than the wasteful destruction policy of Secretary Brannon.

* * * * *

On February 18th, Kent County Republicans are sponsoring the biggest Lincoln Day Dinner in Michigan at the Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids. Harold Stassen, former governor of Minnesota, presidential aspirant in 1948 and now President of the University of Pennsylvania, is to be the speaker. Better get your tickets early. Hope to see you all there.

* * * * *

Visitors this week were Harry Plaggermans of Holland, Edsko Hekman and Oakley Henry of Grand Rapids; also Mrs. Pat Loomis and Miss Anne Reynolds.

* * * * *



February 16, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD JR.

Last Monday evening the Fords attended a tremendous G.O.P. rally in the City of Washington. For a good chicken dinner and all the trimmings, including top-notch speeches, Fred Waring's band, and George Murphy as master of ceremonies, we paid \$2.20 per ticket. Two bucks was the admission price and 20¢ for the federal tax. Our Democratic friends are shortly having their annual Washington dinner at a price of \$100 per plate. No 20% tax (\$20.00) on this affair. Why?

* * * * *

Last week a delegation of American Legionnaires from Michigan were in town to discuss with Michigan Congressmen a number of veterans problems. It was decided among other things that we would all do our utmost to convince the Veterans Administration that the VA should take over the Army's Percy Jones Hospital in Battle Creek. The Army hospital is about to be closed for economy reasons. The same facilities at little additional expense could be well used to meet a need for more hospital beds in Michigan.

* * * * *

Recently received a letter from home referring to the conviction of Alger Hiss and the subsequent statement by Secretary of State Acheson. The arrest of Dr. Karl Fuchs, the atomic scientist, has further emphasized the infiltration of Soviet sympathizers in high government positions of responsibility. Those who tolerate this situation and those who disparage the efforts of the F.B.I. by calling the issue a "red-herring" are not sincerely interested in protecting the security of the United States.

* * * * *



Alger Hiss was not convicted solely on the testimony of Whittaker Chambers but rather on additional irrefutable proof produced in court by the F.B.I. J. Edgar Hoover and his men should be complimented and given further support in their efforts to eliminate subversives from high offices in our government. Mr. Acheson has impaired his usefulness as Secretary of State by refusing to denounce the reprehensible conduct of his friend and former associate.

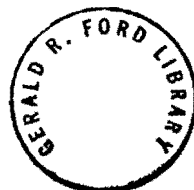
* * * * *

A number of friends have invited me to speak in Kent and Ottawa counties before various groups and organizations while Congress is still in session. I sincerely appreciate the invitations but feel my job is here in Washington when the House meets regularly. Week-end speaking engagements are fine and I'll be glad to fly back on such occasions, but during the week when I would have to be absent from the job for at least two days, I think it wise to decline.

* * * * *

Visitors of the week: Jack Osier, Walter Baker, Ray Conlon, Herb Daverman, Pat Loomis, Chet Clarke and Lew Lockley all of Grand Rapids. In addition Mr. & Mrs. Charles Spanas of Ohio. Mrs. Spanas is a former resident of Grand Rapids.

* * * * *



February 25, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

Members of the House Committee on Appropriations have a rough job. They've got to screen requests for federal funds. There might have once been a day when the requests were small and reasonable. In these times, however, with everyone and his Dutch-uncle trying to hit the treasury jack-pot, the sub-committee hearings have become long and complicated.

Typical information brought out by these hearings follows.

From the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture--

A plane used to combat the grasshopper blight last year cost the government \$27,000 in rental for two weeks work. The owner of the plane paid \$6,600 for it! Match that one if you can.

Here's another: A DC-3 was rented at \$450 an hour. One of the larger airlines told the Committee investigators they would rent a similar plane with pilot, co-pilot and stewardess at \$150 an hour and make a 25% profit.

The Denver office of a certain bureau asked funds for 63 new automobiles. The Committee investigators turned up the fact that with only 35 persons employed this outfit already had 270 automobiles! That figures nearly 8 cars per employee. Hardly enough, is it?

* * * * *

Our neighbors to the north, Canada, have apparently done a better job getting costs whittled down since the war. At least taxes have been eased.

Here's a comparison or two--

Wartime tax on transportation: Canada, repealed; USA 15% Tax on amusement and entertainment: Canada, repealed; USA 20% Tax on telephone charges: Canada, none; USA 15 to 25%.



Canada has made three separate reductions in income taxes since the end of the war. The USA has made one reduction -- by the 80th Congress.

At the end of the last fiscal year, Canada reported a surplus of 87 millions. The Truman Administration was in the hole 5 billions.

* * * * *

We have all heard the Administration try to justify these sad facts by pointing out that 2/3 of our expenditures go to pay for past wars and war debt. To my mind that's the equivalent of trying to prove that two "wrongs" make a "right".

Next time I hear this excuse, I'll remember those 270 automobiles in Denver being used by 35 employees.

* * * * *

Slipped home last week for a few hours and attended the Lincoln Day Banquet where Mr. Stassen gave his rousing talk on foreign affairs.

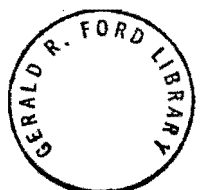
In the audience of more than 1500 I saw so many friends it would be impossible to name them all.

I think former governor Stassen was genuinely amazed at the turnout. It happened we rode the same planes back east and I enjoyed talking to him.

* * * * *

Visitors in Washington last week: Herman Baker, Jacob Van't Hof, and Dr. John Van Bruggun of Grand Rapids; also Joe Deeb of Grand Rapids, Paul Johnson of Grand Haven and Mrs. Kirkpatrick of Coopersville.

* * * * *



March 2, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

On Wednesday, the House had a marathon session which lasted 15 hours and 20 minutes. We started at noon and adjourned at 3:20 A.M. the next day. It was the longest session in 6 years. I marvel at the endurance of some of the older members who seem to stick it out along with their younger colleagues. For example, Representative Bob Doughton of North Carolina who is 84 years old, seemed mighty chipper at 3:00 A.M.

* * * * *

What caused the 15 hour session? F.E.P.C., technically known as the Fair Employment Practices Act. The proposal aims at eliminating job discriminations based on race, color and creed. I agreed with the desired result but did not favor compulsion by the use of Court orders or criminal penalties. When the bill was amended to put the emphasis on education and conciliation I voted in the affirmative.

* * * * *

Everybody but the President seems to have realized that the nation's coal supply was serious in November and December of last year. If Mr. Truman had taken positive action then and not waited until we were down to the last shovelful, the United States wouldn't be in the present predicament. The national health and welfare provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act could have been invoked several months ago if the President really wanted to prevent needless suffering. The blame for the present crisis rests properly on Mr. Truman and no one else.

* * * * *

A few days ago 20 copies of Hollandsche Kookkerij Boek arrived in my Washington office from Steketee-VanHuis of Holland, Michigan. Took a copy home to Betty and she promptly tried one of the recipes with excellent results. The additional nineteen copies, setting forth examples of superb Dutch culinary art, were immediately distributed to a few colleagues who I know will appreciate the delectable suggestions.

* * * * *



As far as the House of Representatives is concerned the penny post card is a thing of the past. We admit the cost of everything else has about doubled since the war -- now, at last the blow has struck mail rates.

Symbolic perhaps, the fact that henceforth it probably will take a two-cent stamp to say, "Having a wonderful time--wish you were here", this small incident may give citizens more cause to think than more spectacular evidences of inflation. When Mr. Truman's trillion dollar economy becomes a fact, how much will a penny post card cost? Ten cents? Then divide the trillion by ten and see where we actually wind up!

* * * * *

Visitors this past week: Bill Schuiling, John Whetzell and the Harry Potters, all of Grand Rapids.

* * * * *



March 9, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

It may not be long before flag-makers will have a problem on their hands: how are they going to get fifty stars in even rows on the Stars and Stripes?

That will be the question if Alaska and Hawaii are admitted to the Union. The House last week took action to approve Alaska's admission; the "islands" are next on the list.

* * * * *

Fifty states in the Union! Personally, I'm enthusiastic about the idea. As a nation it seems to me we need the stimulus of having new blood. From a dozen different points of view statehood for these territories is a desirable move.

Alaska and Hawaii have earned this dignity of position. The citizens of these territories have stuck through tough times and have contributed much. Furthermore, in an era of transportation when the tip of the Aleutians is closer by air than California was in 1849 by mule-train, the old excuse of geographical separation doesn't hold water.

* * * * *

Many excuses will be found for blocking this growth of the nation. In the Senate it is to be expected that opposition will develop.

Why?

The answer is simple enough. If new states were admitted there would be four more Senators.

Some will say that's too much power for too few people.

It's an old argument -- one that doesn't gain strength with age. The same thing was said when Arizona was admitted February 14, 1912, making us 48 strong.

* * * * *



The wags of journalism have been quick to catch this one, a story about the poor leopard of Oklahoma.

Here's what they're saying and it makes a point: "Speaking of subsidies, don't forget that leopard out in Oklahoma. He won his freedom--yes--but then he crept back and lost it all for one free government meal".

Need more be said?

* * * * *

Had the privilege last week of attending a very special function at the Press Club. The Honorable Dirk U. Stikker, envoy to the US for Marshall Plan countries, was the speaker. Prior to the meeting I had a chance to talk with the Ambassador from Netherlands, Mr. E.N. Van Kleffens. During the conversation he remarked that he had purchased all of his furniture to replace that which he had lost in the war from our furniture factories in Western Michigan. I'm sorry it took a war to force such a decision on the Ambassador but he assured me he was happy with his purchases. As Oliver Wendell Holmes once pointed out, when buying antiques in Europe, don't be surprised if you get home and find the Grand Rapids label on the underside.

* * * * *

This note comes from a national news release but it's worth repeating: there'll be a \$25,000,000 bonfire in the Post Office department soon unless veterans present receipts for money orders sent in the service but uncollected. Due to plane crashes, ship sinkings, and other flukes of war, 25 million dollars worth of PO money orders were never collected.

Step up, boys, with your receipts -- it's your money. Take it away.

* * * * *

Last weeks visitors -- CC Crawford and C.J. DeKoster of Holland. From Grand Haven came A.L. Bradfield and Mr. and Mrs. F.S. Pearson. Rod Schopps and R.W. Rigdon dropped in from Grand Rapids. That was all. See you next week.

* * * * *



March 15, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

The House recently considered a bill which if approved would have authorized a new federal expenditure of approximately 4 million annually and a total 36 million in the next five years for federal aid to local library bookmobile programs. The bill was defeated by a close margin (3 votes) after heated debate.

The proponents for the library bill contended we needed the legislation for the benefit of the children of the United States. Representative Byrnes of Wisconsin had this sensible comment on that point: "If there is one thing that the children of this country need, it is an administration that will put a stop to loading them with debts that we are unwilling to pay today but are willing to incur for future generations".

Representative Brown of Ohio made another statement during the debate which makes good sense and I quote, "If we had a surplus in the Treasury then it might be well to consider many of these new projects, but regardless of the merit or demerit of any new project, not absolutely necessary to the national defense or to the security, safety and the welfare of the American people, I believe it wrong to start any such new Federal project when we must borrow the money to pay for it".

* * * * *

With March 15th before us it might be well to reprint a story about a tired taxpayer from Connecticut: "Gus Mann reaches out at 6 a.m. on a dark December morning to turn off the alarm clock (price: \$5; tax, \$1). He climbs sleepily out of bed (price: \$195; annual personal property tax, 75¢), walks across the floor, and switches on the electricity (33¢ tax on his \$10 monthly bill).

"To music from a bedroom radio (price: \$30; tax \$3) Gus shaves with his electric (see above) razor. He slaps across his chin a handful of bay rum (price: \$1.30; tax 26¢). He dresses quickly and hurries to the kitchen, putting on his Swiss wrist watch as he goes (price: \$60; tax \$12).

* * * * *



"He's just in time to snatch two slices of bread from the electric toaster (price: \$16; tax, \$1.60), lift his coffee from the gas stove (price: \$190; tax \$19) and grab a glass of fruit juice from the refrigerator (price: \$300; tax \$30). He calls goodbye to his wife (marriage license, \$2), gets his car (price: \$1,800; tax \$105) and drives (operator's license; \$1) to work.

"Gus lights a cigarette (price per pack: 9¢; Federal tax, 7¢), with a match (tax 5½¢ per 1,000).

"At work, Gus sighs (no tax) and settles down to his job (annual income \$2,500, Federal income tax \$73, social security tax paid by employee \$25, and by employer \$25). If he works hard for the rest of his life, he may be able to save enough to provide the government with a slice of inheritance tax. And if he dies in the right state, he can take comfort in the fact that his casket, provided it costs less than \$100, will be exempt from any sales tax.

"And in Connecticut there is the 2% sales tax on almost everything we buy".

Visitors: Howard Fant of Grand Haven and George A. Pendleton of Grand Rapids. Also Charlie Ziegler, State Highway Commissioner, who is in Washington to testify before my committee of Public Works on the federal road legislation. There is a real controversy brewing throughout the U. S. on the relative merits of primary and secondary roads and Charlie is in Washington to state his views.

* * * * *



March 22, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

The event had nothing to do with national or international problems but it was of major importance to Betty and me. "Mike" Ford, a 7 pound boy with some reddish hair, arrived on March 14th at Doctor's Hospital in Washington. Betty and Mike are doing fine; the "old man" is still excited. The Fords, all three, are deeply grateful for the many thoughtful messages of congratulations.

* * * * *

Here's a fact every American can put in his pipe and smoke: in a recent poll 78 percent of the editors of country newspapers expressed the fear that the US was headed for socialism. That's nearly eight out of every ten!

Who'll laugh that one off? Country editors are editors in the old-fashioned sense of the word. They do their own thinking; write their own editorials, and rub elbows daily with the folks whose opinions they reflect. By far the majority of these men--respected in their communities and looked up to by average Americans--say we're on our way to a form of government never contemplated by the constitution.

Isn't that something to think about?

If you ask me, it is! It seems to me it's time we got the fog off our windshields and took a look at where we're heading. Or, as the boys in the aircorps would say, "Let's stop flying blind". We may hit a mountain top one of these days if we don't!

* * * * *

From time to time I've heard a good deal of loose talk and rumors about GIs who are said to have flopped on their GI mortgages. The percentage of failures has been rumored so high that at times I've wondered how we could afford to keep on under-writing these loans if such was really true. Now the true facts are available and it's a different picture. The VA gives out with this dope:



1,862,296 veterans have taken advantage of GI loans.

Only 13,479 have failed, including business loans where the casualty rate is undoubtedly higher.

Soldiers, sailors and marines are apparently pretty good risks. I'm not surprised. They were between Pearl Harbor and V-J Day!

* * * * *

Received this telegram last week which for a kind of rough and ready humor deserves acknowledgement:

"Congressman Gerald R. Ford Jr.:

"Jud, the Wheel Jackass on the Mule Train, just died. See Truman. If his IQ would equal Jud's, think I can get him the job. But not at \$90,000 a year! Let us know at your earliest convenience. Telephone Glendale 47338. CLYDE CRAVEN 542 Cloverdale Ave. NW, Grand Rapids".

Will stick my neck out at least this far, Mr. Craven, to say, "Yes, I too get a little tired of Mule Train--and, certain other Missouri phenomena". But as the philosopher says, "All things pass", eventually.

* * * * *

Washington was snowed under in the literal sense last week. Outside of a budget-cut for federal employees nothing confuses bureaucrats more than a snow storm. We had it; confusion reigned for a few hours. Well, it seems to me we had Cherry Blossoms when we should have had snow. That evens the score.

* * * * *

Not many visitors in Washington last week but welcome were those who came. Mr and Mrs. Irving Stroup of Grand Rapids and Don Leonard of the Michigan State Police. If there were others, forgive my oversight. I was very busy with conferences with doctors and diaper services. Next week I'll be back on the beam. This can't happen again for a few months at least. Your patience and letters of congratulation were sincerely appreciated.

* * * * *



March 30, 1950

YOUR WASHINGTON REVIEW

BY GERALD R. FORD, JR.

It's probably an old political technique but nonetheless dishonest: make the public believe you're a friend of the common man at any cost. Keep lambasting your opponent as reactionary; keep promising bigger and better circuses; give away what you don't have to give. Call it LIBERALISM. That's an ancient formula for staying in office. The Administration is working it for all it's worth. Signs are that it may be weakening. Last week even Democrats couldn't go along with the so-called "Middle Income Housing Bill". The proposal died an ignominious death. It did not deserve to live. I voted against it and so did many Democrats. 4023 veterans in Kent and Ottawa Counties who now have GI loans would have been cheated if the bill had passed. There were other reasons too numerous to mention for voting it down, but at the root was cheap political opportunism on the part of its sponsors. I hate this kind of politics. I think the majority of people back home agree with me; at least, I'll take the chance on it.

* * * * *

Paradox of modern government. It's a fact that the government paid 22 cents for burlap bags; sold them filled with potatoes for 1¢ -- then bought the empty bags back for 12¢. What will school teachers of the future do when they teach mathematics? "Now Johnny, if you had ten burlap bags worth 22 cents, sold them for 1¢, and bought them back for twelve, how much money did you make?"

That's a Ten Dollar Poser. Who knows the answer? I don't. I'm frank to admit it.

* * * * *

This story comes from the south -- from the Ft. Lauderdale News.

It seems the seagulls around St. Augustine are having a frightful time.

Recently a new shrimp bed was discovered off Key West. The shrimp fleet that



used to feed the seagulls of St. Augustine with castoffs moved south.

To quote the Ft. Lauderdale paper: "The seagulls haven't been able to adjust themselves to the new situation. According to INS reports the reefs and shores around St. Augustine are lined with long silent rows of gulls with their dark eyes turned prayerfully out to sea -- waiting for the shrimp fleet and the free meals that won't return."

They say naturalists are baffled at this phenomena. The birds have forgotten to fish for themselves!

* * * * *

A popular takeoff on the Gettysburg Address is going around Washington these days. It begins:

"One score and 16 years ago our father brought forth upon this nation a new tax, conceived in desperation and dedicated to the proposition that all men are fair game.

"Now we are engaged in a great mass of calculations testing whether that taxpayer, or any taxpayer, so confused and so impoverished can long endure. We are met on Form 1040. We are come to dedicate a large portion of our income to a final resting place with those men who here spent their lives that they may spend our money.

"It is altogether anguish and torture that we should do this. But in a legal sense we cannot evade -- we cannot cheat -- we cannot underestimate this tax. The collectors, clever and sly, who computed here have gone far beyond our power to add and subtract.

"Our creditors will little note nor long remember what we pay here, but the Bureau of Internal Revenue can never forget what we report.

"It is for us taxpayers rather to be devoted here to the tax return which the government has thus far so nobly spent. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these vanished dollars we take increased devotion to the few remaining, that we here highly resolve that next year will not find us in a higher income tax bracket; that this tax-payer, underpaid, shall figure out more deductions; and that taxation of the people, by the congress, for the government shall not cause our solvency to perish." WITH APOLOGIES TO ABE LINCOLN.

Last week's visitors: Pete Murdick and Henry Parker of Grand Haven.

* * * * *

