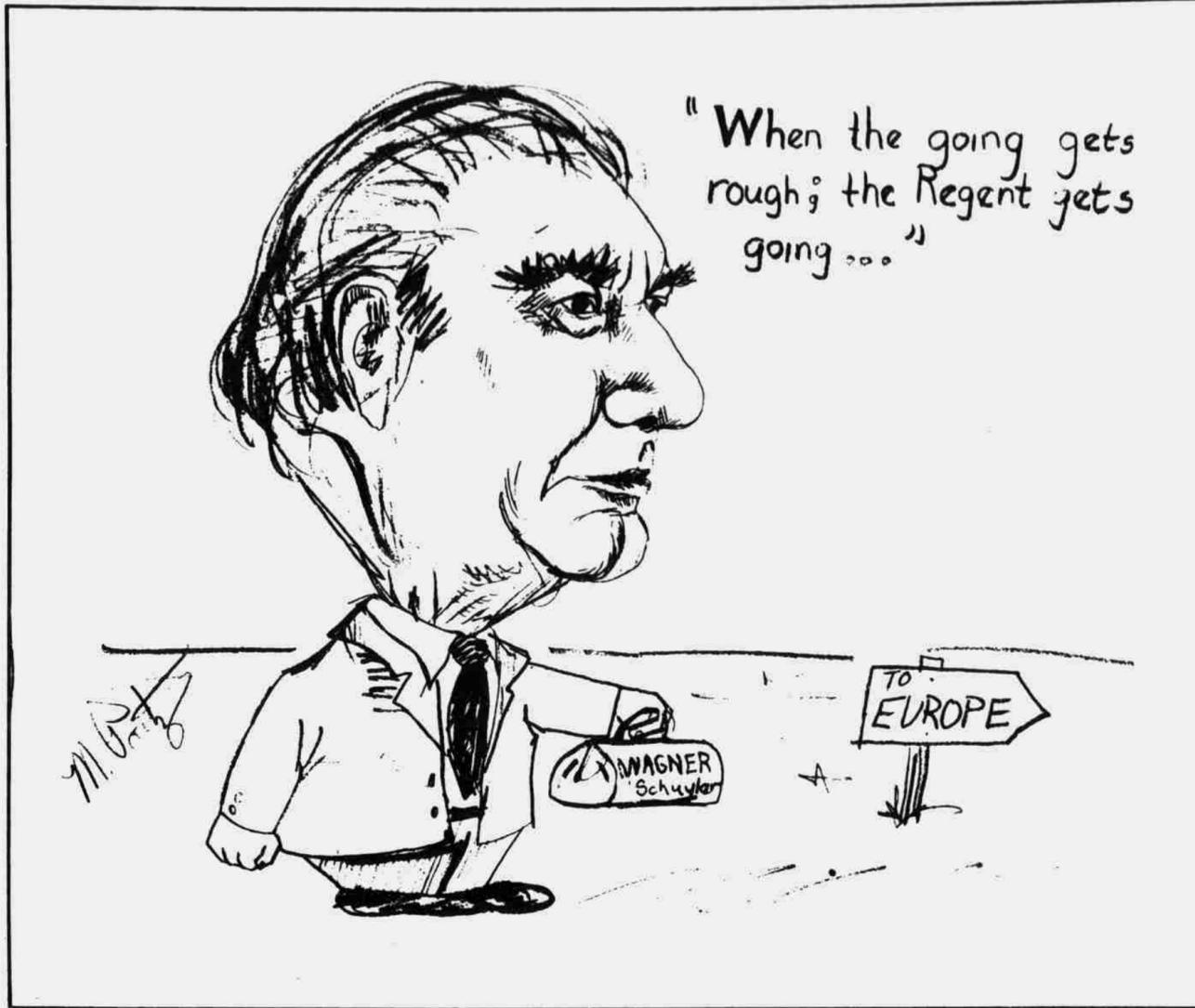


opinion/editorial



Bottle bill should cork opponents

"Throw-away cans and bottles are the litter problems" is the slogan of the Nebraskans for Returnable Containers. It may not be a witty slogan, but it addresses an important issue which will be on the November ballot.

proposes that a 5 cent deposit be placed on all beverage containers, both cans and bottles.

Proponents of the bills say the deposit required will help curb litter and they have their fingers in other pies such as the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Clean Air and the Clean Water act of 1977. They also address themselves to the issues of land use and nuclear waste.

Opposition to the bill says the deposit won't stop litter effectively, will increase costs and cause unemployment in the canning industry.

The reasoning behind the loss of jobs says that since there will be a deposit on cans will virtually become obsolete. So the canning industry will cut employment.

A deposit on both bottles and cans doesn't make much sense. Individuals will still be able to make a choice. The canning industry also argues that it will hike up costs to hire more people to drive to and from recycling centers and hire people to sort the containers.

Another beef the petition drivers have is that outstate money is fighting for the defeat of the bill. They say the beverage and container industries spend millions of dollars annually to defeat Bottle Bill legislation and have budgeted \$350,000 to fight Proposition 301 in Nebraska.

The bottling and canning industry can gather that much money to fight legislation. It's not an unfeasible thought.

We also don't need outside interests buying into the November election. If there is a debate, it should be between Nebraskans, not the beverage industry.

A nickel deposit is not that much of a hardship because one can return the containers. It also will put responsibility on individuals to clean up the environment. The bottle bill is not an issue we can neglect anymore.

Other groups that support proposition 301 include: the Audubon Society, League of Women Voters, Nebraska Chapter Wildlife Society, Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation and the Nebraska Wildlife Federation.

It is the concern of groups such as these to curb litter and it should be a concern of all Nebraskans to fight litter.

Columnist says press more aggressive

Since Watergate, the performance of the press has been closely monitored by many people both in and out of the journalism business, but none have done it better than Washington Post ombudsman Charles Seib.

Seib, who also writes a syndicated column, *The News Business*, has been ombudsman and internal critic for the Post for three and one-half years of a five year contract. Prior to joining the Post, Seib was an editor at the Washington Star.

Interviewed by telephone, Seib said Watergate has had major after effects on the press.

He said the press is more questioning, less trusting and more combative than before the scandal.

Innocence gone

"We lost our innocence then, and we are determined not to get caught again. This is natural."

But he said the press had not deliberately distorted the news nor had it ill served the public, but rather the public was better served by a skeptical press because "things being turned up need to be turned up."

"I don't think we'll go back to the so-called objectivity of the '50's, in the main saying what the man said, we've gone beyond that for good."

But he said the investigative frenzy spawned by Watergate has died down somewhat.

"There was a lot of overkill, trying to reach too far, the local school board meeting had to be a Watergate, everybody had to make his mark as investigative reporter. It was a temporary overreaction to Watergate."

Press more aggressive

"The continuing reaction as an epilogue to Watergate is more aggressive questioning by the press which is all for the good.

"It's a big job, the government is getting bigger and bigger, the press has to be aggressive if it is going to do its job."

Seib said he had seen a difference in journalists coming out of college since Watergate as well.

"It is almost a truism to say that we have a group interested in journalism coming out of colleges as a result of Watergate and the performance of Woodward and Bernstein.

"We have a generation of youngsters who see journalism as a more activist occu-

pation than some of us older people."

But he said journalists have traditionally been motivated by the idea of changing the world.

He said he was impressed with young people interested in journalism and said young journalists are interested in more abstract ideas like ethical issues, privacy and fairness, while their predecessors were more concerned with empirical aspects of writing the story.

News role important

He said the young journalists have an interest in the role of news in society.

news, it (the court) doesn't seem to feel the press needs special protection and privilege in gathering the news."

Conflict newsworthy

He said that the importance of the conflict between the courts and the press is demonstrated by the fact that of his last 22 columns, eight have been on the conflict, including three about the Farber case in New Jersey.

He said the Farber case "has brought to public attention a problem that has been festering a long time, a conflict between the First and Sixth Amendments."

Although the study of this issue has been going on for at least five years, Seib said it has been dramatized due to the severe penalties imposed in the case by a judge who ruled without even hearing the issue.

Fields calls, too

In addition to writing this column, Seib said he has two duties as ombudsman, to receive calls from readers of the paper who have a complaint against the Post on accuracy or fairness and aid in solving the problem and to critique the paper from the reader's standpoint.

Seib said he is able to critique the paper as a reader since he takes no part in the production of the paper.

He said he operates by internal memo, that is, finding a problem in the paper and sending a memo to the editors that says "look, you guys did this wrong."

Seib said there are about 20 to 25 ombudsmen at newspapers which "isn't many out of 1750." He said each of them operate differently, but most write more about their individual papers than he does.

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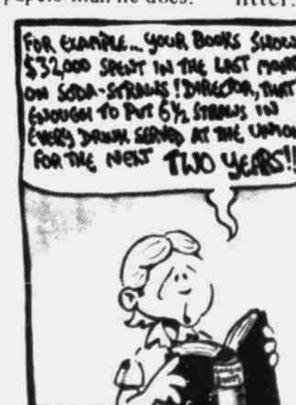
Also, the press is "having a rather hard time with the courts from the Supreme Court on down," Seib said.

"The public is a little suspicious of the press and uneasy with the power of the press. Judges can sense the public would not be disturbed or upset if the powers of the press were set back."

He said he felt the public felt the press had gotten too big for its britches.

Peter Finley Dunn, an Irish writer said the Supreme Court follows the election returns, Seib said, and added that the court also follows public opinion as illustrated by recent decisions against the press.

Seib said the Burger Court has worked on the theory that "while the Constitution gives the press the right to communicate



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