

# RIPON FORUM

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## COMMENTARY: CARTER

AMERICAN POLYRHYTHMS

by Dick Behn

It is no longer as simple as ABC. Jimmy Carter seems no longer vulnerable to an Anybody-But-Carter Movement. That tells a lot about Jimmy Carter and a lot about the polyrhythms that govern American politics.

Jimmy Carter has combined his ambition opportunity and press relations cycles in a unique way. He's done so without bothering to tell the public what he expects to do as President. It seems enough to know that Jimmy Carter has a pleasant smile, a sincere disposition, and a Horatio Alger background; it seems too much to ask about the specifics of Carter's planned reorganization of the federal government. For that, the nation must wait for Carter's planned inaugural and beyond. Columnist William Raspberry, usually a thoughtful observer, suggested recently that such specifics were unnecessary and uncalled for. Somehow it seems that less stringent criteria are being used to select Presidents than are used to select members of local school boards. It is hard to imagine electing a school board candidate who proposed to reorganize 20 schools into five institutions without inquiring how such a feat might be accomplished.

Still, Jimmy Carter has taken his sincerity a long way. When Carter began his presidential quest, he had only the benefit of a steady ambition cycle. There is no question about what Jimmy Carter wants. His references to the content of his inaugural address make that perfectly clear. Carter, however, has his ambition cycle under control---unlike some other would-be Presidents like Ronald Reagan, who has been ambivalent about how much he wants to be President and what he is willing to do to win that office; Walter Mondale, who decided he didn't have the ambition it took to gruel it out in the primaries; Nelson Rockefeller, who has always been questioned about "the ambition" even when he wasn't wearing it on his lapel; and Hubert Humphrey, whose best strategy these days requires that he hide his ambition until opportunity knocks.

Carter has no such problems. He wants to be President, he's not ashamed of it, and he has an unwavering faith in his ability to win election.

Furthermore, Carter has amazing good luck in his opportunity cycle, which has steadily climbed upward in ways which would have seemed improbable a year ago. First, the failure of any liberal Democrat to emerge as the hero of the McGovern wing of the party left a large opening for Carter. Second, the continued stubborn presence of George Wallace on the party's right provided Carter with a convenient straw man to knock down and thus cultivate a dragon-slayer image. Not only was defeating Wallace a good deed for the party which earned Carter a lot of brownie points, but such dragon-slaying bolstered Carter's electability quotient. George Wallace, his image fuzzied by critiques of his administration of Alabama, his vigor slowed by confinement to a wheelchair, and his appeal dulled by the subsidence of the busing issue outside Massachusetts, was the perfect Carter foil. Third, the mood of the electorate fed Carter's candidacy---the absence of burning issues, public disenchantment with Washington, disillusionment with the politics of promising, apathy about "tired" political names; and the ascendancy of electability over ideology in the voting booth. Fourth, Carter seems aided by a slightly lesser dragon (one which Henry Jackson fosters when he talks about the importance of northern industrial states)---anti-southern bias. Again, Carter has used this bias and Establishment bias at his lack of Washington connections to his own advantage. Carter has used his primary victories to dispel the problem the same way John F. Kennedy used his 1960 primary victory in West Virginia to dispel the handicap of his Catholic religion.

Finally, Carter has had good luck with his press relations cycle...which turned slowly upward last October with the publication of poll results from an Iowa political dinner which gave Carter something close to instant

political credibility. His opportunity and press relations cycles fed each other for the next two months as Carter took full advantage of the absence of strong opponents to demonstrate his appeal to wide segments of the electorate. The glowing accounts about Carter continued to dominate media coverage until mid-January when the media, having perceived that it had perhaps created a giant, reverted to its role as giant-killer with critiques of Carter's stands, non-stands, gubernatorial performance, and gubernatorial non-performance. Columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak and writer Steve Brill in Harper's Magazine were particularly deadly. So, to a lesser extent, were journalists like the Washington Post's David Broder, who turned up a five-year-old letter to the National Right to Work Committee guaranteed to get Carter in trouble with the AFL-CIO. This sudden downturn in media acceptability was reversed only by Carter's victory in the New Hampshire primary, which generated a new round of favorable media coverage for Carter as the "frontrunner."

So Carter rides the crest of his ambition, opportunity, and public relations cycles at the moment. Henry Jackson has never been able to get his press relations cycle to move upward. The ambition cycles of men like Sargent Shriver and Milton Shapp always seemed terribly mismatched with their opportunity cycles. Carter cut George Wallace's opportunity cycle right out from underneath him by competing for the same constituency. The long-awaited rise in Hubert Humphrey's opportunity cycle may never come despite the steady character of his press relations cycle over the past few months. And even if Mo Udall had a favorable opportunity cycle, it seems doubtful that he possesses an ambition cycle to complement it. That leaves only Jerry Brown, whose phenomenal coupling of ambition, opportunity, and press relations cycles matches Carter's to the same degree that their gubernatorial records seem marked by ambiguity and posturing. ■

## POLITICS: The GOP

**Massachusetts:** Reagan bruised a few feelings when Diane Brosdon was appointed to head the Massachusetts campaign rather than former GOP State Chairman William Barnstead, who had headed Reagan's primary effort. Barnstead, an outspoken and sometimes unpredictable conservative, said he was "crushed" by the move.

**Nebraska:** The support of Senators Carl Curtis and Roman Hruska helps make Ford the solid favorite to win the GOP primary. Reagan's campaign is headed by former top GOP officials in the state, but rumors of dissension have not improved the image of the Reagan effort.

**Nevada:** Sen. Paul Laxalt(R), national chairman for Reagan, has activated his personal campaign organization in the state. That action alone may be enough to negate the Ford effort being headed by former Las Vegas Mayor Oran Gragson.

**New Jersey:** The seven at-large members of the state GOP delegation have been chosen by Sen. Clifford Case, who usually disdains involvement in party affairs. The State GOP Committee, though unhappy, acceded to Case's list, which included State GOP Chairman Webster B. Todd, the state's three GOP congresspersons, former U.S.Rep. Charles Sandman, and Assembly Minority Leader Thomas H. Kean, who heads the state Ford campaign.

**Texas:** Despite talk of a favorable upturn for the President in Texas, it still seems likely that Reagan will carry the state in the May primary. As a result of the Bentsen primary system, delegates will be chosen on a district basis; in many districts both slates are headed by prominent party and elected officials. Although the competition thus far has been fairly muted, the possibility for more divisive conflict in an already divided state party exists.

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## POLITICS: STATES

### ARKANSAS

Despite the withdrawal of U.S. Rep. Wilbur D. Mills (D) from contention in the 2nd C.D., Republicans are less likely to win this year than in 1974 when Judy Petty almost stripped the former House Ways and Means Committee chairman of his seat. The Democratic nomination has been practically sewn up by Attorney General Jim Guy Tucker. Tucker's congressional candidacy relieves Gov. David Pryor (D) of any fears about reelection, but it does not relieve the GOP of the necessity of finding a sacrificial lamb to oppose him. The GOP realizes it has little chance of upsetting the popular Pryor, but it must field a candidate to prevent maverick newspaper publisher Joseph H. Wetson from receiving the GOP endorsement. Instead, the GOP will emphasize its legislative races this, hoping to contest about 15-20 seats in the 135-seat legislature where only four Republicans now serve. Republicans can take some heart in the strengthened incumbency of U.S. Rep. John Paul Hammerschmidt (R-3rd), who survived a concerted attempt to oust him in 1974---and who is likely pondering a 1978 race for the Senate seat now held by the aging John L. McClellan. The GOP also has some small hopes in the 1st C.D. where businessman Harlan "Bo" Holliman will contest U.S. Rep. Bill Alexander.

### HAWAII

With three of the state's four seats in the House and Senate vacant this year, the GOP has a strong opportunity to elect its most attractive slate of candidates in years. With Sen. Hiram Fong (R) retiring, the GOP's Senate candidate will be former Gov. William Quinn. The businessman-lawyer may be able to exploit the gap between U.S. Rep. Patsy Mink and Spark Matsunaga in the October 2 Democratic primary enough to squeak through to victory. Matsunaga's seat will be sought by former State Sen. Fred Rohlfing, who came within 12,000 votes of unseating the incumbent in 1972. In the 2nd C.D., Republicans will rely on Carla Coray, the state's able GOP national committeewoman and former party chairman.

### NEW JERSEY

When Dr. James R. Cowan resigned recently as assistant secretary of defense for health and environment, he said President Ford urged him to "seriously consider" a race against entrenched Sen. Harrison Williams (D). The former New Jersey health commissioner said he wanted to "assess the situation" in New Jersey before committing himself to a race. Another New Jersey state official, David Norcross, director of the State Law Enforcement Commission, is also considering the GOP Senate nomination, but both candidates must be restrained by the memory of Nelson Gross's futile race against Williams in 1970 when Gross had the full resources of the Nixon

White House and the benefits of Williams' personal weaknesses to bolster his campaign. In the interim, Gross has lost a criminal court case and Williams has won increased respect for his position in the Senate. He has a hefty campaign war chest from an odd alliance of backers---Wall Street brokers who "respect" his position as chairman of the Securities Subcommittee of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and union officials who "respect" his position as chairman of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee. Even a losing but respectable race for the moderate Norcross, 38, might boost his political career. Ironically, the man who ran an impressive primary campaign against Gross as a "conservative" alternative in 1970 is now the moderate candidate in the heated race for the GOP nomination in the 7th C.D. James Quaremba, a Ridgewood attorney, has been labeled a party-splitter by conservative James Sheehan, former mayor of Wyckoff. Quaremba is considered the stronger candidate against freshman U.S. Rep. Andrew Maguire (D) in the once strongly Republican district. Just when neighboring U.S. Rep. Henry Helstoski (D-9th) was beginning to look like Sen. Williams for the GOP---tempting but beyond reach---he appears to be vulnerable again. Helstoski has had troubles because a former top aide has been convicted for masterminding an extortion-immigration scheme. Helstoski admits that he met with an underworld informer in order to explore the possibilities of obtaining damaging evidence against government witnesses in the case. According to the informer, Helstoski "said he thought the (witnesses) had unsavory pasts and he wanted me to bring back evidence of it (from Chile). But he also said that if I couldn't find legitimate evidence, I was to bribe local officials to fabricate whatever was needed." Helstoski has denied this part of the conversation and says his tapes of his two conversations with informer Frank Peroff will confirm it. Helstoski himself has been the subject of federal investigation, and in an effort to turn the tables on U.S. Attorney Jonathan Goldstein, has tried to get a House Judiciary subcommittee to investigate the U.S. attorney. Helstoski also pressured the full House to exempt him from appearances before a federal grand jury while the House is in session---in the past he has made eight such appearances in less than two years. Even if indicted, Helstoski would be a formidable candidate. However, former State Sen. Harold C. Hollenbeck, 37, a prominent GOP moderate, might be a formidable match. Hollenbeck considered the race in 1968 and 1972 but though better of it. Criticizing Helstoski's most notable accomplishment in his own campaign announcement, Hollenbeck said, "He answers his mail, but what else does he do?" In southern New Jersey, Republicans also would like to recover the seat lost by U.S. Rep. Charles Sandman, Jr., in 1974. Confronting each other for

the GOP nomination are State Assemblyman James R. Hurley and J. Fred Coldren, whom Sandman brought into the GOP state organization to head his disastrous 1973 gubernatorial campaign. U.S. Rep. William J. Hughes (D) is the 2nd C.D. incumbent.

**PENNSYLVANIA** U.S. Rep. Bill Green (D) appears to have the Democratic Senate nomination tallied up in the April 27 primary, but the Republican Senate contest continues to be a horserace among U.S. Rep. H. John Heinz III, former Philadelphia District Attorney Arlen Specter, and former Philadelphia Evening Bulletin executive editor George Packard. All are attractive, articulate moderates, but Heinz would be the odds-on favorite were it not for the disclosure last December that he had received \$6,000 in contributions from the Gulf Oil Corporation in his earlier congressional races. In later disclosing his net worth of \$1.3 million and income from \$11.3 million in trusts, Heinz said, "I am not in politics for personal financial gain. This is why I ask the people of this state to put the Gulf contribution into the right perspective." Although Heinz's contributions were similar to ones which resulted in a criminal conviction for U.S. Rep. James R. Jones (D-Okla.), the statute of limitations on the offense has now expired. Heinz has denied that he knew of the contributions until last December. Heinz would also have received the endorsement of the State GOP Committee were it not for some adept maneuvering by Philadelphia GOP leader William Meehan, who took Specter's name out of the endorsement contest---thus forcing both Packard and Heinz to withdraw as well. Specter's strength in the Philadelphia area will be offset by Heinz's advantage in western Pennsylvania. Green, meanwhile was supposedly the uninvolved beneficiary of an agreement between Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo and Gov. Milton Shapp, which involved Shapp's backing for ousting the Philadelphia Democratic leader, Rizzo's backing for Shapp's then still active presidential plans, and joint backing of Green for the Senate. That agreement reportedly convinced Pittsburgh Mayor Pete Flaherty (D) to stay out of the Senate race.

**TENNESSEE** The announced retirement of veteran U.S. Rep. Joe Evins (D) in the 4th C.D. has prompted a large selection of candidates to suggest their availability. Two of them have especially prominent relatives: Albert Gore, Jr., a Vanderbilt University law school student whose father was defeated for reelection to the Senate in 1970, and Leslie "Bud" King, a tire company owner whose half-brother is President of the United States. At the western end of the state, freshman U.S. Rep. Harold E. Ford (D) may have jeopardized his reelection chances when columnist Jack Anderson published a column in February detailing the congressman's alleged poverty, high life style, and questionable use

of staff. Among the revelations was the employment of Ford's sister in Ford's Memphis office, where she was paid through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act. Repeatedly mentioned as a possible GOP candidate is State Rep. Brad Martin, a young moderate.

**WEST VIRGINIA** West Virginia Republicans keep waiting "for the other shoe to drop." Actually, there are two shoes. The first is the pending decision by the state Supreme Court on the constitutionality of Republican Gov. Arch Moore, Jr.'s attempted reelection to a third term. The suit was brought by another Republican aspirant for the gubernatorial office. The second shoe is the April 20 trial of Moore and a former top aide for allegedly extorting a \$25,000 election contribution from a businessman seeking a state banking charter. Moore announced his candidacy December 20, the same day he was indicted in federal court. Republicans hope that both shoes will drop before the May 11 primary---allowing them a clear opportunity to either renominate Moore or choose a Republican successor. If Moore is upheld in his contention that the 1970 amendment to the constitution which limits governors to two terms was ratified during his governorship and therefore inapplicable to him, then Moore will assuredly be renominated. If not, then the GOP race boils down to State Commerce Commissioner Ralph D. Albertazzie, 52, a Moore "stand-in," and moderate former Gov. Cecil H. Underwood, 53, who was defeated by Moore in the 1968 gubernatorial primary. Although Albertazzie, a former Air Force One pilot under Richard Nixon, is the designated Moore favorite, Underwood would be favored to win the primary in Moore's absence. The Democratic picture is almost equally confusing. It is nowhere near as clear as that in 1972 when then Secretary of State John D. Rockefeller IV engaged in a well-publicized race against Moore. This time, Rockefeller faces former State Supreme Court Justice James M. Sprouse, who ran unsuccessfully against Moore in 1968; U.S. Rep. Ken Hechler, a maverick Democrat who will draw support for his opposition to stripmining; and Charleston Mayor John G. Hutchinson, who has waged a feisty campaign which has been critical of Rockefeller. With Hechler abandoning the 4th C.D., Republicans feel they have a good chance to pick up the seat behind Steve Goodman, a young former railroad company official. The GOP also hopes to make another concerted effort to regain Moore's old House seat, now occupied by U.S. Rep. Robert Mollohan, who has resisted stiff challenges in the past. The GOP candidate this year will be State Del. John McCuskey, a young attorney and member of a well-known local family.

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Thirdly, the waffling stand taken by these three candidates has cost them potential backing. On the Democratic side some Iowa supporters of Jimmy Carter switched because they felt his abortion stand was too vague. In New York City, a woman resigned from his delegate slate upon learning that Carter has reservations about the Supreme Court decision. In Merrick, Long Island---home of Ellen McCormack---several Henry Jackson people organized an uncommitted, pro-abortion slate so that voters would have a choice. On the Republican side, some Ford supporters who uphold the 1973 decision say that while they will back Ford in the GOP primaries against Reagan, they will not work or vote for him if the Democrats nominate someone less equivocal on the issue.

The argument that a "waffling" position will win Catholic votes is fallacious. Seventy six percent of the Catholics interviewed in the previously-cited Knight-Ridder survey supported the "right of privacy" position. Certainly, many of these Catholics will seek an independent course from the anti-abortion directives of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

While it is still too early to make many sound judgements about the impact of abortion "waffling" on the general election, certain data should be considered. If Ellen McCormack, Ronald Reagan, or George Wallace are independent candidates, they would receive most of the anti-abortion vote. If none of them run independently, then their supporters would certainly pressure the waffling candidates to move toward a strong anti-abortion position. If any should cave in, there would immediately be a counter-reaction. The pro-abortion groups are larger and equally committed and could cost the anti-abortion candidate more votes than he would gain. While there is always the possibility that a Catholic anti-abortion vote could "swing" away from the hard-liners to one of the wafflers, it would not be significant, given the size of Catholic opinion favoring the Supreme Court's decision.

It would appear then that the same pattern of liabilities and advantages are open to the "wafflers" in the fall campaign as in the primaries with a net gain for those unequivocally supporting the Supreme Court decision. An independent candidacy by an anti-abortion candidate would increase the political benefit the Democratic and Republican nominees could reap by a pro-abortion position. And while it is hard to judge the impact of a McCormack, Wallace or Reagan endorsement upon anti-abortion voters in the absence of such an independent candidacy, it would probably not significantly aid the endorsed nominee.

All politicians and their strategists, when analyzing the impact of the abortion issue upon vote-getting, should realize that it is not a traditional, liberal-conservative issue despite the opposition to abortion of such right-wing organizations as the Young Americans for Freedom and the John Birch Society. To assume that an anti-abortion position would automatically mean more conservative votes is fallacious. For belief in an individual's right of choice, free from government intervention and belief in the separation of church and state are classic conservative positions held by many conservative people. They are not going to accept a candidate's position in opposition to their beliefs simply because that candidate labels himself "conservative."

A recent United Nations-funded study by Worldwatch, an international research organization, found that in democratic countries, "abortion liberalization seldom takes place until a solid majority of a population supports it. Once this point is reached, a return to earlier, severely-restrictive conditions is unheard of. Opposition often continues once official action has been taken...But the representative mode of government makes it difficult for a minority, however vocal, to impose its will on a majority."

It is hoped that Gerald Ford, along with any other waffling candidates who might be nominated, will recognize the moral reasons and political benefits for supporting the Supreme Court decision without reservation. The loud haranguing from the right-to-life groups will continue unabated for some time. And even though their position undermines constitutional protections of privacy, they do have the right to their opinions. Only presidential candidates more concerned with what they falsely perceive as political benefit can give the anti-abortion position the stature and respectability it does not deserve and, in so doing, turn the presidential campaign into a brutalizing cacophony of bitter, unreasoned dialogue.

The views of the majority deserve to be respected by aspiring Presidents. On the issue of abortion, the majority wants the government to leave it alone; it wants the protections guaranteed by the Supreme Court to stand. Is it such a small request to ask that Ford, Carter, Jackson, and any other waffler who pops up heed both the Constitution and the people? ■

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Contributor Notes: Tanya Melich is a member of the FORUM Editorial Board. U.S.Rep. Joel Pritchard was president of the Griffin Envelope Co. before his election to Congress in 1972. His article for the FORUM took five days to get from Washington to Boston.

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# COMMENTARY: ABORTION

ABORTION ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

by Tanya Melich

Recent discussion of the abortion issue evokes a disturbing sense of both *deja-vu* and 1984. *Deja-vu* because it conjures up past historic conflicts over the role of the church and state in America, particularly those pertaining to the Catholic Church; 1984 because the thrust of the anti-abortion arguments logically leads one to a time when the state not only tells a woman whether she shall have a baby but whether, when, and with whom she shall have sexual intercourse.

On the basis of the merits of the issue alone, it is disturbing that President Ford---publicly professing to be a philosophical conservative with strong allegiance to the constitutional guarantees separating church and state and protecting individual liberties---could take a stand diametrically opposed to these beliefs. By being against abortion, as defined by the guidelines of the Supreme Court's 1973 decision, the President is favoring government imposition of a particular religious belief upon those not of that religious persuasion and favoring government-dictated morality upon very personal, private behavior. It is a stand favoring the intrusion of government into some of the most vital and private concerns of human beings---both men and women.

It would appear that the President's attack upon the Supreme Court decision was politically motivated, but it is hard to understand what political gains he sought. To repeat a worn phrase, "he cannot out-Reagan Reagan." For those supporting any of the various constitutional amendments banning abortion---both Reagan and George Wallace champion this approach---Ford's suggestion that the decision be left up to the states is a rejection of their viewpoint since it does not advance the cause of total abolition. For those upholding the Supreme Court's position, Ford's stand represents a hypocritical undermining of that decision since a state's rights policy would allow states to greatly restrict or ban abortions.

Ford's position not only alienates those on either side of the issue but represents economic discrimination of the rankest sort, placing him in a position of approving abortions for the affluent, but not for the poor. Such discrimination would occur if a reversion to a state's rights policy, similar to that practiced prior to the 1973 decision, allowed a checkerboard of legal and nonlegal abortion states which would force women from nonlegal states to travel across state lines to receive legal, safe abortions. Inevitably, those with the economic means could afford to make the trips, but the poor could not. Instead, they would again

seek out the illegal abortionist, whose dangerous methods have destroyed the health and lives of women for years. Still, the President has the temerity to describe this policy of political expediency as a "moderate position." There is nothing "moderate" about a policy which heaps hardship upon those least able to help themselves.

The President's style of political "compromise" is typical of congressional decision-making. It is enormously beneficial in resolving policy debates where the elemental resolution depends upon agreement on how to accomplish a goal rather than on what the goal shall be. It is a disastrous approach to governing when the issue at stake is a moral one rooted in the very essence of our constitutional system. There is a time when the President of the United States need to take clear positions---when the issue at hand could, if incorrectly resolved, contradict and undermine the basic philosophical tenets of America's democratic system.

Slavery was such an issue. Abortion is another. Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Henry Jackson have described their positions as moderate ones, but this is not the case. For a position which hampers the true implementation of the Supreme Court decision, as theirs do, is as morally reprehensible for the freedom of human beings as the anti-abortion position is. In a sense this incorrectly-labeled "middle" position is worse since it seeks to establish a false aura of freedom. No matter how they label their positions, the reality is that these three are anti-abortion candidates.

And what are the political results of presenting such contradictory stands. In terms of the pre-convention period, there are few benefits. First, these candidates will not receive the anti-abortion convention and primary vote. It is going to Wallace, Reagan, and the right-to-life candidate, Ellen McCormack. Secondly, numerous public opinion surveys taken over the past three years have found that a substantial majority of Americans support the Supreme Court's decision. According to a recent Knight-Ridder national survey, 80 percent of those polled believe that abortion is none of the government's business and is a private matter between a woman and her doctor. There is little political gain for a candidate in deviating from a position that is held by a majority of the electorate unless the votes of the minority can be won. In this case, the minority adhere to Reagan, Wallace, and McCormack.

# COMMENTARY: GOVERNMENT

CURING POSTAL PROBLEMS

by Joel Pritchard

The regular, efficient, and reliable delivery of mail is essential to the economic and social health of our nation. Unfortunately, the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, which gave birth to the U.S. Postal Service and promises of professional, business leadership, has not lived up to expectations. If anything, the emerging problems of the 1960's now seem ready to overwhelm the postal system, and neither the President nor Congress have initiated any positive proposals to forestall its collapse.

Caught in the middle of the inflation/recession whirlpool, the Postal Service has seen its costs skyrocket and projected mail volume growth blunted. The following table reflects what has happened over the past decade.

All numbers in billions	Ten Years Ago (Mid-1965)	Latest (Mid-1975)
Volume of mail	71.8	89.2
Postal-labor cost	\$3.9	\$10.8
Total operating cost	\$5.2	\$12.7
Postal revenue	\$4.4	\$11.7
Postal deficit	\$0.8	\$1.0

Two other figures need to be added. Total mail volume is actually declining (an historical first) from a peak of slightly over 90 billion pieces in 1974, and the projected deficit for mid-1976 is expected to reach \$1.4 billion. Mail volume over the next five years is projected to fall off to 83 or 84 billion pieces, with little or no recovery prospects.

Postmaster General Benjamin F. Bailar lists some additional problems which bode ill for the future: (1) A substantial portion of postal system costs are not tied into declining mail volume. The number of delivery points, for example, continues to increase as new households are formed and businesses expand. (2) Costs are attributable to the recipients of mail, rather than the senders. Thus, a decline in overall mail volume does not necessarily mean a decline in the number of mail slots which have to be serviced daily. (3) Finally, major efforts over the past five years to boost productivity through increased postal mechanization will soon reach a realistic end. There is only so much one can do mechanically with a letter before someone has to physically deliver it to your door.

Almost everyone now has a mail "horror" story, and the volume of postal complaint let-

ters flowing onto a congressman's desk increases each week. Demagogic attacks will fill the airways this election year, for though the Postal Service employs some 700,000 people (one percent of the nation's labor force), it has no real constituency. It's an easy whipping boy, and we could leave at that if the consequences of a mail system slowdown or shutdown were not so serious to our national health and security. One day's mail delay costs billions of dollars in lost interest and revenue. We simply cannot afford further deterioration; yet, no one seems to be willing to confront the problem with bold new initiatives.

It all goes back to the basic question of whether the delivery of mail should be considered a service or a business. From its inception up until July 1, 1971 (when the U.S. Postal Service came into existence), mail delivery in the United States was not only considered a national service but official chartered as a government monopoly through the private express statutes passed by Congress in 1792. The formalization of the cherished hope of many was accomplished, however, in the four major goals set forth in the Postal Reorganization Act---one of which called for postal revenues to cover postal costs. (The other goals were to provide the American people with good mail service; to charge the public reasonable rates and fees for this service; and to bring wages and working conditions of the postal worker to levels comparable to those of the private sector. Perhaps only the last goals has or will ever be attained. Last year, postal workers averaged \$8.05 per hour, including fringes, compared to \$8.04 an hour for workers in 14 other industries having strong unions and noted for higher wages. In general, the pay increases for postal employees over the past five years have exceeded those for other Civil Service workers.)

According to the General Accounting Office, the Postal Service had revenues of \$35.3 billion in its first four years, but costs of \$43.4 billion, requiring federal subsidies totaling \$6.5 billions. The service's assets, again according to the GAO, exceeded its liabilities by \$1.7 billion in 1971, but by the end of this year, liabilities will exceed assets by \$1.3 billion---a \$3 billion cumulative loss.

Appearing before the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee this past February, James T. Lynn, director of the Office of Management and Budget, stated that while recognizing the Postal Service's failure to achieve a balance of revenue and costs, the Administration

still supported the basic reorganization concept and suggested three alternatives for improving the financial picture: (1) reduce costs, (2) increase rates, (3) a combination of (1) and (2). However, Lynn stated that the Administration would oppose legislation covering postal deficits with general Treasury funds. Said Lynn, "The Postal Service's first priority should be to reduce costs." This is the crux of the issue.

The first priority of the Postal Service is and must be to deliver the mail, promptly, efficiently, and with the greatest care and reliability possible. This does not obviate the need for a thorough review of our whole mail delivery system, nor for a major effort to reduce costs. Our problem today is getting the right mail to the right door in a reasonable time. Returning the post office to the old days of political patronage and influence will accomplish nothing. We must build on the Reorganization Act structure, but change our philosophical direction.

Postmaster General Bailar feels we should also challenge some of our more traditional

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- Lamar Alexander, 1974 GOP gubernatorial candidate in Tennessee, was the March speaker for the Nashville chapter.
- New members of the board of directors of the Chicago chapter include Dennis Allred, Leland Badger, David Ellbogen, Harry Estell, Lola Flamm, Robert Friedlander, Alice Ihrig, Jared Kaplan, Paul Kimball, William Kwan, Barry MacLean, Michael Maibach, Richard Means, Kenneth Padgham, George Polli, Roger Rainville, John Sahn, Don Samuelson, Mary Sfasciotti, Maryann Wiczorek, and Gloria White.
- An address by former U.S. Attorney James R. Thompson, Republican gubernatorial candidate in Illinois, will highlight the annual meeting of the Ripon Society's National Governing Board April 23-25 at the University Club in Chicago. Other speakers will include University of Chicago Professor Arthur B. Laffer on "Economic and the 1976 Election" and Albert E. Jenner, Jr., minority counsel to the House Judiciary Committee during impeachment proceedings.
- In the early history of the Memphis Chapter, Ed Miller, the chapter's first president, was nominated for a position on the County GOP Steering Committee in early 1972. He was op-

posed about the mails, and I would strongly agree. Six-day-a-week home delivery is a luxury which perhaps we can do without. Maintaining endless, inefficient small post offices simply to placate local members of Congress should no longer be tolerated. Recognizing the importance of incentive postage rates would spur business-mail cooperation and provide competition to the rapidly growing private delivery systems.

The Washington Post accurately summed up the situation: "The nation's postal system should be business-like, but it is not a business. It is a basic public service that Americans rely on heavily. Indeed, the services that matter most are often those that make least sense in cost-accounting terms; service to individuals, to small communities, to small businesses and little publications. This does not mean, for instance, every rural post office must be kept open forever if equivalent or better actual service can be provided another way. It does mean that postal communications have to be maintained; the mails simply must go through." ■

posed from the floor, called a "creeping socialist" from the podium, and defeated by over 300 votes. At the convention held in late 1973, Linda Miller was nominated by the nominating committee for a seat on the same steering committee. She was opposed from the floor and won by a 13-vote landslide. At the latest convention in January, 1976, she was nominating for the post of county GOP secretary and was elected without opposition. It is interesting to note that the chairman elected, also without opposition, was Don Sundquist, former Young Republican national president. The question to be pondered is whether the Memphis Chapter is creeping into the Shelby County GOP or the Shelby County GOP is creeping forward?

● Sen. Howard Baker, Jr., and former HEW official John Veneman were the key speakers at the 1976 Ripon Issues Conference in Washington, D.C. February 27-29. Transportation Secretary William Coleman was the guest of honor at an evening reception on Friday. Saturday issues panels included sessions on neighborhood revitalization, the energy crisis, economic regulation, and privacy. Sen. Jacob Javits was the key speaker at a foreign policy panel and columnist Robert Novak was the featured speaker at a Sunday politics panel. Other panel participants included former Federal Trade Commission Chairman Lewis Engman, U.S. Rep. Edward G. Biester, and Morton Halperin.

## RIPON FORUM

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