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*The University of Montana*

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NEWS MANAGEMENT IN THE COMPANY PRESS:  
The Anaconda Copper Mining Company's  
Missoulian, Billings Gazette and Helena  
Independent, Independent-Record, 1938-1944

By

William E. Larson

B.A., University of Montana, 1969

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

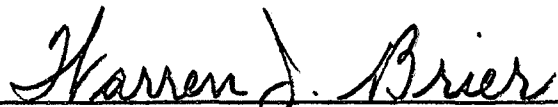
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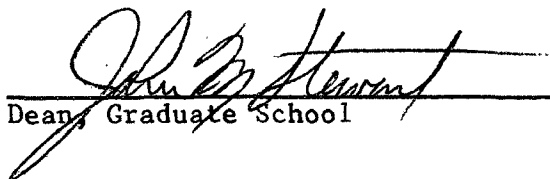
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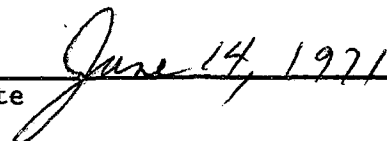
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1971

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## PREFACE

This study of news management in three of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company's daily newspapers was made as a result of a long standing resentment toward the corporation's domination over Montana's politics and economics. Until 1959 part of this domination took the form of ownership or control of a major part of the state's daily and weekly press.<sup>1</sup>

Many people have commented about and investigated various aspects of the mining company's control of the Montana press.<sup>2</sup> Few people, however, have investigated news coverage for a long period of time. This study covers seven years of the three newspapers chosen.

The Missoulian, the Gazette and the Independent-Record were chosen for this study because they represent three regions with different economies. The Missoulian circulated in Missoula county, which voted Republican more often than Democrat and which was the base for the Anaconda Company's lumber operations. The Gazette covered Yellowstone county, which was strongly Republican and which was not a base for any major ACM activity. The Helena paper, the Independent until November, 1943, when it became the Independent-Record, covered Lewis and Clark county and the state capital. Helena's politics varied,

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<sup>1</sup>Oswald Garrison Villard said all but one of the daily newspapers and most of the weeklies showed signs of being owned, controlled or heavily influenced by ACM in his article, "Montana and 'the Company'" in Nation (July 9, 1930), pp. 39-41.

<sup>2</sup>See Ruth James Towe's bibliography to her Master's thesis ("The Lee Newspapers of Montana: The First Three Years, 1959-1961, (Unpublished thesis, University of Montana, 1969)) for an extensive list of materials covering ACM's ownership and the news policies of its newspapers.

often following the party in control of the State House.

Butte's Montana Standard was not chosen because Butte and Silver Bow county voted Democrat despite any attempts by the newspaper to swing elections to Republicans. Miners in Butte supported "Company men" and men opposing ACM who ran on the Democratic ticket. Also Butte residents were in closer contact with ACM during this period than were people in Billings, Helena and Missoula. For these two reasons it was assumed that the Montana Standard had less influence in the area it covered than had the three papers chosen in their areas.

No effort was made to contact people employed by the ACM newspapers or to find evidence of the means used to manage news in the papers. The paper deals only with actual news coverage in an attempt to show that Montanans living in areas served by the three newspapers were deprived of unbiased, objective and complete news coverage by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company. The news pages of the three newspapers stand as proof of this charge.

Appreciation is extended to the members of my thesis committee, Warren Brier, Robert McGiffert and K. Ross Toole, for their aid and their patience, and to Mrs. E. A. Cragholm for helping prepare and for typing the manuscript.

## INTRODUCTION

The title of this thesis presents two conclusions: That between 1938 and 1944 the Anaconda Copper Mining Company (ACM or the Company) owned the Missoulian, the Billings Gazette and the Helena Independent, Independent-Record and that news coverage of certain elections and other events consistently favored one side of an issue or one candidate for office over another.

Company ownership of the three newspapers is the necessary basis for this paper's major thesis, that news was managed. Ownership, then, will be considered first, but briefly.

The Company's influence on the way the three papers presented the news has been called "news management." James Reston of the New York Times originated the term in reference to governmental policies of influencing and controlling news coverage. In this paper the term is used in a similar way. ACM newspapers ignored some news events, printed brief, incomplete reports of others, and in general presented only the Company position concerning any major Montana issue. In election campaigns the same philosophy was seen behind coverage of various candidates; Company men received extensive news coverage but their opponents were ignored, reported only briefly or attacked by the Company press. The news pages of the three newspapers serve as evidence that such one-sided news coverage resulted from a policy followed by the three papers. That policy, whether written or unwritten, was the basis behind news management in the Company press.

The Helena People's Voice, a liberal weekly, was used to find dates for events that the Company press could be expected to either not



report or report with bias. The People's Voice began printing late in 1939. Consequently this paper's analysis of news coverage in the three daily newspapers in 1938 is restricted to that year's primary and general election campaigns, the only events in 1938 for which relevant dates were available.

## CHAPTER I

### OWNERSHIP

Readers of the Missoulian, Billings Gazette and Helena Independent-Record did not see an admission of their daily newspaper's real ownership until June 2, 1959. On that day each newspaper greeted its city with a page-1 "Hello" and announced a change in ownership.

A statement from the Lee Newspaper Group, new owner of the papers, ran beneath the greeting and said that the Anaconda Company (ACM's new corporate title) had sold its newspaper interests in Missoula, Helena, Butte, Anaconda, Livingston and Billings. This was the first admission in any of the newspapers of Company ownership.

The fact that ACM had owned the Missoulian, Gazette, and Independent-Record until 1959 was not news to Montanans. As John M. Schiltz wrote in 1956, "It has never been any real secret that Anaconda owned or controlled certain papers."<sup>1</sup> The Company admitted ownership to the FCC in 1951 but had never admitted it in its own papers.<sup>2</sup>

Until the 1950's proof of ACM ownership was difficult to uncover. Between 1938 and 1944 the People's Voice, unable to find conclusive proof, printed six substantial assertions of Company ownership.

The Helena weekly summarized four times the annual reports issued

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<sup>1</sup>"Montana's Captive Press," Montana Opinion, I (June, 1956), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-7. See also Ruth James Towe's "The Lee Newspapers of Montana: The First Three Years, 1959-1962" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Montana, 1969), pp. 18-20.

by the publishing companies that printed the newspapers.<sup>3</sup> The People's Voice compared the stated capital value of each daily with the acknowledged debts of each. Debts consistently approached or exceeded each firm's capital value. The Independent Publishing Company, printer of the Independent, Independent-Record, led the unprofitable firms, listing debts of \$135,000 to \$226,000 in excess of capital value.

Each time the weekly printed these summaries it asserted that ACM owned the daily newspapers. The People's Voice also asserted that ACM was the creditor for each publishing firm's debts.

The paper called the News Publishing Company, stated owner of 1 per cent or more of the Missoulian, the Gazette and the Independent, Independent-Record and other dailies, an ACM subsidiary in its December 3, 1939 issue. The weekly cited circumstantial evidence supporting its statement but reported no conclusive proof.

On November 19, 1943, the People's Voice reported that Senator James Murray, Democrat from Montana, had told the paper he thought the November, 1943 merger of the Independent and the Montana Record into the Independent-Record was forced on the Company as the result of charges Murray had made before the U.S. Senate. He told the People's Voice he used information from the publishing companies' annual reports as well as other sources.

The weekly reported in full a less substantial assertion of ACM ownership made by Leif Erickson in a campaign speech over the radio on September 19, 1944. The speech appeared in the September 22 People's

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<sup>3</sup>People's Voice, Dec. 6, 1939; March 6, 1942; April 2, 1943, and June 2, 1944, p. 1 each issue.

Voice on page 1. Erickson, an associate justice of the state Supreme Court, was campaigning for election as governor.

These assertions, taken singly or together, were not proof that ACM owned many of the state's daily newspapers. No proof appeared until the Company opened its files to the FCC in 1951 at which time ACM revealed it owned all the Missoulian stock, 72.49 per cent of the Independent-Record stock, and 66.67 per cent of the Gazette stock.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>See Schiltz, "Montana's Captive Press," pp. 5-7 and Towe, "The Lee Newspapers," pp. 18-20.

## CHAPTER II

### NEWS MANAGEMENT DEFINED

The three Company newspapers seldom commented editorially about issues or events in Montana politics or about events adversely affecting the Company and its subsidiaries and corporate allies. The papers took obvious stands on issues and personalities, but in their news pages, not on the editorial page.

The Company press made known its positions by managing news. News of events tending to damage the Company's self-image was buried in brief stories on inside pages of the newspapers when such news was printed at all. More often than not bad news for the Company was not reported.

When it was necessary to refer to an opponent of ACM in order to tell the company's side of an event that was reported, the newspapers usually named the opposing force and then ignored the opposing side of the issue.

During election campaigns candidates favored by the Company received prominent coverage in the Company press. Candidates less favored received less extensive news coverage of their campaigns. Candidates strongly opposed by the Company were either completely ignored or else were attacked by the ACM newspapers.

The Company's attitude toward any candidate for major office could, therefore, be determined by comparing the news coverage given candidates for such office. The newspapers did not report why one candidate would be favored over another, although in some cases the reasons were known to Montanans. To many voters such information would not have

been necessary; it was enough to know who were "Company men" and who were not. By managing campaign news the Company press made apparent which side a major candidate was on.

## CHAPTER III

### THE 1938 ELECTIONS

#### The Important Contests

Because 1938 was not a presidential election year, the important contests in Montana were those for the two congressional positions. The races for chief justice and two associate justice positions on the state Supreme Court were also important in 1938.

The primary election was held July 19. Five candidates competed for the Democratic congressional nomination in the First (Western) District. Incumbent Congressman Jerry J. O'Connell was challenged by Payne Templeton, T. J. Collins, Maggie Hathaway and Eugene Burris. O'Connell won the nomination, defeating his closest opponent, Templeton, by 6,400 votes.

Dr. Jacob Thorkelson, Winfield Page and J. B. Garrison competed for the Republican nomination in O'Connell's district. Thorkelson won the nomination, receiving 1,300 more votes than Page.

In the Second (Eastern) District Democratic Congressman James F. O'Connor was challenged by H. D. Rolph, a Farmer's Union man. O'Connor polled over twice as many votes as Rolph.

The Republican candidates for nomination in the Eastern District were W. C. Husband, T. S. Stockdal and Harry Willard. Husband won the nomination by 1,300 votes over Stockdal and 7,100 votes over Willard.

Candidates for the Supreme Court run on a non-partisan ticket in Montana. Six men campaigned for the two positions on the November ballot for chief justice candidates. This was a write-in campaign in the

primary election because the previous chief justice had died in office too soon before the election to have ballots printed.

Thomas J. Walker, H. A. Johnson, William Cushing, Stanley Felt, T. H. MacDonald and C. J. Dousman were the write-in candidates who received more than 2,500 votes each. Walker won 13,000 votes and H. A. Johnson won 7,500 in the primary election.

Four men would compete for the two associate justice posts in the fall. The six major candidates were ex-governor Samuel V. Stewart, Leif Erickson, Ralph Anderson, Philip O'Donnell, George Hurd and George Howard. Stewart, Erickson, Anderson and O'Donnell won places on the fall ballot.

#### The Primary Election Campaigns

The Independent provided the best news coverage of the 1938 primary election campaigns. Between July 3 and July 19, election day, the Helena paper printed twenty-seven stories concerning the various candidates for nomination to major offices. Of those stories twelve were either straight news stories on the campaigns in general or stories announcing political rallies for the parties, not individual candidates.

The Gazette printed three news stories on the election in general and eight covering the activities of particular candidates.

The Missoulian gave the primary election campaign poor coverage, printing three stories about the election and three concerning particular candidates.

The Helena daily printed fifteen stories reporting the campaign efforts of individual candidates. Three of these covered the campaign of Maggie Hathaway, who was from Helena. Stories reporting Mrs. Hatha-



way's campaign visit to Bozeman were printed July 8 and July 10. The Independent reported the end of Mrs. Hathaway's campaign with a story July 17. All the stories appeared on inside pages.

On July 13 and July 14 the Independent reported Payne Templeton's speeches to the Lions and Rotary clubs in Helena. In his speeches Templeton referred to himself as a political novice and layman.

The paper reported July 17 that T. J. (Ted) Collins was ending his campaign for the Democratic nomination for congressman. Templeton's two stories and Collins' one were printed on inside pages.

The Independent did not cover Eugene Burris' campaign. The Helena paper ignored the campaign of the most likely winner of the Democratic nomination, Congressman Jerry O'Connell, but did report that O'Connell had been refused permission to speak in Jersey City, N.J. This story appeared July 14 under the headline, "O'Connell Assailed By Catholic Clergyman." A Jersey City priest was reported to have called O'Connell a radical and a rabble-rouser.

O'Connell, a certain liberal and possible radical, was disliked by the Company for reasons not reported during the 1938 election campaigns. The Independent's only story on O'Connell in the primary campaign, the July 14 story, cannot be cited as substantial evidence that the Company was conducting an anti-O'Connell campaign in its newspapers, however. No other Democrat received news coverage extensive enough to demonstrate Company favoritism.

The Independent printed one story about a Republican campaigning for the congressional seat in the Western District. On July 13 the paper reported in a two-inch story that Winfield Page was visiting Helena in

the interests of his campaign. Dr. Thorkelson's campaign went unreported.

The Missoulian ignored the campaigns of all eight candidates for congressional nominations. This is evidence of bad reporting, not news management. The Missoulian was caught in a lie, however, when it printed a page-1 headline on July 18: "Quiet Primary Campaign Draws Toward Climax As 44 Seek State Offices," and then reported the day after the election, "The O'Connell-Templeton race was the most strenuous of all the 1938 primary campaigns, and it was the only one which produced verbal pyrotechnics." This sentence appeared in a front-page report of election results.

The Missoula daily covered the campaigns as if they were quiet, ignoring what must have been an interesting contest between O'Connell and Templeton.

The Billings Gazette printed the only front-page news stories on a candidate campaigning in the 1938 primaries. On July 15 and July 17 the Gazette printed news of the campaign of James F. O'Connor on page 1. The July 15 story reported that the congressman had visited Billings the day before. O'Connor's statement to the press was printed in full; it consisted largely of a support of his record. O'Connor's picture was printed on page 2 with the continuation of the front-page story.

The July 17 story reported O'Connor's speech in Miles City supporting water conservation. The story called O'Connor "an enthusiastic water conservationist," showing the Gazette's clear support for the congressman's renomination.

This support was further demonstrated by comparing coverage of O'Connor's campaign to that given his Democratic opponent, H. D. Rolph,

and the three Republicans seeking nomination. There was no comparison; no other candidate for congressional nomination, Democrat or Republican, received news coverage by the Gazette between July 1 and July 19.

All three of the Company papers investigated gave the Supreme Court contests better coverage than the congressional contests, if measured in terms of numbers of stories about individual candidates. However, this coverage was biased and not well balanced among the various candidates.

On July 15 the Gazette printed a story on page 5 with the headline, "Justice Tells Court History/Honest Tribunals are Vital To People, Says Stewart." The story was the text of a speech given by Stewart about the history of the state Supreme Court. Stewart did not mention his candidacy for re-election to the court but the Gazette prefaced his speech with a paragraph reporting that fact and Stewart's two-term service as governor.

On July 18 the Missoulian and the Independent printed Stewart's speech as it had appeared in the Gazette but without the political first paragraph. Both western papers mentioned Stewart's candidacy in a brief sentence at the end of his speech. The Missoula daily, however, included Stewart's photograph with the story and printed the article on that day's sports page, page 2. This Stewart story was the most prominent story on a court candidate to appear in the papers since each of the three papers printed Stewart's entire speech.

The Gazette earlier printed a story reporting that Stewart and Ralph Anderson, who was also campaigning for re-election, were in Billings on a campaign tour of the state. The story appeared July 10 on page 3.

The Independent did not report Stewart's campaign, printing only the one story on the associate justice. The Missoulian, however, reported a visit to Missoula by Stewart in its election day issue, July 19. Because the three papers seldom reported the campaigns of individual candidates on the election day, the Missoulian's July 19 story on Stewart was unusual.

Thomas J. Walker, state senator from Butte, received coverage as extensive as Stewart's. The Gazette announced Walker's candidacy in a page-1 story on July 10. The Independent printed the identical story the same day on page 3 beginning, "Thomas J. Walker, one of Butte's best-known lawyers and most popular citizens . . . ." Walker, obviously, was another Company favorite.

The Gazette announced appearances in Billings of other Supreme Court candidates but always on an inside page in stories no longer than two inches each.

The Independent printed a story of this sort July 13 on page 5 under the headline, "Senator Walker Here In Interest Of His Campaign." Although this was not a story giving Walker good publicity, Walker was clearly the Independent's favorite candidate for Supreme Court chief justice. No other important candidate was covered by the Helena paper with a story as long as this one of Walker's visit.<sup>1</sup> The story ran three inches.

The Missoulian reported Walker's campaign in an eight-inch story

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Justice Goddard, who was not running for the position, announced that he would accept the chief justice nomination if the people voted for him, Independent, p. 5. Few did; he did not finish in the top six vote-getters.

on July 17, page 12. The paper did not report the campaigns of any other candidate for the office.

None of the three papers showed much interest in the 1938 primary campaigns. The two western papers failed to inform their readers about the O'Connell-Templeton race during the campaign. The Missoulian, at least, said that the contest had been interesting but only after all the votes were in. A reader could infer that this was the most exciting race across the state from reading the Gazette's banner headline and the sub-heads that followed it July 20: "O'Connell Holds Lead of 2,000 Votes/Husband Has 2-to-1 Edge Over Stockdal/O'Connor Rolls Up Advantage of 4,000 In Second District." The Billings daily subordinated the contests in its own district to emphasize O'Connell's lead (later victory).

The Gazette cannot be criticized for not covering the O'Connell-Templeton contest, since the race was in the other congressional district. The Missoulian and the Independent can be and should be criticized for their coverage of this race.

All three papers should be faulted for their one-sided coverage of the Supreme Court contests. Stewart and Walker were given the important news coverage; Erickson, O'Donnell, Johnson and Cushing, the closest competitors to Stewart and Walker, were ignored during the primary campaign. The Company press had reported the campaigns of the two men most wanted on the court. The others, whether from Company opposition or indifference, were denied news coverage.

The General Election and the  
Eastern District Congressional Contest

The 1938 general election was held November 8. H. A. Johnson defeated Thomas J. Walker for Supreme Court chief justice by more than 12,000 votes. Samuel V. Stewart and Leif Erickson won the two associate justice positions, Stewart finishing 400 votes ahead of Erickson, who beat Ralph Anderson by 1,400 votes. Philip O'Donnell received 32,900 votes, 15,800 behind Anderson. Obviously the associated justice race was an important, closely contested one.

The hardest fought contest, however, was the Western District congressional race between Democratic Congressman Jerry J. O'Connell and Dr. Jacob Thorkelson, a Republican who did not use his first name. The Company press always referred to Thorkelson as Dr. J. Thorkelson. Thorkelson defeated O'Connell with the aid of the Company press by slightly fewer than 8,000 votes.

The Eastern District contest between Congressman James F. O'Connor and his Republican opponent, W. C. Husband, was the only fall election contest reported fairly and without news management. O'Connor won re-election by 8,800 votes.

Although a few stories on O'Connor, most of them brief press releases, appeared earlier, news coverage of the congressman's campaign began in earnest in mid-October. On October 16 the Gazette reported a speech by O'Connor on party unity and support for the New Deal which O'Connor made in Billings the night before. The story ran on page 6.

Two days later the Gazette covered a speech made in Sidney by Husband. This story was printed on the back page, page 12. In the next

three weeks the Gazette covered the congressional contest with twenty-six stories, sixteen about O'Connor's campaign and ten about Husband's.

The Gazette gave O'Connor a slight advantage in other ways but not in ways discriminatory against Husband. On November 3 the Billings paper printed a story about the congressman's campaign on page 1 under the headline, "O'Connor Sees Rehabilitation Of States Area/Congressman Tells Of Securing Funds For Survey Of Yellowstone River Basin." This was the only story covering the campaigns of either candidate to appear on page 1.

Three times two O'Connor stories appeared in the same day's paper; twice this happened to stories about Husband.<sup>2</sup>

During the final week of the campaign the Gazette printed seven stories on O'Connor, including the page-1 story November 3.<sup>3</sup> In the same period Husband's campaign was covered in four stories.<sup>4</sup> Despite O'Connor's slight advantage, Husband received fair coverage; the coverage of the contest was as fair as possible considering the number of stories printed.

#### The Supreme Court Contests

The three Company newspapers reported the Supreme Court campaigns in a biased manner. Most of the bias and most of the coverage

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<sup>2</sup>Gazette, Oct. 23, pp. 2 and 7; Oct. 26, pp. 3 and 6, and Nov. 2, pp. 5 and 7 (O'Connor). Oct. 29, p. 10 and Nov. 4, pp. 15 and 19 (Husband).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Oct. 30, p. 7; Nov. 2, pp. 5 and 7; Nov. 3, p. 1; Nov. 4, p. 6; Nov. 5, p. 5, and Nov. 6, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Oct. 30, p. 5; Nov. 4, pp. 15 and 19, and Nov. 5, p. 12.

was given to the campaigns of the four associate justice candidates.

The Gazette printed eleven stories on the campaign efforts of court candidates. Erickson, Walker and Johnson were covered with one story each. O'Donnell's campaign was ignored. Justices Stewart and Anderson, however, received eight stories covering their campaigns, four for Anderson, three for Stewart and one for both of them.

The Independent printed three stories for Stewart and one for Anderson. Erickson and O'Donnell were covered in one story that only named them as speakers at a political rally. The Helena paper printed two stories on Walker's campaign for chief justice and one on Johnson's.

The Missoulian printed four stories on Stewart's candidacy and three on Anderson's, one story each on Walker and Johnson and no stories on Erickson or O'Donnell.

Johnson's victory over Walker cannot be attributed to press coverage of the chief justice contest, because news coverage of the race was both slight and balanced.

The Gazette reported November 3 in a story on page 6 that Walker was in Billings campaigning. The next day the Gazette printed similar news about Johnson on page 13.

The Missoulian reported that Walker would deliver a banquet address to law students at the university in a page-14 story October 17. The next day the Missoula paper reported that Johnson had joined Walker as a speaker at the affair. The front-page story summarized Johnson's speech before printing Walker's in full on page 2. Each man spoke on the American system of law and justice, not on his candidacy. Although each was named as a candidate for chief justice, the story on



October 28 was not news of either man's campaign efforts so much as it was news of an important local civic event.

In the second paragraph the October 27 story did earlier mention Walker's candidacy. The Missoulian balanced its coverage of this race October 29 in a page-10 story reporting Johnson's campaign tour of western Montana. Johnson had spoken in Flathead and Lincoln counties, it was reported.

The Helena Independent on October 15 reported that prominent Republican Sam Ford had spoken on behalf of Johnson's candidacy. The page-5 story included Johnson's qualifications, briefly, as they might have appeared in a press release. The story was not a press release, however, since Ford had spoken over a Helena radio station.

The Independent's two stories on Walker's campaign appeared September 23 (page 7) and October 18 (page 10). The first story announced a campaign visit to Helena; the second listed towns where Walker would speak on a campaign tour. Walker's two objectively reported stories balanced the Independent's slightly favorably reported story on Johnson.

The coverage of this race showed a definite shift between the primaries and the general elections. Walker had been favored by the Company press in the spring elections but he was given no advantage in the fall campaign. The Company evidently found both men acceptable.

It was just as evident that the Company favored Stewart and Anderson over Erickson and O'Donnell for the associate justice posts. Together the three ACM papers printed two stories covering the campaigns of Erickson and O'Donnell and nineteen on those of Stewart and

Anderson.

The Gazette ignored O'Donnell's efforts and printed only one story on Erickson. That appeared November 5 on page 5 and reported that Erickson was in Billings on his final campaign tour. The story did not mention any speaking engagements Erickson might have had.

The Missoulian did not report either man's campaign. The Independent did little better, reporting October 22 on page 5 that Erickson and O'Donnell were two of several speakers at a rally. The headline to the story was: "Farm-Labor Speakers To Talk Here Tonight." Erickson and O'Donnell were named in the second paragraph.

The papers would not report campaign news for Erickson and O'Donnell. The Company press fabricated news to publicize the campaigns of Stewart and Anderson.

The Independent gave the least coverage to the two justices. On September 17 the paper printed a three-inch story on page 3 reporting that Stewart had toured eastern Montana and had found farm conditions good there. By October 27 the Helena paper completed its coverage of the associate justice contests.

On that day the Independent printed a story in its news columns that should either have appeared as an editorial or as a paid political advertisement. The headline to the story read: "Stewart Rules On Tax Case Which Will Help Home Owners." The story did not say when he so ruled, how the rest of the court ruled or what effect the property tax decision might have had on corporations. The only information the story revealed was that whoever had written it thought highly of Stewart; the story was written in a congratulatory style.

It was not a news story but a press release.

The Company press printed several such press release-style "news" stories on Stewart and Anderson. That one did not appear in any other paper.

On October 19 the Independent printed a story with the headline, "Judge Stewart Cites Important Decision In Reply to Question." The story purported to be an interview with Stewart but it was obviously a press release framed around a labor-related question. The identical story appeared in the Gazette October 30 and in the Missoulian November 5. Only a press release would be printed with identical working in three papers so many days apart.

On October 20 the Gazette printed the most effusive Stewart press release to appear in the Company press. The page-3 story appeared under the headline, "Stewart Knows Farm Problems/Associate Justice Has Point Of View Of Farmer." The story began:

Sam Stewart's knowledge of farming was gained at the plow and the rake, as well as those well remembered chores at milking time. This foundation, along with eight years as governor, during which time Montana's efforts to reclaim dry land was (sic) first started on a large scale, has kept him well posted and in entire sympathy with the development of Montana's agricultural sympathies. (sic)

Evidently no effort had been made to edit what was obviously a badly written press release. The story presented no news--merely Stewart's affinity for farmers. It was the worst form of campaign coverage--unpaid publicity with no news value. The Missoulian printed this press release November 3 on page 6; it had not been edited.

On October 23 the Missoulian printed another press release for Stewart on page 4 with the headline, "Eight-Hour Law Upheld By Stewart

Opinion." The Gazette printed this one October 26 on page 3 under a different headline, "Stewart Knows Montana Needs/Candidate For Bench Has Lived In State For 40 Years."

The identically worded stories ended, "In every county of the state, Judge Stewart has friends who revere him for his political liberality, fairness and staunch friendship of many, many years." This piece, too, should have been edited if the papers had to print it.

Except for the September 17 Independent story, only one Stewart story was printed that was not a press release. On October 6 the Mis-soulian reported on page 6 that Stewart had spoken to a Kalispell Kiwanis meeting. The press releases in the three papers, outnumbering campaign news, prove that the Company press actively campaigned for Stewart's re-election to a greater degree (judging from the number of campaign news stories printed) than Stewart campaigned for himself.

Ralph Anderson's campaign was reported in news stories more often than was Stewart's. Anderson, however, also received aid from the Company press in the form of press releases.

The Company press paid no attention to Anderson's campaign until the November 8 election was less than three weeks away. On October 20 the Gazette printed a story on page 5 datelined Lewistown, Anderson's home and his state headquarters, with the headline, "Justice Anderson Pens Opinions Of Benefit To 'Little Fellow.'" The story referred to several of Anderson's Supreme Court decisions, listed his qualifications for office and appealed for votes. It was a press release containing nothing of news value.

The identical story under the headline, "Anderson Passes On

Important Questions While Court Member," was the only Anderson story printed by the Independent. It was printed October 21 on page 3.

On October 22 the Missoulian printed a brief campaign news story about Anderson's campaign tour through western Montana. The Gazette reported Anderson's visit in Billings on October 28 but the story read like a press release not related to any news event.

The Gazette reported a radio speech by Anderson on page 6, October 30. The campaign speech was a news event but the story was like Anderson's press releases; the judge reviewed his record and then asked for votes.

On November 1, page 10, the Gazette printed another Anderson press release with the headline, "Anderson Asks Vote On Record/Associate Justice Has Passed On Many Legal Points." The headline accurately summarized the story.

The Missoulian printed the same press release on November 6, page 10, under the headline, "Record In First Term Anderson's Platform Basis."

The most congratulatory Anderson press release was printed in the Missoulian only. It appeared November 1 on page 5 with the headline, "Experience Is Asset Of Judge R. J. Anderson/Twenty Years As Lawyer, Six In Supreme Court For Lewistown Man." The story reported, "According to those who have watched his career, Judge Anderson is a thorough thinker, endowed with admirable common sense, loyalty to the high posts he has won and to the Treasure State."

The Gazette's final news story on the associate justice contests appeared November 6. The story under the headline, "Justice Stops

Here Saturday/Local Attorney Speaks For Stewart And Anderson," incorporated Anderson's campaign visit in Billings with a radio speech by former U.S. Senator H. L. Myers urging the re-election of the two justices.

The next day the Gazette ran a paid advertisement in a news format. The only indication that this was a paid advertisement instead of a freely printed press release was the "paid" identification at the end of the "story." It featured H. L. Myers endorsing Stewart and Anderson and could easily have been printed as a follow-up to the November 6 story. So biased was the Company press coverage of the contests that Gazette readers could not have seen any difference between previous news stories on the two judges and this paid advertisement.

#### The Western District Congressional Contest

On October 30 the Independent printed a news analysis of the Western District congressional campaign between incumbent Democrat Jerry J. O'Connell and Republican Dr. J. Thorkelson. The page-1 story appeared under the headline, "Observers Say Present Political Campaign Is The Dullest In 25 Years," and referred to "veteran newsmen" in Montana to support the contention. This was either an attempt at facetiousness or it was the worst reporting of the campaign.

By October 30 the Independent had printed fifteen campaign news stories and press releases on the campaign of Jacob Thorkelson (always reported as Dr. J. Thorkelson). The Helena paper had printed eight stories in which O'Connell was attacked by someone other than Thorkelson. Many of Thorkelson's campaign speeches attacking O'Connell were summarized or printed that have been counted among the fifteen Thorkelson stories.

The Gazette was to call the O'Connell-Thorkelson race the bitterest of the campaign; the Missoulian was to say that the race was at a fever heat two days before the election.<sup>5</sup> Thorkelson called O'Connell a Communist and implied he was a traitor. O'Connell reportedly cast doubts on Thorkelson's citizenship. Yet the Independent called the campaign dull.

As if to support its contention, the Independent ran only two stories on Thorkelson's campaign between October 31 and November 8, election day. The Helena paper did not restrict its coverage of opposition to O'Connell, however, printing four more stories reporting liberals endorsing Thorkelson and rejecting O'Connell.

Thorkelson, a retired Navy doctor, defeated O'Connell, a liberal first-term Democrat, for the Western District seat in Congress. Thorkelson's victory was made possible by the biased, distorted, discriminatory and inflammatory managed news coverage given the contest by the Company press.

For reasons never reported during the campaign the Company desired O'Connell's defeat and his replacement in the House of Representatives by someone else. (Who that person was to be evidently did not concern the Company, if the Company press' treatment of Thorkelson after 1938 is any indication.)

The Independent's coverage of the "dull" campaign began Sep-

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<sup>5</sup>"Montana Vote Race Is Seen At Fast Pace/Bitterest Fighting Is In First District O'Connell, Thorkelson Congress Race," Gazette, Nov. 6, p. 1. "Montana Political Campaign At Fever Heat As End Nears," Missoulian, Nov. 6, p. 1

tember 25. Beginning that day the Helena paper covered three Democratic rallies at which O'Connell spoke. The congressman was not named in one of these; his name was buried in the other two. The Helena paper printed fourteen stories about O'Connell, all but two expressing someone's opposition to his candidacy.<sup>6</sup> The Independent printed seventeen stories reporting Thorkelson's campaign and endorsements. All of these were favorable to the Republican.

The Missoulian began its coverage of the campaign on September 29 with a story announcing a shift of one man's support from O'Connell to Thorkelson. Between September 29 and November 8 the Missoulian printed stories favorable to Thorkelson's campaign efforts twenty-three times, stories expressing opposition to O'Connell twice and no stories supporting, much less objectively reporting, O'Connell's campaign.

The Independent's September 25 story was a report of a Democratic party meeting and rally in Helena. The meet was reported as if it were a personal rally for Congressman James F. O'Connor under the headline, "Solon Predicts Democrats Will Win In November/Congressman O'Connor Confers With Party Leaders In City." A photograph of O'Connor accompanied the page-5 story. Buried in the story among the names of those who met with O'Connor was the name of Congressman Jerry J. O'Connell. Five names preceded O'Connell's; one name followed his. The paper obscured O'Connell's role in the party meeting and emphasized O'Connor's. If O'Connell could not be placed in an unfavorable light, then

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<sup>6</sup> Many stories expressed support for Thorkelson and opposition to O'Connell to equal degrees. Headlines to such stories were used to categorize them as pro-Thorkelson or anti-O'Connell.



the Independent would keep O'Connell in obscurity.

On September 26 and September 28 the Independent printed page-5 stories announcing Thorkelson speeches in Helena. The speeches were not reported.

On September 29 the Independent and the Missoulian printed stories on inside pages reporting that Dr. Francis E. Townsend, founder of the Townsend old-age pension plan movement, had announced he would not support O'Connell's re-election bid. The Missoulian's headline did not name either candidate, saying instead that Townsend had confirmed reports he would switch his endorsement. The Independent's headline was: "Dr. Townsend Says Flatly He Will Not Back J. O'Connell."

On October 26 Townsend came to Montana to campaign for support for his pension plan and to campaign against O'Connell. The Independent announced Townsend's arrival that day in a page-6 story which repeated Townsend's endorsement of Thorkelson and his denunciation of O'Connell.

The Independent carried the news of Townsend's Helena appearance on page 1 for the next three days. The October 27 story featured a pen-and-ink drawing of Townsend with the caption, "Flays O'Connell." Under the drawing Townsend was quoted as saying that O'Connell was "not the type of man we want in congress."

The front-page stories the next two days previewed and then reported Dr. Townsend's endorsement of Thorkelson. On October 29 the paper reported that Townsend stopped supporting O'Connell because the congressman had stopped supporting the pension plan.

The Missoulian printed the identical story on page 1 that day. The Missoula daily charged O'Connell with trying to destroy the Townsend

National Retirement Plan, carrying the charge in the first bank of the headline. The story did not support the charge. Townsend was reported saying that O'Connell had abandoned the pension plan; no mention was made of attempts to destroy the program.

The papers printed two other types of stories slanted against O'Connell that were not reports of speeches by Thorkelson. The Independent reported October 22 in a headline to a page-5 story: "Thorkelson Charges That O'Connell Coerces W.P.A. Workers To Vote For Him." The story reported that O'Connell's secretary, not O'Connell himself, was accused of coercing the Work Project Administration laborers to promise to vote for the congressman. The story reported that Thorkelson had protested such activity in a wire to Harry Hopkins, head of W.P.A.

The paper did not report any denial of the charges made either by O'Connell or by W.P.A. officials in Helena.

On October 23 the Independent reported on page 1 that the national office of the federal agency promised to investigate the charges. The story reported the Republican candidate's reaction to the response (he was pleased) but did not report O'Connell's reaction. The issue was not again reported, leaving it as a political victory for Thorkelson who had involved O'Connell in a scandal without being touched himself.

On October 26 the Independent reported another reputed O'Connell misdeed. The story ran on page 5 with the headline, "O'Connell Seeks To Oust Penwell From Collector's Office." The story said that O'Connell had accused the state's top Internal Revenue officer of violating the Hatch Act forbidding political activity by federal employees. The story

did not repeat O'Connell's charges verbatim but it did print Collector Penwell's denial of the charge, in effect denying O'Connell's charge.

This story was not followed up, leaving readers in doubt as to which man was lying, O'Connell or Penwell.

The Missoulian did not report either of these issues but did join the Independent in reporting various labor union statements expressing opposition to O'Connell and support for Thorkelson. Most of these came from railroad unions which opposed O'Connell because he had voted against the Railroad Retirement Act in 1937.

The Independent printed five of these stories and the Missoulian printed five; four of them appeared in both papers. On October 13 the Missoulian reported on page 8 that the railroad shopmen's union had endorsed Thorkelson. The Helena paper did not print this story.

On October 27 both papers reported that the railroad union chiefs' group, the Railway Labor Executives association, had endorsed Thorkelson. The Missoulian carried the story on page 1, the Independent on page 12, the back page.

On October 31 both papers printed on inside pages a letter from the railroad clerks' union to Thorkelson headquarters telling why the union endorsed Thorkelson and urged O'Connell's defeat--O'Connell's vote on railroad retirement.

On November 4 the Independent printed on page 1 the news that William Green, AFL president, had urged state federation of labor leaders to oppose O'Connell. The story was attributed to unnamed AFL officials who said Green's request had come two weeks earlier. The Missoula paper printed this story on page 8 that day (November 4).

The next day the papers switched, the Missoulian reporting on page 1 what the Helena paper printed on page 2. The papers reported that Edward Keating, editor of Labor, the rail unions' magazine, had wired Butte's Republican party office, saying that most rail unions were strongly opposed to O'Connell's re-election because he had voted against the retirement law.

The Independent November 6 printed a page-1 story running ten inches that listed other rail unions and rail union leaders who opposed O'Connell. The Missoulian did not print this story.

Each paper ignored O'Connell as much as possible when it could not attack him. On November 2 the Missoulian printed on page 1 a story reporting a Democratic rally in Missoula at which Senator Murray spoke. The story did not mention O'Connell's presence at the rally until the third from the last paragraph on page 3, where the story had been continued. "Jerry O'Connell, candidate for re-election to Congress, spoke briefly," the story said.

On November 4 the Independent printed a page-3 story announcing the final Democratic rally in Helena. The story named Murray as a speaker but did not mention O'Connell. A paid advertisement the next day said that O'Connell would speak at the rally.

The Helena edition of the Company press reported the rally on page 1 November 6 under the headline, "Democrats State Campaign Meeting At Shrine Temple/Candidates Presented By Chairman Bonner At Gathering." The story began, "John W. Bonner, vice chairman of the county central committee presided and introduced the various speakers. Senator James E. Murray, who advocated the election of Congressman Jerry O'Connell, and

the latter were speakers at the gathering last night."

The story had buried the lead (the most important point of the story) beneath a statement about a county vice chairman. This was either bad reporting or news management, most likely the one as the result of the other.

Thorkelson's campaign was covered extensively by both the Independent and the Missoulian. The Helena daily announced Thorkelson speeches on inside pages September 26, September 28, October 6, October 18 and October 21. The Missoula paper did the same October 5, October 8, October 14 and November 4. All other Thorkelson stories, except two in the Missoulian and two in the Independent, that have not been mentioned either reported a speech by Thorkelson or announced a speech on page 1.

On October 4 the Missoulian reported that T. H. MacDonald of Helena spoke over the radio in praise of Thorkelson. On October 15 the Missoula paper printed on page 1 a story announcing the opening of Thorkelson's campaign. A picture of the Republican ran with the story.

The Independent reported October 23 that a club in Dillon had been formed several weeks earlier to work in Thorkelson's campaign. On November 7 the paper reported on page 3 that state party leader E. K. Cheadle was confident of a Thorkelson victory in the election the next day. The rest of Thorkelson's campaign coverage was devoted to reports of his speeches or page-1 campaign news.

The Independent printed two page-1 stories on speeches by Thorkelson, October 15 and October 22. The Missoulian printed three of them, October 16, October 23 and November 3.

The Independent's front-page story October 15 reported a Thorkelson speech at Hamilton in which the candidate criticized O'Connell for saying that Thorkelson lacked a medical degree and was not a U.S. citizen. The story also reported Thorkelson's charge that O'Connell was a "stooge for communism."

The Missoulian on October 16 printed another story on O'Connell's charges about the doctor's citizenship. The front-page story under the headline, "Citizenship Canard Once More Nailed By Dr. Thorkelson," reported that O'Connell had questioned Thorkelson's citizenship in a speech given over KGVO radio in Missoula. The story reported nothing else about O'Connell's speech but it did report that the radio station issued an apology to Thorkelson on seeing his citizenship papers.

The Independent's October 22 front-page story appeared under the headline, "Dr. J. Thorkelson Labels O'Connell Communist At Rousing Political Meet." Thorkelson said the congressman was a "communist Spain" (evidently referring to the losing side in the Spanish civil war).

No doubt a reporter for the Independent covered the speech. The story, however, read like a press release from Thorkelson headquarters, ending,

At the conclusion of his talk, Dr. Thorkelson conducted a short forum. A listener queried him as to his stand on the Townsend plan. Suddenly a spectator shouted: "Who is this fellow asking questions? We want to know."

Thorkelson smiled and said: "He's wearing an O'Connell button, but that's all right. Every man is entitled to his rights."

The story established the doctor as a man of liberal temperament and abiding tolerance. Thorkelson could speak in a different manner, however,

The Missoulian reported on page 1 the next day that Thorkelson said in a speech,

I want to hitch this fellow (O'Connell) to the plow of communism. I want to brand him so everybody will know it, so definitely that no one will wear his button, that it will become an emblem of disgrace.

On November 3 the Missoulian reported a Thorkelson speech in Missoula on page 1. Thorkelson called O'Connell "a weeping child begging for sympathy." The story ended,

In closing he declared that the Roosevelt administration dared not come to O'Connell's aid "because it would be wrapped in the same scarlet blanket as that in which Jerry is enfolded."

On November 8, 8,000 more voters chose Thorkelson than voted for O'Connell. The Company press played on people's fears of Communism and their desire for increased old-age pensions to defeat O'Connell. Union men were exposed to O'Connell's record on labor matters only so far as the one vote against the railroad retirement law. Repeated attacks on O'Connell from these directions contributed to a great, if not precisely determined, extent.

The Company press reported open attacks on only two candidates between 1938 and 1944. The press attacked Jerry O'Connell in 1938 and it attacked Leif Erickson in 1944 when Erickson was the Democratic candidate for governor. Both men lost. Direct attack on opponents was the Company newspapers' strongest and most seldom used weapon. It was also the most reprehensible.

#### The Press' Influence

The Company press undoubtedly influenced the result of the O'Connell-Thorkelson contest. Thomas J. Walker's primary election victory as

a Supreme Court chief justice nominee was possibly another instance of press influence on election results.

In general 1938 was not a year in which every victory and every defeat could be laid onto the workings of the Company press. Jerry O'Connell won nomination in the primaries. The Company opposed him, gave him no press coverage, gave his opponents good press coverage and still O'Connell won. The same was true for Leif Erickson in both the primary and general elections.

The other contests were so evenly and, with the exception of the O'Connor-Husband race, so poorly covered that the Company press cannot be blamed or credited for influencing their results.

The Company press deliberately managed the news of the associate justice and Western District congressional contests. For this the three papers can and should be blamed, despite the resulting stalemate.

Erickson's election made the 1938 elections a stalemate for the Company. The Company got rid of O'Connell only to see another anti-Company liberal reach a high position. It was not an exceptional year for the Company politically.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE 1940 ELECTIONS

#### The Important Contests

In 1940, a presidential election year, Montanans elected a governor, a U.S. senator and two U.S. representatives. With campaigns for these positions to cover, the Company press gave the campaigns for two positions on the state Supreme Court poor coverage.

The primary election was held July 16, 1940. Arthur Lamey and A. E. Kathan challenged Governor Roy E. Ayers for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. Sam C. Ford, C. A. Hauswirth, Julius J. Wuerthner and three other men competed for the Republican nomination.

Governor Ayers was renominated with a 1,250 vote margin over Lamey. Sam C. Ford won the Republican nomination by nearly 2,000 votes over Hauswirth.

Democratic Senator Burton K. Wheeler was opposed in the primary campaign by state Attorney General H. J. Freebourn. Wheeler won the nomination by 47,000 votes.

E. K. Cheadle, L. Ray Carroll and Floyd C. Fluent competed for the Republican nomination for senator. Cheadle won the nomination with over 8,000 more votes than Carroll.

In the First Congressional District Congressman Jacob Thorkelson, Republican, was opposed by former Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin, Winfield Page and W. R. Allen. Miss Rankin won the Republican nomination by 1,900 votes.

Jerry J. O'Connell won the Democratic nomination in the Western District, defeating Hugh Adair by 1,800 votes and Mike Mansfield by 3,700 votes. Rugh Reardon finished last, nearly 6,000 votes behind Mansfield.

Congressman James F. O'Connor, Democrat, ran unopposed in the Eastern District primary campaign. Republicans Melvin Hoiness and William Ruffcorn competed for their party's congressional nomination. Hoiness won by 1,700 votes.

#### The Primary Election Campaigns

Senator Burton K. Wheeler was given the most extensive coverage in the primary election campaigns by the Company press. Most stories covering Wheeler, however, dealt with his announced candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination. Not until late in the primary campaign did stories appear covering Wheeler's campaign for renomination as senator. Wheeler's name, however, was kept before the eyes of Montana voters. His presidential campaign must be considered a part of his renomination campaign for that reason.

Wheeler's opponent, H. J. Freebourn, received no press coverage in the three ACM newspapers. Freebourn was an anti-Company man who was under a federal indictment for income tax evasion during the primary campaign. The attorney general claimed the indictment was a frame-up engineered by ACM.<sup>1</sup>

Wheeler had been a bitter opponent of the Company years earlier.

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<sup>1</sup>People's Voice, Feb. 20, 1940, p. 1.

By 1940, however, the senator had gradually shifted to the Company's side. No single event or series of events has been accepted as a significant turning point in Wheeler's relations with the Company but by 1940 Wheeler and ACM were firm allies.

The Independent indicated as much by printing a front-page story July 8 with the headline, "Mining Association Will Hold Meeting In City Aug. 9-10/C. F. Kelley, Senator B. K. Wheeler To Be Speakers." Wheeler would not appear before the mining industry with Kelley, chairman of the board of ACM, unless Wheeler and the Company were no longer on opposing sides in Montana politics.

Eighteen stories on Wheeler's presidential campaign appeared on page 1 of the three Company newspapers between July 1 and July 16, election day.<sup>2</sup> Many of these, especially as the primary campaign neared election day, connected the senator to Montana voters. All of the stories kept Wheeler's name before voters in the state.

The Independent printed eleven of the eighteen page-1 stories, the Gazette printed five and the Missoulian, which gave all the primary contests poor coverage, printed two.

Between July 1 and July 14 the Independent ran eight page-1 stories featuring Wheeler's national campaign efforts.<sup>3</sup> On July 14 the Helena paper printed a front-page story with the headline, "Wheeler Would Not Take Second Place; Prefers Senate Seat; His Record For Peace."

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<sup>2</sup>Wheeler's presidential campaign began before July 1. This investigation into press coverage of the primary campaign in Montana covered the period July 1-16.

<sup>3</sup>Independent, July 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12, 1940, p. 1 each time.

This story marked the Independent's shift in its treatment of Wheeler; after July 14 he was more the Montana senator and less the presidential candidate.

Wheeler did not visit Montana during the primary campaigns; he did not abandon his presidential aspirations at any point before the Montana primary election, July 16. The July 14 story and the next day's front-page story in the Independent, however, were aimed at Montana voters. If Wheeler would not be nominated presidential candidate, he wanted to remain Montana's senior senator.

The July 15, page-1 story made this clear. Under the headline, "Wheeler's Name To Go Before Convention And Montana Will Back Him," a story appeared telling of the fond regard Wheeler felt for Montanans and of his gratitude to the Montana delegates to the Democratic national convention who would be placing his name in nomination as a favorite son.

The Gazette's five front-page Wheeler stories reported his presidential campaign with no reference to Wheeler's renomination campaign.<sup>4</sup> The page-1 stories on July 13 and July 14, however, reported that Wheeler would support the Democratic ticket no matter who was nominated and that Wheeler's peace plank had been accepted into the party's platform but Wheeler would probably not head the ticket.

The Missoulian printed six stories about Wheeler's national political campaign. On July 3 and July 15 the Missoula paper printed Wheeler stories on page 1. The July 3 story reported that Wheeler had entered the contest for the presidential nomination without waiting for

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<sup>4</sup>Gazette, July 1, 3, 9, 13 and 14, 1940, p. 1 each time.

the President to announce whether he would seek renomination for a third term.

The July 15 story, however, did not report news about Wheeler's activities. Under the headline, "Senator Wheeler Believes in Good Neighbor Policy," the Missoulian printed an AP story written as a background piece. The story reported Wheeler's positions on various policies of Roosevelt and the federal government.

The news feature obviously had been written when Wheeler was a serious contender for the Democratic nomination. By July 15, however, Roosevelt's renomination was certain. By running the piece on the front page, the Missoulian publicized Wheeler to Montanans and promoted his senatorial campaign without specifically reporting it. The promotional nature of this newsless story was enhanced with a photograph of the senator.

The Independent printed the same story July 15 with the headline, "Position Of Senator Wheeler On Leading Policies; Is Opposed To Sending Army To Europe." The Helena paper chose to print the feature on page 2 with no picture of Wheeler. While the story should have appeared earlier, before Roosevelt's renomination was assured, at least the Independent printed it on an inside page. The senator's actions could have been page-1 news; his opinions were not.

The Gazette did not print any press releases from Wheeler but the two western papers did. On July 13 the Missoulian printed a page-2 story about Wheeler's work for a survey project in Montana; the story reminded his constituents of the federal monies Wheeler had brought to the state. On July 14 the Independent called attention to Wheeler's aid

to Montana farmers by printing a press about food stamps on page 5.

The Gazette reported the Democratic senatorial campaign in a slightly more fair manner than the other two papers since it did not print any Wheeler press releases or feature stories on his presidential campaign after he was out of the running for the nomination.

The Company press did not report the campaign fairly to any extent, however, because Wheeler's activities were extensively reported and Freebourn's were not covered with so much as one story.

In only one other contest did any candidate receive wide coverage by the Company press. Governor Roy E. Ayers made headlines two times in the Missoulian, four times in the Gazette and five times in the Independent. Wheeler was the only candidate to be covered on the front page of the Missoulian and the Gazette; the Independent printed three Ayers stories on page 1.<sup>5</sup>

Of Ayers' two opponents for the Democratic nomination, Lamey and Kathan, only Kathan received press coverage in a Company newspaper. On July 12 the Missoulian printed on page 11 a story with the headline, "Candidate Kathan Chief Speaker At Mass Meeting Here." The story competed with political advertisements many times its size.

Lamey's campaign deserved better coverage than Kathan's, rather than no coverage in any paper. Lamey gave Ayers a close contest, losing as he did by only 1,158 votes.

The Company press gave poor coverage to the other primary contests. The Republican candidates for the senatorial nomination, Cheadle,

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<sup>5</sup>Independent, July 3 (campaign speech), July 6 (public service award received) and July 13 (non-campaign speech).

Carroll and Fluent, were denied campaign coverage except for one story about Cheadle.

On July 13 the Gazette printed on page 5 a story reporting that a Cheadle-for-Senator club had been formed in Billings. The story included a brief political biography of Cheadle. The Missoulian and the Independent on July 11 reported that Cheadle had stepped down as head of the Republican party in the state. Neither story, printed on page 1 by the Missoula daily and on page 1 by the Helena paper, mentioned Cheadle's campaign for the nomination for senator. The Missoulian's headline said that Cheadle had retired although he had not retired from politics; he had merely resigned his state party position.

Since Congressman O'Connor ran unopposed, there was no Democratic congressional contest in the primary campaign for the Gazette to report. The paper noticed the Republican contest of one of the two candidates, Melvin Hoiness and William Ruffcorn. The Gazette on July 15 printed a press release from Hoiness announcing the end of his campaign. Ruffcorn's campaign received no mention before election day.

The Western District contests were reported unevenly. The Missoulian and the Independent ignored Congressman Jacob Thorkelson's renomination campaign, giving no reason why the congressman no longer had the Company's support.<sup>6</sup>

In retrospect from 1940 the 1938 coverage of the Thorkelson-

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<sup>6</sup>Thorkelson had exposed himself as an anti-Semite in speeches to Congress. He connected Jews with Communism and supposed Communist threats to America. The Company may have stopped supporting him for this but there is no proof.

O'Connell congressional contest seems to have been designed to defeat O'Connell, not to elect a Company man. If Thorkelson had been a devoted Company man he would have been given press coverage in 1940.

Thorkelson was challenged for renomination by Republicans Jeannette Rankin, Winfield Page and W. R. Allen. Only Miss Rankin received coverage, a paid advertisement disguised as a news story. The "story" was an endorsement printed in a news format but identified as a paid advertisement at the bottom of the page-7, July 2, piece in the Independent. With that apparent exception, the Company press did not report the Western District Republican congressional race.

The Company press printed no mention of Jerry O'Connell's campaign for the Democratic nomination for congressman, continuing the anti-O'Connell policy of 1938. The ACM papers supported Hugh Adair, the lieutenant governor, giving his campaign one story in each of the western papers. The Missoulian reported a visit by Adair to Missoula in a two-inch story on page 5, July 2. A three-inch photograph of Adair accompanied the story, which reported only Adair's candidacy and the campaign appearance.

The Independent reported that Adair would speak in Whitefish in a brief page-5 story on July 6. This story and the Missoulian's were the only ones reporting the Democratic congressional contest in the Western District; the campaigns of Mike Mansfield and Ruth Reardon went unnoticed.

The Gazette reported the Republican contest for the gubernatorial nomination, giving two of the three candidates space in its news pages. The two other papers reported nothing about this campaign.



The Billings daily printed a page-2 story on July 6 reporting that Sam Ford predicted Wendell Willkie would defeat Roosevelt. Ford's name appeared in the headline of the story. On July 11 and July 12 the Gazette printed one-inch stories about a visit to Billings by candidate for governor and Great Falls Mayor Julius J. Wuerthner. Both stories ran on page 3 and the July 12 story identified Wuerthner only as mayor of Great Falls, neglecting to note his campaign for governor.

The primary campaign was poorly covered by the Company press. Wheeler and Ayers received coverage, particularly from the Independent. No other candidate was given significant notice. Wheeler and Ayers were renominated.

In spite of the support, however limited, given Hugh Adair, Jerry O'Connell won the Democratic congressional nomination in the west. He would be opposed by Jeannette Rankin in the fall. E. K. Cheadle won the Republican nomination for the Senate position and Sam C. Ford won that for governor. Congressman O'Connor would face Melvin Hoiness in the general election for Eastern District congressman.

#### The General Election

The three Company newspapers sought to promote voter interest in the general election of 1940 with editorials and front-page stories calling attention to the deadline for voter registration. The Missoulian paid the least attention to the registration deadline, printing only one page-1 story and that one early, September 8.

The Independent printed page-1 stories on September 19 and September 20 announcing that the latter date was the last day for registering. The Gazette printed boxed announcements in bold type from

September 10 until September 20.

The 1940 general election was held November 5. The Company press treated the election as a significant news event as the papers had not done with the primary campaigns.

#### The Senate Contest

The campaign between Senator B. K. Wheeler and Republican nominee E. K. Cheadle for election to the U.S. Senate was covered by the Company press to Wheeler's advantage. The real news of this campaign concerned the absence of both candidates. Cheadle was called to duty as an officer in the federalized Montana National Guard in September and did not return to the state before the elections were held. Wheeler was in the capital working in the Senate and did not come to Montana until November.

Cheadle-for-Senate clubs and Mrs. Cheadle conducted Cheadle's campaign after the candidate was called to active duty. Wheeler conducted his campaign in the pages of the Company press. Wheeler won the election by 113,000 votes.

The Company press began reporting the campaign earlier than usual. The Gazette printed its first story about Wheeler on September 10. The Independent ran its first Wheeler story September 15 and the Missoulian waited until September 21 to print a story about the senator.

Cheadle's coverage began in September and ended in November, as did Wheeler's, but the Republican candidate was not mentioned by any

of the papers in October.

On September 10 the Gazette reported on page 3 a speech Cheadle made in Billings. Three days later the Billings daily reported that Cheadle would be able to campaign no more because he had been activated. The page-10 story said that Cheadle-for-Senate clubs would actively campaign for the candidate.

The Independent reported Cheadle's activation in a page-2 story on September 21 with the headline, "Shelby Bids Farewell To Senate Candidate." The Missoulian noted Cheadle's military service in two stories about Mrs. Cheadle's campaign appearances in Missoula. The stories ran on page 12 September 25 and page 3 September 28.

The Missoulian failed to report any other news about Cheadle's campaign. The Gazette and the Independent printed a letter Cheadle had sent to the papers reporting conditions at the camp where the Montana National Guard was training. The Independent, which reported the letter on page 4 November 3, mentioned Cheadle's candidacy in the third paragraph of its story. The Gazette, printing the letter in a front-page story on November 4, did not note Cheadle's candidacy until the final paragraph.

Wheeler's campaign efforts were reported in two ways by the Company press. Each of the three papers printed Wheeler press releases and stories reporting his activities in the Senate. The papers also carried a running story devoted to the question: When will Wheeler come to Montana?

The Independent gave Wheeler the most coverage of the three papers, reporting his campaign efforts in twenty-four stories between

September 15 and November 4. Nine of them appeared on the front page.

The Gazette printed nineteen stories about Wheeler, seven of them on page 1. The Billings daily printed the first Wheeler story of the campaign; it appeared September 10. The Missoulian printed only nine Wheeler stories and only one on the front page.

The press releases from Wheeler's Washington office were written in a congratulatory style and related the senator's activities on behalf of Montana and the nation. News stories reporting actual occurrences in which Wheeler played part were printed with headlines emphasizing his role.

The Independent printed a Wheeler press release concerning his Senate activities on page 1, October 8. Under the headline, "Senator Wheeler To Begin Defense Investigation On Bottle Neck Elimination," the story began: "Word was received by the Independent last night . . . ." Such a phrase identified a press release at least as well as would a label saying "press release."

References to Wheeler in the story made clear that the piece was a press release. None of them were objective; all were laudatory. One such reference called Wheeler a man "who has fought for strengthening the defense of this country consistently."

Other Wheeler press releases printed by the three papers referred specifically to Wheeler's work for the state of Montana. The Gazette printed one of these on October 22 on page 8 under the headline, "Wheeler Urges Flood Project/Requests Canyon Creek Survey." The story announced Wheeler's intention to establish a federally financed survey project near Billings.

Occasionally news stories by the Associated Press or the United Press reported Wheeler's Senate activities. The Company press seldom printed these stories on page 1 but usually named Wheeler in the headlines.<sup>7</sup> Press releases made the front page more often than AP news stories did. One AP story that did make page 1 appeared in the Gazette on October 8 with the headline, "NLRB Defense Probe Voted/Wheeler Also Backs Production Quiz." Wheeler was not mentioned until page 2, where the story was continued.

The question of Wheeler's return to the state was the subject of stories on page 1 and on inside pages. The story began in the Independent on October 11 with the page-1 headline, "Wheeler Will Return To Montana If Recess Is Taken By Congress."

The Independent on October 18 reported in a page-1 headline, "Sen. Wheeler To Come To State Briefly October 23." This was supported by a page-16 headline October 20: "Senator Wheeler To Leave Capital Today For Campaign Swing."

He did not, however. "Sen. B. K. Wheeler's Visit To Montana Is Delayed Temporarily" the Independent reported on page 1 the next day, October 21. The Gazette announced further changes in Wheeler's plans in a page-12 story on October 29 with the headline, "Wheeler Cites Campaign Plans/No Extended Drive Slated In State."

The Independent did not print that story nor one by the Gazette October 30 announcing that Wheeler would arrive in the state that week.

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<sup>7</sup>The Gazette printed six stories from the AP or UP, one of them on p. 1 (Oct. 8). The Independent printed eight, one on p. 1 (Sept. 24). The Missoulian printed no AP stories.

Both the Gazette and the Missoulian carried the October 30 announcement on page 1.

The Helena daily did report Wheeler's arrival with a page-1 story on November 2 as did the Gazette, which announced Wheeler's campaign appearance in Billings that day. The Independent printed an editorial that day welcoming the senator home to Montana. On November 3 the Independent printed a photograph of Wheeler on page 1 with a one-inch story reporting Wheeler's prediction that the Democrats would sweep the elections. On November 4 both the Gazette and the Independent printed the final Wheeler press release in which the senator said he supported defense measures but not war. Wheeler stayed in his state four days.

Wheeler was popular in Montana. He probably would have won the election without the help of the press. The Company press, however, gave Wheeler publicity and denied Cheadle of publicity and legitimate campaign news coverage.

#### The Governor Contest

Democratic Governor Roy E. Ayers was defeated in his re-election bid by Republican Sam C. Ford. The Missoulian printed twenty-six stories on Governor Ayers' campaign tours, speeches, proclamations and endorsements. Twenty of the stories appeared on page 1. The Gazette printed thirty-seven Ayers stories but ran only six of them on the front page. The Independent printed forty-nine, twenty-seven of them, including a story election day, on page 1. Ayers' coverage began early, September 13 in the Independent and the Missoulian and September 14 in the Gazette. The three stories announced Ayers' speech to the state

Democratic convention: all appeared on page 1.

Press coverage of the 1940 campaign for governor was unusual for beginning so early and for continuing at such a pace (more than one a day in the Independent between October 1 and November 5, election day). Coverage of this campaign, however, was unusual in other ways.

Ayers was obviously the favorite of the Company newspapers. Yet Ford was given considerable coverage by the three dailies. The Missoulian printed ten stories covering Ford's campaign for governor, including a story on page 1, October 31. The Independent did not print any Ford campaign news on page 1 but the paper carried seventeen stories on Ford's campaign, beginning September 15. The Gazette ran three Ford stories on the front page (October 6, 14 and 16). The Billings daily reported stories about Ford's candidacy nineteen times, the first appearing September 29.

The three papers treated Ford's campaign fairly; none of the stories in any paper expressed opposition to or criticism of the Ford campaign. The papers did not ignore Ford; they did not criticize Ford. All three of them reported Ford's campaign. But they supported Ayers.

Reporting the campaign of the Company man's opponent broke one tradition of the Company press. To make clear which candidate the papers supported, one paper had to break another policy of the ACM press. On Sunday, September 15, the Independent ran an editorial, the first of several in the page-12 column, that was unlike any the paper had written for several years.

The editorial praised Governor Roy Ayers. It praised his political speech to the Democratic state convention. It praised Ayers' admini-

stration. A Company daily had commented editorially on a Montana candidate competing in a Montana election campaign. This was news.

The Missoulian and Gazette were not so bold. Neither paper printed an original editorial naming Ayers, much less praising him or his administration. The Missoulian ran several editorials praising Wendell Willkie, however, and they dwelled on making a distinction between New Deal Democrats and "real" Democrats. Such editorials often implied that Montanans were familiar with good, anti-New Deal Democrats within the state.

The references, if indeed they were such, were never clear. Ayers' continual appearance on page 1 of the Missoulian, however, should have provided some clarification.

Readers of the Gazette could easily have been confused. The Billings daily, with five Ayers stories on page 1 and three Ford stories on that page by November 6, wrote no editorials referring, even vaguely, to Montana politicians.

The Independent made the final clarification. On November 3, page 14, the Helena paper printed an original editorial entitled, "A Case Of Producing." This editorial endorsed Ayers for governor. The September 15 editorial, while praising him, had not officially endorsed Ayers. The November 3 editorial did.

Another unusual aspect of the Independent's coverage of the Ayers-Ford contest was the appearance of campaign stories on election day, November 5. The Helena paper printed a story announcing the end of Ayers' campaign on page 1 that day. The conclusion of Ford's campaign was reported on page 5.



For all the coverage it was given, the Ayers-Ford contest appeared to be a dull campaign. Neither candidate leveled serious charges against the other. The only headline to a story about Ford's campaign to arouse interest appeared in the Missoulian on November 4, page 2. "Candidate Ford Answers Campaign Charges" the headline read.<sup>8</sup> In the story Ford denied that he opposed the teachers' retirement law and retail liquor stores.

Ayers campaigned on his record, promising more of the same.<sup>9</sup> The three newspapers made no attempt to distinguish between Ayers' campaign activities and his official acts as governor. Neither did Ayers. "Ayers Posts State Award For Killer" was the page-1 headline of a story in the Missoulian on October 25. The story was straight news about a murder, except for one sentence reporting Ayers' posting of a \$500 reward for the unknown killer. The headline buried the news by emphasizing Ayers' act.

The Independent and the Gazette reported October 27 that Ayers had recommended clemency for a convicted embezzler during a campaign speech in Havre. The convict had been Havre's city clerk. The Helena paper printed the story on page 9. The Gazette ran it on page 2. This was the only campaign story concerning Ayers that was of more than slight interest.

The campaign for governor in 1940 was covered both extensively

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<sup>8</sup>Every story on Ford's campaign reported actual campaign news, either announcing a coming speech or reporting a speech Ford had given. Ayers stories reported endorsements and official acts and proclamations as well as campaign speeches.

<sup>9</sup>Independent, Nov. 5, 1940, p. 1.

and with reasonable fairness. It was the only contest covered both ways in the Company press that year.

Sam Ford defeated the Company favorite, Roy Ayers, and was elected governor for a four-year term. Ford won by a relatively narrow margin of slightly fewer than 5,000 votes. (Nearly 224,000 Montanans voted for one or the other candidate.) Ford lost Yellowstone county, a Republican area, by 456 votes and Lewis and Clark county was less populous than Yellowstone and normally went Democrat. Ford won Republican Missoula county by 376 votes.

#### The Congressional Contests

The congressional contest in the Western District between former Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin, a Republican, and former Congressman Jerry O'Connell, a Democrat, was not covered evenly in the Company press. The two western papers reported Miss Rankin's campaign efforts but extended O'Connell no more than a brief notice.

The Missoulian printed twelve stories about Miss Rankin's campaign. The first one appeared September 13 on page 16 and reported her arrival in Missoula. On September 19 a page-6 story in the Missoulian reported a campaign speech given in Missoula. The last story was printed on page 5, November 1 and announced a campaign tour of the Flathead valley area with which Miss Rankin would end her campaign.

The Missoulian printed nine other stories about Miss Rankin, all of them endorsements by Senator Taft of Ohio, a Republican; William Green, president of the AFL, and three national AFL unions, among others.

The Independent reported no campaign appearances by Miss Rankin

but did print five stories reporting endorsements for the Republican candidate, including one by Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin, a Progressive.

On November 3 the Independent printed a page-2 story about a poll taken by high school students in Montana. The story reported students' choices between Miss Rankin and O'Connell and appeared under the headline, "Choice In Polls."

The story was actually a long identification for a photograph of Miss Rankin that was printed above the results of the poll. The story reported that Miss Rankin defeated her opponent (O'Connell, who was not named in the story) in every city except Butte.

Neither paper gave O'Connell fair coverage. The Independent failed to report a single O'Connell story. The Missoulian mentioned in two stories O'Connell's campaign. Both times O'Connell's name was buried among the names of Democrats scheduled to appear at local party rallies. The paper did not place O'Connell's name in the headline of either story.

Miss Rankin defeated O'Connell to return to Congress after twenty-years' absence.

The Gazette covered the Eastern District Congressional race more evenly than the two western papers covered the contest between O'Connell and Miss Rankin.

The Billings paper placed Republican Melvin Hoiness' name in headlines over campaign stories eleven times between September 13 and October 22, the first day Congressman James O'Connor was named in a headline. On October 15 and October 16 the headlines appeared over

page-1 stories.

However, after O'Connor came to Montana from Washington, D.C., in late October, the balance of coverage shifted. From October 22 to November 1, O'Connor was featured in eight stories that named him in a headline. Hoiness was so reported twice.

On November 1, November 2 and November 3 the Gazette ran similar page-1 stories on each candidate's campaign speeches in the Billings area. Photographs of identical size accompanied each man's story on November 2. The Gazette ended the equal coverage on November 4 when the paper printed a story about O'Connor's campaign on page 2. No Hoiness story was printed November 4.

The Gazette's coverage of the O'Connor-Hoiness race was uneven over definite periods, but not over the campaign as a whole. The Gazette, which had covered the Ayers-Ford contest most fairly of the three papers, gave the Eastern District Congressional race the most evenly balanced coverage of any race reported by the Company press.

O'Connor won re-election to Congress by 35,000 votes but carried Yellowstone county by only 127 votes. Since Billings and Yellowstone county were and are Republican areas, however, the Gazette's balanced coverage of the contest cannot be held responsible for the closeness of the Yellowstone county vote.

#### The Press' Influence

Coverage of the 1940 primary and general election campaigns by the Gazette, the Independent, and Missoulian probably influenced the results of two individual races. Roy E. Ayers won the Democratic gubernatorial nomination by little more than 1,000 votes. Ayers' primary cam-

paign was well publicized by the three newspapers. Arthur F. Lamey's campaign efforts might have been successful if the newspapers had given Lamey any news coverage.

Governor Ayers was not re-elected. Sam C. Ford's campaign against Ayers in the general election received considerable attention from the Company press. It is quite possible that Ayers' victory in the primary elections and his defeat in the fall can be traced in part to the coverage given his opponents by the Company press.

Miss Rankin's victory over O'Connell probably reflected O'Connell's unpopularity outside Butte and Miss Rankin's popular anti-war stand. The Company press did not influence the results of this contest.

## CHAPTER V

### OTHER EVENTS IN 1940 AND 1941

Biased news coverage of election campaigns was only part of the Company press' news management. Other news events, particularly those involving ACM or the Montana Power company, often received unusual coverage. The three papers to varying degrees called special attention to good deeds performed by Anaconda. Wrongdoing by the Company or its power-supplying ally, on the other hand, usually went unreported. On those rare occasions that the news made print the papers buried those stories inimical to either company's interests.

Unions, especially those organized in ACM plants, and officials who opposed the Company became villains in the Company press and were treated like anti-Company candidates during election campaigns.

On February 20, 1940 H. J. Freebourn, Montana's attorney general, was indicted for evading federal income taxes. The Company press, which had never supported Freebourn, reported his indictment with relish. The Independent printed the story on page 1, February 21, under the headline, "Indictment On Tax Count Is Returned Against Freebourn/\$11,000 Payment From Novelty Concern Is Alleged In Case."

The paper reported that Freebourn was charged with failing to report on his 1937 returns \$11,000 paid him by a slot machine owner. The Independent next mentioned the 1938 legislature's attempt to impeach Freebourn for accepting the \$11,000 as a bribe.

On page 2 the Helena paper, continuing the page-1 story, printed a photograph of Freebourn with his hat pulled over one eye. This was

not an official or election campaign photograph. In the photograph Freebourn looked like a gangster.

The paper reported on page 2 that the federal government wanted \$960 from Freebourn, who had escaped impeachment by two votes in 1939. The Independent ended the story saying, "Yesterday Freebourn branded the charges as 'absolutely false.'"

The People's Voice printed Freebourn's entire statement on page 1, February 20. In it Freebourn said ACM was framing him and that the Company had been behind the legislature's impeachment of Freebourn. Failing in that, the Company had engineered the federal indictment, Freebourn said.

Freebourn's trial ended August 29, 1940. The Independent ran page-1 stories on the trial's final days. On August 27 the daily's story reported the government's contention that Freebourn evaded payment on \$11,000. It did not report the sum claimed due, \$960. The story, continued to page 2, noted the history of the charges and the government's case against Freebourn before reporting in the final paragraph that four character witnesses for the defense said Freebourn had a "good" reputation for honesty and integrity (its quotes). The daily then reported that the witnesses for Freebourn were Secretary of State Sam W. Mitchell, Sam D. Boya, Helena, member of the state board of equalization, and T. E. Downey and J. J. Lynch, district judges in Silver Bow county. (Fair reporting would have placed much earlier in the story mention of the presence of such prominent witnesses for Freebourn.)

On August 28 the Independent's front-page story appeared under this headline: "Witness Says He Collected Money From Gamblers For

Freebourn; Case Near End." The story did report testimony showing the witness to be of dubious honesty (he had been arrested and tried for perjury). The Independent reported Freebourn's denial of the man's charge.

The August 29 story again reported the \$11,000 figure and not the amount of taxes wanted paid. This page-1 story, written after the jury had retired, finally reported Freebourn's defense. Freebourn had said he had been offered the bribe but he had refused it.

The jury found Freebourn not guilty. Their verdict did not make page 1 of the Independent. On August 30 the trial story was printed on page 2 with the headline, "Freebourn Freed By Federal Jury On Tax Question/Jurors Cast Twelve Ballots Before Agreement." The story emphasized the charges against Freebourn, summarizing the government's testimony, after briefly reporting the jury's findings.

The August 30 Independent did not report Freebourn's reaction to the verdict or any statement he might have made when the trial ended. Much worse, the paper did not print the verdict story on page 1 after the trial had been page-1 news for three days. A story equal in length to the final story on Freebourn's trial appeared on page 1 of the Independent on August 30 under the headline, "Chemical Found That Turns Gray Hair Dark Again." The Freebourn story's ending had not been favorable to the attorney general's opponents; the Independent, therefore, buried the final episode.

The Gazette reported the trial more fairly but did not carry the story on page 1, as it should have. The Billings paper reported (August 25, page 9) in its first story the \$960 tax payment demanded and



\$11,000 alleged pay off on which the taxes were due. The paper's only serious instance of news management was its failure to fully report Freebourn's denial. The Gazette on August 27, page 7 repeated Freebourn's accusation that the charge was a "frameup" but did not report whom Freebourn accused (its quotes).

The Missoulian did not cover the last days of the trial with daily stories as the two other papers did. The Missoula paper buried all stories on the trial, including the one reporting Freebourn's acquittal (August 30, page 5). This running story deserved better coverage.

On September 29 the Independent printed a page-1 story expressing the Company's fear of federal controls over the price of copper. A two-column headline, "Administration May Deal State Crushing Blow," led into a one-column story datelined Washington, D.C., and a one-column story from Butte. The Washington story, with the headline, "Copper Prices Attacked By Commission/U.S. Defense Body Has Astounding Statement," revealed that "defense commissioner" Leon Henderson said he believed copper prices to be too high. Henderson, a member of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, did not advocate market-wide price controls but he did call for lower prices on copper bought by the federal government for defense purposes.

The headline to the Butte story, "Mine Industry Is Amazed By Crass Policy/Copper Prices Now Low; Wages Sure To Be Hit," was as biased as the story, which attributed the policy recommendation to "President Roosevelt and his advisors." The story said the wage cuts would come because wage rates had been set in relation to the price of

copper at the Butte mines and the ACM mills and smelters. The story expressed ACM's outrage over a potential loss of earnings without naming the Company. The story attempted to make readers think that what was bad for ACM was bad for Montana.

The Missoulian printed the Butte story, which had not come from the Associated Press, without the Washington, D.C. story, which had. Missoula readers of the Company press, therefore, saw only the ACM side of the issue. The September 29, page-5 story was identical to the Independent's Butte story under the headline, "Attack On Copper Prices Amazing To Mining City." The Gazette did not print the story.

The Gazette also did not cover another story affecting ACM's western Montana operations. On October 5 the Missoulian (page 5) and the Independent (page 9, the classified advertisement page that day) reported that the western states' lumber industry faced large-scale federal prosecution for conspiring to fix prices and board sizes of lumber.

The Missoulian story under the headline, "Seven Indictments In Western Lumber Industry Announced," did not report the charges against the industry or the companies and individuals under indictment. The story did list ten states in alphabetical order as the states where the defendants operated.

The Independent was slightly more specific, reporting that seven associations, fifty-three individuals, and one hundred sixty-eight corporations were involved in the anti-trust suits. No defendants were named, the story was buried, and the Montana news in the story was not reported.

The Missoulian failed to follow up its October 5 story. The Independent printed a denial of the charges by one defendant the next day, October 6, on page 14. The Helena paper reported that the Western Pine Association denied all charges; the paper did not identify any member of the group or name the spokesman who issued the denial.

The People's Voice on October 9, 1940, named on page 1 the Montana defendants in the suits. The Anaconda Copper Mining Company and several Missoula firms and officers in those firms were among the western lumbermen indicted. The Company press had again managed news about the Company and its business allies.

On October 6 the Independent printed a piece of ACM good news on page 1. "Anaconda Wage Scale Is To Be Boosted Today" was the headline to a story announcing an automatic wage increase written into the union contract and put into effect when the price of copper had remained above a certain level over a period. The price had stayed above 11½¢ a pound for the unspecified length of time so the workers received their raise, although through the efforts of their contract negotiators and not through ACM's benevolence, as the Independent implied in the lead paragraph.

Both other dailies reported the story that day in a similar manner. At other times the Independent used page 1 for ACM news that the Gazette and the Missoulian carried on an inside page.<sup>1</sup> But whether on

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<sup>1</sup>Sometimes the page-1 story was page-1 news, as on Oct. 26, 1938 when ACM announced the reopening of a Butte mine. The Missoula and Helena dailies properly reported the event on page 1. More often the story did not belong on page 1, as for example a Nov. 4, 1940 page-1 story in the Independent reporting ACM's intention to hold draftees' jobs for them and to carry their company insurance for their period of military service.

page 1 or on an inside page, ACM good news received extensive coverage by the Company press.

In 1941 papers owned by ACM continued managing news in the best interest of the Company and its allies. On January 20, 1941, the Independent and the Gazette printed page-1 stories about a meeting of the Butte Miners Union and the Silver Bow Trades and Labor Council in Helena. The union groups met with other groups and individuals interested in forming a lobby for progressive legislation in the coming Montana legislative session.<sup>2</sup>

"Red Front Is Formed Here With Purpose Of Trying To Influence Legislature" was the Independent's headline to its biased version of the meeting. The "scare" headline technique accurately reflected the style of the story, which began:

Another communist "front" organization was formed here yesterday for the purpose of influencing the Montana legislature and preventing the enactment of any legislation which may tend to unify and strengthen through economic peace. By resolution this group opposed any legislation which may be offered to stamp out sabotage.

The meaning of this lead paragraph came out finally in the sixth paragraph when the Independent reported that the group opposed anti-strike legislation disguised as defense emergency measures.

The second paragraph and other later ones named Montana communist Arvo Fredrickson as the organizer of the session and referred to others attending the meeting as "fellow travellers" (its quotes) of Frederickson's.<sup>3</sup> The story did not mention the two labor groups that did call

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<sup>2</sup> People's Voice, Jan. 22, 1941, p. 1. The Voice emphasized legislation the group supported, rather than the anti-strike legislation it opposed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The story referred to Frederickson as a Communist although style at that time spelled it with a lower case c. He was also called "the Communist Leader."

the meeting. Attendance was summarized:

Farmer representatives were conspicuous by their absence and there were very few representatives of American Federation of Labor unions among the comrades. Participating were some C.I.O. representatives, a few members of the legislature and a full delegation of those who have come to be known as the "radicals of Butte."

On the second page, where the story continued, the Independent admitted that most of the resolutions passed by the group dealt with unemployment compensation. The paper editorialized, "The committee evidently expecting serious unemployment at a time when all industry seems to be begging for help (sic)."

The Gazette's front-page headline read "Form Communist 'Front' Group To Snag Defense/ Helena Session Is Arranged By State Chairman Of Reds" and featured beneath it a photograph of Fredrickson. The story was identical to that printed by the Independent except that the Gazette corrected the Helena paper's grammar, changing "expecting" to "expected."

The Missoulian printed the January 20 story on page 2, emphasizing the resolutions passed at the meeting in the story's headline, not the supposedly Communist nature of the group.

The Gazette's story created an immediate reaction. On January 22 the Billings paper carried on page 1 a story with the headline, "Union Protest 'Red' Program/Laurel Group Balks On Plans Of 'Front.'" The story reported that a CIO union of oil workers protested the affiliation of the state CIO with a group opposed to legislation designed to prevent sabotage and to secure peace in Montana's economy. The story said the Laurel union filed the protest with Sylvester Graham of the state CIO after reading the January 20 Gazette account of the meeting.

The Independent printed a similar story on page 1 that day,

expanding on the Gazette report by including reference to anti-strike legislation. The Billings story did not mention anti-strike legislation, only anti-sabotage laws, in its report of the union's protest. The effect of the Independent's mention of these laws was to place the union in defense of anti-union legislation.

The Missoulian, while printing this story on page 1, January 22, used a smaller headline and ran the Billings version.

All three papers carried regular analyses of proposed legislation offered to the Montana legislature in 1941. One bill they failed to analyze was House Bill 270, which would have made Montana Power pay taxes on the same property valuation used to calculate their customers' rates, thus increasing the power company's state taxes. Another bill, H.B. 360, would have increased Montana Power taxes without forcing the company to accept equal valuation for tax and rate-making purposes. Both bills were killed in the House.

On February 19 the legislative summaries in all three papers reported that H.B. 360 had been defeated. The bill was described as one that would "increase taxes on electrical energy producers." Each paper the next day reported in the legislative calendar the defeat of H.B. 270, described as a bill "requiring utilities to file statements for rate making purposes" by each paper.

Readers of the three papers were never told the real purposes of these two bills. ACM's ally, Montana Power, was protected from the force of public opinion because the uninformed public could have no opinion about such innocuous-sounding legislation.

On May 14, 1941, federal judge James H. Baldwin denied a request

by Broadwater county farmers to use for irrigation water impounded behind Montana Power's Toston dam. A state judge had previously ruled against the farmers and for the power company. These decisions in effect granted Montana Power full ownership of the upper Missouri River since the company's claimed water rights were based upon levels never reached by the river at flood stage, much less regular flow.

None of the papers printed this story although it was a victory for Montana Power. Possibly the Company press did not wish to publicize the fact that the state's major river was privately owned.

The Gazette printed on page 1 the day of Baldwin's decision a story from Helena with the headline, "Private Utilities Said To Be Ample/ Speaker Says West Has Enough Power." The story reported a Lions Club address in Helena by the secretary of Montana Power, S. P. Hogan. The speech and the Billings page-1 coverage of it were no more than public relations gestures on behalf of the utility.

The Independent printed this story with other local news on page 7 that day, May 14. The Missoulian printed no news, good or bad, about Montana Power on May 14.

The coverage of these events, beginning with the indictment and trial of Attorney General Freebourn and ending with the Broadwater-Missouri Association's suit against Montana Power, demonstrates the news-management techniques used by the Company press in 1940-1941. The events investigated were not the only ones receiving biased coverage but they were major events affecting Montana and the corporate powers in the state. Lesser events were similarly reported as a common practice

if the news tended to affect Anaconda's interests and activities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The editorial pages of the three papers seldom commented on Montana issues of any importance in 1941-1942. Exceptions, such as a Gazette editorial on Jan. 21, 1941 concerning anti-strike laws isolated the issue from its Montana context and rendered the issue unto a vague national scene.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE 1942 ELECTIONS

#### The Important Contests

In 1942 Montanans elected a U.S. senator and two U.S. representatives. Democratic Senator James E. Murray ran for re-election. He was opposed in the July 21 primary election by Joseph Monaghan. Murray won renomination by more than 19,000 votes.

Congressman James F. O'Connor, Eastern District Democrat, also won renomination. O'Connor defeated Robert Patterson by 13,000 votes and William McCracken by nearly 22,000 votes. Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin, having voted against war with Japan in 1941, twenty-four years after she had voted against war with Germany, did not seek re-election.

Republicans Wellington D. Rankin, Jeannette's brother and a wealthy rancher, Charles Dawley and Dr. Jacob Thorkelson, former congressman, competed for their party's nomination for senator. Rankin won the nomination with a 15,000-vote margin.

In the Eastern District Republicans F. F. Haynes, Grant Hammond and Byron DeForest sought the congressional nomination. Haynes won, defeating Hammond by 7,500 votes and DeForest by 8,500 votes.

Competing for the Democratic congressional nomination in the First District were Mike Mansfield, former Congressman Jerry O'Connell, John K. Claxton and two others. Mansfield beat O'Connell, his closest competitor, by more than 5,000 votes.

With Congresswoman Rankin not running, the Republicans in the Western District had to select between H. K. Hazelbaker, E. G. Toomey

and Sherman W. Smith. Hazelbaker won the nomination with a margin of only 543 votes more than Toomey.

The general election was held November 3, 1942. Senator Murray won re-election by only 1,032 votes. Congressman O'Connor defeated Haynes by more than 5,000 votes in the east and Mike Mansfield beat Hazelbaker by 14,000 votes in the western congressional contest.

#### The Primary Election Campaigns

On July 19, 1942, the Independent printed a front-page analysis of the primary election campaign with the headline, "Interest Lacking In Elections As Voting Draws Near." This was true of the three Company newspapers, at least.

Between July 1 and July 21 the Missoulian printed two campaign news stories about individual candidates. In the same period the Gazette printed four stories about candidates for major offices--two stories each day on July 4 and July 15. The Gazette's July 19, page-1 election story called the campaign "one of (the) most listless in history."

The Independent, usually the most politically active of the three newspapers, matched the Gazette's coverage of individual candidates with four campaign news stories. The Independent, however, printed one paid advertisement in a news format.

The war contributed to the usual lack of interest in off-year elections. Despite that, the Company press failed badly in covering the primary election campaigns. Candidates traveled in the interests of their campaigns, in spite of travel restrictions. Candidates spoke

at rallies and over the radio. The tours and speeches should have been reported but the Company newspapers showed no desire to do so.

The Missoulian's two campaign stories appeared the same day, July 17. On page 6 a headline announced, "Senator Murray In Brief Trip To This Area/Says Montana To Become Important Strategic Point In War Effort." The story concerned a Missoula interview with the Senator.

On page 7 the Missoula daily printed a story of less length but with the same size headline on Murray's opponent in the primary election, Joseph P. Monaghan. "Monaghan Here In Interests Of Senate Campaign/Candidate Visits Missoula, Will Go To Kalispell In Few Days," said the headline.

The Gazette printed two press releases from Senator Murray's office on page 2, July 4. On July 15 the paper ran its lone story on O'Connor's campaign with the headline, "Urges Farm Help To Keep Jobs/O'Connor On Windup Of Primary Campaign." The story appeared on page 1 beside a photograph of O'Connor. Page 3 featured a small story on O'Connor's major opponent, Robert A. Patterson, with the headline, "Congressional Aspirant Is Visitor In Billings."

The Independent remembered Republican candidates in a page-6 story on July 17. "GOP Candidates Speak At Meet Of Pro-Americans" was the story's headline. Western District Congressional candidates H. K. Hazelbaker, E. G. Toomey, and Sherman W. Smith addressed the meeting. Rankin's Senate nomination campaign was recognized in a page-2 story on July 11 mentioning a meeting of the local Rankin-for-Senator club. The story was one inch long.

The Helena paper reported Murray's campaign with two stories. On

July 4 the Independent printed a press release identical to one of the two carried that day by the Missoulian. The story ran on page 3, was labeled a press release in the lead paragraph, and reported Murray's concern regarding reopening many abandoned silver mines in Montana.

On July 11 a page-1 story in the Independent reported Murray's campaign visit to Helena with a headline form usually reserved for inside pages: "Senator Murray Is Helena Visitor In Campaign Trip." The story, an interview with Murray, ran eight inches on page 1 and continued on page 2 for four inches.

The Company press could not have influenced the results of any of these election contests because the three papers exerted no effort to report the primary campaigns.

#### The General Election

The general election for 1942 was held November 3. The three newspapers warned voters not to be apathetic during the last month of the campaign. This time the Company press was not at fault if voters showed little interest. The papers covered the election campaign well.

In terms of the number of stories reporting their campaigns, the four Congressional candidates received equal coverage by the newspapers in their districts. The Gazette printed seven stories each on O'Connor's and Haynes' campaigns. The Independent reported Mansfield's campaign with eight stories and Hazelbaker's with five. The Missoulian reversed those figures, running eight Hazelbaker stories and five Mansfield stories.

The Independent carried four stories on O'Connor's campaign,

for the benefit of its readers in the Eastern District, evidently. The Helena paper reported Haynes' campaign only once.

In the Senate campaign Wellington D. Rankin received more stories, with forty-six, than Senator James E. Murray, with thirty-seven stories in the three papers. Rankin's campaign coverage was not better publicity than Murray's, however. Six Murray stories made page 1 to only five of Rankin's. Moreover, Rankin's numerical advantage was acquired early in October; after October 15 both Senate candidates received near equal coverage.

In addition to covering the major party candidates, the Company press reported on the candidacies of Socialist Senate candidate E. H. Helterbran,<sup>1</sup> Socialists LaVerne Hamilton and Earl McConnell for Congress,<sup>2</sup> and Prohibition party candidate for Senate Charles R. Miller.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Congressional Contests

The Gazette printed two press releases on O'Connor on page 3, October 4; one was from O'Connor's office and the other from Senator Wheeler's office. Congressman O'Connor was named in the headlines of both stories. The five other O'Connor stories originated in Montana but only one reported a campaign speech.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gazette, Oct. 3, 1942, p. 8; Independent, Oct. 4, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Independent, Oct. 1, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Missoulian, Oct. 15, p. 3 and Oct. 30, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Gazette, Oct. 22, 1942, "O'Connor Opens Campaign Tour/Urges Army Youth Moral Protection" (Lewistown speech), p. 7.

On October 20, page 6, the Billings daily printed a campaign press release from O'Connor's Livingston headquarters. The story reported the Congressman's support for the Roosevelt administration's farm program.

On October 28 a page-5 story announced that O'Connor's son had enlisted in the navy. The story was about Congressman O'Connor, not Seaman O'Connor, however,

The Gazette's final report on O'Connor's campaign appeared on page 3, November 1. The story was another press release and featured an appeal for re-election based on the Congressman's record in office.

The Billings paper printed one O'Connor story on the front page. "O'Connor Praises Move To Hold Labor On U.S. Farms," was the headline to the October 29 story. A photograph of O'Connor accompanied the report of an interview he gave in Billings.

F. F. Haynes, Republican opponent of O'Connor, apparently made more campaign speeches than the Congressman. His campaign coverage in the Gazette consisted of four stories on inside pages reporting speeches,<sup>5</sup> one story announcing his first campaign stop in Billings (October 15, page 3), and two front-page stories on his first major Billings campaign address.

On October 18 the Gazette printed a page-1 story with the headline, "Haynes To Speak Monday Night/Republicans Plan County Gathering." A photograph of Haynes ran beside the story. Two days later, October 20, the speech was reported under the headline, "Haynes Honored At

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<sup>5</sup>Gazette, Oct. 22, p. 3; Oct. 23, p. 5; Nov. 1, p. 6 and Nov. 2, p. 3.

G.O.P. Reception/Congress Aspirant Delivers Address." Quoted statements from Haynes' speech comprised much of the story.

The Gazette gave the men as equal coverage as possible. Haynes' positions were made known through reports of his campaign speeches. O'Connor's positions were recorded in press releases and an interview printed by the paper. Each candidate's photograph appeared on page 1. The Gazette gave neither candidate an advantage.

The Helena Independent gave O'Connor a considerable advantage over Haynes in the paper's coverage of the Eastern District campaign. The Independent printed one of the press releases appearing in the Gazette that day on page 3, October 4. On October 20 the Helena daily printed the same press release carried by the Gazette, but not on the same page as the Billings paper (page 10 Independent). On October 22, page 7, the Independent reported on O'Connor's Lewistown speech the same day as the Gazette and on October 29 the Helena daily printed O'Connor's Billings interview on page 6.

The Independent's lone report of Haynes' campaign appeared October 23 on page 2 and covered a campaign speech reported also in the Gazette that day.

Congressman O'Connor won re-election in 1942, defeating Haynes by 5,000 votes. This result of the Eastern District congressional contest could not have been influenced by the coverage it received in the Company press.

Coverage of the Western District race was similar to the extent that neither Mansfield nor Hazelbaker enjoyed a favored position in the news pages of the Helena Independent and the Missoulian.

The Missoulian printed three stories on Hazelbaker's campaign and five stories on the Republican congressional candidate's speaking tour with Wellington D. Rankin. All either announced or reported speeches by Hazelbaker. Seven of the eight stories were printed on an inside page and all eight appeared between October 22 and 31.<sup>6</sup>

On October 28 the Missoulian printed a page-1 story with the headline, "Rankin, Hazelbaker Featured At Rally," running over two columns. The story, which dealt mostly with Rankin, was Hazelbaker's only mention in a page-1 headline.

The Missoulian's five stories on Mansfield's campaign covered only two appearances by the Democratic congressional candidate. On October 24 (page 10) and October 26 (page 8) the paper announced Mansfield would attend a rally in Missoula and would speak briefly. Senator Murray would be the main speaker at the event. On October 27 the Missoula paper reported the Democratic rally on page 1 with the headline, "Murray, Mansfield Honored At Dinner." The two-column headline, like the story beneath it, placed most emphasis on Murray and the speech he gave.

Mansfield joined Franck C. Walker, Butte native and U.S. Postmaster General, in a Democratic rally in Butte October 28. The Missoulian announced Mansfield's appearance in a page-6 story October 28. Mansfield was named as a speaker in the lead paragraph but was not mentioned in the headline.

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<sup>6</sup>Missoulian, Oct. 22, p. 6; Oct. 24, p. 2; Oct. 25, p. 5; Oct. 26, p. 5; Oct. 27, p. 10; Oct. 29, p. 6 and Oct. 31, p. 2.



"Frank C. Walker Brings Message To His Old Home/Postmaster General, With Mike Mansfield, Speaks At Democratic Rally," was the page-6 headline on October 29 to the story of Walker's speech. Mansfield's speech was noted but not covered in the story.

The Helena Independent covered the Western District contest much differently. On October 9, page 6, the paper reported that "Mansfield Visits Friends In Helena Region." The headline was as large as the story; each was two column-inches.

Mansfield's campaign was reported on the front page before his opponent began receiving coverage by the Helena paper. On October 17 the Independent reported a coming Democratic rally on page 1. Although the two-column headline named neither candidate, the lead paragraph reported that Murray and Mansfield were the principal scheduled speakers.

Not until October 24 did Hazelbaker's campaign receive coverage by the Independent. That day the Helena daily ran page-5 stories on both congressional candidates. The Hazelbaker story reported that William A. Brown of Helena had been named head of the town's Hazelbaker-for-Congress club. A longer story with a larger headline announced Mansfield's second campaign visit to Helena.

Two front-page stories on October 28 named Mansfield in the first paragraph but not in the headline. One story concerned Frank Walker's speech in Butte that night. The other reported that Murray and Mansfield would speak again in Helena in two days.

Hazelbaker's campaign appearances in Augusta and Anaconda were reported in that issue of the Independent on pages 5 and 10. The head-

line of each story named Hazelbaker but the page-5 story was so small a reader could easily not have noticed it.

Mansfield's campaign made page-1 again October 29 in connection with the Decocratic rally planned the next day. Again Mansfield was named in the first paragraph but not in the headline of the story.

Hazelbaker made the headline to a story on page 6 of the Independent on October 29. The headline and story reported campaign speeches by Hazelbaker and Rankin in Butte.

On October 30 the Independent announced in a page-1 story that "~~Murray~~, Mansfield Will Speak At Rally Tonight/Democrats Sponsor Meeting At Civic Center." The headline extended over two columns.

A page-3 story that day with the headline, "Mike Mansfield Is Speaker At Townsend Rally," featured a photograph of the congressional candidate. A headline on page 5 reported: "Hazelbaker Bringing Campaign To Close."

Neither candidate again received coverage in the Independent before election day, November 3.<sup>7</sup> Mansfield was named in the lead paragraph in three front-page stories in the Independent but in a front-page headline only once. His photograph was printed with a news story one time.

Hazelbaker's campaign was not reported on page 1 by the Helena paper. No photograph of the Republican candidate appeared in connection with a news story.

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<sup>7</sup>No Saturday, Oct. 31, 1942, copy of the Helena Independent was included on the microfilm I used for my research.

Mansfield defeated Hazelbaker for the congressional seat from Montana's first district. In an election in which the two incumbents did not win decisive mandates, Mansfield won election by 14,000 votes.

### The Senate Contest

Although coverage of the congressional campaigns mentioned no attacks by any candidate on any other, a few stories in the Senate campaign between incumbent James E. Murray and Republican rancher Wellington D. Rankin did carry charges made by Rankin and denials by Murray.

The Senate campaign began in the three newspapers with stories about Rankin's campaign. The Gazette (page 5) and the Independent (page 3) reported Rankin's campaign opening on October 2. The Missoulian followed the other two papers' lead with a story on October 5, page 2, reporting Rankin's coming speeches in western Montana.

Senator Murray was first mentioned in headlines on October 5 in the Gazette and the Independent. The Missoulian began reporting Murray's re-election efforts on October 15.

The Gazette and the Missoulian covered the Senate contest similarly. Rankin's campaign was reported fifteen times in the Missoula paper and fourteen times in the Gazette. Murray's press releases from Washington, D.C., and his campaign in Montana were covered with ten stories in the Missoulian and nine in the Gazette. The Gazette, however, printed more front-page stories on the campaign (three for Rankin and two for Murray), than the Missoulian (one each).

The Independent gave Murray a slight edge over Rankin in its coverage of the campaign, offsetting to some extent Rankin's advantage

in the Gazette and the Missoulian. The Helena paper printed eighteen stories on Murray's campaign efforts and seventeen on Rankin's campaign. Murray's campaign was covered as page-1 news three times to one front-page story about Rankin's campaign.

The Gazette printed Rankin campaign stories on October 11 (page 10) and October 13 (page 3) that did not feature Rankin criticisms of Murray's performance in the Senate. On October 20 the paper printed a story on page 9 reporting Rankin's objection to Murray's vote on a railroad pension bill.

After its first story on Murray, a press release, the Gazette announced a speech by Murray (October 15, page 5) and printed another press release (October 20, page 5) before Murray returned to Montana to answer Rankin's charges.

On October 21 the Gazette printed two stories on Rankin's campaign. The story on page 2 reported Rankin's attack on the Roosevelt administration's war effort. The story did not refer to Murray specifically. The page-3 story announced a campaign speech to be held in Billings on October 23.

"Senator To Speak At Meet Tonight/Democrats Slate Campaign Dinner" was the headline to a page-1 story on Murray's first campaign appearance in Billings on October 22. The story did not refer to attacks made by Senator Murray. A story on page 2, however, announced in the headline, "Senator Requests Probe Of Alleged Charges Made During Campaign." The story referred to charges that Murray's sons were avoiding service in the military and Murray's formal request that the FBI investigate the charges. Murray did not attribute the charges to Rankin.

A page-7 story that day, October 22, reported that Rankin criticized the administration's sugar policy in a speech at Sidney. Rankin wanted increased use of beets for sugar production. This story reported no charges against Murray. Murray won the contest in the Gazette that day because a photograph of the Senator appeared with the page-1 story in addition to Murray's two stories outnumbering Rankin's one.

In the next eight days Rankin's campaign was reported in seven stories in the Gazette; two stories on a Billings speech appeared on page 1, one with a photograph of the candidate. Rankin apparently did not attack Murray in the Billings speech, stressing winning the war instead.

In five campaign speeches<sup>8</sup> Rankin attacked Murray's record in support of New Deal policies and Murray's supposed abandoning of Montana's interests, agriculture and raw materials. The Republican continued this theme throughout the rest of the campaign.

The Gazette did not report Murray's response to Rankin's charges until October 30. In a page-1 story on October 23 and a page-8 story on October 24 the paper printed summaries of Murray speeches on the Atlantic Charter and on national defense but nothing on Rankin's charges.

On October 30 the headline, "Solon Says Some Confuse Issue/ Murray Cites Family Military Record," reported in summary Murray's reaction to the anonymous charges about his sons (page 8). Murray defended his record in the Senate in a Great Falls speech covered by this story.

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<sup>8</sup>Gazette, Oct. 26, p. 3; Oct. 28, p. 6; Oct. 29, p. 1; Oct. 30, p. 8 and Oct. 31, p. 10.

The Gazette's last day of coverage of the Senate campaign, October 31, was the only day the paper printed a story in which Murray attacked Rankin. The page-2 story with the headline, "Solon Addresses Rally At Helena/Murray Says 'Issues Manufactured,'" reported Murray's charge that Rankin was attacking Murray because Rankin had no program on which to campaign.

The October 31 story by the Gazette on Murray's counter-charges against Rankin was the paper's only one putting Murray in the position of being seriously challenged for re-election. All previous stories on Murray's campaign showed Murray as being unconcerned about Rankin's chance to win the Senate seat.

Murray should have been worried if he was not. He won re-election by only a little more than 1,000 votes, defeating Rankin by 83,673 to 82,641.

The Missoulian to some extent and the Independent to a greater degree balanced Rankin's charges against Murray with larger, more prominently displayed headlines on stories covering Murray's campaign.

The Missoulian's second Murray story appeared on page 2, October 17. The short story merely repeated the large headline, "Senator Murray Returning Soon." On pages 5 and 9 the next day the Missoula daily printed reports of Murray's request for an FBI investigation in regard to charges about his sons' military records and of Murray's request that the gas ration in Montana not be cut.

Two stories reporting Murray's campaign appeared in the Missoulian on October 24; a page-9 story reported the Senator's Billings speech and a page-10 story announced that Murray and Mans-

field would speak in Missoula. The Missoula speech was announced again on October 26, page 8.

The Missoulian printed three more stories on Senator Murray's campaign. The page-1 headline, "Murray, Mansfield Honored At Dinner," and a photograph of the Senator were designed to draw attention to his campaign on October 27. The story ran nearly forty column-inches and reported Murray's vigorous defense of his voting record.

On October 29 the Missoula daily reported a campaign speech by Murray in Lewistown. A six-inch story explained Murray's vote against the Selective Service Act. Murray said he voted against the bill because it did not defer all farmers and miners.

On October 30 the paper printed similarly designed stories on page 8 reporting both Senate candidates' campaigns. The headlines were, "Senator Murray Answers Critics," and "Rankin Continues Campaign Charges." Murray's "positive" headline treatment seemed clearly advantageous to the headline given the Rankin story.

Of the fifteen stories on Rankin's campaign printed by the Missoulian, seven reported attacks on Murray's record. Five stories on inside pages briefly announced or reported Rankin campaign speeches.<sup>9</sup> Two stories, one on October 18, page 8, and the other on October 29, page 6, reported in some length Rankin speeches containing no attacks on Murray. The paper's first story on Rankin's campaign announced his western Montana campaign tour (see page 76).

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<sup>9</sup>Missoulian, Oct. 8, p. 2; Oct. 9, p. 8; Oct. 25, p. 5 (two stories), and Oct. 27, p. 10.

The first five stories reporting campaign charges against Senator Murray detailed Rankin's criticisms.<sup>10</sup> Rankin accused Murray of disregarding Montana's interests in general, of abandoning raw materials, sugar beet, and cattle producers in particular, of forsaking the state completely by promising blanket support to all New Deal programs, of failing to bring defense industries into Montana, and of not supporting the national war effort enough. These stories were usually long (more than 8 inches) but were never given display treatment by the Missoula daily. None of the five appeared on page 1; none featured a two-column headline, and none included a photograph of Rankin. All of them could have been given more prominent display.

On October 28 the Missoulian carried on page 1 a story with the two-column headline, "Rankin, Hazelbaker Featured At Rally." Rankin's photograph accompanied the story on page 1. On page 1 and page 2 the story quoted Rankin charges against Murray's performance. Most of these charges Murray had explained or denied in the Missoulian's page-1 story the day before.

The page-8 Rankin story on October 30 was the last one printed on his campaign by the Missoula daily. Murray's story on the same page ended his campaign in the paper as well.

Rankin's campaign was covered with more and longer stories than Murray's. The Missoulian, however, gave each Senate candidate equal page-1 coverage. In addition Murray stories usually received larger

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<sup>10</sup>Missoulian, Oct. 9, p. 8; Oct. 10, p. 2; Oct. 11, p. 8; Oct. 24, p. 2 and Oct. 26, p. 5.



headlines than the stories deserved. This seemed to be an attempt to balance the Missoulian's coverage of the Senate campaign between Rankin, an extremely active campaigner, and Murray, who traveled less widely and spoke less frequently.

Rankin defeated Murray in Missoula county by 418 votes, a margin not attributable to the Missoula daily's coverage of the campaign.

The Helena Independent did not attempt to balance its coverage of the Senate campaign. The Independent carried three stories on Rankin's campaign before it printed a press release from Murray. The October 2, page 3, Rankin story announced the opening of his campaign, as noted (page 76).

Two Rankin campaign stories were printed in the October 3 issue of the Independent. A story on page 3 reported a speech in Jordan and a page-12 story reported one in Winnett. Neither story included attacks on Murray, although the page-12 story appeared to be a press release. (The lead paragraph mentioned "a large and enthusiastic audience" applauding Rankin with some frequency.)

From the first story concerning Senator Murray, a news release reporting his request that silver be made a strategic metal, thus encouraging the reopening of Montana silver mines, Murray's campaign efforts outnumbered and outbalanced Rankin's in the Independent's news pages.

Rankin campaign speeches, many of them including attacks on Murray, were printed in summary reports twelve times on inside pages by the Helena paper. Many of these stories appeared under headlines much smaller than the stories deserved by the nature of the stories and

by their length.<sup>11</sup>

Murray campaign stories, many of them press releases from Washington reporting his activities on behalf of Montana and the war effort, appeared fourteen times inside the Independent.<sup>12</sup> The press releases, especially, tended to offset Rankin's printed campaign charges.

The Independent printed page-1 stories on October 14 and October 15 reporting Republican Senator Robert Taft's appearance in Helena on behalf of Republican candidates. The first story did not mention Rankin until the bottom of the second paragraph. The October 15 story, which included much of Taft's speech in summary form, did not mention Rankin at all. A paper supporting Rankin would have displayed his name prominently.

The Helena paper performed only one act directly favorable to Rankin. On October 26, page 5, the Independent printed a story reporting that Oregon Senator McNary had endorsed Rankin. The story was actually a political advertisement, probably unpaid.

The Independent printed one story on Rankin's campaign on page 1, November 2. The headline, "Republican Rally Tonight Will Close Lewis And Clark County's 1942 Campaign; Rankin Heads Speakers," covered two columns but was printed in a medium size type. No photograph appeared

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<sup>11</sup>Independent, Oct. 9, p. 7; Oct. 11, p. 16; Oct. 14, p. 3; Oct. 17, p. 12; Oct. 18, p. 12; Oct. 21, p. 3; Oct. 23, p. 3; Oct. 24, p. 3; Oct. 25, p. 16; Oct. 28, p. 10; Oct. 29, p. 6, and Oct. 30, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>Independent, Oct. 10, p. 2; Oct. 11, p. 12; Oct. 13, p. 2; Oct. 16, pp. 3 and 10; Oct. 20, p. 3; Oct. 22, p. 3; Oct. 23, p. 10; Oct. 24, p. 3; Oct. 26, p. 1; Oct. 27, p. 2; Oct. 29, p. 2; Oct. 30, p. 7, and Nov. 1, p. 3.

with the story, which also referred to a Democratic rally the previous Friday. The story was not favorable to Rankin's campaign efforts for those reasons.

Murray's campaign made page-1 of the Independent on October 17 for the first time (although Murray's name did not appear in the headline. This happened again the next day, October 29. All three stories did name Murray in the lead paragraph, however.

The Independent carried a page-1 story October 30 with the headline, "Murray, Mansfield Will Speak At Rally Tonight/ Democrats Sponsor Meeting At Civic Center." A picture of Murray appeared with the story. The Senate campaign was not reported, except for victory predictions issued by the two party chairmen on November 2, in the last three days of the campaign period.

Murray won the contest to return to his Senate seat. The campaign had been well reported but also dully reported. If Murray or Rankin had aroused voter interest about a particular issue, readers of the Company press did not see it in print. The press ran a succession of dull headlines over equally uninteresting stories, giving each candidate good coverage and placing the name of each before the voters. It did not report an interesting campaign.

Voters were not sufficiently interested in the Senate campaign to rush to the polls November 3. In 1942 Murray and Rankin together did not receive as many votes as Senator Wheeler received in 1940.

#### The Press' Influence

The Company press could not have had a decisive influence on any of the major contests in 1942. Taken together the three papers gave the

elections balanced coverage.

The press barely covered the primary election campaigns at all. Poor coverage in 1942 was also well balanced coverage, a rarity in the Company press.

In the general election campaigns the Company press achieved an overall balance. In the Eastern District congressional contest Congressman O'Connor and his opponent F. F. Haynes received equal coverage in the Gazette. In the west the Missoulian's advantage given to Hazelbaker was equaled by the Independent's slight favoritism given Mansfield.

The Gazette's coverage favored Rankin over Murray. The Independent favored Murray over Rankin. And the Missoulian attempted to find a position between the Billings and Helena papers, succeeding on the front page. Overall Rankin's coverage exceeded Murray's in terms of the number of stories about each man reported in the three papers.

The papers were allowed by the Company to show minor level variations in their news coverage of the general election campaigns. ACM let the three papers report the various contests as each saw fit, so long as overall coverage was balanced, it would seem. It is possible, however, that the Company actively controlled coverage to reach the final result--balanced news coverage.

## CHAPTER VII

### OTHER EVENTS IN 1942 AND 1943

The years 1942 and 1943 found ACM being indicted for producing defective field combat wire and cable in two out-of-state wire and cable plants. The Company and Montana Power in 1943 were affected by bills introduced in the Montana Legislature.

The Independent on July 1, 1942, printed a story on page 10 with the headline, "Subsidiary Of Anaconda Co. To Receive Navy 'E.'" The three-column headline and two photographs, two columns wide and four inches deep, drew attention to the award, which was given to ACM's Hastings, N.Y., wire and cable plant.

The story was not important as an example of Company news management, despite the publicity given ACM. It was important because it showed to some extent how Montana newspapers owned by ACM treated good news about ACM wire and cable plants situated far from the state.

On December 21, 1942 an Anaconda wire and cable plant in Marion, Ind., was indicted by the federal government for producing wire which allegedly was defective, for use in combat telephone and telegraph units. Between December 21 and December 31 none of the three Company newspapers reported the indictment.

On January 1, 1943, Senator Murray informed the People's Voice and the Voice informed its readers that he had requested that all ACM contracts for wire and cable be dropped by the government. None of the ACM newspapers printed this story either.

On January 14 another ACM wire and cable plant, this one in

Pawtucket, R.I., was indicted for the same offenses charged against the Marion plant.

The Missoulian did not report this indictment. The Independent and the Gazette, however, printed the story as received from the Associated Press. The AP story appeared in the Gazette January 15 on page 8 under the headline, "Firm Is Indicted By Federal Jury/Charge Cable Was Defective." The Independent ran the story the same day on page 2 with the headline, "Indictment Returned Against Wire Co. In Rhode Island." The story, at the bottom of the page, reported the Marion plant's indictment as well as the one filed against the Rhode Island plant.

The Missoulian did not print the stories about ACM scandals but it did print a story on page 1, January 29, with the headline, "Anaconda Plant Gets Award On War Production/Old-Time Employees Get 'E' Buttons; East Helena, Great Falls Next." The ACM smelter in Anaconda had received the award from the government; the Missoulian wished the smelters in Great Falls and East Helena good luck in winning the award next.

Anaconda company awards were page-1 news. The Company's criminal activities were not. In the Missoulian those activities were not even news worth printing.

On January 26 House Bill 47 passed the Montana House of Representatives. The Missoulian, the Independent, and the Gazette said the bill was one to reduce taxation on "monies and credits from 30 per cent to 7 per cent." On January 29 the People's Voice called this the "Banker's Relief Bill."

The three dailies failed to mention that the bill would reduce

taxes on banks' assets and, therefore, on banks. The papers failed to mention the word "bank" in their legislative calendars. The ACM papers also failed to report that ACM owned a bank in Butte.

The People's Voice reported on February 12 that a bill introduced in the state senate would in effect give Montana's rivers to the Montana Power company. None of the newspapers explained this bill, S.B. 77, to their readers. The Voice reported on February 19 that the bill had been withdrawn.

The Missoulian on February 17 printed a front-page story with the headline, "Governor Vetoes Reduction Of Taxes On Bank Measure." Governor Ford had vetoed the "banker's relief" act.

The Independent printed the story on page 3 with the headline, "Gov. Ford Vetoes House Bill 47." The story said the bill would have reduced from 30 per cent to 15 per cent the value of moneyed capital and shares of banks for taxing purposes.

The act had escaped notice in the Company press until February 17. For several days before, it had been mentioned without explanation as one of many acts yet to be signed into law.

The Gazette continued to obscure the purpose and the importance of the act. The Billings paper reported Ford's veto in a February 17 story on the Montana House of Representatives, burying the story effectively. The Gazette did mention after Ford's veto that the tax reduction measure applied to banks.

On July 9 the People's Voice reported the first verdict in the ACM wire and cable trials. ACM's Marion, Ind. wire and cable subsidiary was convicted of supplying the government with dangerously sub-

standard communications cable. The company was fined \$31,000.

The story should have been printed in every newspaper in Montana. The Missoulian, the Independent and the Gazette did not print it. Readers of those three papers could read about strikes that supposedly damaged the war effort. They could not read about the Company when it did actual damage.

Reporting the other wire and cable trial, the People's Voice on December 31 told its readers that testimony had revealed Anaconda officials in Pawtucket knew they could not adequately test the communications wire they were to produce when the Company won the government contract. The testimony showed that tests of the wire were deliberately fixed to let all wire produced pass because the testing equipment otherwise might have indicated deficiencies in wire actually free of defects.

No testimony from this trial was reported in the Missoulian, Gazette, or Independent-Record.<sup>1</sup> None of the papers reported the Pawtucket ACM conviction revealed by the People's Voice January 28, 1944. The wire and cable company had been fined \$10,000, a mild punishment to the Company. Four Company officials, however, had been sentenced to serve prison terms of less than two years for their part in falsifying tests.

In 1943 and early 1944 the Company press covered up major stories about ACM wrongdoing. The ACM newspapers obscured the purpose of legislation beneficial to the mining company's allied interests in Mon-

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<sup>1</sup>The Independent merged with the Montana Record-Herald in November, 1943. The first Independent-Record was printed November 22.



tana. The papers managed the news in attempts to keep Montanans ignorant of the Company's dark side. The success of the Company press in these efforts cannot be determined. The newspapers undoubtedly were successful to a great extent in the towns they "served."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MONTANA POWER COMPANY IN 1944

Joseph Kinsey Howard's article "The Montana Twins In Trouble?"<sup>1</sup> reported a list of troubles suffered by the Company and Montana Power in 1943 and 1944. Montana Power in 1944 was involved in two major disputes and lost both. Howard reported what happened. The Company press reported only a part of what happened to the utility and distorted most of that in its reports.

On January 4, 1944, a federal judge in San Francisco dismissed an injunction against the state water board. The judge ruled that the injunction, issued by a federal court, was improper because no federal question was involved.

Montana Power was involved. The power company, claiming all the water in the river, had requested the injunction to prevent the Montana Water Board from authorizing use of water behind a dam on the Missouri River above one of the company's power dams. Farmers and ranchers wanted the dam for irrigation. Failing to win the authorization to use one they had built, the irrigationists had requested the use of water behind the Montana Power dam. They lost in that effort as well.

The January 4 decision nullified previous federal court decisions, returning the case to state courts.

On January 5 the Missoulian printed a story in small type under a

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<sup>1</sup>Harper's, September 1944, pp. 334-342, reprinted in the People's Voice, Sept. 22, 1944, p. 3.

small headline, "No Federal Question." The two-inch, page-2 story reported only that a federal judge in San Francisco had nullified the injunction against the water board. No other information was given except to say that the injunction stemmed from the water board's proposal to build a dam on the Missouri "above one of the seven dams operated by the Montana Power company." The story appeared in the Missoulian's "Western Montana Events" section among reports of small town events.

The Gazette printed the identical story January 5 on page 9, the classified advertisement page. The Gazette's headline was as cryptic as the Missoulian's. It, too, was a label headline, "Nullify Injunction." The Independent-Record of Helena did not print the story. Helena was the closest sizable town to the Missouri River section the irrigationists wanted to use.

The Company press buried this story or did not report it. Montana Power had lost a court case, the repercussions of which could have had a major impact on the state. The utility's virtual ownership of the Missouri River had been overturned. Every Montanan should have been informed but those served by the Company press were not.

On January 7, page 6, the Missoulian announced in a headline, "Power Company Book Values To Be Reviewed." The story reported a hearing scheduled for January 31 in Washington, D.C., before the Federal Power Commission. Montana Power was to show cause for not reducing "the book cost of its properties."

The other two papers did not print that story. None of the newspapers reported two postponements and a change in the location of the hearings from Washington to Butte.

The Montana Power company hearings began in Butte March 17 and ended May 12. They were held before Federal Power Commission trial examiner Edward Marsh and members of the Montana Railroad and Public Service Commission.

The utility company had been served with a show-cause order directing it to explain why the FPC's report of the company's accounts should not be used by the company. The FPC report placed \$50.6 million in an account, no. 107, used as a stopover for items to be written off the books.

The federal commission contended that the \$50.6 million represented the difference between real costs borne by Montana Power and the company's inflated valuation of those costs.

The Montana Power company had been organized in 1912 and 1913 in two major steps. The first step was the consolidation of many single-plant power firms into the Butte Electric Light and Power Company. John D. Ryan, chairman of the board of directors of ACM and the largest stockholder in Butte Electric, directed this merger.

In 1908 Ryan bought a dam and several potential sites for dams near Great Falls from James J. Hill, builder of the Great Northern railroad. In 1909 Ryan sold half interest in the Great Falls properties to Butte Electric. The second step in the formation of Montana Power occurred in 1913 when Ryan sold the other half interest in the Great Falls sites and a power site at Thompson Falls, to which he had secured title the day before, to Butte Electric, renamed Montana Power.

Four shares of Montana Power common stock (\$100 par value) were issued for every share of Butte Electric stock (\$100 par value) after the

Butte Electric consolidation and before the final deal with Ryan. The FPC contended that Ryan and the other Butte Electric directors watered the Montana Power stock in this transaction since the properties owned by Butte Electric were worth no more when owned by Montana Power but Butte Electric stock was worth four times Montana Power stock. The directors of Butte Electric made paper profits of 400 per cent by turning in their Butte Electric common stock for shares of Montana Power.

The FPC wanted this transaction corrected by having Montana Power carry Butte Electric's purchase and development costs of the plants as the original cost in the accounts. Montana Power argued that the four-fold increase in the valuation of the Butte Electric properties, made necessary by the stock transfer, represented a real cost that should be carried on the books of Montana Power.

The FPC also wanted Montana Power to carry Ryan's costs of the Great Falls and Thompson Falls properties as the real original cost to Montana Power. The federal commission said that since Ryan was both the controlling influence in Butte Electric and the owner of the properties Butte Electric bought, the transactions had not been at arm's length.

Montana Power denied this, claiming that Ryan acted only as seller and not as both buyer and seller. Ryan's 22.5 million dollar profits in the final transaction, the utility held, came from Ryan's skillful bargaining. The power company played down Ryan's part as a director, soon to be president, of Butte Electric/Montana Power.

Trial examiner Ed Marsh and attorneys Reuben Goldberg and Howard Wahrenbrock represented the FPC at the Butte hearings. Austin B. Middleton, Leonard Young, and Paul T. Smith were the Montana public service

commissioners. Enor K. Matson was attorney for the Montana commission.

Attorneys John E. Corette, Jr., John Hauck, Kendrick Smith (Middleton's son-in-law), and R. L. Glover represented the Montana Power company.

Both commissions allowed Montana Power stockholders who feared the hearings would lower the stock's value to intervene in the hearings. A. J. G. Priest was the attorney for American Power and Light, which owned 99.75 per cent of Montana Power's common stock. E. J. Strommes, E. G. Toomey, Howard Toole, William Meyer, and Arthur Lamey represented Montana owners of \$6 preferred Montana Power stock who had assessed themselves \$.25 each at the request of Montana Power.

Montanans should have been informed of the FPC's charges against Montana Power. The Company press reported only the utility's side of the case whenever possible. Occasionally witnesses for the power company revealed parts of the FPC's argument. Occasionally the newspapers printed the FPC's case on a particular point in order to print Montana Power's argument against the FPC. The three newspapers did not report in full the FPC position when the hearings began or when they ended. Montana Power's position was printed when the hearings closed.

Electric rates charged by Montana Power were set by the public service commission and were based on the capital worth of the company. If the utility was overcapitalized by \$50.6 million, as the FPC charged, customers of the power company could demand greatly reduced power rates. None of the three ACM papers made this clear; the papers did not report the connection between the accounting hearings and a Montana Power customer's monthly bill. Readers of Company newspapers were kept ignorant

of the real news about the hearings.

The Missoulian printed nine stories on the hearings, none on page 1. The first appeared March 29 on page 5 with the headline, "Accounting Case At Butte Continues" (a strange headline for a first reference). The story reported that the federal and state commissions disagreed on admitting evidence regarding the future for power production as seen in 1912. The FPC disallowed the testimony given by C. F. Kelley, who said expectations for great increases in power demands were more than justified over the years.<sup>2</sup> The Montana regulatory agency admitted Kelley's testimony.

The Missoulian in this story did not identify Kelley. Cornelius (Con) Kelley in 1944 was chairman of the board of ACM. In 1912 he was employed as an attorney for the Company and as John D. Ryan's personal attorney. As such he was involved in the legal aspects of Montana Power's formation.

In the next week the Missoulian printed two stories covering the hearings. The six-inch stories March 31 and April 4 were the longest stories printed by the Missoula daily. The paper noted the existence of the hearings; it did not cover them.

The other two papers reported the hearings, or at least Montana Power's side of the hearings, in great length. The Independent-Record printed two stories a day and over the first weekend it printed three stories when hearings were not in session.

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<sup>2</sup>The FPC contended that all post-1913 developments were immaterial.

From March 29 to April 1 and from April 4 to 6 the Independent-Record printed page-1 reports on the hearings issued by the Associated Press and page-2 or page-3 stories written by a correspondent. The non-AP stories were more biased than those from the AP though the AP-affiliated daily in Butte producing the stories sent by the press service was also a Company paper, either the Montana Standard or the Butte Post.

The Gazette covered the hearings with 30 stories, all of them from the AP. Gazette stories often were worded exactly the same as Independent-Record stories and were usually printed a day later than similar stories in the Helena daily.

The Independent-Record reported the hearings on page 1 eight times. The Gazette printed fifteen front-page stories covering the hearings, keeping the running story on page 1 until April 13. The Helena paper moved the story off page 1 April 5.

The best example of the biased reporting of the hearings done by the Company press comes from a page-1 AP story printed by the Independent-Record March 31 under the headline, "Basic Property Value Of Power Holdings Stressed By Kelley/Men Who Organized And Developed Early-Day Power Potentialities Of Montana Laid Foundation Of Service To Mankind." The lead paragraphs were?

All the petty questions and suspicions as to what was in the minds of the men who organized the great power possibilities and potentialities of Montana were answered today by C. F. Kelley, chairman of the board of directors of the Anaconda Copper Mining company, in the hearing before the examiner of the federal power commission over the Montana Power Company's accounting methods.

There wasn't any sordid or petty thought in the minds of these men. They realized that they were dealing with tremendous resources, that they were laying the foundations of a great service to mankind.



The story reported Kelley's version of the founding of Montana Power before saying, "This statement was made piece-meal in answer to numerous questions. But Mr. Kelley gave the formula on which all enterprise and all success in the west has been built."

The Gazette's page-1 story April 1 included the two quoted paragraphs but they were not the lead of the story.

The Independent-Record's own (non-AP) story that day included similarly biased reporting. The page-3 story with the headline, "C. F. Kelley Returns To Witness Stand To Review Early Developments In Montana Power Company Origin," contained this sentence:

Because John D. Ryan had bought with Mrs. Marcus Daly a broken down electric light and street car company in Great Falls in 1903 and later assumed the presidency of that concern, Attorney Goldberg sought to show that Mr. Ryan was a "public utility man" before he took over from the Hill interests the vast Great Falls power sites on the Missouri river.

The Gazette printed this sentence in its page-1 story the same day. The story under the headline, "Questions Argued At Power Hearing," carried an AP sign.

The Independent-Record's own page-3 story April 6 with the headline, "C. F. Kelley Concludes His Testimony On Development Of Power Firm Properties At Hearing In Butte," began: "There was fair dealing, arm's length dealing throughout . . . and all bargains which were struck were eminently fair." The second paragraph of the story reported that this in effect had been Kelley's concluding testimony.

The Gazette edited the quoted statement from its April 6, page-1, story.

The Helena paper usually ended its stories with favorable, or

at least highly quotable, testimony from a Montana Power witness. One example appeared in the paper April 11 on page 2 under the headline, "Henry Horne Continues Testifying During Cross-Examination in Montana Power Company Hearing." Horne, chairman of an American Institute of Accountants committee on public utility accounting, had defended valuations that included such "intangible values" as good internal company organization, good management, good employee relations, and a good public service record.

The Independent-Record ended the story quoting Horne, "'Light and power service is going to go on as long as civilization endures,' he stated, 'so we presume a continuation of the intangible values of utility companies.'"

Over the course of seven weeks a reader of the Company newspapers could determine what the FPC tried to prove in regard to the early history of Montana Power and why the hearings were held. But a reader could not uncover the whole story.

In a page-1 story March 29 the Independent-Record reported that the hearings were "affecting in large part the disposition of capital sums described as the difference between original cost of properties acquired and the price paid for them by the Montana Power company."

The story said the difference could be placed in account no. 100.5 or in account no. 107. If placed in no. 100.5 the items could be carried indefinitely if the regulatory body considered the items to have continuing value.

Items placed in no. 107 "disappear quickly from the assets of the corporation and from its capital structure," the story said. Further

on in the story it was noted that write-up and other fictitious costs would be placed in no. 107.

The Independent-Record did not mention that the FPC wanted more than \$50 million written from the books of the power company until March 30 (page 3), four days after the hearings began. The page-3 story reported that FPC attorney Howard Wahrenbrock said that "the whole value attempted to be shown to the extent of \$50,000,000 of this property was 'nothing more than a writeup' which should be stricken off the books." The story did not report why the FPC took such a position.

On April 1 the Helena daily reported in its front-page story that FPC attorney Reuben Goldberg attempted to show that Ryan's activities in Butte Electric and in his own Great Falls power company were such that Ryan's sale of the second half-interest of the Great Falls company to Butte Electric/Montana Power could not have been "at arm's length," (its quotes).

The front-page story the next day reported that the FPC attorneys tried to show that Ryan was a dominating influence in Butte Electric, that he was able to control Butte Electric actions and, therefore, that his deal for the second half-interest in the Great Falls properties "were not the regular arm's length business dealing of two contending parties seeking to close a deal."

Montana Power witnesses' repeated assertions of arm's length negotiations made clear that the FPC contested the claim. The April 6, page-3, story in the Helena daily reported public service commission attorney Enor K. Matson asking Kelley if there had been collusion between Ryan's group of Butte Electric directors and the other directors

of the company. Kelley, once again, denied that any dealings other than arm's length negotiations had occurred.

On May 2, page 2, the Independent-Record reported the testimony of FPC accounts examiner John J. O'Neill, who had headed the staff that made the commission's report of Montana Power's accounts. The Helena paper printed O'Neill's contention that the 1912 consolidation of Butte Electric into Montana Power and the 1913 deal for Ryan's Great Falls interests were not arm's length transactions. The paper said the FPC and Montana Power accountants could not agree on this point and that Montana Power "has claimed these transactions were made in 'arm's length' bargaining."

The Gazette's May 3 story (page 5) included more of O'Neill's testimony. This story was the first in a Company newspaper to present a fair report of the FPC's position.

O'Neill said that the first public use of the Great Falls power sites was not at issue because the FPC said the Great Falls sites were not sold to Montana Power in arm's length transactions. O'Neill was reported to have charged that the 1912 consolidation creating Montana Power "was merely a form of writeup" and a continuation of Butte Electric under a new name. "The company maintains there was 'arm's length' bargaining and that an entirely new business entity resulted," the Gazette reported.

In the same manner the origins of Montana Power were reported over the whole of the length of the hearings, never reviewed in one or two stories.

On March 29, page 2, the Independent-Record reported that Ryan

owned half-interest in the Great Falls power sites and Butte Electric owned the other half and that Ryan was on the board of directors of the Butte company. The story said the seven directors in the Ryan group left Butte Electric/Montana Power board meetings whenever the fourteen other directors discussed consolidation with Ryan.

The story reported that the January, 1913, deal for Ryan's Great Falls and Thompson Falls properties gave Ryan \$17.5 million in Montana Power common stock and \$5 million in preferred stock. The common stock paid no dividends, however, until the Thompson Falls plant produced enough power to fulfill a contract with the Milwaukee railroad and until the Great Falls plants' gross earnings reached \$1,750,000 a year.

The story later reported that Ryan became president of Montana Power before he sold the power company his properties in 1913. This fact should have been reported before with the first report of the joint ownership of the Great Falls properties.

In a front-page story March 30 the Independent-Record reported that the accounting company Price, Waterhouse had valued Montana Power's holdings after the deal with Ryan in 1913 at \$43 million. The page-3 story that day reported a valuation of Montana Power property before the Ryan deal of \$36 million. After that purchase, then, the utility was overcapitalized by at least \$15.5 million if Price, Waterhouse had correctly evaluated the property. Montana Power denied that it had.

On March 31, page 1, the Helena paper reported that Con Kelley had termed "cheap" Ryan's original cost of the Great Falls sites.

Ryan paid \$1.5 million for the properties.

On April 5, page 3, the newspaper reported FPC questions about the Butte Electric-for-Montana Power stock transfer. The paper reported for the first time that one share of Butte Electric transferred for four shares of Montana Power. The story mentioned market values of the stocks to be in approximately a four-to-one ratio. The paper did not reveal that the assets of Montana Power were exactly the same as those of the firm it succeeded.

The same story reported Con Kelley's contention that Ryan's common stock had no market value because of its dividend restrictions. Kelley denied that Ryan made a profit by selling the Thompson Falls site to Montana Power for \$5 million in stock after paying \$950,000 for it. Kelley cited the dividend restrictions on this stock to support his statement.

Before the hearings ended, the Independent-Record had reported that the FPC charged Montana Power had overvalued its book costs by \$50.6 million. It had reported that the difference between the original cost of a power plant and the purchase cost to a new owner could be written off the owner's book if the transaction had not been made at arm's length.

The paper reported that John D. Ryan paid \$1.5 million for his Great Falls properties and sold half-interest to Montana Power in 1908. This sale price was not reported.

The paper reported that Ryan paid \$950,000 for his Thompson Falls power site. The paper reported that Ryan sold this site and his remaining interest in the Great Falls properties for \$22.5 million in 1913.

If the 1913 deal was not negotiated at arm's length, as the FPC charged, a reader of the Independent-Record could conclude that more than \$20 million should be written from Montana Power's books for the 1913 deal with Ryan.

The paper reported that the Montana Power directors, with Ryan as president, issued themselves four shares of Montana Power stock for every share of Butte Electric stock they turned in.

The paper reported that Montana Power valued its holdings in 1912 at \$36 million. A reader could conclude that in terms of Butte Electric stock this property had been worth \$9 million. A reader could see that the consolidation of Butte Electric into Montana Power watered the newly formed company's stock by \$25 million. The \$50.6 million figure that the Independent-Record had never explained could begin to make sense to a reader who carefully analyzed his daily Company newspaper.

The Helena and Billings papers reported enough information to allow these conclusions to be made. The papers should have reported the FPC's evidence, however, and they should have done the work necessary to explain the purpose of the hearings. They did not.

On May 14 the Independent-Record (page 2) and the Gazette (page 8) printed identical stories reporting the end of the hearings May 12. Instead of summarizing the evidence presented by both Montana Power and the FPC, the stories attacked the federal commission for using a theory of original costs that "ignores value."

The two stories reported that the FPC produced witnesses who testified that \$45.5 million should be written from the books of Montana Power immediately and that \$5 million more should be written off

over a period of years.

The papers complained that the original cost method as applied by the FPC called for the removal of \$45.5 million, "though that amount represented value which existed in the properties involved at the time of acquisition and even though that value continues to exist in the properties."

The two papers reported that the FPC's method had been opposed by "a parade of leading accounting authorities," who testified that the original cost theory was at odds with accepted accounting principles, that the book cost to a buyer should be the buyer's total cost in cash or the fair market value of "non-cash considerations."

The newspapers' complaint was immaterial. The FPC's original cost theory was the only legal method of determining book costs under federal law and Montana's copy of that law, passed by the state legislature in 1938.

The May 14 story, by not proclaiming a Montana Power victory in the hearings, implied that the power company's accounts would be revised by the FPC. While not required by law to revise Montana Power's accounts for the state of Montana, the public service commission could be expected to do so also.

Montanans who knew the basis by which Montana Power electric rates were fixed could expect a rate reduction as the result of the hearings. Those who did not know that rates were fixed as a percentage of the power company's capital value should have been informed of this. The Company press withheld this information from its readers.

On September 27, 1944 the Independent-Record printed a boxed



story in bold type on page 1 with the headline, "Electric Rate Cut Oct. 1, Announced By Montana Power." The story reported that Chairman Middleton of the public service commission announced the reduction, amounting to \$800,000 a year savings to Montana Power customers.

The Gazette and the Missoulian printed the story the next day, September 28. The Billings daily ran the story on page 1, but without the box and bold type. The Missoula paper printed the story on page 2.

None of the papers printed a story or commented editorially about the connection between the spring power hearings and the fall rate reduction. The connection was obvious and it should have been reported; Montana Power had nothing to lose by its printing.

On December 22 the Gazette and the Missoulian printed page-1 stories announcing the public service commission's order to Montana Power to write \$28.6 million from its books. The Independent-Record printed the story on page 3.

The stories reported the state commission's statement supporting states' rights and criticizing the FPC for ignoring (unspecified) state laws. The commission emphasized that the order was to reclassify accounts, not reduce rates. No connection between the October 1 rate reduction and the commission's orders to Montana Power was reported.

The Company press and the public service commission had no need to report the relationship between the hearings, the rate reduction, and the order to Montana Power to reclassify its accounts. When the December 22 story appeared, the direct causal relationship could no longer be doubted. The Company press had managed the news but it could not

prevent the rate reduction. Montanans had won an important victory over the Montana Power company.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE 1944 ELECTIONS

#### The Important Contests

The 1944 election campaign coverage in the Company press produced the most virulent attack on a candidate for state office that the press printed between 1938 and 1944. Associate Justice Leif Erickson, Democratic candidate for governor, was the Company's target.

In 1944 two congressmen and a governor were elected in Montana to major offices. Eastern District Congressman James F. O'Connor ran unopposed in the primary election. F. F. Haynes and Dan Maddoz opposed each other for the Republican nomination in the July 18 primary election. Haynes defeated Maddoz for the Eastern District nominations by 3,000 votes.

In the general election November 7, O'Connor won re-election by nearly 10,000 votes.

Western District Congressman Mike Mansfield and his Republican opponent, M. S. Galasso, were without opposition in the primary election. In the fall Mansfield defeated Galasso by more than 30,000 votes.

The only contest considered important by the ACM press was the contest for governor of the state. In the primary election Leif Erickson, Austin B. Middleton, chairman of the Railroad and Public Service Commission, and Roy E. Ayers, former governor competed for the Democratic nomination. Erickson defeated one current ACM favorite (Middleton) and one past favorite (Ayers). Erickson polled 28,000 votes to Middleton's 17,000 and Ayers' 14,000.

Governor Sam C. Ford ran for renomination against Dr. Jacob Thorkelson in the Republican primary. Ford won the nomination by more than 34,000 votes.

On November 7 Governor Ford defeated Erickson in a campaign fought largely in the Company press.

#### The Primary Campaigns

In 1944 Sidney Hillman, president of the CIO Amalgamated Clothing Workers union, brought labor unions into politics by organizing a national political action committee. The goal of Hillman's organization was to re-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt to a fourth term and to support liberal candidates for national office in the nation's primary elections. The Corrupt Practices Act forbade labor unions from endorsing and financially supporting candidates in general elections.

Jerry J. O'Connell, ex-Congressman and no favorite of the Company, organized a political action committee (p.a.c.) in Montana. This group, formed among CIO unions in the state, expanded to become the Progressive Political Action Council when Hillman, threatened by congressional investigations, expanded the union members' political organization by enlisting the support of liberals and progressives. The new organization was named the National Citizens' Political Action Committee.

The Montana organization elected leaders at a meeting in Great Falls June 11. The Company press did not report the occasion.

The council endorsed Erickson, O'Connor, and Mansfield, among others running for election in the primary and general election. The Company press chose to publicize only the endorsement for Erickson.

The CIO organization and its successor were hated by conservatives and the Company press, although the newspapers did not explain why. Instead the ACM papers called the group a Communist front, a subversive organization, and the greatest danger to the American way of life.

Erickson came under attack by the Company press when he spoke before the Yellowstone county political action chapter on July 10.<sup>1</sup> In the week before July 18, election day, the Independent-Record printed five stories attacking Erickson for being endorsed by the political action organization in Montana. In that same period the Missoulian ran three such stories and the Gazette ran four. All of them reported that Jerry O'Connell was reputed to have \$40,000 from the national political action fund and that O'Connell was spending the money to "deliver" Montana to the CIO-p.a.c.

The Independent-Record on July 10 printed a 25-inch story with the two-column headline, "CIO's \$670,000 Political Fund Fails To Win Eastern Elections; Part Of This Money Comes to Montana." A Montana story under the sub-head, "Montana Slate Named," followed a national story from Washington, D.C. This story and nearly every other story on the CIO political action movement in Montana said O'Connell and his organization advocated the unionization of farm workers.<sup>2</sup>

On July 11 the Independent-Record on page 1 and the Gazette on

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<sup>1</sup>The Company press did not distinguish between Progressive Political Action groups and CIO political action committees.

<sup>2</sup>People's Voice, June 16, 1944, Progressive Political Action Council program reprinted. The program pledged support to family-size farms and asked for an end to exploitation on corporation farms. It did not mention unionization of farm labor.

page 2 reported Erickson's speech to the Billings area political action group. Instead of referring to the candidate's program, the papers reported that Erickson spoke on use of the funds in the state treasury. His program then was reported after that introductory comment. The story was not biased again until the final paragraph which reported that "the CIO-sponsored group," formed May 9 in Billings by O'Connell, "has promulgated a plan for the unionization of farm labor."

On July 12 the Missoulian printed on page 1 a national story about the CIO but did not add to it any reference to O'Connell's Montana organization or the supposed plan to unionize farm workers.

Both the Independent-Record and the Gazette carried Montana CIO stories under national stories about the union's activities on July 12. The front-page stories in both papers presented a biased report of the political union's actions.

The Gazette July 12 printed the Montana CIO, Jerry O'Connell story carried by the Helena paper on July 10. The Independent-Record reported Erickson's Billings speech as one of the major CIO political rallies of the week. (The story did not make clear whether it was a major rally on the national level or on the state level.)

The Independent-Record ended the story with the non sequitur, "In support of the announced intention to unionize farm labor, Manager O'Connell has stated, 'We intend to make political action our No. 1 order of business for 1944.'" The paper attempted to quote O'Connell in such a way as to have him admit to demanding farm labor unionization. Evidently that quotation was the best the Helena daily could find.

July 13 was the peak of the attack on Erickson. All three

papers printed page-1 stories reporting a radio campaign speech made the night before by former governor Roy E. Ayers. The Missoulian's headline was the least inflammatory: "CIO Group Assailed In Address." The Gazette's headline read, "Ayers Assails C.I.O. Candidate." The Independent-Record's headline said, "Jerry O'Connell's CIO Program Is Hit By Ayers/Finds Erickson Seeks Dictation From Hillman Lieutenant."

The stories reported Ayers' request that Democrats should abandon Erickson because he was supported by O'Connell. Ayers said any candidate or any program supported by O'Connell was against the interest of Montana.

The Gazette that day printed three photos on page 3 under the caption, "Political Actionists Figure Prominently In State Primary." A picture of Erickson appeared between one of O'Connell and one of Sidney Hillman. References to farm unionization and a \$40,000 political fund accompanied the identification of O'Connell. Erickson was identified as the Democratic candidate for the nomination action committee.

The same photographs and identifications were printed by the Independent-Record the next day, July 14, on page 2. The Missoulian did not print the guilt-by-association photos. The Missoula paper printed a national anti-CIO story on July 15 that did not include a Montana CIO story.

The Missoulian printed a story on page 1, July 16, that listed Erickson as the first of several candidates endorsed by the state CIO group. The four-inch story appeared under the headline, "CIO Intervenes In State Politics." The usual statements about O'Connell's \$40,000 campaign fund and his organization's farm unionization plan

were included in the story.

On July 17, the day before election day, identical stories appeared in all three papers under headlines saying that Montana farmers and stockmen were alarmed by the CIO's farm unionization plan. The Gazette printed the story on page 1, the Independent-Record printed it on page 2, and the Missoulian printed it on page 3. The story, running twenty-five to thirty inches depending on the size of the headline, reported three western Montana stockmen's fears of a CIO takeover in Montana if Erickson were elected governor. One of the men, Fred L. Hershey, quoted the Independent-Record's non sequitur, saying that he was informed that O'Connell made the statement about political action in reference to farm labor unionization.

Erickson won the Democratic nomination in spite of the Company press' attempt to connect him to farm labor unionization.

Austin Middleton's campaign coverage was extensive in the Independent-Record, six stories between July 2 and 17. None of the stories on Middleton's campaign appeared on page 1 in the Helena paper. The July 17 story, an endorsement by former governor John Erickson (page 3) and a story July 13 (page 6) were the only two of the six reporting campaign news. The four other stories were press releases from Middleton's public service commission office.

The Missoulian reported July 12 on page 10 a story announcing Middleton's campaign visit to Missoula. On July 16 the Missoula daily printed John Erickson's endorsement of Middleton on page 14.

The Gazette did not report Middleton's campaign. The Gazette gave the primary election campaign the poorest coverage of the three



papers. In addition to the Erickson, O'Connell CIO stories, the Billings daily reported news on the campaigns of only two candidates. Governor Ford's campaign was reported July 7 in a page-12 story about the state leader of the Ford-for-Governor club. On July 12 a visit to Billings by former governor Ayers was reported on page 10. The Gazette ignored the Republican congressional race in the Eastern District.

The Missoulian reported a visit by Ayers on page 2, July 6, and Ford-for-Governor club story on page 2 the next day. On July 14 the Missoula paper reported another campaign visit by Ayers on page 12.

The coverage given the campaign by the Billings and Missoula papers would have been unexceptional but for the papers' attacks on Erickson. The papers' only other unusual coverage of the governor campaigns was the failure to print a single story on the campaign of Jacob Thorkelson. By 1944 the Company press had forgotten their 1938 favorite.

The Independent-Record gave Ford greater coverage than it gave Middleton. The Helena paper printed nine stories on Ford's renomination efforts, all but one were press releases. On July 2 a Ford press release on the \$5 million in the state general fund appeared on page 1. On July 6 the Ford-for-Governor club story was printed on page 10. This was the Helena daily's only story on Ford's campaign as such. The other Ford stories reported his activities as governor. They kept Ford's name in headlines, however, and therefore have been included as campaign stories.

The Helena paper did not report any Thorkelson campaign news. The only Ayers story the Independent-Record printed was the one attack-

ing Erickson and O'Connell on July 13. Since all three papers carried this story to stir opposition to Erickson, rather than to promote Ayers' campaign, the story was not properly an Ayers story.

When Erickson won the Democratic nomination for governor, the Company press accelerated its campaign against him. News coverage of political action groups across the nation and in Montana did not decrease between the primary election July 18 and the general election November 7.

#### The General Election and the Congressional Contests

In the 1944 general election November 7, Montanans elected representatives to Congress in addition to electing a governor. Readers of the Company press learned little about the candidates for Congress, however, so extensive was the news coverage of the race for governor.

Congressman Mike Mansfield won re-election in the Western District, defeating his Republican opponent, M. S. Galasso, by more than 45,000 votes. This contest was virtually ignored by the newspapers.

The Independent-Record printed one story on Mansfield's campaign (September 12, page 13) and none on Galasso's. The Missoulian printed press releases from Mansfield on October 5, page 5 and October 17, page 5. On October 23 the Missoula paper reported in a three-inch story on page 8 that Mansfield had come to Missoula for a brief visit. The paper named Mansfield in stories reporting Democratic rallies but the candidate's name appeared in no headlines after October 23. And,

like the Helena daily, the Missoulian ignored Galasso's campaign.

The Billings Gazette covered the Eastern District congressional contest much better than the two western papers covered that district's contest. Congressman James F. O'Connor defeated F. F. Haynes, Republican, in the Eastern District by slightly less than 10,000 votes. The Billings paper did not influence this election since it gave better coverage to Haynes than to O'Connor.

On September 16, two days after Republican presidential nominee Thomas E. Dewey had visited Billings, the Gazette printed a page-1 story with the headline, "Haynes Praises Governor Dewey." A photograph of Haynes was printed with the story.

Haynes' campaign was reported in nine more Gazette stories. On September 24, page 1; October 1, page 6; October 15, page 5; October 20, page 3, and October 21, page 3, the Billings paper reported or announced speeches by Haynes in Lewistown and Billings and before Republican women and labor unions.

On October 22 the Gazette reported on page 1 a speech by Haynes to a Laurel audience. A picture of the candidate accompanied the report. The Gazette reported three more of Haynes' campaign speeches. An appearance at Bridger was reported October 28, page 8; one at Billings reported October 31, page 10, and one at Absarokee reported November 5, on page 8.

In a slight contrast, the Gazette printed five stories on O'Connor's campaign, although his name was included in lists of speakers at Democratic rallies in several stories. Three of the stories concerned an appearance in Billings. On October 19, page 3, the Gazette announced

O'Connor's speech. The next day the speech made page 1 and was accompanied by a photo of Congressman O'Connor. And on October 21 a page-5 story reported that O'Connor was leaving Billings on a campaign tour.

Only two speeches made on the tour were reported. On October 29 a page-6 story reported a Billings speech and on October 31 the Gazette reported O'Connor's speech at Red Lodge in a story on page 8. Congressman O'Connor did not make the headlines again, but he won re-election by 9,751 votes.

The comparatively few reports on the congressional races and an occasional story on a candidate for lieutenant governor or the Supreme Court competed for space in the Company press with hundreds of stories on the contest for governor.

#### The Governor Contest

Democratic candidate for governor and current Supreme Court justice Leif Erickson received the most biased, abusive and defamatory coverage that the Company press gave any candidate between 1928 and 1944. Not one unfavorable word was said about Governor Sam C. Ford.

On November 7 Ford defeated Erickson 116,461 to 89,224. Nearly 90,000 Montanans, therefore, did not believe the Company press' accounts of Erickson's abilities, character, and beliefs.

On September 9 in Lewistown, Montana Democrats chose Lester Loble of Helena chairman of the state central committee. The Company press the next day reported Loble's selection on page 1 in stories with the headlines: "Loble Election Viewed As Another Victory For Jerry O'Connell/Threat Of CIO Political Action Domination Expected

To Turn May Regular Democrats To Support Of Republicans" (Independent-Record), "Loble New Democratic Chairman; Selection Victory For O'Connell," (Missoulian), and "Helena Man Heads Democrats" (Gazette). All three papers printed photographs of Loble and O'Connell with the story and called the men old colleagues ("old chums" in the Independent-Record).

From September 10 to November 7 the Company press covered the contest for governor between Ford and Erickson with 285 stories. The Missoulian printed the fewest, 71, while the Independent-Record, with 108, and the Gazette, with 106, showed no restraint.

All of these stories named either Ford or Erickson. In addition all three papers printed national news stories that indirectly concerned the election campaign. These news stories all reported opinions about and reputed activities of the CIO and its political action groups.

The year 1944 marked the Company press' return to the vituperative election reporting of decades earlier. The ACM newspapers used every means available to influence voters to vote against Leif Erickson. Chief among their weapons was the identification of Erickson as the CIO's man in Montana and the identification of Jerry O'Connell as Erickson's Machiavelli. This began in July during the primary election campaign.

The September 10 story on the Democratic state convention carried by all three papers continued the Company's efforts to connect Erickson with O'Connell and the "communist" CIO. The story ended saying that Senator Murray, national committeeman O. S. Warden and Erickson had forced the state convention to accept Loble as state party head:

That combination proved too powerful for those who styled themselves regular Democrats to oppose the Loble candidacy, and the threat of CIO domination.

LEO THE LION TO ROAR (sub-head)

Thus, LEO (Loble, Erickson, O'Connell) constellation will seek to guide enough Montana voters to the polls in November to override old line Democrats who have voiced a willingness to accept a Republican governor rather than submit to CIO political dictation.

The Missoulian and the Independent-Record printed fourteen stories each and the Gazette printed fifteen stories reporting national-level attacks on the CIO as un-American, undemocratic, and Communistic. Of more concern, however, were the Montana stories on Jerry O'Connell and the CIO's (and Council for Progressive Political Action's) supposed attempts to unionize farm labor and to bring Montana under the dictatorship of Sidney Hillman's CIO political actionists. All of these stories either referred to Erickson by name or as the candidate backed by the CIO.

The Independent-Record printed thirteen stories attacking O'Connell and the CIO that were not also hard attacks on Erickson. Most of these stories gave Erickson only passing mention.

The Missoulian printed fourteen such stories, twelve of them the same stories that appeared in the Helena paper. The Gazette printed eleven of them, only one of which did not appear in either other newspaper.

The September 10 story on Loble's election made page 1 in all three papers. On September 24 the three Company papers printed on page 1 a report that L. A. Sutherland, president of the Grange in Montana, had attacked O'Connell and the Progressive Political Action Council for making

the unionization of farm labor the number one plank in the group's political platform. Sutherland's speech to the state Grange convention in Missoula in which he repeated the charge was reported on page 1 in the Missoulian October 20 and in the Gazette October 21. The Independent-Record printed the story on page 3 October 20.

On October 22 the Independent-Record and the Gazette ran identical stories on page 1 reporting that Ashton Jones, state Republican chairman, predicted defeat for p.a.c.-supported candidates. Jones predicted O'Connell would "lead the hand-picked candidates of the CIO-PAC with their Communist support to certain defeat at the polls on Nov. 7." The Missoulian carried this story the same day but on an inside page (page 9).

On November 3 all three papers reported a radio speech by Republican farmer Wetmore Hodges that repeated the charges of a CIO-O'Connell-Erickson chain of command. The Helena daily printed the story under the headline, "Montana Is Used As Spearhead For PAC Drive/Jerry O'Connell, Hillman, Browder New Deal Aids Who Exploit Laboring Man For Political Power, Ennis Rancher Avers."

These five stories covered events as they happened, i.e., they were news stories, no matter how biased. The other stories about O'Connell and CIO activities and plans in Montana appeared to be stories picked from a file. In one instance the Missoulian and the Gazette printed the same story five days apart.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Missoulian, Sept. 17, p. 1. Gazette, Sept. 22, p. 3. (The fears of Stevensville farmer James Canton about a CIO farm union were reported in identically worded stories.)

The Company press used the CIO and O'Connell to attack Erickson indirectly more often than they used another tactic. But this guilt-by-association and endorsement lacked sufficient strength; Erickson himself could not easily be frontally attacked because he had not advocated unionizing farm labor (assuming that if he had, the press would have reported it) and he had not allied himself with the CIO. (On September 17 in a page-1 story the Helena paper reported Erickson's attempts to deny connections between himself and the CIO.)

The Company press used a scandal and a series of attacks on Erickson's positions and experience in public office to carry its attacks on the Democrat up to the headlines.

On October 7 George Niewoehner, a White Sulphur Springs attorney, attempted to file a suit with the Supreme Court of Montana requiring that the court's minutes be changed to show Erickson absent for periods he charged Erickson was out of the state. The court, denying Niewoehner the right to file the suit, divided 4-1 on the issue. Four members, including Erickson, said Erickson had worked on cases that were decided on days he was absent or else the court had not been in session for the periods covered in Niewoehner's charges.

Erickson had been absent for periods during the summers of 1941, 1942, and 1943. He had served on a railroad mediation board in Chicago each time. Each time he left the state shortly before the court adjourned for the summer. The court admitted this much, but it denied that the minutes were wrong.

Justice C. F. Morris dissented from the court's decision, saying that Niewoehner was correct in his charges. When the court cited



Niewoehner for contempt on grounds his motion was politically motivated to embarrass Erickson, Morris protested, telling the Company press that not only were Niewoehner's charges true, but that he had done nothing to deserve a contempt of court citation. The rest of the court censured Morris for this the next day.

Later the court dropped its own contempt charge but accepted a motion making the same contempt charge from a Great Falls attorney. The hearing on the contempt citation was postponed until November 20 before Niewoehner asked that all the judges except Morris disqualify themselves for prejudging the case. Niewoehner's disqualification petition kept the story in the news when the court had tried to get it out of the news. The four judges supporting the Erickson position had charged from the beginning that Niewoehner acted only from political motives, that the suit was meant only to cast discredit on Erickson before the election.

They were probably right. Starting October 8, the day after Niewoehner's attempt to file the suit, the "minutes suit" and reports that Erickson drew both his state salary and \$50 a day from the federal government while serving on the mediation board made page-1 news in the Company press at every new development. Each time Niewoehner's charges were repeated. The Independent-Record, an afternoon paper, managed to get the story into print October 7 and nine times thereafter, every time on the front page. The Gazette ran stories on the imbroglio eight times on page 1, the Missoulian did four times.

On October 31 all three papers printed stories on page 1 re-

porting a radio speech by attorney Paul W. Smith in which he challenged Erickson to explain why drawing his state salary and the federal government's \$50 a day was not a violation of the state constitution. On November 4 the Helena and Billings papers reported on page 1 a radio speech by J. Burke Clements repeating this charge. The Missoulian reported Clements' speech on page 6 that day.

Since three of the other four justices supported Erickson, the newspapers' coverage of the Niewoehner affair might not have damaged him politically. It cannot be denied, however, that this was the papers' intention.

The Company press covered Erickson's campaign to Erickson's detriment in two other ways. The papers usually did not report Erickson's speeches and statements of his program but they did report denials, refutations and arguments against whatever Erickson had spoken about. The papers also printed attacks on Erickson's association with O'Connell and on his record as a lawyer, judge, and administrator.

The Independent-Record ignored Erickson's campaign speeches and appearances completely. When Democratic rallies were announced, the paper reported who would introduce the speakers but did not name the speakers. On November 5, if not at other times, Erickson was the featured speaker at a Helena rally, according to an advertisement on the same page as the news story (page 14).

The Gazette named Erickson as a rally speaker in the second paragraphs of four stories.<sup>4</sup> The Gazette, alone of the three papers, report-

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<sup>4</sup>Gazette, Oct. 15, p. 3; Oct. 17, p. 10; Nov. 1, p. 5; Nov. 3, p. 7.

ed a speech by Erickson. On October 18 the Billings paper printed on page 1 a story with the headline, "Erickson Backs MVA Proposal." Erickson's remarks were summarized without bias.

The Missoulian on September 16 and October 1 printed page-1 stories on the governor contest that named both candidates. Neither man made the headlines to the two stories announcing Democratic rallies. Like the Gazette, the Missoulian buried the reference in the second paragraph (once in the third paragraph) and did not name any candidate in the headlines to the rally stories.<sup>5</sup>

The Missoula daily reported Erickson's campaign speeches beneath sub-heads to three stories reporting Ford's speeches. The three stories, on September 28, page 1; October 12, page 2, and October 18, page 2 were no more than two inches long each.

Erickson's positions were not reported in any of these stories except the October 18 Gazette report. Erickson's stand on any issue and his campaign charges could be learned only by reading his critics' replies. Erickson supported the Missouri Valley Authority plan sponsored by Senator Murray. This was made clear by the Gazette's story but also by a number of stories reporting attacks on Erickson's position.

On September 28 the Missoulian and the Gazette reported front-page stories of Governor Ford demanding to know his opponent's stand on MVA. The Independent-Record carried the story on page 12 that day.

After Erickson had proclaimed his support for the project, the

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<sup>5</sup>Missoulian, Oct. 22, p. 14; Oct. 14, p. 2; Oct. 26, p. 10, and Oct. 28, p. 5.

Gazette printed a page-1 story October 19 reporting a Billings man's denunciation of Erickson's stand. H. W. Bunston, president of the Yellowstone Basin Association, a group of irrigationists, endorsed Ford in the story. Six days later, on October 25, the other two papers reported Bunston's objections to Erickson in front-page stories with no datelines.

The Gazette reported another attack on the justice's MVA stand in a page-1 story on November 2. Judge Lew Callaway attacked the proposal and Erickson's support of it in a speech for Ford defending states' rights. The Independent-Record printed the story the same day but on page 2. The Missoulian did not print the story.

On October 12, October 13 and October 14 the three papers printed a story in which E. J. Parkin, a Gallatin county commissioner, called Erickson's criticism of county road maintenance "unpatriotic" and reminded Erickson that there was a war on.<sup>6</sup> On October 13 the Helena paper printed a story reporting a Utah man's praise for Montana road maintenance (page 5).

On October 14, two days after the first roads story was printed in the Helena paper, the three ACM newspapers reported Governor Ford's announcement that the state had \$3.5 million to spend on roads when the war ended. The Missoulian and the Gazette printed the story on page 1 and the Independent-Record printed it on page 5.

Erickson criticized operations at the mental hospital in Warm Springs, it became known, because George O'Connor, speaker of the house,

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<sup>6</sup>Independent-Record, Oct. 12, p. 12; Gazette, Oct. 13, p. 1 and Missoulian, Oct. 14, p. 3.

supported Ford's record in regard to the hospital and attacked Erickson for criticizing Ford's record. Stories appeared October 20 in the Missoula and Helena papers, October 21 in the Gazette and November 5 in all three papers reporting O'Connor's denial of the criticism's validity and his attack on Erickson.

On November 4 the Independent-Record printed a story in which the chairman of the fish and game commission, Elmer Johnson, accused Erickson of masquerading as a friend of sportsmen when, according to Johnson, he was not. The page-2 story included a long defense by Johnson of his department. On October 20 the Helena paper reported a Ford speech in which he announced that the fish and game department had been removed from politics during his administration. The page-2 story did not mention whether Erickson had criticized the department. Neither did the Johnson story. However, from Johnson's lengthy defense (the story ran eighteen inches), it can be gathered that Erickson had commented on the fish and game agency.

Reports of Ford speeches about the water board, the liquor monopoly, welfare, and the agriculture department indicated Erickson criticized Ford's record in those areas, but since no ally of Ford was reported defending his record on those issues, it cannot be concluded with certainty that Erickson had criticized the governor's record in these areas.

Between September 17 and November 6 ten stories attacking Erickson's character and abilities were printed by all three papers. In addition three similar stories appeared in one or two of the papers but not in all three. These assaults were the most vicious

stories to appear in the Company press between 1938 and 1944.

On September 17 the three Company papers printed a page-1 press release from state Republican headquarters finding inconsistencies between Erickson's record of that association. This story was mild since it did not openly call Erickson a liar, but merely implied that he was.

On September 14 the Gazette carried on page 5 a story with the headline, "G.O.P. Terms Tin Cup Passing A Device To Divorce Erickson From Hillmanites." The Missoulian's page-8 headline was very mild, saying only that the Republicans were critical of Erickson's campaign tactics, but the Helena paper's page-3 headline referred to Erickson's efforts "to drown the roar of CIO millions." All three stories were identical charges from Republican headquarters to the effect that Erickson was a hypocrite. The story reported the opinion that the Democratic fund-raising campaign was a sham because Erickson was receiving financial support from Hillman's CIO group in New York.

October 1 page-1 stories in the Helena and Missoula papers strongly criticized a 1935 action before the public service commission involving Lester Loble and Jerry O'Connell. The story, reporting the criticism of commissioner Leonard Young, tied Erickson to O'Connell and Loble and tied O'Connell to "Russian-born" Sidney Hillman. (Hillman was born in Lithuania.) The Gazette did not print this story.

On October 7 the three papers reported a speech by Governor Ford in which he called Erickson "a victim of despair" for not being able to devise a program. The story implied that Erickson's "despair" was one of his most prominent characteristics. The Independent-Record carried the story on page 5 but the other two papers printed

it as page-1 news.

On October 7 the Gazette printed another front-page story highly critical of Erickson. The story reported Judge Frank J. Leiper's questioning of Erickson's administrative ability and his brief residence in Montana. Leiper compared Erickson and Ford in those two areas and concluded that he had to endorse Ford. The story in the form of an interview said Leiper was reluctant to endorse a candidate and was doing so only for the good of the state.

The Missoulian carried the Leiper story on page 1 the next day. The Independent-Record ran it on page 8, October 8.

On October 12 the Gazette on page 1 and the other two papers on page 2 reported another Ford criticism of Erickson's campaign. Ford said that Erickson was "a drowning man grasping at straws."

To this point the attack on Erickson had been conducted with minor insults and innuendoes. The tone of the anti-Erickson campaign changed on October 15.

"Montanans Shudder At Thought Of Erickson Election/ Republican Head Fears Communists Would Hog Appointive Jobs," was the page-1 headline to the Independent-Record's story reporting the opinions of Ashton Jones, state party chairman. The story did not mention the word "Communist" but referred only to CIO-p.a.c. activists.

Jones tried to frighten voters, saying that if Erickson were elected, no business would be granted a license to operate unless it went along with the CIO and all farms and ranches would be unionized.

This sort of political assassination of character was not and never is news. Good newspapers do not report such wild, unsupported

charges, especially when issued by the headquarters of the party opposing the man attacked. All three Company newspapers printed the story October 15, the Gazette, like the Helena paper, on page 1. The Missoulian printed it on page 2.

On October 14 all three papers printed Judge Leiper's second attack on Erickson on page 1. In a radio speech Leiper accused Erickson of having learned little about law and less about being a judge because of his ambitions for higher office after every election. The story was another personal attack that did not deserve to be printed.

On November 1 the Helena and Billings papers printed a page-1 story in which Zales Ecton leveled harsh accusations against Erickson for belittling Montana's war efforts. The Independent-Record's headline was, "Leif Sees Faults In Everything, Ecton Declares/Johnnie-Come-Lately From North Dakota Sneers At Progress For Which Montanans Work So Hard." The headline accurately reflects the tone of the story.

The Missoula paper printed the story that day on page 2.

On November 3 a page-10 headline in the Independent-Record announced, "Skids For Leif's Radical Aides Stockman's Aim/Defeat Of Communist Gang Supporting Young Gubernatorial Aspirant Would Keep Montana American, William Studdert Avers." The story was as inflammatory as the headline, saying that Erickson was being used by O'Connell and other CIO Communists.

The Missoulian did not print this story but the Gazette did on page 5 the same day with a more objective headline, one saying that Studdert was analyzing Erickson's support. The last sentence in this "analysis" was, "No stockman, no farmer, no good citizen will hesitate



in the fight to keep Montana American."

A very similar story was reported on November 5 by all three papers after Wellington Rankin accused Erickson of being a stooge of state and national Communists. Only the Gazette carried the Rankin story on page 1. The story appeared on page 5 in the Missoulian and page 10, the Independent-Record.

The final insult to Erickson was a story printed November 5 by the Missoulian and November 6 by the other two papers on inside pages. Under the caption, "Build Montana At Danville, Illinois," was printed the address side of a postcard used to promote Erickson's campaign. The postcard said "Build Montana With Leif Erickson." The three papers demanded in the same words an explanation from Erickson why he had the cards printed in Danville rather than in Montana by Montana union printers. The card and the story could only have been damaging to Erickson so late in the campaign. The next day he was defeated by Ford.

Ford's campaign was reported with sixty-eight stories by the Gazette, seventy by the Independent-Record, and a mere thirty-seven by the Missoulian. Ford made front-page headlines eighteen times in the Missoulian, twenty-two times in the Independent-Record, and thirty-six times in the Gazette. None of the stories was critical in any way of the governor's speeches, official duties carried out for the benefit of the press coverage he would get, or his official proclamations.

Forty-three of the Gazette's stories on Ford announced or reported campaign speeches, all of them, with the cited exceptions,

in praise of his administration. Many of the speeches were delivered by Ford supporters but all of them read the same, painting Ford's administration in glowing colors.

As an indication of the Company press' coverage of Ford's campaign, the final week before election the Gazette printed the following headlines on page 1:

Ford Cites State Finance Record (November 1)  
 Maddox Predicts Ford Re-election (November 1)  
 G.O.P. Chairman Says Ford Will Lead State Ticket To Record-Breaking Win (November 2)  
 Ford Outlines Postwar Plans (November 3)  
 Ford Says MVA Menace To State (November 6)  
 Ford Re-election Urged To Protect Montana Waters/North Dakotan Says Governor Saved States Rights (November 6)

None of the stories beneath these headlines reported news; they merely reported support for Ford or Ford's support for his own programs.

The Independent-Record printed fifty stories reporting Ford's campaign efforts, thirteen stories reporting official acts performed by the governor, and seven stories reporting Ford's proclamations. These included: Religious Education week (September 14, page 10), the anniversary of the founding of the Republic of China (September 21, page 5), Navy Day (October 22, page 5), Palestine Day and Montana's hopes for a Jewish nation (October 25, page 8), and Ford's official proclamation of Thanksgiving Day, setting it for November 23 as had President Roosevelt (November 3, page 3).

The Gazette reported Ford's Thanksgiving Day proclamation with a five-inch story on page 1, November 4.

The Missoulian printed only seven stories concerning Ford that did not deal directly with his campaign for re-election. One of these

was the November 4 Thanksgiving Day announcement, printed by the Missoula daily on page 2.

Ford's campaign was reported as if he had no serious opponent, except toward the end when the same men who reviled Erickson urged Ford's re-election (Leiper, Studdert, and Rankin primarily). All Ford news was good news, reassuring news, calm news.

In contrast Erickson was presented as a threat to the security of Montana and Montanans. The Company press implied at first and later explicitly threatened that a vote for Erickson was a vote for "communism," farm unionization and New York CIO domination. With press coverage, which included only one unbiased report of Erickson's positions and activities (Gazette, October 18, page 1), the Company press helped Ford defeat Erickson by more than 27,000 votes out of more than 205,000 cast.

In the counties in which the three Company papers operated Ford won easily. He took Lewis and Clark county by nearly 2,000 votes, Missoula county by 2,022 votes, and Yellowstone county by more than 4,600 votes.

The 1944 campaign for governor proved the effectiveness of news management by a controlled press. Erickson had not lost an election before this campaign. Ford had been a capable but colorless governor who began receiving Company support only when ACM realized that Erickson, a non-Company man from the start, would likely be the Democratic candidate for governor. The Company press supported Ford in the primary campaign and attacked Erickson, probably without affecting the results of the primary election to any degree. The ACM newspapers' coverage of the fall campaign, however, was possibly decisive. No candi-

date could withstand the torrent of abuse given Erickson. No candidate could overcome the steady, daily reports of his opponent's good works.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

The three Company newspapers printed biased, one-sided, distorted and adverse news stories about political candidates and about events affecting ACM and its corporate friends continually between 1938 and 1944. Many news events involving candidates, ACM and Montana Power were not reported.

In 1938 the Company press denied coverage to Supreme Court candidates Leif Erickson and Philip O'Donnell and to Congressman Jerry J. O'Connell. The campaign tours, speeches and, occasionally, press releases of their opponents were printed and given prominent display by the three newspapers. In addition the Company press printed stories inimical to O'Connell's re-election efforts.

In 1940 the Missoulian and the Independent refused news coverage to primary election candidates Jerry O'Connell and Dr. Jacob Thorkelson in the western congressional contest. All three papers refused to report the campaigns of Democratic senatorial candidate Attorney General H. J. Freebourn and Democratic candidate for the gubernatorial nomination A. F. Lamey.

In that year's general election campaigns O'Connell, Republican candidate for governor Sam Ford and that party's candidate for the Senate, E. K. Cheadle, were given less coverage than their opponents. Ford received adequate coverage, although less than was given Governor Roy Ayers. Cheadle received no news coverage in October and only a token story in November. O'Connell again was denied space in the news pages

of the Company press.

In 1942 the three papers largely ignored the primary election campaigns but gave balanced coverage to all candidates in the general election.

In 1944 the Company press ignored or gave scant coverage to all primary and general election campaigns except one. In the contest for governor Leif Erickson, associate justice of the Supreme Court, was reported to be the favorite of radicals and Communists, the puppet of a radical labor leader, the unpatriotic leader of unpatriotic attacks on the state's war effort and a violator of the state constitution. Erickson's opponent, Governor Sam Ford, was praised and his accomplishments and activities were reported in a barrage of news stories.

In each case the candidates opposed by the Company press or denied coverage by the newspapers were defeated; there was but one exception--Leif Erickson was elected to the Supreme Court in 1938. In most cases Company news management had to have been an influential, if not decisive, factor in the election results.

Between 1936 and 1944 the three newspapers printed stories publicizing the Company's contributions to Montana and the nation. News reporting Company misdeeds was buried on the few occasions the news made print.

Similarly the activities of Montana Power were reported when the utility needed publicity. When courts ruled against Montana Power and when anyone questioned the company's claim of ownership to the Missouri River, the news was buried or not reported.

State legislation supporting and promoting the interests of ACM

and Montana Power was not explained by the Company press, with the exception of the "bankers' relief" 1943 senate bill that was explained after it was vetoed. Legislation adversely affecting either company was not explained either. Montanans served by the three Company newspapers were not informed about Montana legislation affecting Montana's two most important corporations.

In 1944, when under attack by the Federal Power Commission, Montana Power received favorable news coverage to the extent that the case against the utility was not printed in full and what was printed was distorted.

The Montana agency charged with regulating Montana Power, the public service commission, reclassified the utility's accounts and ordered more than \$26 million written from the company's books, in effect admitting the truth of the Federal Commission's charges. This order was issued in spite of the state commission's support of Montana Power during the hearings and in its report.<sup>1</sup>

The Company press made no such admission. The three newspapers did not report the connection between the \$26 million "write-off" and a rate reduction for customers of Montana Power. The rate reduction was announced and reported before the public service commission issued its report, further obscuring the causal relationship between the spring hearings, the report and the rate reduction.

Because the Company press could not normally influence the

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<sup>1</sup>This support is evident in the commission's opinion and in its justifications for actions taken in its report and order ("In the matter of the Reclassification of Accounts of Montana Power Company," Public Service Commission of Montana, Dec. 21, 1944).

results of court cases and public hearings, the effectiveness of news management cannot be measured by the results of such events. The press worked, rather, in the interests of public relations, trying to influence Montanans' opinions about ACM and Montana Power. The Company press was successful to the extent that many Montanans supported and still support the two companies. If the Company press had reported in full the illegal and unethical activities of the two corporations, few Montanans today would praise the "twins."

More important than public relations and the defeats of anti-Company candidates was the Company's deprivation of Montanans' rights to a free and open press. In Montana ACM's press ownership was similar to any government's censorship and control of any country's press. The Company did the state and its citizens a disservice, not only from 1938 to 1944 but for decades until 1959. The Company's news management like any government's censorship should not easily be dismissed.



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<sup>1</sup>These entries are listed in their relative order of importance to the purposes of this paper.