

# LONELLIEST MAN

## *In Washington*

By SAMUEL GRAFTON

*Wayne Morse lives on a political desert island of his own creation—and he won't leave*

**T**HE loneliest man in Washington, D.C., is Wayne Lyman Morse, the junior senator from Oregon, who decided last fall that most political parties are bad for him.

With Wayne Morse, to think is to act. He quit the Republican party and—although he campaigned for the Democratic Presidential nominee, Adlai Stevenson—he stayed out of the Democratic party.

The only political organization to which Wayne Morse belongs is the Independent party. As its only member, he has so far managed to tolerate that party, but his friends predict that if anybody else should join it, there would soon be a split.

On a recent typical Washington week end, Morse attacked the Republican Cabinet appointments on Friday afternoon in a Senate speech which greatly pleased the Democratic side of the Upper House. And that night, as chief speaker at the annual Roosevelt Day dinner of the Americans for Democratic Action, Morse denounced the Democrats assembled before him.

On a Sunday-afternoon television show, he slugged the Communists. On Monday morning, when two emissaries from a labor union went to his office in a sentimental mood to give him an honorary membership card in their outfit, Morse stood up behind his desk and denounced the labor movement for ten minutes for not supporting him in some of his recent Senate fights. Then he accepted the membership card and shook hands all around.

The Senate of the United States, a body of men usually wisely and deeply tolerant of one another's human foibles, does not quite know how to handle the Oregon maverick who has thrust himself outside the party system. One result is that Morse is not on any Senate committee—the first senator in 82 years to be involuntarily in this fix. He is not on any committee because he is not in either major party, and, for the same reason, he cannot attend Republican or Democratic party conferences. Neither Robert Taft, the majority leader, nor Lyndon Johnson, the minority whip, ever calls him up to ask for his advice or to plead for his support.

Morse has the constitutional rights of a United States senator, of course. He may speak and he may vote; he may steep himself in the hot waters of the Senate baths, and he may ride the exclusive senatorial elevators. But he

is an exile from that deep inner Senate life of the telephone confab and the committee room, which is based on the party system and on the principle that, at least to some degree, you either play along or you don't play at all.

Although Morse formally resigned from the Republican party last October 18th to campaign for Stevenson, he was allowed to keep his old seat on the Republican side of the Senate chamber. This decision is typical of the Senate, which dislikes overt acts against any of its members—and which

in any event couldn't put him in the aisle because he would block traffic.

At his old desk (front row, fifth on the left from Vice-President Richard M. Nixon), Morse is bounded by Irving M. Ives of New York, Hugh Butler of Nebraska, William F. Knowland of California and Andrew F. Schoepel of Kansas.

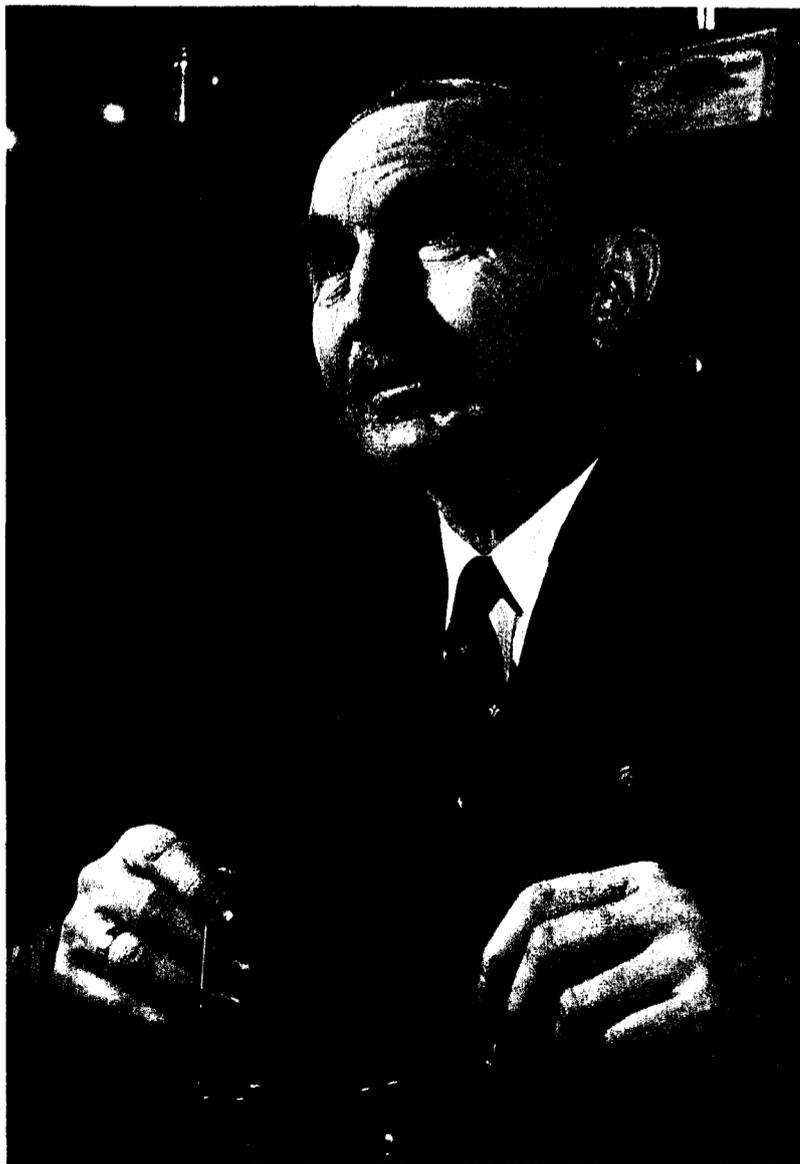
The distinguished Republicans around Morse never discuss political issues with him, but ask after his family regularly; in fact, Morse gets asked about his family by somewhat embarrassed senators more often than any other member of the Upper House. Recently, too, Senator Eugene D. Millikin of Colorado came to Morse's rescue during a long speech with a bottle of soothing throat mixture. Since Millikin was one of the key figures in the Republican party conferences that deprived Morse of his former seats on the important Armed Services and Labor committees, the gesture had a certain air of pathos, as though indicating that he wished he could give more.

Morse had not expected, even after resigning from the Republican party with a whoop and a holler last fall, to be deprived of his committee posts; he had expected that he would only be demoted in seniority to the foot of each committee.

The boom fell on him when the Senate reconvened this year. The Republicans, searching their consciences, could see no good reason for keeping Morse, under the G.O.P. label, in his old places on the two important committees—committee jobs of this caliber being cherished by senators as diamonds are by chorus girls. The Republicans did offer Morse places on the minor District of Columbia and Public Works committees, but these spots would have represented a serious come-down; in any case, Morse felt a principle was involved and spurned the offer.

It had been speculated that Morse might go over to the Democrats, wiping out the Republicans' narrow (48 to 47) majority and leaving them tied with the Democrats, 48 to 48. Then the deciding vote would have gone to Nixon as presiding officer, thus making him one of the most powerful Vice-Presidents in history. But those who had these dreams misinterpreted Morse's feelings about the Democrats, or perhaps about Nixon.

Morse made no move to join the minority party, and the Democrats, with new members of their own hungry for

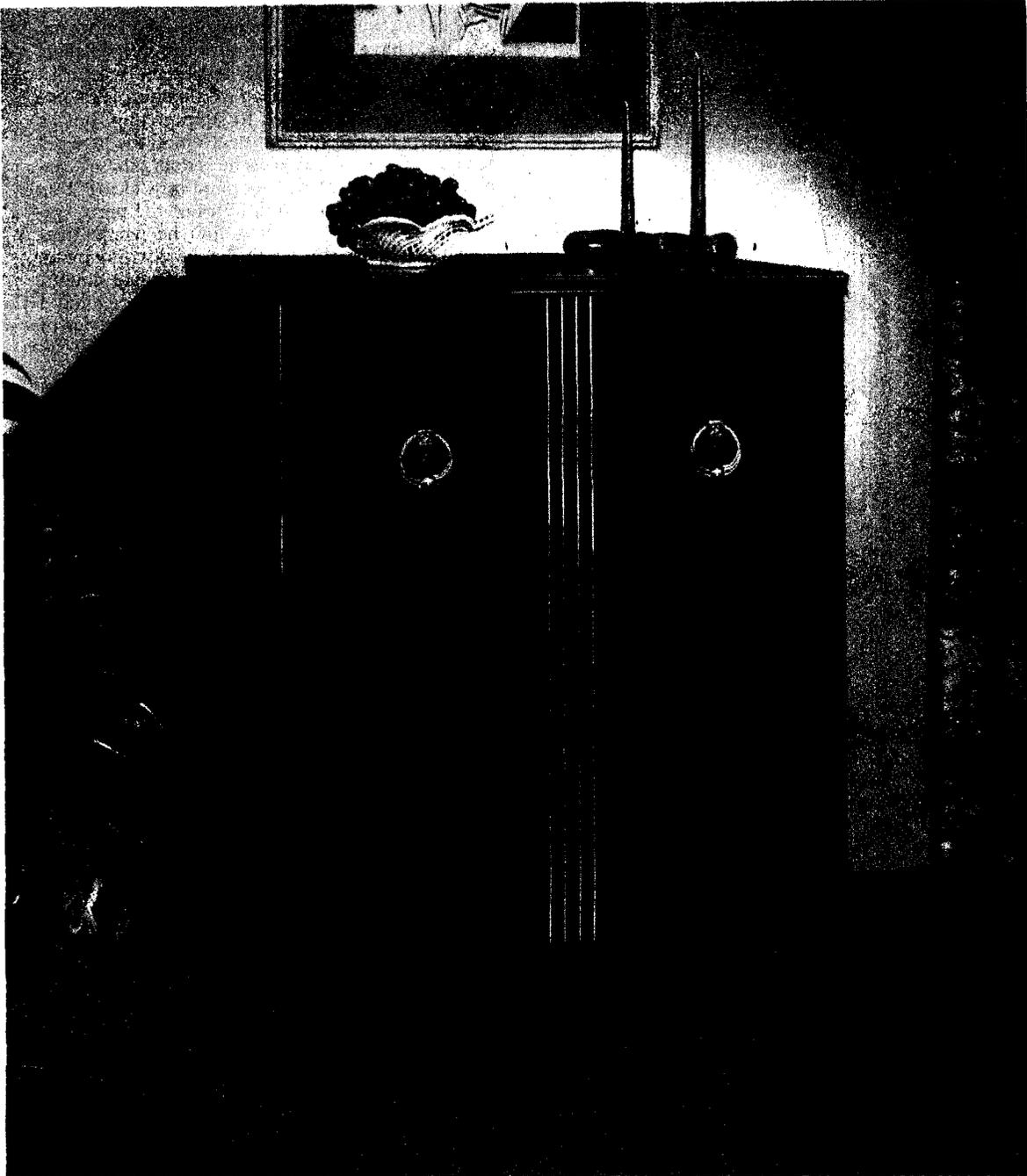


BUZZ BROWN

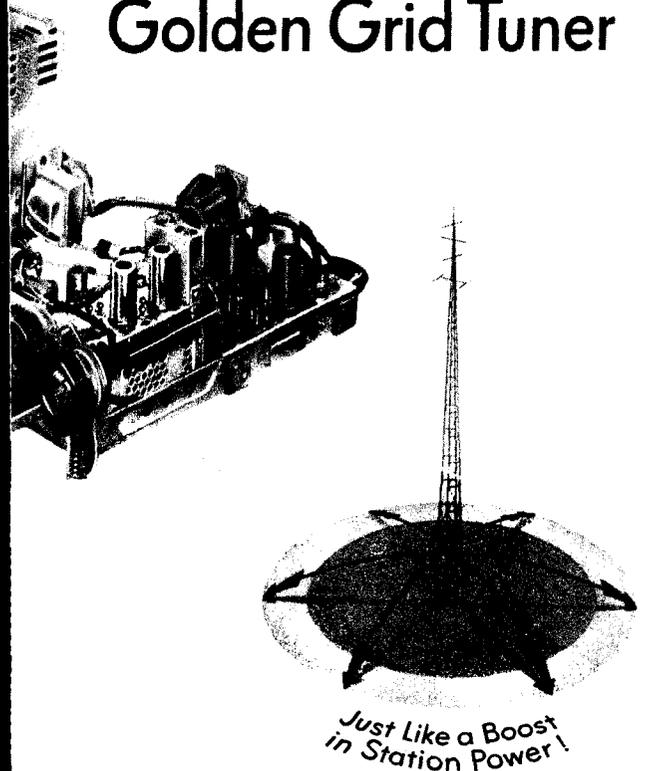
**Founder and only member of the Independent party, Wayne Morse of Oregon battles alone for his ideals**

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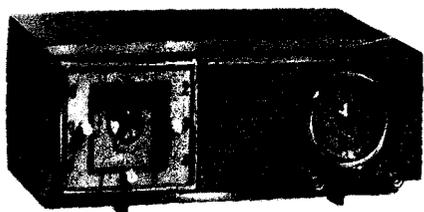
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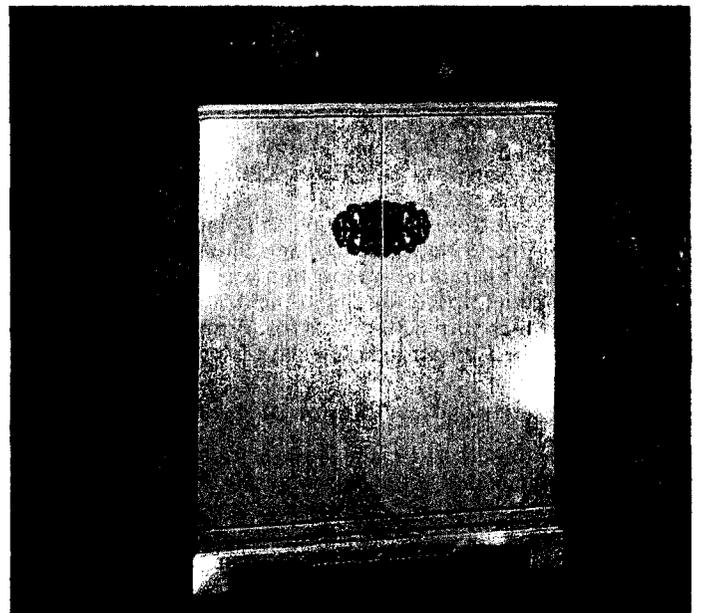
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Morse, with daughter Amy, 17, sits astride Golden Flirt, champion palomino that won first prize at 1949 Oregon State Fair. Senator spends week ends in country caring for his fine livestock

minority places on the important committees, failed to reserve any seats for the ex-Republican from Oregon. On Morse's motion from the floor to be restored to his old committees, he obtained support only from Senator Charles W. Tobey, among the Republicans, and Senators Russell B. Long, Harley M. Kilgore, Matthew M. Neeley, Clinton P. Anderson and Estes Kefauver among the Democrats.

In view of Morse's reputation as a liberal and a fairly consistent New Dealer, the failure of more Democratic liberals to support him was surprising, but Democratic party discipline held. It was this incident which formed the basis for Morse's speech attacking the Democrats a few days later.

#### Party Discipline Cannot Be Ignored

Morse himself had made it easier for both parties by announcing at the outset that he didn't want committee seats as a gift from either party; he wanted the Senate as a whole to give them to him, with no question about what political organization he belonged to. Theoretically, of course, the former law-school dean was right. Committee seats are voted by the Senate as a whole, but the nominations for them are made by the parties and there is no subject on which party discipline holds firmer.

After the first test vote, Morse introduced a reso-

lution to expand his old committees by one member each, to make room for him without using up party allotments. The resolution at last report was languishing in one of the committees of which Morse is not a member.

One distinguished Democratic liberal senator, who had not supported Morse on his bid for committee places, went to him in the cloakroom afterward and offered his own seat on an important committee to the man from Oregon.

Morse characteristically drew himself up, put on his antiparty look, and said: "What makes you think I would take charity from you? I won't take a seat from any individual or any party. I want it from the Senate of the United States." He then denounced the senator for having yielded to party pressure and discipline in supporting the Democratic committee slate on the floor.

"Nobody ever talked to him like that before," Morse chuckled later.

Twenty-one senators in all—Morse has kept a record—have come to him in the cloakrooms at various times to express sympathy for his present plight. To each he said tartly: "I didn't hear you speak up about it on the floor."

He recognizes that his lone position, on what he regards as a great issue, makes him appear somewhat eccentric to the country as a whole. He also is sensitive about newspaper editorials depicting him as a kind of senator gone berserk.

"If three or four senators went along with me," Morse says, "we'd be a movement, we'd be formidable, we'd have the balance of power in the Senate and we wouldn't look so darned eccentric at all."

Morse has a warm feeling of affection for some of the senators who failed to support him, but he keeps his personal and political emotions in separate compartments. He feels he is doing these senators a favor by rebuking them and thus clearing up their thinking about the iniquities of the party system. He frequently remarks that he would treat his own brother in this way if he were wrong on an issue, a threat which nobody in the Senate doubts.

It was with some trepidation, therefore, that I arrived at the Morse home in the Kent district of Washington 40 minutes late for a nine-o'clock Saturday-morning appointment with the master of invective. (My cabdriver, a stubborn man about asking directions, had got lost.) My offense was not political, however, and Morse was unruffled.

#### Introducing the Senator's Family

The senator lives in a pleasant two-story brick house ("about the only house in the block without a houseman," he says happily) with his wife, the former Mildred Downie, whom he met in grade school in Madison, Wisconsin, and their youngest daughter, Amy, seventeen, a junior at Woodrow Wilson High School. Two other daughters, Judith, eighteen, and Nancy, twenty-one, are at the University of Oregon, where their father—now fifty-two—had become dean of the Law School at the age of thirty-one.

The Morses told me that they have suffered few personal snubs because of the senator's actions, Washington being a fairly broad-minded town about political peculiarities. Mrs. Morse, who like her husband is a University of Wisconsin graduate, said smilingly she even gets preferential treatment at Washington stores. Most of the clerks, she said, seem to be under the impression she is married to Wayne Morris, the movie star.

The senator was in rough country clothes. Mrs. Morse went into the kitchen to finish preparing a picnic basket of fried chicken for him. The senator, a former Wisconsin farm boy, spends his week ends on 24 acres of fields and sheds he rents for \$30 a month from Herbert Swarouth, a farmer in Poolesville, Maryland, about 35 miles from Washington.

Morse gets up every Saturday morning at five-thirty, drives out to Poolesville and spends the day happily manuring his fields and taking care of the prize saddle horses and cattle he has been raising for most of his life. There are no sleeping facilities on his acreage; he goes home at night, but returns Sunday after services at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church. (During the week a hired man tends the farm.)

Out of consideration for me, Morse had delayed his trip this Saturday until what was for him late in the day.

As Mrs. Morse handed us the basket of fried chicken, she said: "The only thing I mind in this political situation is that people are getting the wrong impression of Wayne. They think of him as an angry, bitter man. They don't understand his joviality and his humor."

Morse does have considerable humor. He tells stories on himself. Aside from five-gaited saddle horses, which he trains himself, his chief equine interest is a harness-horse type, the roadster, a standard horse-show animal in the gentleman's driving class. These horses are driven from sulkies or buggies—skimpy contraptions which are little more than wheels and a few simple sticks on which the driver sits and steers by leaning his body far to port or starboard on turns.

The class is a throwback to the horse-and-buggy days when men used to show off behind stylish animals. In present-day exhibitions the riders try to show bursts of speed and fast turns; it is among

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## but he hates sympathy

the most dangerous and exciting of show classes.

Morse drives his roadsters himself. At the Oregon State Fair in 1949, he hitched an animal he then owned, Sir Laurel Guy, perhaps the greatest roadster in America, to a borrowed buggy and was whizzing past other drivers when the noseband on the horse's bridle broke. The noseband holds the horse's jaws shut; the horse practically pulls with its mouth. Morse was leaning far out for a turn and couldn't hold the animal back. As the horse and buggy hit the turn, the wheels caved in like toothpicks.

Morse fell beneath the wrecked buggy. He was struck in the spine and knocked unconscious for two hours. He was lifted onto a stretcher and carried across the arena to the infirmary. The crowd applauded to show sympathy and Morse, unconscious and with no later memory of the incident, waved an arm to the crowd all the way across the field.

"The attending physician," he laughs, "remarked, 'How can you beat a man like that—he's a politician even when he's unconscious!'"

### Scared Mare Inflicts Severe Injury

Morse has won 25 trophies and 10 championships with horses he raised himself. In August, 1951, he won the saddle-class championship at Orkney Springs, Virginia. He was walking through the stables after the event, kidding the man who owned the second-place horse about having to buy the steak dinners, when a scared mare let fly with both hind feet. Morse got the full blow on the right side of his face; his jaw was broken in four places, and 13 teeth were knocked out. Bystanders reported that the blow sounded like a pistol shot.

Morse's knees didn't even buckle. He walked into an empty stall, lay down and spit out his teeth. He didn't stop talking for 30 minutes, giving instructions about what to do with his horse, what hospital he preferred to go to, what to tell his family, and how he preferred to be loaded into the ambulance. He again had been unconscious throughout and later had no memory of this period. But, as he says, his ability to talk goes very deep.

One afternoon not long ago he delivered an hour-and-three-quarters' oration in the Senate against confirmation of Charles E. Wilson as Defense Secretary. Yet that morning he had had a tooth removed from a fracture line of the old jaw injury. The operation, which included jaw scraping, took 40 minutes; his physician, knowing he intended to speak that afternoon, gave him some codeine tablets in case pain should recur while he was on the Senate floor. Morse failed to read the instructions about taking one pill every four hours and, in agony, swallowed one every 20 minutes during his speech. Afterward, full of codeine, he collapsed into a deep sleep in the Senate cloak-rooms—"raising a lot of false hopes," he says, "that I had had a heart attack."

A thorough countryman, with a lean, lined, Basil Rathbone kind of face, Morse actually seems far from physical deterioration. As we drove out to his rented acres, he did a 45-minute monologue for me, advancing his view of the evils of party regularity.

"They're not free," he said, "those men in the Senate. A free man is a man who is free to do what he knows is right. They have to take party orders and do things for expediency. Once you put expediency above principle, there is no principle left. Most of the senators take party orders. They stop thinking for themselves, they don't read serious books or try to figure things out. They're not even a very well-informed body of men."

His voice rose. Now he was delivering a speech, but at the same time driving expertly, his eyes never off the road. "Others will join me in the Independent party. It may not grow too big in my lifetime, but I'm planting a seed or two. This is a great movement. It really began forty years ago with Teddy

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SAMUEL GRAFTON

A clipping amuses the Morses. The family has only rarely suffered personal snubs, but many strangers phone Mrs. Morse to complain about senator. She is in complete agreement with him

Roosevelt. Someday it'll come to fruition and we'll have a party of truly independent-minded men."

"Wouldn't that be just another party with its own party discipline?" I asked. "What about future Independents who would refuse to follow the Independent party line?"

"No such problem will come up," he said, "because an Independent just follows facts, that's all. He decides on the facts, not on the basis of expediency. Why, most of the things I stand for you'd get agreement on in almost every living room in the land—it's only in the Senate, where party expediency enters in, that you get this one-sided show."

Then he added, more softly and with a smile: "You know, I used to be dean of a law school. I taught thousands of students these principles of political honesty. How can I depart from them now?"

After we arrived at his farm, Morse showed me his Devon cattle, an all-red breed of short, chunky animals, stemming originally from Devonshire, England. "Their milk is both rich and unusually digestible," he said. "That's what makes Devonshire cream so famous."

We walked over to the three or four rough sheds in which he keeps as varied a collection of living creatures as I have ever seen in one place: cows, horses, ponies, goats, turkeys, peacocks, bantams. A new calf was nursing improbably at a goat which stood high on a platform and was eating through a stanchion. Morse beamed at the scene. "Look at how they get along," he said. "You have to lead them, not drive them."

He began to talk about his boyhood on a Wisconsin farm at Verona, near Madison. He grew up in Verona, riding his horse 11 miles to grade school in Madison, or staying with relatives when the weather was bad. He has always been a livestock man. At ten he owned four Shetland ponies, and the proudest moment of his life, he says, came three years later when he sold one of them by mail order to an Ohioan. He paid his way through college raising laboratory animals.

The idea of blooded cattle and prize horses suggests wealth, but Morse's holdings cost him little. His total investment in five horses and fifteen head of cattle is about \$3,500. (He cheerfully tells you any financial detail of his life. He feels this is an obligation of a public official. He will tell you how much he gets for a speech or how much money he has in his pocket, or any other financial detail you want to know.)

### How His Knowledge of Cows Paid Off

He buys his animals shrewdly, like a countryman. He bought his first Devon cow, Lillybelle, two years ago at butcher prices although it is a pedigreed animal. Its owner, a Devon specialist, thought it had a broken leg; Morse found it did not have a temperature and gave his opinion that it was suffering only from a pulled stifle muscle. The owner disagreed and sold the cow at the slaughterhouse price; in three weeks, the cow recovered. "Later," said Morse, "that man came around to me and said he had to get that cow back—he couldn't let it be known that a politician had come down from Washington and done him out of a blooded cow. I told him he'd sold it, and that was that."

Out of nine Devons Morse exhibited recently at the Southern Maryland Agricultural Exposition at Marlboro, eight won ribbons—two firsts, four seconds and two thirds. "They were in pasture until the day before the show," he said fiercely, "not fattened up"—like some, I gathered, he could name.

As a youth in Wisconsin, Morse used to show his Shetland ponies against entries by the La Follette boys, sons of the old Wisconsin Progressive. Later, as he grew up, he campaigned for the La Follettes. "A group of us," he said, "would get a drum and climb into an old car and go to some small town. We'd beat the drum on the courthouse steps or in front of the post office, get up a crowd and do a campaign speech. Wisconsin was a great place; you could get up great discussions

## Oregon Republicans are out after his scalp. Characteristically, he shrugs them off

there. Hardly anybody talks things over like that any more."

When he married Mildred Downie after obtaining his master's degree in economics at the University of Wisconsin in 1924, Morse found a teaching job—in public speaking, naturally—at the University of Minnesota. He and his bride drove to Minneapolis in a jalopy on the Saturday of their wedding, arriving with a total of 12 cents. A kindly Swedish landlady gave them room and board on credit. Some movie houses charged only a nickel at that time, so the Morses went to a film show that night. Then each had one stick of gum, riotously spending the rest of the 12 cents.

On Monday morning Morse went into a bank and so enchanted the banker with the story of the 12-cent honeymoon that he lent Morse \$100 against his future pay checks. "I paid him off in two months," said Morse. "I hate debt. That's one thing I've kept from my childhood."

While teaching at Minnesota, Morse attended the university law school, graduated, and in 1928 moved to Columbia on a graduate law fellowship. In 1929 he went to the University of Oregon Law School as an assistant professor. In two years he

was dean; in 15 years he was a United States senator from his adopted state.

He made early contact with the New Deal. On leave from Oregon, he served in 1936 as assistant to the Attorney General in directing a nation-wide study of pardons, probations and paroles. He joined the War Labor Board in 1941. Although already well known as a liberal, he resigned from the board in 1944 in protest against what he regarded as its knuckling under to John L. Lewis and the coal miners' union.

The incident was typical of Morse's brand of liberalism. He recently startled some of his liberal friends by supporting Senators William E. Jenner and Joseph R. McCarthy in their requests for new appropriations for their investigating committees. He explained to those who objected to the Jenner and McCarthy methods that he felt the right of the Senate to conduct investigations was at stake. He resented what he calls pressure from "leftists and some I suspect of being fellow travelers" to use him to block the probes. "These people want to destroy true liberties," he said. "If Jenner and McCarthy violate anybody's rights, I'll take care of them later." Typically, while supporting the re-

quests of Jenner and McCarthy for funds, he prepared a bill to give Senate committee witnesses the right to have counsel and the right of cross-examination.

Morse entered national politics in 1944, when he was persuaded to run in the Oregon Republican primary for U.S. senator. He won. In the election, he ran against and defeated a conservative Democrat, Edgar Smith, who has since joined the Republican party which his victorious opponent has left. Morse, who is considered a stout campaigner, was re-elected in 1950 and has four years to go on his second term.

He feels that if he can get over the hump of his next election in Oregon, he will, like the late Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska, have won a real place in the Senate as an independent, a man above party. Many Oregon Republicans are determined to prevent his re-election; they recently introduced a bill in the Oregon legislature to make it illegal for a person elected to office by one party to seek re-election as a candidate of another party.

Morse regards this bill as an attempt to force him to run in the Republican primary rather than stand as an independent in the later election. He said it constitutes a "public confession on the part of Republican politicians that they cannot defeat me if all of the voters of Oregon are allowed to participate in choosing their senator." He is unperturbed about the bill; as a lawyer, he considers it unconstitutional and believes it will arouse protest that will help him.

### Maverick Role Has Some Advantages

As we walked across his farm acres, Morse told me that there are some consolations in his present position as the maverick senator. He receives above 600 "answerable" letters a day, mostly favorable; people around the country with complaints are beginning to write to him instead of to their own senators, he says. He is in demand as a speaker. He figures that his office expenses outrun his Senate allotments by \$500 to \$700 a month; he speaks just enough, for fees, to make up the difference. He is in great request for television political panel shows.

"Mine is not a happy role," he said. "Nor an easy one. It is a very unhappy thing. Worst, for me, is the effect on my family. My wife gets nasty phone calls from strangers. They abuse me to her. When she suggests they call me, they say: 'What's the use? We can't influence him.' Then she tells them that she agrees with me, and they slam the phone down."

At cocktail parties, people sometimes get a little tight and become belligerent toward him. "Since I never take it without giving it back," he said, "I just don't go to cocktail parties." He doesn't drink—or smoke—anyhow. He goes to few parties of any kind, attending only when, he said, "I believe the state of Oregon has a right to be represented."

When the Morses retire for the night—usually around 10:00 P.M.—the senator punches a shutoff device on his telephone. Some of his constituents in faraway Oregon are inclined to brood about his exit from the Republican party at the height of the Presidential campaign. As the night wears on, they sometimes feel the need to call him up and reprimand him. Since Oregon enjoys a three-hour time differential over the District of Columbia, these calls are likely to come in around 2:00 A.M. Washington time. Morse feels he can do without them.

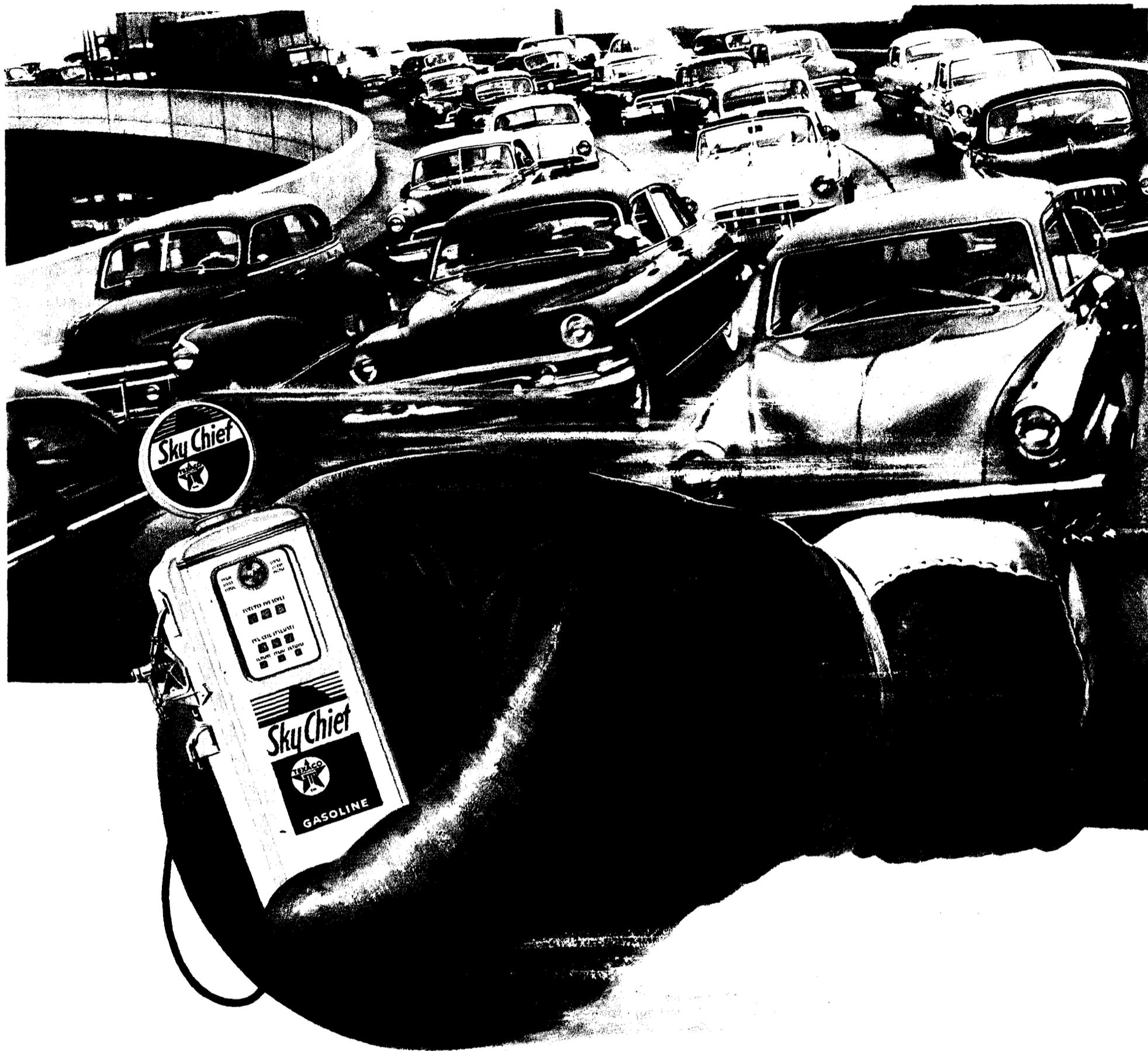
But Morse put aside politics as he proudly pointed out his cherished Devon bulls to me. "Look at those bulls," he said. "They never fight. They're so amiable—that's why I love the breed. I wouldn't keep Angus cattle—they go wild."

And with that somewhat incongruous remark, the firebrand of the United States Senate went off to work his field, as happy a man as I have ever seen. ▲▲▲



Morse probably is happiest doing farm chores. He sees 1956 elections as his greatest obstacle. If he can make the grade, he feels he will have established himself as a bona fide independent

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ARTHUR SHILSTONE

Commander Garrigues said, "You're dead, Mr. Bergdahl, dead through your own stupidity"

# Birds at Sunset

By ROBERT A. KNOWLTON

**A**VIATORS." Commander Garrigues spoke in slow anger. "Children. Heroes in training panties. They know everything, these kids; they were *born* knowing everything, like the Wright Brothers." He paused. "Were we ever that immature, Tom?" he asked. "Even at Pensacola, even with our first squadrons?"

"We're too old to remember," Tom Fullerton answered comfortably. "You and I, we've had it all. We got our three stripes and our ulcers, and it's kind of like the end of a road. What hurts you is that these jockos fly better stuff than we ever dreamed of. They laugh at us, sure, but they'll never know what flying really was."

The high, double whine of a Banshee squadron swelled, shrieked, vibrated through the instructors' lounge. Garrigues waited as the hysterical falsetto of each new jet overlapped the fading scream of its leader. Fliers, he thought coldly. Spare me from fliers. Spare me from myself.

When he was sure the squadron had passed he spoke again, trying to keep his voice low and uncomplaining. "Pitiful, bloody children. They thought they could heckle me in class today, Tom. Heckle *me!*" He tapped the wings on his chest. "There's always one of them who starts it, one wise guy. The others get their cues from him. And you know, being fair about it, the joker's usually the best flier in the whole bunch."

Precisely an hour before, another squadron had skimmed over the Administration Building's

flat roof, filling the classroom with its sudden, unbearable blast. As now, Commander Garrigues had waited carefully until the last jet had passed before picking up the lecture at the point of interruption.

"Water will be a problem, gentlemen," he said, "if you bail out over desert or arid country. Your canteens won't be much help unless you're spotted right away."

"Bail out," Ensign Bergdahl murmured tentatively from the second row. "Flash the nylon. Hit the silk. Geronimo!"

Garrigues ignored him. "Fortunately, very few areas of potential operations are entirely barren," he continued, speaking more rapidly and precisely. "If you keep your heads, you'll find many indications of water. Animal tracks, for example, never by-pass a stream or spring. Notice the flight of the birds at sunset. They'll head toward the nearest drink."

"What kind of birds, sir?"

Garrigues took off his shell-rimmed glasses with exaggerated weariness and pinched the bridge of his nose.

"I'm not an ornithologist, Mr. Bergdahl," he said. "Just birds. Any birds."

"I mean, I was thinking they might be parrots," Ensign Bergdahl insisted. "And parrots don't drink. They chew leaves and things for their water."

"If parrots eat leaves, they wouldn't be living in a desert," said Garrigues, hating himself for

arguing. "Vultures, maybe. Let's get on with it, shall we?"

He glanced around the room, found neither assent nor objection, and bent to his notes. "Condensation may be obtained from the aircraft fuselage or from rocks, and should be collected with a sponge or clean, absorbent cloth. Is that clear?"

"How about halazone, sir?"

Too much, Garrigues thought. You can live with children too much, too long. "Are you asking just to make talk, Mr. Bergdahl?"

"Sir, you said yesterday *all* drinking water ought to be purified with halazone, and you said just now we could get water from condensation, and I wondered whether you meant the condensation water had to be purified too."

"This is a class in survival, gentlemen." Garrigues spaced the words deliberately. "What I'm trying to do is to save your lives, simply because they represent a greater investment in time and money than your planes or equipment do. Your planes can be destroyed—*should* be destroyed, as a matter of fact, if you come down in enemy territory. But I have—the Navy has a selfish interest in your lives."

"If we destroy the planes, sir, how do we go about collecting moisture from the fuselage?"

The class grinned appreciatively.

Commander Garrigues felt his legs stiffen under the table as he tried to keep from rising. How do you teach them, how *can* you teach them? he wondered despairingly. With too much science in their hands, they've stopped being human. How do you get through to them, when they don't care, that they've got to hang on, to live? Damn them, they haven't any right to care so little.

Speaking to the shiny new insignia on his tormentor's green jacket, Garrigues said, "You're dead, Mr. Bergdahl. You're dead on some barren, godforsaken mountain, but nobody misses you because you're dead through your own stupidity. You're stupid, and that's why you're dead." He began to shiver. "Dismissed," he shouted.

**R**EMEMBERING, Garrigues shuddered again, only this time at his own irascibility. "Why'd we keep putting in for jets, Tom? I wonder if we knew we were kidding ourselves." He spread his hands and let them fall. "Well, the hell with it. Even a nineteen-year-old can only take so many g's. They're not so hot. I won't miss them a bit."

"Oh, you can talk," said Fullerton enviously. "You've got your orders, and staff duty at that. Nice soft staff duty for your poor, frayed nerves. When d'you report?"

"Eleven May," Garrigues said. "On or about eleven May, right when my garden's coming along best. That's another thing I love in the Navy: they've been saying 'on or about' ever since they ran sailing ships, but you report a day late and it's a court. What's that?" he asked abruptly.

"Just the station wagon starting," said Fullerton. "You *are* jumpy. Did I ever tell you about that booby-trapped car on Luzon?" Chuckling, he began the story for the tenth time, but through the familiar words Garrigues could feel the racing of the station wagon's motor and could hear Ensign Bergdahl's proud and empty voice calling to the children, to the faceless, arrogant fliers.

"Any you birds at sunset heading for the oasis?" Bergdahl was shouting. "Want to roll for drinks?"

"Hey, Tom," Garrigues interrupted. "You know something? I got a birthday coming up."

"Well, isn't that just dandy! We'll wear paper hats and pin the tail on the donkey and throw up from the excitement of it all."

"No, seriously, we ought to have one good, final celebration. By the time I see you again, we won't be having birthdays any more. We'll be wearing girdles and lying about our age and pinching waitresses in cheap night clubs."

Fullerton considered, a flicker of interest on his face. "Maybe you got something," he admitted. "We been taking it too hard. We could tie one on and forget about these brats. How old you going to be? Thirty?"

Garrigues shook his head ruefully. "Thirty-one," he said. ▲▲▲