

OCTOBER 26, 1972

The big noise the national politicians are making isn't disturbing the Shortgrass scene. Screwworms and shipping are sapping the herders' interest.

Affairs of state become secondary when the push is on to save the area's livestock. Spellbinding hopefuls don't mean much when you are 36 days behind and losing a week every day. Once important matters seem mighty insignificant under the present order. When people have a chance to sit down now, they rest.

Country citizens have an advantage over the city folks. We can be completely objective in our political choice. Nobody can go around saying we voted for a candidate for selfish purposes, because there aren't any candidates who'll spend more than the price of a postage-paid letter to defend our interests.

Polls are run every day to see how popular the contenders are. No polls are needed to know how popular the herders are. All that has to be done to gauge our strength is to review the Congressional Record. Businesses devoted to manufacturing tea napkins have a bigger stroke in Washington than we do.

Campaigns this year have taken on an undercover atmosphere. One party claims that the other party was bugging their telephones and spying on them. The offended say that former FBI men and ex-CIA agents have been putting the old espionage hocus pocus to their campaign strategy.

I don't believe that cloak and dagger experts are tough enough to stomach the political clatter that goes on in front or behind the scenes. Ex-spies may be able to give folks arsenic flavored cocktails, but they can't take the line of chatter that professional politicians are saturated in.

Think how hard it is for you to suffer out their speeches forced by the conscience of patriotism. Imagine doing that for money. Spying on the worthies would be first line hardship duty. It'd take a big piece of coin to hire an old boy to eavesdrop through a whole campaign. I'd prefer listening to a week's rerun on a rural party line to that misery. Cured pork can't get as rancid as political speeches can.

The best break we could have, besides the political sabotage being successful, would be for the parties to start robbing campaign propaganda from the mail trucks.

So much junk mail comes into Mertzon as it is, the postmistress has to tamp the envelopes in with a bar. In election years the problem increases.

An outfit wrote the other day asking for support of a candidate who had practically promised to have all the ranchers in the country deported.

The name of the group was "The Rural Committee for the Election of the Hon. So-and-So." More time was spent drawing together the material than has been spent in the past 20 years supporting rural causes.

I don't guess they had any way of knowing, but I wouldn't join the board of directors of A. T. and T. if their hero owned as much as one share. Five U. S. marshals packing loaded sixshooters is about what it'd take to get me to think about that fellow for the office of low constable of the smallest county in the state.

Besides that, rural committees can't rise high enough off the ground to clear a netwire fence. If I were going to join something called rural, I'd want it to be a bank that wouldn't loan \$40 on a motor scooter to help that candidate tour the country.

So I wrote that rural committee a letter and told them they could take their clam digging, chesapeake-headed candidate and go seek support in the bloody streets of Dublin as far as I was concerned.

Historians aren't going to be able to blame us for influencing the course of the nation or corrupting the parties. Our children can't go around saying that we fouled up the fate of their times.

The shortest love affair known has been the flicker of romance that happens just before election time between the ranchers and the politicians. They have forgotten us so many times now that it may not mend up so fast this time.