

9/25/84

Dear Les,

Thanks for the note and the copy of the column as sent out. It was carried that way locally. I, too, am sorry the Post didn't carry that part because it could have done some good with Washington exposure.

Whittaker may not have returned your call but it did not go unnoted.

Jim Lesar had written a strong personal letter to the first DJ lawyer on the case, a man Jim regarded as an honest conservative. (One word too many!) It was ignored for more than a month. Then Whittaker wrote a letter to Jim's Nader counsel. Fine! I know their fallback position now and will prepare my ACLU counsel for it.

Without your calls they'd have ignored Jim's letter and we'd not know their newest lies.

Hope you have a great time in Europe!

Thanks and best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Hal', written in a cursive style.

Sept 21

Dear Hal,

Well, they chopped it but not fatally,
I hope. Wish the Post had carried it.
Thanks for the other stuff but I am
totally under water now, being only
flooded last time ~~xxxx~~ and can hardly
pause to breathe between now and Oct.
6 when I leave for Europe.

Best

Thanks much for the clip!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the initials 'LH' or similar, written in dark ink.

JACK ANDERSON

WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

**Lumber giant has hand out
for government welfare**

By Jack Anderson

WASHINGTON — When it comes to milking the federal government for handouts, the welfare cheats and food-stamp chiselers, who have aroused President Reagan's indignation, can't hold a candle to Louisiana Pacific Corp., the nation's largest buyer of publicly owned timber.

The company goes after the big bucks, not penny-ante speculations.

I've already reported how the U.S. Forest Service — headed by Louisiana Pacific's former general counsel and vice president, John Crowell — has obligingly agreed to cut down 50 million board feet of aspens in Colorado in response to the company's plan to build a waferboard plant there.

Earlier, Crowell engineered a \$600 million bailout that let Louisiana Pacific and other big lumber companies off the hook on their overpriced bids for government timber.

But the Forest Service isn't the only federal agency Louisiana Pacific has its hand out to. The company wants the Department of Housing and Urban Development to help finance construction of its waferboard plants in Mississippi, Michigan and Minnesota, with "action grants" to communities where the plants will be located.

In fact, this profit-making recipient of corporate welfare, which reported a sales growth of 26 percent last year, plans to put up as little as \$400,000 of its own money to build one \$18 million waferboard plant in Minnesota.

Louisiana Pacific expects to raise the rest of the money from publicly financed sources at federal, state and local levels. The taxpayers will take the risks; Louisiana Pacific will reap the profits.

The company laid it on the line to the town fathers of communities where it plans to build waferboard plants: no federal aid, no factory. My associate John Dillon has seen letters sent by Louisiana Pacific intended to pressure the local governments into applying for HUD's urban development action grants, called UDAGs.

"But for the approval of the UDAG, Louisiana Pacific will not undertake the project," company Vice President John Hart warned the mayor of Two Harbors, Minn.

Hart's letter pledged that Louisiana Pacific would commit "a minimum of \$400,000" toward the Two Harbors waferboard plant. Where would the rest of the \$18 million estimated cost come from? A \$2 million HUD grant, \$10 million worth of tax-exempt industrial revenue bonds, and the rest from a Small Cities Development Grant and money put up by Lake County and a state development fund.

Despite the threat clearly expressed in Hart's letter to the mayor of Two Harbors, a Louisiana Pacific spokesman insisted that the availability of a HUD grant is "not a determining factor for our consideration to go into a community." More important, he said, is a good labor pool and proximity to a "fiber pool" — meaning trees.

He was at least partly correct: Louisiana Pacific does plan to build plants in some communities without HUD grants to keep loan interest rates low. Apparently the company just uses the grants selectively.

Footnote: Louisiana Pacific's corporate arrogance is not limited to its dealings with governmental bodies. Last year, a few days after it refused to sign a wage-freeze agreement with the carpenters' union, the company board voted to give Chief Executive Officer Harry Merlo a \$94,000-a-year raise.

Already one of the nation's highest-paid executives, Merlo now makes about \$2.5 million a year — while his company lines up for taxpayer-supported handouts.

UNSEEING JUSTICE: The Justice Department has tried to discredit a persistent adversary by claiming that he had been "closely observed" misbehaving in federal court for over five years, when in fact he had been seriously ill at home throughout the period except for one brief court appearance.

Justice's target is Harold Weisberg, 71, who has been trying to extract information from Justice about the 1963 assassination of President John Kennedy.

In an appeal brief, Justice Department attorneys managed to malign Weisberg's lawyer, James Lesar, as well, writing: "The district court had closely observed plaintiff's counsel's relations with plaintiff in this litigation for more than five years."

The brief blistered Lesar for allegedly letting his client get out of control. Actually, in his one appearance, in 1980, Weisberg sat in the audience, not at counsel's table.

Weisberg has been virtually confined to his home with a variety of circulatory ailments since September 1980. Yet the Justice brief claims the trial judge "saw" Weisberg making "interminable demands" for information.

CROSS-BORDER DRUG TRADE: Mexico continues to be a major conduit for illegal drugs into this country. Investigators for Sen. Paula Hawkins, R-Fla., say Mexican officials have failed to prevent increased production of opium poppies, heroin and marijuana.

A confidential cable from the U.S. embassy attributed Mexico's poor showing in drug matters to "corruption and mismanagement" and to simple lack of concern. According to the cable, Mexican officials concede that "the government of Mexico... hadn't given the border due attention."

In evident exasperation, U.S. Customs Commissioner William Von Raab has threatened to "redeploy customs forces onto the drug problem and away from efforts against smugglers of high-value items into Mexico" — a matter supposedly of more serious concern to the Mexican government than the smuggling of drugs into the United States."

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