Montana daily press and the 1964 gubernatorial campaign

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The University of Montana
THE MONTANA DAILY PRESS AND THE
1964 Gubernatorial Campaign

By

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Widespread charges that newspapers are unfair in their election coverage are not new. Prior to 1952, the complaints primarily were concerned with the fact that a majority of newspapers editorially supported Republican candidates. That the charge was true never was denied. In fact, the charge was documented by the newspaper trade magazine, Editor & Publisher (see Table 1).

Thus, from 1932 through 1948, Democrats and others complained about the press' editorial support of Republicans, and, more specifically, of conservative Republicans. Among those complaints were charges papers were being unfair in news coverage as well as on the editorial page. In 1940, for instance, Edward J. Flynn, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, charged that newspapers, particularly the New York Times, were bowing to financial pressure from advertisers in coverage of the presidential campaign.¹

But those complaints of pro-Republican bias usually died down after the elections, which resulted in Democratic victories. Charges of bias by the losing Republicans would have sounded hollow because of the preponderance of pro-Republican editorial pages; Democrats, after victory, were inclined to seek better cooperation with the press rather

**TABLE 1**

NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL SUPPORT FROM 1932 to 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Percentage of Newspapers*</th>
<th>Percentage of Circulation*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoover R</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt D</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landon R</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt D</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willkie R</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt D</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewey R</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt D</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewey R</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truman D</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower R</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenson D</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower R</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenson D</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nixon R</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy D</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The figures in this table refer to the percentage of newspapers among those responding to the poll. In 1932, for instance, 52 per cent of the newspapers responding to the Editor & Publisher poll supported Hoover.

2Robert U. Brown, "57% of U. S. Dailies Back Nixon; 16% for Kennedy," Editor & Publisher, November 5, 1960, p. 9, and "Gain in FDR Press Support Shown by Second E & P Survey," Editor & Publisher, October 26, 1940, p. 7. Circulation figures for 1932 and 1936 are not available. All numbers given have been rounded to the nearest per cent.
than risk damaging press-administration relations with charges that newspapers were unfair. The Democratic winners could afford to be magnanimous; the Republican losers had no reason not to be.

It is difficult to mount an attack on newspapers' editorial stands. Democrats could bemoan the fact most newspapers took editorial positions favorable to Republicans, but they could not argue the paper did not have the right to take whatever stand it wanted. They might charge—perhaps with truth in some cases—that publishers were endorsing candidates solely on the basis of economic prejudices, but they would have to admit, with Robert H. Estabrook, that "there is no kind of cure, no method of control, that would not be far worse than the disease."  

The critics undoubtedly were aware, too, of the serious doubts being raised about the influence of editorial opinion in newspapers. There is no proof that newspaper endorsements, no matter how strong the emotions they raise among partisans, are an important, much less a decisive, factor in determining the outcome of elections. Alexis de Tocqueville, in his astute Democracy in America, recognized a related fact in 1833 when he wrote:

The personal opinions of the editors have no kind of weight in the eyes of the public; the only use of a journal is, that it imparts the knowledge of certain facts, and it is only by altering or distorting these facts, that a journalist can contribute to the support of his own views.

The campaign of 1952 marked a change in emphasis in the controversy

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over election coverage. Democrats concentrated on charges newspapers were letting their editorial preference—which once again was predominantly Republican—seep into the news columns. And for the first time since 1928, the Republican candidate, Dwight Eisenhower, won.

"Newspapers—especially daily newspapers—have become big business, and big business traditionally has always been Republican," retiring Democratic President Harry S. Truman said. Americans, he continued, should "add a dash of salt to every Republican helping of news." A group of 96 prominent American authors, including Pearl S. Buck, Bennett Cerf, John Steinbeck and Carl Sandburg, charged the press with distortion:

Partisanship has been allowed to soak through from its legitimate place on the editorial pages and in signed columns. It has been allowed to infect the very writing of the news and, even more, the way it is displayed. Even photographs have been used to mislead.

That the criticism of the press was on a larger scale than it had been in previous elections is shown by the press reaction to it. Editor & Publisher, which had hailed the election as disproving the charge newspapers were losing their influence, criticized the methods used by the group of authors, saying they "set out to prove what they


6"Page 1 Display Contradicts Authors on Press Bias," Editor & Publisher, October 25, 1952, p. 52.

believed to be true." An Associated Press study of election coverage purported to show that the Democrats actually had been given an edge in coverage because of stories about Truman's whistle-stop tours.

Proof that the charges of bias worried newspapers—at least temporarily—is illustrated further by Editor & Publisher's call for a complete study and review of campaign coverage. Less than a month after the election, Sigma Delta Chi, men's professional journalism society, offered to sponsor a study of news coverage by radio, television, magazines and newspapers of the 1952 Presidential campaign.

Reaction to the proposed study is illuminating. Louis LaCoss, editorial page editor of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, said, "If SDC admits by resolution that it wishes to become another snooper, another meddler, another high inquisitor, another self-appointed monitor of newspaper morals, then it has missed a big lesson in the recent elections." The voters, he continued, had spoken out in the election against snooping—"against nosey persons who for 20 years have been

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8"Real Study Needed," editorial, Editor & Publisher, November 1, 1952, p. 42. Just two weeks later, however, Editor & Publisher reported that newspapers all over the country were adding up their campaign news coverage to "disprove politicians' charges of news bias by a so-called 'one-party press.'" Editor & Publisher overlooked the fact that the newspapers were doing exactly what it had accused the authors of doing. See "Post-Election Roundup: News Held in Balance," Editor & Publisher, November 15, 1952, p. 10.

9"Page 1 Display Contradicts Authors on Press Bias," loc. cit.

10"Real Study Needed," loc. cit. The magazine even offered to contribute to the cost of such a study.

telling us how we must live.\textsuperscript{12}

But other editors supported the proposed study. Barry Bingham, editor of the Louisville \textit{Courier-Journal}, said:

It seems to me extremely important for the press itself to meet these charges \textit{[of unfair campaign coverage]}. If there is dirty linen to be washed, let's do the washing ourselves. If we ignore the washing job, some others will do it for us, and it's quite possible that they will put ignorance into the water and prejudice into the cake of soap.\textsuperscript{13}

In the spring of 1953, the special Sigma Delta Chi committee declared that a study of press performance was not feasible. The performance could be catalogued, the committee said, "but properly to weigh such material objectively to arrive at a sound collective judgment of bias or lack of bias is a problem for which we have found no feasible solution."\textsuperscript{14}

Although Sigma Delta Chi found that a study was not feasible, several individuals—including Nathan B. Blumberg, Sidney Kobre, Charles E. Higbie, Malcolm W. Klein and Nathan Maccoby—conducted studies of newspaper performance. Most of those studies indicated that although there were instances of bias, no widespread indictment of the press could be made from the evidence studied.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{12}Louis LaCoss, letter to the editor, \textit{Editor & Publisher}, December 13, 1952, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{14}"Study of Press in 1952 Campaign 'Not Feasible.'" \textit{Editor & Publisher}, April 18, 1953, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{15}The most extensive study, that done by Blumberg, encompassed 35 newspapers from all over the nation. Blumberg found that six showed evidence of partiality in news columns. The six were the Sioux
By 1956, controversy over the press's 1952 performance had died down. Candidate Adlai Stevenson said he thought the press was doing a better job than it had done in 1952 and that newspaper coverage of his campaign was "generally good."\textsuperscript{16} The \textit{Columbia Journalism Review} reported that the question of biased selection and display of news did not even arise in 1956.\textsuperscript{17} A study of a sampling of Pennsylvania dailies by James W. Markham and Guido H. Stempel III showed little evidence of bias in coverage of the 1956 presidential election.\textsuperscript{18}

Cries of unfair newspaper coverage of the presidential race arose again in 1960. The criticism differed in several important ways from that of years before. For the most part, the charges were levied by supporters of Richard Nixon, Republican, who lost to Democrat John F. Kennedy by 118,000 votes. The complaints centered around accusations that reporters consistently had colored their writing to favor the Democrats.

This latter charge marked a major shift from earlier criticism, nearly all of which had been aimed at the conservative publishers and their top editors by Democrats who claimed the Democratic cause was

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textquote{"Adlai Pleased With Coverage," \textit{Editor & Publisher}, October 6, 1956, p. 96.}
  \item \textquote{"Campaign Coverage: An Appraisal of 1960--And Implications for 1964," \textit{Columbia Journalism Review}, Fall, 1961, p. 8.}
  \item James W. Markham and Guido H. Stempel III, \textit{Pennsylvania Daily Coverage of the 1956 Election Campaign}, pamphlet (University Park: School of Journalism, Pennsylvania State University), August, 1957.
\end{itemize}
being harmed by editorials and unequal space and display. "Liberal" reporters now were being accused by Republicans of writing their personal preferences into campaign stories. "Nobody had ever doubted that the majority of reporters favored Democrats or underdogs," said the Columbia Journalism Review, "but this was the first year that brought widespread accusations that they had consistently embroidered their copy politically." The Review noted that some accusers blamed Nixon's defeat on unfair coverage.19

But Nathan B. Blumberg, who had studied the 1952 election coverage, attributed Kennedy's victory partly to the fact the press had been fair. "With the election turning out as close as it did," he wrote, "it is safe to assume that if John F. Kennedy had been treated by the press in 1960 as Adlai Stevenson was in 1952, he would have been defeated."20 The Columbia Journalism Review, stating that few newspapers made "deliberate attempts to favor one party," added, "Many appeared to have learned the lessons of equal display so well that they occasionally forgot news value."21

Another relevant factor in the analysis of campaign coverage was the candidates' treatment of the press. The Democrats treated their relations with the press as an important part of the campaign; the Republicans apparently did not.22 The truth probably is that if


20Nathan B. Blumberg, "Appraising the Appraisers," Montana Journalism Review, IV (Spring, 1961), 5. See Footnote 15, this chapter.


22Ibid.
a few reporters treated Nixon shabbily; Nixon treated the press as a whole no better.

Nixon's attitude toward the press was illustrated several weeks after his defeat in the gubernatorial election in California in 1962. In his now famous "last" press conference, Nixon said:

I am proud of the fact that I defended my opponent's [Gov. Pat Brown's] patriotism. You gentlemen didn't report it, but I am proud that I did that. . . . For once gentlemen, I would appreciate it if you would write what I say. . . .

And as I leave the press, all I can say is this: For 16 years, ever since the Hiss case, you've had a lot of fun— a lot of fun—that you've had an opportunity to attack me, and I think I've given as good as I've taken.

I think that it's time that our great newspapers have at least the same objectivity, the same fullness of coverage that television has. And I can only say thank God for television and radio for keeping the newspapers a little more honest. . . .

Just think how much you're going to be missing. You won't have Nixon to kick around any more, because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference.23

The phenomenon of criticism of the press coming from Republicans rather than Democrats continued in the campaign of 1964. Many right-wing supporters of Republican candidate Barry Goldwater never had trusted the press, believing it to be either a tool of or an active, knowing participant in the "Communist plot."24

That belief undoubtedly was strengthened when it became obvious


\[24^\text{A local example of the distrust of the press by Goldwater supporters is shown by the following quote from a newsletter prepared by Missoula County Goldwater supporters: "Much good news about the Goldwater-Miller campaign keeps coming into Headquarters even though the Press continues to give our candidates a bad time." See "Missoula Goldwater Club Newsletter" (Missoula, Mont.; Missoula Goldwater Club, October 14, 1964), p. 1. (Mimeoographed.)}\]
that for the first time in many elections and perhaps in history, the Democratic candidate, Lyndon B. Johnson, would have more editorial support than would Republican Goldwater. The final figures from Editor & Publisher showed 42.4 per cent of the papers that participated in the poll supported Johnson and 34.7 backed Goldwater. The aggregate circulation of the pro-Johnson papers was 26,997,400 compared with 8,977,214 for the Goldwater papers—a margin of three-to-one readers for the Democratic candidate.25

But most complaints from Goldwater supporters did not concern newspaper editorial positions or the way newspapers displayed stories. Rather, the complaints were directed primarily against reporters and columnists. Goldwater on separate occasions during the campaign claimed some newspapers stooped to "utter dishonesty in reflecting my view" and had printed "out-and-out lies."26

Newspapermen answered that Goldwater was a difficult candidate to report. Noting that it was hard sometimes to understand exactly what Goldwater meant, AP political reporter Wally Mears said, "After a while you get to know what he means, although he doesn't exactly say it."27 Perhaps the best example of misunderstanding occurred when Goldwater, answering a question on how he would cut Viet Cong supply lines, said, "there have been several suggestions made. I don't think


that we would use any of them. But defoliation of the forests by low-yield atomic weapons could well be done." Thus, on one hand, Goldwater said, "I don't think we would" use atomic weapons, and on the other added that it "could well be done." The Associated Press drew heavy criticism from Goldwater supporters for printing the story without the Senator's qualifying statement, "I don't think that we would use any of them." 28

Early in the campaign a politically conservative national weekly newspaper, National Observer, said the press wasn't giving Senator Goldwater "a fair shake." 29 Two months later, however, the paper said, "The reporters, by and large, have cut it out. Mr. Goldwater today is getting a fair shake." Now, the editorial continued, it was time for Goldwater's supporters to stop complaining about the press. 30

Goldwater himself ended the campaign with praise for the press. "On the whole," he said the night before the election, "I think press coverage has been eminently fair." The Senator said he was aware many reporters disagreed privately with his views, but added, "I like many of those who have opposed me better than some who have supported me." 31 Within two months after the election, Goldwater, in his newspaper column, gave a short lesson on distinguishing between news stories and columns and editorials. He said:

28 Ibid., pp. 71-72.
A little experience in politics, of course, teaches that you must differentiate between the spot news reporters and the editorial writers, columnists and commentators. For the most part, I felt that the working press which followed me around week after week did a fair and impartial job.

Some of the misunderstanding about the press handling of campaigns, I am convinced, arises from the tendency of many readers to confuse news stories with editorials and reporters with columnists.32

Goldwater explained that although he disagreed with some of what the columnists said, he did not dispute their right to say it.

Despite Goldwater's kind parting words, his earlier complaints and the more serious complaints of some of his followers have left a residue of doubt in the minds of the newspaper-reading public. Those doubts, when added to those raised in previous elections, form a nucleus of distrust of newspapers—a distrust most commonly expressed in variants of the statement, "You can't believe what you read in the newspapers!"

Much of the criticism of press performance is suspect because it comes from partisans who do not understand the operation of newspapers. Indicative of this type of criticism is the charge of a conspiracy among newspapers to defeat this or that candidate. Traditionally, the charge has been that conservative publishers are engaged in a nefarious plot to defeat Democrats. More recently, liberal reporters are alleged to be engaged in a conspiracy to deliver the nation to communism or to the Democratic party—which is almost as bad in the eyes of the accusers. The National Observer, noting the absurdity of the charges of conspiracy, said, "Reporters of the

32Barry Goldwater, column, Missoula (Mont.) Missoulian, January 4, 1965, p. 4.
same point of view bicker among themselves. Editors can't even get their reporters to capitalize all words the same way, let alone adopt some party line. 

The fact the criticism is coming from partisans should in itself be a warning. All too often, the partisan—whether a candidate, office-holder or charity drive chairman—is not seeking newspaper fairness; what he wants is a controlled press that will serve his ends.

As one editor put it:

It is possible for an editor to take two exactly equal stories, both fairly written, one dealing with a Republican candidate and the other with a Democratic candidate. He can place those stories side by side on the same side of his paper. Violent Republicans will swear that their candidate's story was shorter and less prominent, while violent Democrats will raise the Devil because their candidate got "inferior treatment."

Also prevalent are the complaints based on a lack of understanding of how newspapers operate or on a lack of observation. Those critics never have experienced the pressure of writing a story to meet a deadline, keeping it short enough for space requirements,

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34 Bingham, op. cit., p. 8.

35 A humorous instance of the lack of observation was given at a public meeting at Montana State University in October, 1964. The speaker, a Republican candidate for the state legislature from Missoula County, claimed that Governor Tim Babcock, also a Republican, was getting an "unfriendly press." He said, in fact, that the Billings Gazette was for Renne. At that point, Bonnie Bowler, an MSU student and daughter of the Gazette's managing editor, commented, "I doubt very much if the Gazette is supporting Renne as much as you think." The paper, which clearly endorsed Babcock, traditionally has been strongly Republican.
writing rapidly a headline that can be no longer than 22½ counts, placing the story on the page without sacrificing attractive makeup and cutting the 10-inch story two minutes before deadline so it will fit in the five-inch hole. And, as noted earlier by Goldwater, some readers fail to distinguish between the editorial page and the news columns.

But as dangerous to the press as its uninformed critics are the journalists who believe newspapers share the throne with God and are beyond criticism. It was newspapermen of that ilk who scoffed at the idea of a press study in 1952. They have heard complaints for so long that they now automatically pass over criticism as being absurd.36

It is that very complacency that leads a newspaper to become a propaganda sheet. The idea that "You can believe everything, as long as it's in a newspaper or comes over the wire" is as ridiculous as its counterpart that "You can't believe anything you read in newspapers."

Since 1952 publishers have been aware increasingly of their duty to keep news columns free of bias. In a 1964 poll of editors and broadcast news directors by The Quill, publication of Sigma Delta Chi, 46 of 88 respondents answered "Yes" to the question, "Do you feel there is any cause for real concern in the regular

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36Why are we journalists so resentful of criticism?" Barry Bingham asked. "I believe the main reason is that we have such a high sense of our profession and its mission. We know that we are performing a vital service to our democracy. ... It is too easy for us to forget that some readers not only do not appreciate our performance but do not even understand our purpose." See Bingham, op. cit., p. 9.
challenges to the 'impartiality' of political reporters? Many newspapers and wire service bureaus are taking second looks at their campaign coverage in attempts to improve it.

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent such a "second look" is needed among Montana daily newspapers. The study was not begun with the assumption that bias did or did not exist in the newspapers' reporting of the 1964 gubernatorial campaign. Rather, the purpose is to study press coverage of the 1964 Montana gubernatorial campaign and to draw conclusions after the facts have been established.

Previous studies of press performance in election campaigns have considered primarily the effects of problems rather than the problems themselves. Rather than talk to candidates and editors about campaign coverage, the researchers have used rulers—and, increasingly, slide rules—to determine press performance. Their methods will be used in this study where they are of value, but they will not be used as ends in themselves. Through a combination of methods, bias or fairness may be indicated.

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37"Campaign Coverage '64," The Quill, LII (August, 1964), 12.
CHAPTER II

THE MONTANA DAILY PRESS

The 13 newspapers¹ selected for this study range in daily circulation from 36,924 for the Billings Gazette to 1,970 for the Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner. The papers fall into three size categories: (1) Billings Gazette, 36,924; Great Falls Tribune, 36,686; Montana Standard and Butte Daily Post, 24,273; and Missoula Missoulian, 18,159; (2) Helena Independent Record, 8,514; Kalispell Daily Inter Lake, 6,895; Bozeman Daily Chronicle, 5,111; Miles City Leader, 3,371.

¹There are 17 daily newspapers in Montana: The Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner, Great Falls Tribune, Great Falls Leader, Miles City Star, Lewistown Daily News, Kalispell Daily Inter Lake, Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Havre Daily News, Helena Independent Record, Missoula Missoulian, Missoula Sentinel, Livingston Enterprise, Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican, Montana Standard and Butte Daily Post, Billings Gazette (morning) and Billings Gazette (evening) and the Anaconda Standard. The Standard is published as an insert in the Butte Montana Standard and was not included in this study. A necessary decision was whether the evening papers in Missoula (Sentinel), Great Falls (Leader) and Billings (Gazette) should be included. They were not, for several reasons. In the case of the Sentinel, only the first page and several inside pages are made over from the morning Missoulian, thus leaving considerable duplication between the morning and evening papers. No copies of the evening Gazette were available locally. Although copies of the Leader were available, local material from the Leader is picked up in the Great Falls Tribune and vice versa. In fact, to varying degrees, studies of those three evening papers would have repeated studies of the morning papers in Great Falls, Missoula and Billings. Also, it was believed all or none of the three should be studied, and a decision to study all would have meant considerable effort and time in locating complete sets of the papers and in the actual study. For those reasons, the three papers were omitted from the analysis.
Star, 4,609; Havre Daily News, 4,066; (3) Lewistown Daily News, 3,749; Livingston Enterprise, 2,901; Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican, 2,485, and Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner, 1,970 (see Table 2).²

All the papers except the two smallest—the Tribune-Examiner and the Republican—have wire service coverage. Six are members of the Associated Press; two subscribe to United Press International and three have both AP and UPI coverage (see Table 2). Only one paper—the Great Falls Tribune—lists itself as Democratic; five of the papers—the Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner, Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican, Havre Daily News, Kalispell Daily Inter Lake and Miles City Star—list themselves as Republican or Independent-Republican.³

The Lee Newspapers of Montana, Inc., owns five of the papers: the Billings Gazette, the Butte Montana Standard, the Helena Independent Record, the Livingston Enterprise and the Missoula Missoulian. The five have a total circulation of 90,771, which is 58 per cent of the total circulation (156,342) of the 13 Montana dailies being studied. Three other papers—the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Havre Daily News, and Kalispell Daily Inter Lake—are members of the Scripps League. Owners of the other papers are: Dillon Tribune-Examiner, S. E. Burgess, owner;¹ Great Falls Tribune, Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company,


³Editor & Publisher Year Book, 44th year book of Editor & Publisher (New York: The Editor & Publisher Co., Inc., 1964), pp. 173-74.

¹During the period studied, the Tribune-Examiner was owned by E. C. Townsend. It was sold to Burgess effective March 1, 1965. Burgess also owns a daily newspaper in Dickinson, N. D., and a semi-weekly in Glendive, Montana.
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<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Daily Circulation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Billings Gazette</td>
<td>36,924</td>
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5Editor & Publisher Year Book, 1965, cit., and Montana State Press Association, loc. cit.
Although historical aspects of Montana journalism have gained some attention from writers, there have been few constructive analyses of the contemporary Montana daily press. Most of what has been written in this field deals with Montana journalism under the Anaconda Company, which, in 1959, sold its newspapers to the Lee group.

As pointed out by Richard T. Ruetten in an article in Journalism Quarterly, "Although Anaconda owned newspapers, the extent to which it controlled its editors is not clear." However, Ruetten and other writers suggest—directly or indirectly—that the Company exercised considerable control.

For some, the sale of the Company newspapers to the Lee group heralded a new era in Montana journalism. For instance, Editor & Publisher wrote, "The newspapers have been bought by a group of successful and reputable middle-Western newspapermen which will bring

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6 During the period studied, the Tribune was published by Alexander Warden. The Minneapolis Star and Tribune Co. purchased the paper effective May 1, 1965, from the Warden family. The Tribune was one of six newspapers cited for showing partiality in the news columns in Blumberg's study of the 1952 campaign. "Republican speeches and activities were inundated by a flood of stories and photographs emphasizing the Democratic cause, and the Eisenhower campaign was given little more than token coverage." See Nathan Blumberg, One-Party Press? (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954), pp. 73-74.

to them a policy of independence and individuality, as promised." In its own publication, "The Lee Group: Mid-America to the Mountains," the new owner stated:

The old taboos died with the Lee entry into Montana. Editorial columns, which had been stereotyped for generations, spoke out again. Good or bad, the news got fair play, and all but shocked readers who long had felt they were entitled to a more complete coverage of the local scene. And more than that, the Montana cities discovered a friendly new Lee family which took a personal interest in the welfare of each of the communities it served.9

Others were less certain. They pointed to the fact that the other "independent" Montana dailies, like the company papers, were dedicated editorially to the status quo. And they noted the Lee Group had promised to retain the same personnel who had been putting out the Company papers.10

Most of the articles concerning the contemporary Montana press have appeared in the Montana Journalism Review, an annual publication of the Montana State University School of Journalism. Vic Reinemer, executive secretary to Senator Lee Metcalf, Montana Democrat, wrote in the Review in 1961 about the need for better national and state government coverage by Montana newspapers and for critical analysis among Montana newsman of their own editorial and news efforts.11

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9 The Lee Group: Mid-America to the Mountains (Lee Enterprises, Inc., 1960), p. 73.

10 Ruettin, op. cit., pp. 104 and 8.

11 Vic Reinemer, "A Hard Look at Montana Journalism," Montana Journalism Review, IV (1961), 13-16. Reinemer reported that Montana was one of three states with no Washington correspondents. This
The Review also has printed studies of the Montana daily press in the 1960 and 1962 campaigns. The 1960 study, done by Montana State University journalism seniors, dealt with all the papers included in this study except the Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner and, in addition to those 12, also the Great Falls Leader.

Four newspapers were selected as having presented the most impartial coverage: the Butte Montana Standard, the Helena Independent Record, the Livingston Enterprise and the Missoula Missoulian. Races studied were the presidential (Richard Nixon v. John Kennedy), the gubernatorial (Donald G. Nutter v. Paul Cannon), senatorial (Orvin B. Fjare v. Lee Metcalf), Eastern congressional (James Battin v. Leo Graybill) and the Western congressional (George Sarsfield v. Arnold Olsen). The 13 newspapers in the study gave a total of 54.2 per cent of space to the Republican candidates and 45.8 per cent to the Democrats. A considerable amount of that advantage, it appears, came from the gubernatorial race where Democrat Paul Cannon, then lieutenant governor, refused to cooperate with newspapers or wire services; consequently, Republican Donald G. Nutter got considerably more news space in each situation has been changed slightly with the hiring by the Billings Gazette and the Missoula Missoulian of Kenneth Scheibel as a correspondent. Reinemer also reported that only one paper--the Great Falls Tribune--other than the Helena Independent Record had a correspondent in the capital city. Tom Mooney now serves as Helena correspondent for the Lee newspapers in Butte, Missoula, Livingston and Billings.

of the papers.

A similar study of the 1962 campaign was reported in the 1964 <i>Montana Journalism Review</i>. A senior journalism student, Printer Bowler, studied campaign coverage of the Eastern and Western congressional district campaigns by 11 daily newspapers (the 13 included in this study and the Great Falls Leader). The Eastern district race pitted incumbent Republican James Battin against Democrat Leo Graybill; the Western district race saw incumbent Democrat Arnold Olsen running against Republican Wayne Montgomery. In each case, the incumbent got more news coverage, although Battin with 59 per cent had a much larger proportion of coverage than did Olsen with 51.7 per cent.\(^{13}\)

It should be noted that neither study attempted to ascertain why the coverage was as it was. Each study, also, emphasized the statistical approach to the problem of studying campaign coverage.

One of the most thorough studies of the Montana press' relations with a contemporary political figure is Judith B. Rollins' master's thesis, "Governor Donald G. Nutter and the Montana Daily Press." Although the press reported fully the actions of the governor, Miss Rollins concluded it did so largely in an approving manner and failed in acting as a check on the government. She noted a great dependence on wire services for information and said papers sometimes would use wire service dispatches to cover events concerning their own locale.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., pp. 8-12.

She wrote:

If fault is to be found with the Montana dailies it lies not in the quantity, but in the quality of news coverage and editorial comment. The papers reported on government business at the state level perhaps as best they could, but the editorial columns could have been more aggressive, more analytical and more perceptive. The Montana daily press did not function as a check on Governor Nutter; it chose rather to augment the impression which the governor presented of a dynamic, aggressive politician.¹⁵

Miss Rollins' findings have particular significance for this study because the 1964 gubernatorial campaign probably started in public disagreement over the programs of the late Governor Nutter.

CHAPTER III

THE 1961 MONTANA GOVERNORIAL CAMPAIGN

The 1961 gubernatorial campaign may have started early in 1961 when the newly elected Republican governor, Donald G. Nutter, a conservative, announced a financial retrenchment program to get the state out of the red. Included in Nutter's proposals to the 1961 Legislature was a cut of approximately one-half in the University system general fund requests of the University unit presidents. Montana State College and its experiment stations and extension service particularly were affected. Although all the University unit presidents objected to the cuts, the most outspoken were L. O. Brockman, president of Northern Montana College at Havre, and R. R. Renne, president of Montana State College, Bozeman.

Tempers flared throughout the legislative session. On several occasions, Governor Nutter was particularly critical of Renne. Such an occasion was reported by newspapers following the Governor's speech in Sidney, his hometown:

Apparently referring to a statement by Montana State College President Roland R. Renne, that the budget cut would force the closure of the experiment station in Sidney, Gov. Nutter said, "You are not going to lose the Experiment Station and Dr. Renne, if he attempts to take out the experiment station... is going to have to answer to somebody besides the Board of Education."

"I think I'll be around here longer than Dr. Renne," he said.  

1Montana Kaimin (Montana State University, Missoula), January 24, 1961, p. 1.
Republican legislators and officials supported Nutter. House of Representatives Speaker Clyde Hawks of Big Horn County and Floor Leader Jerome Anderson of Yellowstone County accused Renne of starting a campaign to "continue the type of financial program that has placed this state seriously in debt." Lieutenant Governor Tim Babcock, elected with Nutter, gave complete support to the Governor's program.

On the other hand, Democrats, who controlled the Senate, generally opposed—at least in degree—the Nutter austerity program and defended Renne.

At the end of the session, the Democrats had been successful in restoring some cuts, but University System funds still were down 7.8 per cent from the amount the units had received in 1960-61. For Montana State College, the decreased budget meant a cut of 15.9 full-time positions, plus 21 full-time positions in the experiment stations and 45 in the extension service.

Meanwhile, in the April, 1961, meeting of the Board of Regents, the University System's governing body, Nutter failed in an attempt to block the offering of contracts to the six unit presidents under terms that would allow them to accept employment for one, two or three years. Nutter thought one-year contracts should be offered. That and other statements and actions by the Governor caused some persons to conclude Nutter was "out to get" Roland Renne. In a column in the People's

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Voice, a politically liberal weekly newspaper published in Helena, Associate Editor Gretchen Billings wrote:

There seems to be little question that Governor Nutter is hell bent on getting rid of Dr. Renne, either because of personal vindictiveness or because of pressure from the radical right and especially one powerful corporate interest or all three, and together these forces spell dynamite.£

Even if that were Nutter's plan, he did not live long enough to put it in effect. On January 25, 1962, the Governor and five companions were killed in an airplane crash. The state's 42-year-old lieutenant governor, Tim Babcock, became governor.

The disagreements between the state's Republican administration and the president of Montana State College continued. At the December, 1963, meeting of the Board of Regents, Renne requested a year's leave so he could accept appointment as assistant secretary of agriculture. Babcock and Dr. Gordon Doering, a Nutter-appointee on the Board, opposed the granting of the leave. Babcock, in a statement several days later, claimed it was unfair for Renne to leave the state because he was in the middle of a three-year contract (the one Nutter had opposed offering) and because Babcock thought Renne would not be able to achieve much in only a year in Washington.6 The other Regents overrode the protests. But in April, 1963, when the acting president of Montana State College was ill, the Board unanimously agreed to authorize Babcock to call Renne and ask him either to return to

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6Associated Press dispatch, Missoula Missoulian, December 14, 1962, p. 3. At this Board of Regents meeting L. O. Brockman submitted his resignation as president of Northern Montana College at Havre.
Montana or to resign as Montana State College president. Renne, however, stayed in Washington and did not resign and the Board appointed a new acting president.

On February 12, 1964, Governor Babcock announced he would seek his first full term as governor. He had indicated he would base his campaign on the upgrading of the University units and over-all education system during his term, a balanced budget, continued industrial growth and the "continuation of a business-like administration."  

Meanwhile, speculation had been increasing for months that Renne would announce his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. Renne made that announcement February 18 and explained, "My experience in public administration convinces me that I can provide the kind of state government Montana needs and deserves."  

Babcock was unopposed in the primary election, but Renne was faced by Billings furniture dealer Mike Kuchera, a perennial candidate in Montana. Despite indications many Republicans crossed party lines to vote for Kuchera and against Renne, Renne got 55.9 per cent of the Democratic vote, compared with 44.1 per cent for Kuchera. Babcock got only 30.5 per cent of the total gubernatorial vote in the primary, compared with 38.9 per cent for Renne.  

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7 Interview with Governor Tim Babcock, February 3, 1964.


The primary balloting on June 2 marked the beginning of Montana's grueling five-month campaign before the general election. Montana gubernatorial campaigns traditionally capture considerable interest, but seldom had two candidates so markedly different faced each other.

Babcock is a congenial, handsome former trucker with an easy smile. Although not a college graduate, he gained practical governmental experience in three terms in the House of Representatives. Babcock, who flies his own plane, spent three years as an Army combat infantryman in Europe and won the Bronze Star for valor in combat.

Renne is a more serious-looking, quiet man. He had been on the faculty of Montana State College for 3½ years, the last 20 as president. The 58-year-old former economics professor served in federal government posts under Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy. Although Renne had no practical political experience, he had worked with legislatures and governors for two decades on educational programs.

Throughout the summer, Babcock and Renne were forced to share the campaign stage with Charles Lee, a pro-gambling advocate who attempted to run as an independent candidate for governor but whose name finally was not allowed on the ballot because of the method by which he had been nominated. Lee made the first—and apparently the only—public statement of dissatisfaction with press coverage. At the Platform Convention of his Independent Development Party in late August, Lee said the state was controlled by "weaklings and parasites"

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10In Montana, according to Joe Kelly, executive secretary of the state Democratic party, "all of the pressure, about 90 per cent of the money and 105 per cent of the rumor goes for the governor's race." (Kelly made the statement in a speech at Montana State University, October 7, 1964).
who gained power "by corruption, by lies, by deceit, (and) by false promises to the public." He continued:

With the aid of a chain of newspapers, which are an insult to human intelligence, and with the help of false theological prophets [Lee had been opposed strongly by church leaders] they presume to enslave the people of Montana.\textsuperscript{11}

Both Babcock and Renne campaigned extensively throughout Montana. Babcock and the Republican candidates used the campaign caravan employed with some success in the 1960 campaign. During the summer and early fall, both candidates attended fairs, holiday celebrations and other community events.

Renne keyed his campaign mainly to attacks on the Babcock record. "The more we review the stewardship of the present Governor," he said in September, "the more we are impressed with the evidence of conflict of interest and the use of the Governor's office for private gain."\textsuperscript{12} He and R. V. Bottomly, the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, accused Babcock of using his office to further his trucking business and of corruption in the Centennial Train accounts. Renne tried to tie Babcock to the John Birch Society and the Goldwater forces in the Republican party.

The state, Renne asserted, was moving backward:

Recent Republican administrations have let us become a backwater state with low per-capita income and a poor tax base. They have shunned federal projects when those projects might have made possible securing funds to bring

\textsuperscript{11}Associated Press dispatch, Missoula Sentinel, August 26, 1964, p. 12. The author wrote to Lee to learn more specifically the nature of his charges about press coverage. The letter was not answered and the quest for information stopped when Lee's name was dropped from the ballot.

\textsuperscript{12}Letter from Roland R. Renne, September 24, 1964.
people, trade and commerce into our area. To increase per capita income and improve our tax base we must achieve economic growth at a rate in keeping with the rest of the nation and the West. Then our commerce will grow because markets will be adequate to sustain continued growth.¹³

Babcock, in his campaign, defended his "businesslike" administration, claimed schools were faring better under his administration than ever before, and said the state had a good business climate because of his administration's work.

The following is United Press International's interpretation of the campaigns:

In the gubernatorial campaign Babcock and Renne began to meet the issues after a dreary start that was less concerned with issues than with efforts at guilt by association.

Babcock used a textbook Renne wrote on land economics to intimate Renne favored socialism while Renne toured the state hinting Babcock, if not a member, favored John Birch Society views.

As the opponents got to the issues they found agreement in one thing—a reassurance to property owners of no increase in taxes. But they were less explicit on how the state would finance increasingly expensive programs.

Both put most of their faith in the fact an expanding economy would generate a tax base that would take care of rising expenditures. Babcock proposed a continuation of the three-cent tax on cigarettes to finance a building program for state institutions.

Babcock campaigned that under his administration employment and personal income rose except in agriculture for which he blamed farm policies in which he said Renne had a part as a former assistant secretary of agriculture.

Renne charged that under the GOP leadership Montana has fallen behind the national gain in prosperity and that under his leadership and in cooperation with Washington, the Treasure State could catch up.

Both Renne and Babcock came up with proposals for an expanded industrial development bureau for the state.¹⁴

¹³Roland Renne, political address, Civic Center, Helena, Mont., June 26, 1964.

Renne was aided in his campaign by President Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, Democratic vice presidential nominee, who had special praise for Renne on their visits to Montana. But Renne’s greatest asset may have been the assistance given by Montana’s senior senator, Mike Mansfield, a candidate for re-election. Mansfield, in the last weeks of the campaign, devoted much of his time to campaigning for Renne.

Babcock, meanwhile, was aided by Republican governors from nearby states who came to Montana to participate in the Governor’s birthday party, undoubtedly one of the biggest political extravaganzas ever staged during a Montana campaign.

In a discussion at a public meeting before Renne had announced his candidacy, Professor Thomas Payne, chairman of the political science department at Montana State University, summed up what any challenger would face in a race against Babcock:

Anyone who can eliminate a $4.5 million deficit is a strong political candidate for re-election. The Governor’s business-like administration followed a balanced budget for 1963. Gov. Babcock inherited the benefits of the Nutter austerity program, but he has not felt any of the program’s unpopularity.

Babcock’s biggest asset may well have been Land Economics—a textbook Renne had written. Babcock supporters called it “socialistic.” Although charges about the book and Renne’s defense of it were mentioned in the press, both editorially and in news stories, the damaging effect of the book likely was brought about primarily through whispering campaigns.

Adding to Babcock's advantage was the fact Montana has elected conservative governors since 1948 and Republicans since 1952 and the fact Renne, although probably generally respected throughout the state, was a political novice trying to assume a politician's role.

Babcock won his first full-term as governor by a 7,251-vote margin in a total vote of 280,975. He won in the face of a landslide that gave Montana's four electoral votes to Lyndon Johnson and elected Mike Mansfield by a 81,276-vote margin. In 13 national and state partisan races, the Republicans won four—the Eastern district congressional seat, the governorship, the lieutenant governorship and the position of state auditor. Control of both houses of the state legislature went to the Democrats by comfortable margins.

Renne, who received 136,862 votes to 144,113 for Babcock, carried 11 of the state's 56 counties.

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CHAPTER IV

CAMPAIGN COVERAGE AS SEEN BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Roland Renne and Tim Babcock differed basically in their assessment of press coverage of the 1964 gubernatorial campaign. Renne, interviewed at his office three weeks after the election, said he believed coverage was very inadequate and added that he thought the press had been unfair particularly in its handling of his campaign. Babcock, in an interview early in February, 1965, said he thought campaign coverage was adequate. "Coverage newswise was fair, impartial and complete," he remarked.

Generally, Renne's assessment of coverage was supported by other Democrats who assisted in his campaign. Babcock's campaign manager, Orvin B. Fjare, was satisfied with the press' performance. However, four of the 13 Republican county chairmen in counties where daily newspapers are published termed inadequate the coverage of the Babcock campaign by their local newspaper. Six of the 13 Democratic chairmen termed inadequate the coverage given Roland Renne by their local dailies.

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1Interview with Roland Renne, November 20, 1964. All of the following information from Renne was taken from this interview unless otherwise indicated.

2Interview with Governor Tim Babcock, February 2, 1965. All of the following information from Governor Babcock was taken from this interview unless otherwise indicated.

3An explanation of the questionnaire and the respondents is given later in this chapter.
Specifically, Renne said the press was unfair not in what it printed but in what it did not print. He said the newspapers

tended to play up the dramatic and the personal and not the issues. No one controls the headlines but the papers, and the headlines frequently were quite misleading. And I say this regardless of which party candidate was involved.

If his press releases had been covered more adequately, Renne said, they would have given a much different impression to the public at times. For example, he said headlines would say, "Renne Lashes at Babcock" or "Renne Slams at Somebody" and that was not at all representative of what was occurring, but the average reader, who reads only the headlines or scans a paper would get the impression it was sort of a vicious attack." He claimed the newspapers emphasized the flippant and stressed personalities and quips.

Renne did not expect equal coverage from the press. He realized the amount of coverage was tied in with the fact Babcock was the incumbent "and got coverage on everything from Centennial trains to cutting ribbons on 16 miles of highways... so obviously he got a lot more inches of coverage constantly than I did, partly because as incumbent he had opportunities to speak on these different matters and got coverage because he was governor." Generally Renne was not concerned with the difference in the amount of coverage each candidate got.

But, he continued, after the primary election, the two candidates should be treated precisely alike. He explained:

The governor, although he is the governor, is also a candidate, and this is a distinction we haven't been making. It's a very real handicap for the challenger compared with the incumbent. It was certainly true this year, as evidenced in the Centennial
parades and celebrations, county fairs and ribbon cutting events and so forth.

Governor Babcock, Renne said, is in the press too much.

Contrast this with a governor like Hugo Aronson who was in the press very little—maybe, in the minds of some, too little. I think you have to choose between the extremes. People get tired after a bit of [an official] being in the papers all the time on trivial matters.

Besides being considered more newsworthy because of his governmental position, an incumbent has the advantage of a built-in publicity department, Renne said. He explained that the incumbent...

... has his own staff right there in his office in addition to taking individuals from other offices. Even though they might be on leave just for the campaign, they are experienced people who have worked with him and know about how to write [his releases] and they have, supposedly at least, pretty good relations with the press generally. The [challenger] has to build that up over a period of time and doesn't have much time to do it.

A lack of adequate newspaper writing assistance was a "very real weakness" in the early part of his campaign. But, Renne continued, his news releases were "very adequate" in the last two months of the campaign.

Thus, Renne conceded Babcock got better coverage partly because he was governor and because, at least during the early months of the campaign, he had more effective press relations. But he thought there were other causes.

For instance, he believed the United Press International did a much more "complete and accurate job" of reporting the campaign than did the Associated Press. The AP, he said, because it had its own capitol reporter in J. D. Holmes, covered "a lot more of my opponent's side of it than it covered on our side." He also objected to the manner
in which the Associated Press rewrote and cut his releases.

"Frankly," Renne said, "I must admit that personally over the years I had developed—justly or unjustly—a feeling that the AP had greater coverage and was—as a result—the more complete news covering agency of the two."

He continued:

But, honestly, during this campaign, the UPI seemed to be more accurate and complete, and played the sensational less than AP. I think part of this was due to personalities involved; another part was due to the fact that AP had its own capitol correspondent who covered these things from day to day and covered all activities in the state capitol that might concern the governor—the incumbent.\(^4\)

Renne said he believed the Butte Montana Standard probably was the "most complete and accurate in its reporting for both sides. The others disappointed me." The Billings Gazette and the Missoulian were particularly bad in their editorials, he said.

I mention particularly the editorial in the Missoulian which accused me of not abiding by a Board of Regents understanding of the division of responsibilities of coursework between the state university and the state college. And that was later retracted in part. The Missoulian had no business putting in a two-column, full-page editorial that had all kinds of statistics in it which were erroneous and didn't really apply to the case in point. It seems to me there should have been a much

\(^4\)Renne also objected because "the AP sent a man to the San Francisco Republican convention and did not send anyone to [the Democratic Convention at] Atlantic City. I suppose one of the arguments for this is that Atlantic City is farther away than San Francisco, but I don't think that's an adequate reason." Renne apparently was referring to Tom Mooney, state capitol correspondent for the Lee Newspapers, who did attend the Republican National Convention and not the Democratic National Convention. Neither Montana wire service sent a Montana bureau man to either convention, although both gave extensive coverage to both the Democratic and Republican conventions through their national wire service reports.
more thorough job of checking the sources before they ran any such editorial. It was not the kind of thing you usually expect in an editorial. It was a statistical, and purported to be factual, sort of a presentation. Editorials usually present editors' views. This should have been a news item and quoted sources.

Renne said the Bozeman Chronicle, the daily in his hometown, was also remiss in its coverage. "The people in Gallatin Valley had no idea whatever of what I was saying or doing over the state because there was practically no coverage in the Bozeman Chronicle," he said.

Renne said his personal relations with Montana newspapermen were good. He always tried to visit daily and weekly editors when he was in their towns. He said:

They were very cordial and friendly, even though many of them didn't agree with my particular political philosophy or thinking. . . . They always gave me time to talk and discuss matters with them. They were a very friendly group.

I would certainly be the last to say that they didn't cooperate. If you called a news conference they were there. If you went to see them in their offices, they talked with you and put the article in the paper. I would have to say that my relations with them were cordial in that respect. I think that doesn't offset this other general conclusion that I feel that the press in Montana . . . in many, many cases is highly inadequate. . . .

In September, 1964, Renne and Babcock were sent letters describing plans for this thesis and seeking information. One section of the letter asked for "any comments you might have regarding your relations with the press. Has coverage of your speeches and those of your opponents [Charles Lee was also a candidate at this time] been fair? Have some newspapers refused to cooperate with you?"

In an answer September 24, 1964, Renne said:

In regard to my relations with the Press, I am both pleased and proud of them. I believe the coverage has been fair and
that newspapers generally have cooperated very well. I have found this to be true for many years and am pleased to find it still holds true during the heat of the campaign. 5

In the interview in November, Renne did not feel there was "too much conflict" between the opinion he expressed in his letter and those being expressed during the interview. He noted that he still believed his relations with the press were cordial and added that the letter had been written during the hectic pace of the campaign "and in writing, obviously, at that time, one would want to be as fair as possible."

Renne objected specifically to the fact that newspapers referred to him as "Dr. Roland R. Renne." He tried his best, he said, to establish that he "was just Roland Renne, the Democratic candidate, not Dr. Roland R. Renne... But I don't think ever was I able to get a news release actually printed in the papers that didn't say Dr. Roland R. Renne."

Most Montana newspapers, he believed, are affected greatly by what has come to be known as the "country club" influence. As Renne put it:

I think newspapers and newspaper editors are oversensitive to the views or interests of Main Street because of the dependence of their papers on business advertising. Farmers and ranchers, you know, don't do much of that kind of advertising. Neither do labor groups ordinarily.

And, he continued, the pressure from Main Street affects not only the editorial page of Montana newspapers but also the news coverage. "I also think that the captive press [a reference to the

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former ownership of state dailies by the Anaconda Company] we had in Montana for so many years has left its imprint on the lack of leadership and initiative and resourcefulness on the part of the average editor in Montana."

Renne, in a speech to a Bozeman service club the week after his defeat, said "Montana is politically dominated by a major corporation and this corporation is interested in only a limited type of growth that will not cause diversification." 6 He did not name the corporation, but in a letter in March, 1965, he confirmed that he was referring to the Montana Power Company.

He said:

I think the present state administration is influenced to a major degree by this Company and other major corporations doing business in the state, if for no other reason than that he [Babcock] leans to the interests anyhow and wants and needs their support. 7

Did Renne believe the Montana Power Company made any direct effort--such as threats of economic retribution--to affect the coverage given by the state dailies?

He answered:

In general, I think the weeklies of Montana are much more limited in their general perspective and tend to follow the "company line" more than the dailies. I don't think threats of "economic retribution" were necessary during the campaign on either the dailies or weeklies. The facts of life are such that the larger business organizations, especially a public utility, are in a position to do much advertising and most papers as well as other communications media want and need the advertising. Most of them are either going to try to curry favor with these business organizations, or certainly not be outspoken against them or for a political candidate or party that may not be the preference of these business organizations. 8

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8 Ibid.
Renne expressed his opinion about the weekly newspapers in the interview, also. The weeklies, he said, showed their particular editor's prejudice and bias much more than did the dailies in both editorial and news coverage. This bias is perpetuated and expanded, he said, when the dailies pick up and reprint weekly newspaper editorials which "are particularly bitter or have an ax to grind, and give a one-sided view of a particular issue or candidate's thinking."

Montana weeklies "are a very conservative group of papers and make it pretty difficult for readers in the rural areas who don't get any other newspapers to really get the true coverage of state and national news." 9

Considering other media, Renne said he thought the radio stations in Montana did a "pretty good" job of covering the campaign but that television news reporting was very poor generally. "I think a great deal needs to be done in Montana to improve the over-all competence and performance of Montana T.V.," he said.

In summation, Renne was critical of newspapers that always presumed to "pick out what they thought were the most newsy things in a news release" because the result seemed to be that "some of the newspapers never once seemed to emphasize the program of economic growth and development that I tried to stress."

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9Many editors would argue that the primary function of a Montana weekly newspaper is to give local news and to report national and state news only when it has some direct effect locally. For that reason, campaign coverage by weeklies should not be judged by the same criteria used in judging coverage by dailies.
He continued:

I realize that this isn't so dramatic and eye-catching as some other things, but nevertheless, those were the important matters that I think are of greatest concern in the state's future. These were almost completely buried, or, in many cases, not even mentioned. They probably would be mentioned by saying, "Renne also emphasized a five-point program for economic development and growth" but not spell it out so that people really didn't know whether I was being specific or not.

Preferential treatment for an incumbent, the incumbent's built-in press service and the use of capitol correspondents "make it almost impossible for the challenger to have equally good and complete coverage in the campaign as the incumbent," Renne said. Though the disparities were lessened in UPI coverage, he said, the incumbent still had a considerable advantage.

Renne listed the following men as his primary campaign aides: Gordon Bennett, general chairman; D. B. Fabrick and Hjalmer Landoe, general counselors; Joe Kelly and Fred Barrett, general advisers; L. Edward Lashman, assistance with speeches and news releases; Vic Reinemer, assistance in preparing mailing lists; Brit Englund, assistance with newsletter to Renne clubs. In addition, Renne relied on county Democratic chairmen and former chairmen and Renne county chairmen for campaign advice.10

L. Edward Lashman, who assisted in the Renne campaign, was working in Montana on behalf of the AFL-CIO, which had endorsed Renne. Lashman, who has had journalism experience, has worked full time since 1951 on political campaigns and public relations for the AFL-CIO and the AFL. The Montana press, he said, was the worst he had ever

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The real issue in the campaign coverage was "favoritism toward the Montana Power Company," Lashman said; Montana papers were "kowtowing to the Montana Power Company and [didn't] care about Tim Babcock personally." Renne, he said, had received excellent press coverage as president of Montana State College, and to Lashman's knowledge, his campaign press relations had been good.

Lashman's most serious complaint was the way the Associated Press handled releases about Renne. Charging the AP with "deliberate, malicious distortion," he said the press service distorted and cut Renne's releases to make them dull and uninteresting.

United Press International was fair in its coverage, Lashman continued, but most papers refused to use a story that came from UPI only. If the story came from both wire services, the papers would use the AP story "eight out of ten times," he said. The Renne headquarters mailed out each release 48 hours in advance to all dailies in an attempt to bypass the Associated Press.

Lashman accused the state dailies of playing down all Renne stories in headline size and placement on the page. He said he personally had observed this in the dailies in Missoula, Great Falls, Butte, Billings and Helena.

The papers, he said, used very little news judgment in their play of the stories and he pointed to practices such as that of the

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11Interview with L. Edward Lashman, October 30, 1964. All of the following information from Lashman was taken from this interview.
Great Falls Tribune, which ran political roundups containing a paragraph or two about the doings of each candidate.

Gordon Bennett, Renne's manager for the last six weeks of the campaign, agreed. "The division of space and play was mechanical," he said. "I thought it lacked a desirable exercise of discrimination as to news value." He thought determination of use and play was made by inch rather than by news value. Renne's campaign staff "did everything we could to get Renne into all papers," Bennett said. Each release, he explained, was taken or sent to the wire services and was mailed to all dailies "barring administrative inadvertence." No full texts of speeches were made available, he said.\footnote{Interview with Gordon Bennett, December 31, 1964. All of the following information from Bennett was gathered at this interview.}

Bennett, who has a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and has worked on the Great Falls Tribune and other newspapers, said that the news services were loaded with press releases in the final six weeks of the campaign. Candidates, he said, are imbued with "the mythical theory of correlation of number of press releases you get out and chances of success."

"This in some ways justifies, I suppose, the treatment they gave press releases," he said, referring to the practice of cutting the releases greatly and combining them into "roundup" articles.

"As far as space and play are concerned," he continued, "the Renne campaign, during my six weeks, probably got a fair amount of play in view of the volume of press release material put out by the
two candidates."

An attempt was made in preparing Renne's press releases to avoid repeating information. Bennett realized that press associations think you should "give one shot to any declaration, and after that, it ceases to become news."

Another of Renne's advisers, Joe Kelly, executive secretary of the Montana Democratic Party, castigated the press in a public meeting at Montana State University on October 7, 1964. Kelly candidly admitted that as of then, Renne was running behind. The reasons he was trailing, Kelly continued, were that he was running against an incumbent, that Babcock had four to five times the financial assets of Renne and that Babcock was getting a better press. Renne, Kelly charged, was up against "a newspaper system."

Kelly claimed a Montana weekly newspaper editorial condemning Renne's book, *Land Economics*, was reprinted in more than 45 editorial pages in Montana. He also implied the Missoula *Missoulian*, which had endorsed Johnson for President and Babcock for Governor, had done so on the theory that by endorsing one from each party the paper could claim to be objective.

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13Joe Kelly, political address, Montana State University, Missoula, October 7, 1964. Although the meeting at which Kelly spoke was open to the public, his speech was not covered by the *Montana Kaimin*, campus daily, or the Missoula *Missoulian*. All of the following information from Kelly was gathered at this speech.

14The editor of the *Missoulian* editorial page, Sam Reynolds, said in an address at Montana State University, October 6, 1964, that the five-member *Missoulian* editorial board voted--on the same day--5-0 to support Johnson and 5-0 to support Babcock. The votes were based entirely on which men the five board members thought would be best for the jobs, Reynolds said.
"I would like some day to show you the press releases we put together and then compare them with what you see in the Daily Missoulian or the Great Falls Tribune," Kelly said. "We don't have a friendly newspaper. . . . Not a paper where we can go up to them and say, 'Here's a point we'd like to have out [before the public].' We don't have the outlet."

Kelly said the Democrats had been getting better coverage since the Lee Newspapers took over from the Anaconda Company, because "these editors are left pretty much on their own." But the Democrats still don't get editorial support.

The Democrats sent out five press releases asking why or if Babcock had repudiated Goldwater after strongly supporting him earlier in the campaign. "Not one," he claimed, "has seen the light of day."

Besides a hostile press, he said, Renne was being hurt by a "whispering" campaign led by the "emotional Birchers"—people who Kelly said react to stimuli as would a member of the John Birch Society but who are not themselves Birch members. Another factor accounting for Babcock's lead, he said, was the Republicans' well-financed campaign. "Renne," he said, "is in dire need of money."

In contrast to the statements of Renne and his campaign aides, Babcock said he had no complaints about press coverage. He said he could see only differences in style between coverage by the Associated

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15According to an interview with Joe Renders and Ray Fenton of Public Relations Associates, Great Falls, the Renne campaign was out of money when Gordon Bennett became chairman with six weeks remaining in the campaign. Public Relations Associates handled advertising for the Renne campaign.
Press and the United Press International. He rejected claims that papers that had supported him editorially also had supported him in their news columns. "I think," he said, "the papers were trying to be as objective as possible."

Although the Governor admitted that running as an incumbent gives a candidate "some stature," he asserted that Renne had gained similar stature as assistant secretary of agriculture. Babcock implied this was the only reason Renne had been given the post.

Television and radio coverage of the campaign was "very fair" and "very important," Babcock said. The only objection the Governor had to campaign coverage was to the news services' policy of reporting a charge from one candidate and the answer from his opponent in the same story. The papers, he said, should print the original charge before an answer to the charge is reported. 16

Babcock's campaign manager, Orvin B. Fjare, who was on leave as state advertising director, said although statements occasionally were taken out of context, "We were treated very fairly" by the Montana press. But he understood Renne's feelings about press coverage and said he thought Renne felt that way because he had been running against an incumbent. Fjare, a former Congressman, was defeated in a bid for the United States Senate in 1960 when he ran against Lee Metcalf, an

16Although Babcock did not mention it in my interview, he had some hot words for the national press in a speech in Butte, October 13, 1964: "I have never seen such a propaganda campaign," he said, "as is waged on the national level in this campaign. This does not include the press in Montana, but the man described in many national publications, by national commentators and on TV is not the Barry Goldwater I know personally." See Montana Standard, October 14, 1964, p. 5.
incumbent Congressman from the Western district.\textsuperscript{17}

Fjare said he could see little difference in the coverage given by the Associated Press and United Press International. Babcock releases either were given or telephoned to both wire services and occasionally also were sent to all papers in the state, Fjare said. On major occasions, he continued, copies of speeches were given to the wire services.

Babcock had an advantage as an incumbent, Fjare said, explaining that where the Governor goes and what he says is news. "And," he noted, "there's no substitute for getting your name in the paper and having it spelled right."

He said news releases were prepared by Tom Maddox, a former Associated Press Helena bureau chief now in public relations work; Jack Hallowell, the Governor's executive secretary who is a Montana State University journalism graduate, and Don Byrd, a graduate student at Montana State University. Fjare said official releases and campaign releases were issued from different offices.

Babcock, he said, stopped in at newspaper offices throughout the state, but "not as much as I would have liked." The Governor was "just too busy," his campaign manager said.

Fjare believed some of the papers that supported Babcock editorially also favored the Governor in the news columns. He would not name the papers.

The Babcock campaign was praised for its organization by Ray

\textsuperscript{17}Interview with Orvin B. Fjare, December 30, 1964. All of the following information from Fjare was gathered from this interview.
Fenton and Joe Renders, partners in Public Relations Associates of Great Falls. Fenton handled publicity for the successful team campaign of Donald Nutter and Tim Babcock for governor and lieutenant governor in 1960. Renders was in charge of all media advertising in Renne's 1964 campaign.18

In contrast to Babcock's smoothly functioning organization, Renders and Fenton were more critical in analyzing what they believed to be faults in the Renne campaign. The basic weakness, Renders said, was that Renne placed "too great a confidence in the advice of political 'experts.'" He explained:

Renne, as a long-time college president and administrator, had naturally learned the value of advice by department heads and other learned colleagues. Therefore, when he went into politics—an area where he was an admitted novice—he was inclined too much to depend on the advice of professional politicians, expecting their advice to be equally learned in that field.

Because Renne did not believe he knew enough about politics to override his advisers, he cast himself in the role they selected for him: that of a politician. Thus, Renne constantly tried to subordinate his experience as an educator, administrator and economist. That decision gave Babcock a decided starting edge, Fenton said, because the Governor definitely had more experience as a politician.

Fenton explained:

It was to be just plain Roland Renne, citizen of Montana, running for governor, despite the convictions of many—not a majority of the Renne advisers, obviously—that as "plain, average citizen of Montana," Renne had no justification for

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18 Interview with Ray Fenton and Joe Renders, March 4, 1965. All of the following information from Fenton and Renders was gathered from this interview.
seeking the office of governor. His very qualifications for the office he sought and his prominence in the state revolved around his background and experience in the very areas he was advised to hide during the campaign.

Who were Renne's advisers?

"Almost everybody," Renders said.

He cited a July meeting which was supposed to be a basic strategy conference of the Renne campaign. The meeting was attended by about 25 persons, each with different ideas on campaign strategy and none with the authority to make the final decisions. Renders said the advisers seated around the table would say, "Dr. Renne, we've just got to make people stop thinking of you as a doctor," thus illustrating the futility in trying to change the name by which a man has become known after 30 years as an educator in Montana. The attempt to eliminate the title probably was the most obvious example of trying to change Renne's image.

Renders noted that Senator Mansfield attempted to build support for Renne by stressing Renne's qualifications, rather than by attacking Babcock. "In my opinion," Renders said, "Senator Mansfield's assistance to Renne was the most significant single part of the Renne vote-getting effort."

As an example of the organizational problems of the Renne campaign, Renders told of decisions concerning the utilization of television. It originally was decided that 5-minute appearances by the candidate and 20-second spot advertising announcements would be used. After Renders ordered the programs and spots, he was told 15-minute appearances would be used and he re-planned and re-ordered. He then was told just spot announcements would be used. Cancel.
Re-plan. Re-order. Finally, this last strategy was abandoned—in favor of the first: five-minute appearances and 20-second spots.

The campaign budget suffered seriously as a result of many people purchasing campaign gimmicks, such as bumper strips, matches and pins. For example, Renders cited an order for $800 worth of emory boards (used for fingernail files with the candidate's name inscribed on them). When the shipment arrived, the campaign staff did not know what it was for or who had ordered it.

Those organizational problems were under control after Gordon Bennett took over as campaign manager late in September, Renders said, noting that Bennett acted as a buffer for all the advice which formerly had been going directly to Renne. Bennett became the final authority in matters relating to the campaign.

The decision to play down the education and college-president role committed Renne to an 'attack' campaign. An 'attack' campaign, Renders and Fenton explained, requires an experienced politician with a deft touch and a definite knack for speaking. It also poses another problem: it offers a limited number of ways to say things and repetition is necessary. This liability becomes particularly great when two candidates—such as Renne and R. V. Bottomly, the Democratic lieutenant governor candidate—both are running attack campaigns. 19

Normally, Renders said, the attack campaign is left to the

19Bottomly said during the campaign that newspapers were treating him fairly. In the Montana Kaimin of October 15, 1964, p. 6., he was quoted as saying that although press coverage was poor earlier in the campaign, "better coverage" was more and more the case.
lieutenant governor candidate, freeing the gubernatorial nominee to develop his own programs in a forceful manner.

Granting the disorganization of the Renne campaign and the fact that Renne's press releases failed to develop positive programs, was the press still unfair to Renne?

For different reasons, Fenton and Renders agreed it was.

The newspapers were not unfair to Renne because he was Renne but because he was a Democrat, Renders said, explaining he thinks the Montana press is "chronically unfair to Democratic candidates." The unfairness extends to both the editorial page and the news columns, he said, and includes everything from not running stories to not covering personally meetings of Democratic candidates. "There are a lot of Democrats working on newspapers," Renders said, "but they can't help but know that the boss is a Republican, and news judgment too often is affected accordingly."

Part of the unfairness also resulted from the fact Renne was a challenger, Renders added, explaining that after the primary, it should be "candidate against candidate, not governor against candidate."

But the fact of incumbency is not the only one affecting coverage. For example, Fenton believed incumbent Representative James Battin, Republican from Montana's Eastern district, gets better press coverage throughout the state than does incumbent Representative Arnold Olsen, Democrat from the state's Western district.

Renders said he is convinced the Associated Press is "decidedly unfair to Democrats," saying the stories the AP files as "depth" stories often are little more than opinion stories that are not
labeled as editorial comment. "The quality of Renne's news releases would have very little to do with it," Renders said, "because there still would have been a discrepancy in favor of the incumbent."

Although he agreed with Renders' assessment, Fenton said "The press wasn't as unfair to Renne as Renne was unfair to the press." He cited "haphazard releases," duplication of the same release from several sources, late releases and general "lack of professionalism in dealing with the news media." Too often, Fenton explained, Renne's advisers had little conception of the mechanics of newspaper publication and of the newspapers' role in a political campaign. He continued:

In that the candidate cannot be expected to become involved in the mechanics of news releases during an active campaign, Renne probably never was aware of the problem some of his releases were creating in editorial offices throughout the state, and a social call on the editor by the candidate isn't designed to discuss the mechanics of newspaper publication.

Renne, Fenton said, "was too inclined to defer to the 'experience' of his advisers in this matter of political news releases and again he was portrayed as a politician when his strength had to be in other fields."

Both men agreed the unfairness basically was to politics in general, rather than to one party or candidate. What really hurt Renne, they said, were rumors and heresay. The question was whether the press had a responsibility to expose the rumors and hearsay or whether that was the duty of the candidate.

Renders said that although the editors demand in editorials that readers become politically informed, they often destroy news releases that will permit the candidates to make themselves known to the public. Then, after decrying the flood of political news releases,
the editors vote "the election" as the top news event of the year.

Both men also agreed the weekly press was more unfair than was the daily press, and that the Montana Power Company exerts a strong influence in the weekly field through advertising. The Company's influence in the dailies is through other Main Street businesses and thus is broader but less direct, they said.

But Renders, Fenton, Renne, Babcock and their aides did not work as closely with any individual paper as did the county chairmen of each party during the 1964 campaign. For that reason, the chairmen were asked to assess the performance of the daily newspaper in their counties.

The 26 chairmen, all of whom returned questionnaires, were asked the following questions:

1. Whom did the paper support EDITORIALLY? (Babcock, Renne, neither)

2. Do you believe one of the candidates was favored in the NEWS COLUMNS? (In answering this question, please disregard any preference the paper may have shown on its editorial page.) (Babcock, Renne, neither)

3. Did the newspaper adequately cover the campaign of your party's gubernatorial nominee? (yes, no)

4. Did the candidate of your party cooperate adequately with the press? (yes, no)

Space was left to cite examples to support answers to questions 2, 3 and 4.20

Generally, there was no disagreement between the two county chairmen concerning which, if either, candidate the paper had supported.

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20 The particular complaints will be discussed more fully in Chapter VIII, which deals with the specific newspapers.
Both chairmen from Flathead, Yellowstone, Hill, Ravalli, Custer, Lewis and Clark and Missoula Counties recognized that the Kalispell, Billings, Havre, Hamilton, Miles City, Helena and Missoula dailies respectively had supported Tim Babcock editorially.  

Both chairmen from Park, Fergus, Gallatin, Silver Bow and Cascade Counties said that the Livingston, Lewistown, Bozeman, Butte and Great Falls papers supported neither candidate editorially.

For only one paper, the Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner, did the county chairmen differ as to whom the paper supported editorially. Mrs. Alta Lee Pilon, Republican County chairman, thought neither candidate was supported. However, Jim Womack, Democratic chairman, thought the Tribune-Examiner had supported Babcock editorially. No indication of editorial comment, much less support, by the Tribune-Examiner was found in this study.

Of the 13 Republican County chairmen, three—Arthur Hoff of Fergus County, Leonard Wing of Gallatin County and M. K. Felt of

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21 Although the Independent Record did not endorse Babcock, its editorials concerning the gubernatorial campaign generally were favorable to him.

22 Questionnaires referred to in this and the following paragraphs were received from Democrats Jim Womack of Beaverhead County; James R. Paul, Cascade; R. A. Grant, Custer; William Spoja, Jr., Fergus; John Bartlett, Flathead; Dr. Paul H. Visscher, Gallatin; Gordon Hoven, Hill; Robert T. Cummins, Lewis and Clark; Thomas F. Murray, Missoula; Wilbur I. Sullivan, Park; Charles Dillon, Ravalli; Joseph T. Shea, Silver Bow, and Chester Blaylock, Yellowstone. Republican chairmen participating were Alta Lee Pilon, Beaverhead; M. K. Felt, Cascade; Dr. S. C. Pratt, Custer; Arthur Hoff, Fergus; Robert Keller, Flathead; Leonard Wing, Gallatin; William McElroy, Hill; George T. Bennett, Lewis and Clark; Eugene Clawson, Missoula; Dr. David Colmey, Park; Dave Ayers, Ravalli; Roy E. Murray, Silver Bow and Duane Smith, Yellowstone.
Cascade County—thought Roland Renne had been favored in the news columns of their hometown papers (Lewistown Daily News, Bozeman Daily Chronicle and Great Falls Tribune, respectively). The remaining Republican chairmen answered that neither Babcock nor Renne had been favored in the news columns.

Of the 13 Democratic chairmen, a majority—seven—believed that Babcock had received preferential news treatment. They were Wilbur Sullivan of Park County (Livingston Enterprise); Jim Womack of Beaverhead County (Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner); Thomas Murray of Missoula County (Missoula Missoulian); Robert Cummins of Lewis and Clark County (Helena Independent Record); Charles Dillon of Ravalli County (Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican); John Bartlett of Flathead County (Kalispell Daily Inter Lake), and R. A. Grant of Custer County (Miles City Star).

Five Democratic chairmen believed their home county dailies had supported neither candidate in their news columns and one—Chester Blaylock of Yellowstone County—did not give a definite answer to the question.

Four Republican County chairmen and six Democratic chairmen termed inadequate the coverage of their party's candidate by their county dailies. Republicans dissatisfied with the coverage were William McElroy of Hill County (Havre Daily News); Dr. David Colmey of Park County (Livingston Enterprise); Arthur Hoff of Fergus County (Lewistown Daily News), and Leonard Wing of Gallatin County (Bozeman Daily Chronicle). Democrats who did not believe coverage was adequate were Wilbur Sullivan of Park County (Livingston Enterprise); Jim
Womack of Beaverhead County (Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner); Thomas Murray of Missoula County (Missoula Missoulian); Robert Cummins of Lewis and Clark County (Helena Independent Record); R. A. Grant of Custer County (Miles City Star), and William Spoja of Fergus County (Lewistown Daily News).

Only one of the 26 county chairmen indicated he believed the candidate of his party failed to cooperate adequately with the press. Renne "never called on the press personally," according to Hill County Democratic Chairman Gordon Hoven.
CHAPTER V

CAMPAIGN COVERAGE AS SEEN BY THE EDITORS

It is ridiculous to attempt a study of press coverage of an election campaign without first determining on what fundamentals that coverage was based and what problems newspapermen faced. Yet, almost without exception, previous studies of press performance have turned to the ruler rather than the editor.¹

To avoid that pitfall, editors of each of the 13 newspapers studied were sent questionnaires regarding the 1964 gubernatorial campaign. All responded. They were: E. P. Furlong, managing editor, Great Falls Tribune; Edward A. Coyle, editor, Missoula Missoulian; Walter Nelson, editor, Butte Montana Standard; Robert Gilluly, editor, Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican; Herb Watts, Jr., editor, Havre Daily News; Duane W. Bowler, managing editor, Billings Gazette; Robert J. Scanlan, editor, Miles City Star; Francis S. Powell, editor, Livingston Enterprise; Robert E. Miller, editor, Helena Independent Record; Burl Lyons, editor, Kalispell Daily Inter Lake; Charles Stauffer, news editor, Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner; Woody Laughnan, editor, Lewistown Daily News, and G. Nicholas Ifft III, editor, Bozeman Daily

¹James W. Markham and Guido H. Stempel III did suggest at the end of their study that one basis of analysis of campaign coverage would be to determine what editors consider the standards of fair treatment and how they live up to those standards. See Markham and Stempel, Pennsylvania Daily Press Coverage of the 1956 Election Campaign, pamphlet (University Park: School of Journalism, Pennsylvania State University), August, 1957, p. 8.
The following were the questions asked:

1. Which candidate was most cooperative with the press? (Babcock, Renne, No Noticeable Difference)

   In what ways was (Babcock, Renne) more cooperative?

2. Whom did your paper endorse? (Babcock, Renne, neither)

   If your paper endorsed either candidate, how was the decision made? (Editorial Board, Publisher's Decision, Other)

3. Was wire service coverage of the gubernatorial campaign adequate and fair?

4. What special instructions did you give to staff members regarding the handling of campaign news?

5. On what basis did you determine which stories to use and what display to give stories concerning Babcock and Renne? (Attempted Equal Coverage, Judged Each Story According to News Value, Combined Equal Coverage and New Value Criteria)

6. What particular problems did you encounter in covering this year's gubernatorial campaign?

The survey showed that none of the 13 dailies endorsed Roland Renne and that Governor Tim Babcock was given what the editors considered endorsement by seven—the Havre Daily News, the Missoula Missoulian, Kalispell Daily Inter Lake, Miles City Star, Billings Gazette, Bozeman Daily Chronicle and the Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican. In addition, although no formal endorsement of Babcock was given, the Governor received some editorial support from the

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2Unless otherwise noted, all information from the Montana editors used in the following pages was obtained from the questionnaires. It has been noted previously that some editors across the nation have looked at attempts to study press performance in campaigns as foolishness and have refused to cooperate in such studies. That no such attitude or lack of cooperation was found among the Montana editors is a tribute to them.
Helena Independent Record.  

In most cases, the decision of endorsement was made by more than one person. Watts of the Havre paper said the decision was "more or less" left to him because the publisher is new to the Montana political scene. The Missoulian used an editorial board, comprising the editor, editorial page editor, publisher, news editor and managing editor.

The Kalispell Daily Inter Lake publisher met with department heads and the decision to endorse Babcock was unanimous. Although the Billings paper does not have a formal editorial board, Bowler said the Babcock endorsement "was the consensus of the editor, managing editor and the publisher after discussions toward the close of the campaign."

The endorsement was decided by the publisher and editor of the Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican. The decision was made by the publishers of the Bozeman and Miles City papers.

A bare majority of the editors said they based story selection and display on a combination of equal coverage and news value criteria. Papers combining those criteria were the Livingston Enterprise, Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner, Butte Montana Standard, Havre Daily News, Missoula Missoulian, Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican and the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. Five papers based coverage on news judgment alone: the Helena Independent Record, Lewistown Daily News, Great Falls Tribune, Billings Gazette and Miles City Star. The editor of only one paper, the Kalispell Daily Inter Lake, indicated that he attempted

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3 Editorials in Helena Independent Record, October 6, 1964, p. 4, and October 4, 1964, p. 4.
equal coverage rather than making judgment on news value or a combination of equal coverage and news value.

A national poll of newspaper editors by *The Quill* showed that of those answering, 28 planned to use equal space as a measure of objectivity in their paper's coverage of major election races. However, 37 answered that they did not intend to use equal space.¹

The case against use of equal space and play was summed up well by Bowler of the *Gazette*:

> Be fair was our policy but don't worry about evening up the amount of space. Some stories are better than others. That is up to editorial judgment. We don't think that the number of inches given to one candidate or another is any indication of fairness of coverage or in carrying out the duty to your readers. Tell 'em what is happening. The inches method of computing is about as indicative of good coverage as counting the numbers of D's and R's in stories.

To carry out that policy, Bowler said deskmen and reporters were told "We are running a newspaper; play the stories like news if they are." More specifically, he said the deskmen were told "There should be something in the paper somewhere every issue about what the major candidates were doing or not doing. As to play, judge them as news value."

The *Great Falls Tribune*, also, did not expect its staff members to "keep a balance" between candidates, according to Managing Editor Furlong. Staff members, he said, were instructed to play the news fairly, without letting their personal opinions sway their judgment. This applied to the heads as well as stories. An effort was made to

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eliminate any words that could be considered editorial in nature.\footnote{Although the \textit{Tribune}, according to Furlong, did not attempt to give equal space to each candidate, the paper did keep a log with total amount of space given to each of the major candidates. This log will be discussed at greater length in Chapter VIII.}

He continued:

In general, we tried to base news stories on news events. That is, a candidate was asked not to submit statements made only to his or his writers' typewriters. We wanted the story pegged to a meeting or gathering of some kind. We avoided coverage of TV programs for which the candidate purchased the time. We tried to eliminate duplication of speeches or statements made by the candidates at earlier dates. (This was not too successful.)

Editor Laughnan of the \textit{Lewistown Daily News} said his paper simply handled politics "like we do everything else" and judged the stories solely on their news value.

Similar judgment was exercised by Robert Scanlan of the \textit{Miles City Star}. He said:

The Star's campaign policy has always been the same: We cover local and trade area rallies and meetings and give space in the news columns for them. We do not use political releases in the mail from everyone who happens to know the candidate. We screen wire copy to determine if the contents are legitimate news or the candidate seeking free publicity for what he should be buying advertising space for. A candidate gets copy thrown in the waste basket when he brings in a big (?) story emanating from a coffee meeting with his county chairman. . . . We do not use copy in which a candidate smears his opponent. If he emphasizes his own program, platform, or ideas, he rates a story.

Limitation to area in campaign reporting also is the policy of several other smaller dailies in the state. For instance, Stauffer of the \textit{Dillon paper}, the smallest daily in the state, said:

The Tribune-Examiner deals almost entirely in coverage on an area-only basis. This may sound unique but we are a small operation, limited economically by the fact that publishing a daily paper in a smaller city presents terrific
space problems.

We also have a community which is covered (perhaps I should say "flooded") with morning dailies—Montana Standard, Great Falls Tribune, Salt Lake Tribune and Idaho Falls Post Register. As far as the gubernatorial campaign was concerned, we dealt with the candidates only on occasions when they visited this region—and this same rule applied to all other state and national office seekers.6

The problems Stauffer noted are shared by other small daily editors, including Bob Gilluly, editor of the Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican, the state's second smallest daily. Gilluly, too, alluded to the "area coverage" idea in his answer:

As a small daily this paper did not attempt to provide coverage of appearances and campaign talks outside our circulation area. We do not have a wire service, and I'm sure it is apparent this daily paper handled campaign coverage much as a weekly would.

Each gubernatorial candidate made two major talks in the county, Gilluly continued, and each appearance was covered in detail and with photographs.

Similarly, Burl Lyons, editor of the Kalispell Daily Inter Lake, which is circulated in Northwestern Montana, said:

We are interested only in Northwestern Montana news; what Babcock said in Billings, what Renne said in Glendive got the wastebasket. When they had something to say in Polson, Kalispell, Whitefish, Columbia Falls, Libby, Eureka, we gave the stories good play with the same size head.

As an example one night during the campaign we had a Babcock dinner and also a testimonial dinner for Mansfield. The next day Mansfield got the two outside columns on page 1, Babcock got the two columns on the left of page 1. Both stories carried the same size headline.

6Stauffer, in answer to the question "What special instructions did you give to staff members regarding the handling of campaign news?" gave an answer which is even more indicative of the operations of the small dailies in Montana. "Jerry," he said, "I am the 'staff' on the Tribune and handle all news."
On our editorial page every Sunday for three weeks, we gave space to both local central committees who were free to write anything they desired on the campaign, as long as it wasn't libelous, of course.

Lyons explained that, in an attempt to be fair, descriptive adjectives, such as "standing-room-only crowd" and "attentive audience" were omitted in political reports. The news staff or Inter Lake correspondents were used to cover the candidates when they appeared in Northwestern Montana. "We checked for ourselves to see if they actually said what their mailed-in story said they would say," Lyons commented.

The Livingston Enterprise, according to Editor Powell, "attempted to keep coverage as nearly even as possible each day, provided stories were of nearly equal news value. Babcock as governor, naturally, had a 'better break' in coverage."

An attempt to emphasize local activities of the candidates was made by the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, according to G. Nicholas Ifft, editor. Local activities of the candidates were emphasized compared to "canned" releases, he said, and "letters to the editor" were confined to locally written pieces.

A similar emphasis was intended by the Missoula Missoulian, according to Editor Coyle:

We tried to place the emphasis on coverage of candidates when in our area, that is by live coverage of speeches, obtaining interviews, getting action pictures of major candidates, etc.

The staff generally was instructed to use handout and press service news if they contained news. We had the state editor double checking with the wire desk because handouts would come to both and also often were duplicated on the wire service report. Also the staff was instructed that if any candidate made a new charge or a new comment about his
opponent, a try should be made to obtain comment from the opponent.
Always we tried to achieve a combined balance of coverage with the fresh approach.

However, it is becoming increasingly obvious that intentions of the editor are not the only factors at play in determining campaign coverage. For instance, the Quill poll of editors and broadcast news directors showed that an overwhelming majority—73 of 87 answering the question—thought the attitude of the candidate toward the press has a bearing on that candidate's treatment. As Bill Redell of the San Antonio (Tex.) Express and News commented, "Reporters are human. Attitudes influence reporters though the good ones try to recognize this influence and 'rise above it.'" Robert W. Chandler of the Bend (Ore.) Bulletin agreed:

Reporters are human beings, and they tend to react, as do other humans, adversely toward persons who demonstrate even a mild hostility. Former Vice President Richard M. Nixon has had this problem.

Candidates' treatment of the press was described colorfully by Theodore H. White in his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, The Making of the President 1960. Vice President Nixon, White wrote, considered the press "not a brotherhood, but a conspiracy, and a hostile conspiracy at that." Senator John F. Kennedy, on the other hand, had "an enormous respect for those who work with words and those who write clean prose. He likes newspapermen and likes their company." Kennedy's good relations with the press paid huge dividends, too, according to White:

7"Campaign Coverage '64," op. cit., p. 12.
8Ibid.
9Ibid.
"There is no doubt that this kindliness, respect and cultivation of
the press colored all the reporting that came from the Kennedy campaign,
and the contrast colored adversely the reporting of the Nixon campaign."^10

The Columbia Journalism Review, noting the Kennedy camp "treated
its relations with the press as an integral part of the campaign" while
the Nixon supporters failed to do this, commented, "It can certainly
be anticipated that by 1964 this science of good fellowship with the
press will be developed even further—and will probably be employed by
both sides."^11

But at least one Montana editor, Miller of the Helena Independent
Record, believed that the problem in a campaign is not whether the
candidates will cooperate with the press: "It is whether the press
will cooperate with the candidates. We don't hunt for them. We find
them on our doorstep morning, noon and night begging for free space."
Yet the Quill poll and the White observations suggest strongly that the
degree to which the candidates will get the "free space" for which they
are "begging" is directly affected by their relations with the press.

For that reason, the Montana editors were asked to indicate,
"Which candidate was most cooperative with the press?"

Nine of the 13 editors answered that there was no noticeable
difference between the candidates. One--Laughman of Lewistown--
thought Renne was more cooperative, and gave these reasons:

^10Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960 (New York:

^11"Campaign Coverage: An Appraisal of 1960—and Implications
Renne, early in the campaign, appeared to feel he didn't need the press. Later, however, he became extremely cooperative. He stopped into our paper on several occasions, answered questions and even asked for suggestions.

Babcock, on the other hand, has never been in the office. On some occasions he has not answered pertinent questions. I believe he was so certain of winning that he perhaps slighted the press of the small towns.

However, three editors thought Babcock was the more cooperative of the two candidates. Ifft of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Renne's hometown newspaper, said Babcock was "more available" and more willing to be quoted. Stauffer of the Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner wrote, "My own impression was that Babcock was the more sincere—gave a straight, rather than political answer."

Gilluly of the Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican also rated Babcock as more cooperative:

Our only contact with either candidate came when they visited our circulation area. Particularly helpful to me was a prepared statement and news release circulated by Babcock's press aide when the GOP caravan visited Hamilton. This helped me beat a deadline. Dr. Renne's press relations were equally good, but I did not receive any assistance through the form of a handout. Mailed statements from both candidates seemed equally well prepared.

Two other editors, although indicating they saw no difference in the cooperation of the two candidates, also commented. "If there was any difference," wrote Editor Miller of Helena, "it was that Babcock was in Helena and was available personally." Watts of the Havre Daily News commented, "In my judgment and experience with both candidates they were equally cooperative, answered all questions without equivocation and even inquired as to what service they could render the press in this city.

It is interesting to note that all four of the editors who
ranked either Babcock or Renne noticeably more cooperative were from smaller papers. That suggests the candidates and their staffs overlooked the newspapers in the smaller towns, that the editors of the smaller papers expected more personal attention from the candidates because they are used to face-to-face discussion and meeting with their news sources, or that the editors of the smaller papers are better qualified to judge the cooperation of political candidates because it is often they, rather than subordinate staff members, who interview and write about the political activities in the area.

Nevertheless, the important finding was that nearly all the editors found the candidates either equally cooperative or differing in minor degrees that probably would not affect campaign coverage.

However, newspaper editors are beset by many problems in addition to the cooperation of candidates. The candidates for governor, according to Editor Watts of the Havre paper, "seemed to steer away from discussing major issues and delved more into personalities."

Bowler of the Billings Gazette agreed:

Both candidates wore out their themes as far as coverage was concerned. Republicans overworked Renne's textbook, brought good business to government. Democrats harping on "right-to-work" laws, Babcock's trucking business and cause of sagging economy were examples.

At the other end of the state, Editor Coyle of the Missoula Missoulian added:

The lack of clear cut issues posed the biggest problem. Neither candidate generated much earth-shaking copy, and to keep readers informed that there was a campaign under way it was necessary to use repetitious material, whether we liked it or not.

This rehash of a couple of monotonous themes was especially noticeable on the local level.

It appeared finally that some of the best stories out of
the gubernatorial campaign were released by neither candidate but resulted from questions asked them, or situations that arose in spite of the candidates.

Coyle said he thought the newspapers "did rather well with the material at hand."

Also mentioning what he termed the "non-issues" of the campaign --the John Birch Society and Renne's book, *Land Economics*--was Miller of the Helena *Independent Record*. His staff was instructed, he said, "to try to find some news in the hundreds of pages of mimeographed handouts which were made available each week and which repeated over and over again the same inane assertions of matters having nothing to do with running the state government." Miller also objected to the fact that party organizations "expected free space in the newspapers to promote paid programs on television."

As a particular problem encountered in covering the 1964 gubernatorial campaign, Robert Scanlan of the *Miles City Star* listed "finding copy that could be truthfully classified as 'news.'" He explained:

Over one-half our mail during the campaign consisted of so-called news releases from candidates, seeking free space in the news columns so they could save more money. The money saved was spent on radio or television where they bought time to make the same statements. We even received mimeographed copies of radio and television advertising in case we "desired to use it as news copy."

Other editors had specific complaints regarding Renne or Babcock. For instance, Laughnan of the *Lewistown Daily News*, wrote:

Renne seemed a bit picky toward the press and sometimes his answers to certain questions (notably reclamation and dam construction) were often hazy. He often talked a lot and said very little.

Babcock, on the other hand, had a militant movement which
attempted to coerce some newspapermen on stories and often was highly critical that Renne was getting equal play. This situation may not have existed around the state but it certainly did here.

Bowler of the Billings Gazette said the state wire services and the newspapers were "plagued with the handout." Most papers, he continued, lack an experienced reporter of sufficient knowledge to "properly handle a candidate." The Gazette would like to assign a reporter to each major candidate, he continued, but that would be financially impossible.

Too much dependence on "canned" releases also was noted by Ifft of the Bozeman daily, who complained of a lack of effort by the parties to include the press in paid banquets and activities.

Two editors, Furlong of the Great Falls Tribune, and Walter Nelson of the Butte Montana Standard, said that the fact that Babcock was both an incumbent and a candidate led to problems. His incumbency "lent itself to the use of ordinary state affairs as sounding boards for his political views and as means to publicize his accomplishments," Furlong said. He added, though, that this was not peculiar to the gubernatorial campaign.

Furlong continued:

Renne's political inexperience gave him, and us, a problem in the early stages. Only after his organization improved did we improve in presenting his case. Babcock's many-headed promotion and publicity campaign at times resulted in duplication of stories.

Another special problem, although it did not involve the gubernatorial campaign directly, was faced by Gilluly of the Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican. The Republican is published in the Bitter Root Valley, where activities of the John Birch Society have drawn considerable
attention. "The one thing we guarded against was printing irrational statements from the crackpot element of the Goldwater group in the valley," Gilluly said. "This was done with the knowledge and encouragement of the Goldwater chairman in the county, who had a devil of a time keeping the Birchers in line."
CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS PROBLEMS IN CAMPAIGN STUDIES

Thus far, this study has dealt with editors' and political workers' analyses of press coverage of the 1964 gubernatorial campaign. From those reports, it is obvious that the editors of the Montana daily newspapers and many of the political workers, especially the Democrats, differ widely in their evaluations of the performance of the newspapers in reporting the Babcock-Renne campaign.

The purpose of the next several chapters is to record how the press actually performed. To this point, the research for this thesis has relied mainly on methods recognized as valid by journalists: written and spoken question-and-answer exchanges. It is, of course, on these methods that reporting is based.

The emphasis now must shift to methods that are not as widely accepted. Nearly everyone considers himself a judge of newspapers and there are many criteria on which judgments are based. If the criterion is the number of misspelled words, a supportable judgment can be made because correct spellings are listed in dictionaries. Similarly, a person who rates papers according to size of headlines can arrive at the conclusion he seeks simply by measuring the headlines on a page.

An attempt to assess newspaper performance, however, is much more difficult. What methods does one use to determine whether a newspaper has been "fair" in campaign coverage?

Granville Price, in an article about analyzing campaign coverage,
notes three areas of difficulty: (1) defining the political direction of content; (2) selecting measuring tools that are economical but represent the total newspaper product, and (3) "avoiding the fallacious assumption that the only fair and representative news coverage . . . is equal treatment."¹

To that list should be added the determination of what phases of the campaign to study. For instance, in a study of the 1964 gubernatorial campaign, should the statements of Babcock and Renne only be considered? Should statements by other persons, such as lieutenant governor candidates Ted James and R. V. Bottomly, be included when those statements refer directly to the gubernatorial campaign? What about statements made in behalf of Babcock by visiting governors who spoke at dinners commemorating the Governor's birthday? If those are to be studied, so must statements by Senator Mike Mansfield, President Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, all of whom aided the Renne campaign.

After much consideration and experimentation, it was decided to study only those news stories which quoted statements by Babcock or Renne. Thus, statements by Humphrey, Johnson, Mansfield, Bottomly or other officials supporting the candidacy of Renne and pro-Babcock statements by any of the visiting governors or other Republican officials were not studied. Also excluded from the study were statements by local party officials, such as the chairmen of Babcock and Renne county clubs.

Stories announcing Governor Babcock or candidate Renne were to

speak were not studied; of course, stories reporting what they said at those appearances were.

There are drawbacks to this method. The shortcomings, however, are no greater than they would be in other methods. For instance, if the statements of James and Bottomly were included, how could it be determined if the men were speaking for the candidacies of Babcock and Renne or on their own behalf? The same applies to remarks by other candidates. By expanding the number of persons whose statements are studied, it is also necessary to extend the number of variable factors affecting the coverage. By limiting the study to statements of Babcock and Renne, it is possible to concentrate on factors which affected the amount of coverage of the Babcock and Renne campaigns.

Any decision on how to limit a campaign study is certain to be somewhat arbitrary. The study of campaign coverage is, at best, an imprecise art, and not, as some would make it, an exact science. However, limiting the study to remarks of Babcock and Renne does allow greater concentration on the two major figures of the campaign.

In determining which phases of the campaign to study, a second decision was necessary. How could the official statements of Babcock as governor be separated from the statements of Babcock as campaigner?

The problem is not unique to this study. It must be faced in any campaign study when one of the candidates is the incumbent. As Robert U. Brown of Editor & Publisher noted in 1956:

2If the governor and lieutenant governor were elected as a team as are the president and vice president, it would be logical to include all remarks made by the lieutenant governor candidates. However, the positions are separate in Montana.
Our hunch is that it is going to be extremely difficult for any researcher or analyst to draw a line between the official actions of President Eisenhower and his campaign speeches and activities during the last two trying weeks before the election. The results of the study will be awaited anxiously to see how well they do.\footnote{Robert U. Brown, "Shop Talk at Thirty," \textit{Editor \\& Publisher}, November 10, 1956, p. 92.}

With most of Babcock's statements in the weeks immediately preceding the election, campaign statements could be separated easily from the ministerial statements. In fact, most of his public announcements in that period were made during campaign appearances. However, problems arose in several areas, of which the following are examples:

1. Whether to include the Governor's speeches to such groups as the Columbia Basin Inter-Agency Committee, the Montana School Boards Association, a meeting of Montana county assessors and the Montana Medical Association convention.

2. Whether to include the charges and counter-charges growing out of alleged maladministration of the Montana National Guard.

3. Whether to include Babcock's proclamation of United Nations Improvement Day.

In determining which speeches to include, one criterion was the type of group being addressed. The Basin Committee, made up partly of out-of-state officials, and the county assessors, a bipartisan group of county officials, were considered as groups to which the Governor was speaking as a state official rather than as a campaigner. Nor did the Governor's remarks seem campaign-oriented at those meetings.
However, the tenor of the Governor's remarks to the school boards and medical association meetings definitely was political. For those reasons, his remarks to the Basin Committee and to the assessors were excluded and his speeches to the school boards and medical association were included in this study.\(^4\)

The problem of whether to include charges and answers concerning the administration of the Montana National Guard was more difficult. Babcock, when commenting on the charges, said, "This is one of those things that come up before election time."\(^5\) However, because there was no indication the charges were inspired by Renne or his party, it would not be fair to study the charges as Democratic-originated, although they may have benefitted the Democratic candidates. And if the charges could not be studied as originating from the Democrats, it would not be fair to consider Babcock's defense as a campaign statement.

For those reasons, the controversy surrounding the Montana National Guard was not included.

Also excluded from the study was Babcock's proclamation of United Nations Improvement Day. The proclamation involved a right given to the Governor, though the decision may have been motivated by political circumstances. However, any remarks Babcock might have made concerning the United Nations--other than the official proclamation--

\(^4\)This is not meant to suggest that the Governor may not have reaped political benefit from the Basin Committee and assessor speeches. However, in my judgment, the talks could not be considered primarily political.

were included in the study, as were all of Renne's comments on the proclamation.

Those problems show that any statement by an incumbent during a campaign can be considered the statement of a candidate because it may influence the outcome of the election. However, the same statement can be considered that of a government official because it outlines or defends the incumbent's official position. On the other hand, all the statements of a challenger such as Roland Renne, who had no position other than that of political candidate, must be considered political.

Almost all previous studies of press performance in election campaigns have had as a primary goal the determination of a presence or lack of bias. As noted in the first chapter, this particular study does not hinge on such a determination, although the results may suggest that bias did or did not exist in the campaign coverage. Rather, the major intent of the following sections is to show how the wire services and the 13 daily newspapers handled the campaigns of Roland Renne and Tim Babcock.

However, because serious charges of unfairness have been leveled by some party workers, an attempt will be made to determine if those charges can be substantiated.
CHAPTER VII

WIRE SERVICE COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN

As noted earlier, many of Roland Renne's specific charges about press coverage of his campaign concerned the performance of the Associated Press. Specifically, Renne charged the AP had mishandled his press releases by playing up insignificant issues and personalities and by emphasizing the Republican cause at the expense of the Democratic campaign.\(^1\)

L. Edward Lashman said the most serious of his several charges regarding press coverage concerned the manner in which the Associated Press handled stories. He charged the AP with "deliberate, malicious distortion" and said the stories were cut to make them "dull and uninteresting."\(^2\)

Those charges were investigated by comparing copies of Renne's press releases for October with the stories sent by the Associated Press for the same month. A similar study was made of the United Press International, although the Democrats did not charge that UPI coverage was unfair. In addition, George Remington and David C. Beeder, UPI and AP Montana bureau chiefs respectively, were interviewed.\(^3\)

\(^{1}\) Interview with Roland Renne, November 20, 1964.

\(^{2}\) Interview with L. Edward Lashman, October 30, 1964.

\(^{3}\) Interviews with George Remington and David C. Beeder, December 30, 1964. All information in this chapter from Remington and Beeder was obtained in these interviews unless otherwise indicated.
As a third method, editors of each of Montana’s 13 daily newspapers were asked in a questionnaire, "Was wire service coverage of the gubernatorial campaign adequate and fair?"

Both Remington and Beeder said they decided whether to carry a Babcock or Renne release strictly on the basis of its news value. "We did our best if it looked like a rehash to dig down through it and find something fresh," Remington commented. But both men noted difficulty in finding newsworthy material in the releases.

The AP's Beeder seemed to have a greater aversion to releases than did Remington of the UPI. "We don't operate this bureau with news releases," Beeder said, explaining the AP used as few releases as possible. If there were anything new in a release, it would be carried, he continued, but added that if the release were not newsworthy--"and 90 per cent of political handouts aren't"--it would be thrown out.

The only purpose of a political news release, Beeder believed, is to advance the candidate of one party over the candidate of another. Candidate Renne, in contrast, believed releases are prepared "with the idea of giving the maximum information to the voters of Montana." That difference in basic views of the political news release accounts for much of the misunderstanding each election year between the press and the candidates.

Nevertheless, Beeder said the AP tried to carry as much as possible from speeches of the candidates, depending on whether the information was newsworthy.

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\[1\] Renne interview, loc. cit.
Both bureau chiefs agreed Babcock had a news advantage because he was the incumbent. But Remington said an attempt was made to treat Babcock's political speeches in the same way that his opponent's were treated; the problem, of course, was in separating Babcock's—or any incumbent's—political speeches from his ministerial pronouncements.

"Babcock," Beeder said, "has a built-in platform." The actions of the Governor, he continued, are the actions of the government as well as of the politician; they are "actions that affect people today."

Remington and Beeder criticized both candidates for failing to debate issues. The Associated Press attempted "frequently" to get forthright statements on campaign issues, Beeder said, but the attempts were not always successful. Remington believed many issues were worthy of discussion but that they were clouded by minor issues and often not mentioned in the news releases.

Each press service, Beeder and Remington said, attempted to go beyond news releases to answer unanswered questions. Special efforts were made, Remington said, to get replies when serious charges were leveled.

Remington said the Babcock campaign unquestionably was "more professionally run." He noted that until the last several weeks of the campaign, Renne's releases were poor and emphasized the same points over and over. Beeder said there sometimes were doubts about whether the Renne releases could be used. He gave as an example the Birch membership accusations discussed later in this chapter.

A wire service's job is to operate as an extra arm of newspapers and to furnish papers with news they could not get as conveniently
themselves. Because the two wire services in Montana are relied upon for regional, national and world as well as state news, the problem of "wire time"—the time during which material may be sent to members and clients—is as critical as the problem of space is to the individual newspapers. Wire services are faced with the task of compacting world, national, regional, state and sports news on one wire. An increase in coverage in any one of the categories eventually will mean a decrease in the others.

A wire service faces precise limits on the amount of copy it can furnish its members or clients during any period. The problem becomes one of judgment: does a story have enough news value to replace another story on today's wire? More specifically, does the report of candidate A's speech have enough news value to merit its inclusion on today's wire at the expense of a story about a traffic fatality, a presidential proclamation or a world disorder?

The correctness of any single judgment can be ascertained only by a detailed study of the news situation at the instant the decision was made. Even after such a study, different journalists would make different decisions, depending partly on what they believe the association's members or customers want. Thus, the "correct" judgment depends on the situation surrounding it—in this case, the relative newsworthiness of a story. And that situation may be viewed quite differently by two impartial journalists.

Renne supporters did not protest the fact their stories were cut as much as they disputed the manner in which they were cut and rewritten by the Associated Press. Certainly if there were flagrant
distortion by the AP, it would be obvious if the original releases from Renne's headquarters were compared with the stories sent over the wire.

On that assumption, releases of speeches or statements by Renne for October were obtained from his headquarters. Each release, according to Gordon Bennett, Renne's campaign manager, had been sent or taken to the AP and UPI, barring "administrative inadvertence" on the part of Renne's staff. Each release was compared with the story sent out by the Associated Press and by United Press International. The AP and UPI stories were not compared, as there was no intention to show which story was "better." The only purpose of this phase of the study was to determine if the releases had been "distorted" or capriciously edited by either of the wire services.

Copies of the newsmen's stories written for the "TTS" wire of the Associated Press and a copy of the material for the "B" wire of the UPI were analyzed. Because most of the speeches were prepared for release in the morning dailies, nearly all the campaign material

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5 Interview with Gordon Bennett, December 31, 1964.

6 A determination of which story was "better" would require a separate study. Such a study would be futile, especially if undertaken by one with no wire service experience, because it would simply place the judgment of the researcher against the judgment of the more experienced wire service employee. Also, as noted above, such a study would have to include a day-to-day analysis of all other news sent over by each wire service.

7 The "TTS" wire includes state wire punched in the AP's Helena office and sent to newspaper members throughout the state. The "B" wire of the UPI is sent by wire to Salt Lake City, where it is punched on justified tape (tape on which both the right and left margins of the story are aligned) and sent back to Montana UPI subscribers along with regional, national and international news. Because no editing or
was sent during the evening preceding the morning release date. Both services rewrote some of their evening stories for use in afternoon papers; those were disregarded because the original night story already had been studied. In most cases, the only difference between the night and day stories is that the lead is rewritten and the story is shortened.\(^8\)

Thirty-three press releases were studied. Nearly all of these probably got to the AP and UPI offices, although evidence suggests at least one may never have been released, even though copies were made.\(^9\)

Of those releases, the UPI used 26 and the AP 18. The breakdown is as follows:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Releases used by both AP and UPI} & \quad 15 \\
\text{Releases used by AP only} & \quad 3
\end{align*}\]

\(^8\)Because the author could not find the AP copy for October 7, 25 and 31, it was necessary to go to the papers using Associated Press stories and count all Babcock and Renne stories appearing. There is a chance that some stories sent over may have been missed on those days; however, it is unlikely because several newspapers were checked.

\(^9\)One of the releases, dated for release October 2, reported Renne had proposed the establishment of a Montana Highway Safety Authority. Because of the notation, "check this with Renne--it's a new position he's not taken before--GET HIS OK FIRST!" on the top of the release and because neither wire service used the release, it seems likely that the release never was given to the newspapers or the wire services.

\(^10\)Determination of which releases were used was made by comparison of the contents of each story with the original release. In the case of the Associated Press, the copy was marked "release" if that were its source. In several instances for both wire services, there were indications campaign stories had been telephoned in by stringers. However, if the story clearly dealt with the same speech the release dealt with, the story was tabulated as a release used.
Releases used by UPI only . . . . . . . . 11

Releases used by neither AP nor UPI . . . . 4

Total number of releases studied . . . . 33

In addition, the total number of campaign stories and inches devoted to Renne and Babcock was studied, using the criteria discussed in Chapter VI. The results of this study are as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AP</th>
<th>UPI</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babcock stories</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renne stories</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint stories</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total stories</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those differences are compounded, however, when the length of the stories is considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AP</th>
<th>UPI</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inches for Babcock</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inches for Renne</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total inches</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfortunately, many persons will be willing to take the above figures as an indictment of the AP's performance during the campaign and as proof of bias on the part of that wire service. As pointed out earlier, comparison of the amount of copy sent over for two candidates is meaningless when considered alone. From a consideration of those

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Because of the methods of measurement, these totals must be considered approximations. In neither wire service study was justified copy measured. In the case of the AP, the writer's copy was counted line by line, with three full lines approximately equaling an inch in type. For the UPI, the unjustified copy sent to Salt Lake was measured, using the same criterion.
figures only, it is as sensible to criticize the UPI as the AP, for perhaps Babcock deserved considerably more space than did Renne. Clearly, no proof of bias can be ascertained from consideration only of amount of space or number of stories devoted to either Renne or Babcock.

When considered with other factors, a quantitative measurement has more meaning. Additional meaning is gained, for instance, through a comparison of how Roland Renne's press releases were treated by the Associated Press and United Press International.

Of the 15 releases used by both the UPI and the AP, there was no sign of distortion by either service. In nearly all cases, the leads, although rewritten, concerned the same subject as the lead of the release originally submitted. The releases were cut considerably --particularly by the Associated Press--but there was no indication that the cutting was arbitrary, capricious or malicious. That is not to say the rewriting and editing of the releases was done in the best possible way. Indeed, any trained newsman--including the men who did the editing for the wire services--probably could improve on much of the work if given enough time. But the rewriting and cutting were done in acceptable and understandable ways. Generally, long background paragraphs were cut and specific proposals retained. There was no indication either wire service attempted to play up the personal or sensational at the expense of serious issues.

The study of the treatment of the releases by the AP and UPI showed it is possible to have two "fair" stories that vary in length. The treatment of the following release is an example. It also is
given because the difference in treatment of this release by the two wire services is typical of their treatment of the releases studied.

The following is a release from Renne headquarters for Tuesday morning, October 13:

Billings--"Education universally available is the key to our future," Roland Renne, Democratic candidate for governor, told a Kiwanis breakfast here yesterday.

"It is the realization of the American dream that in this country the sons and grandsons of people who came to our shores, often not knowing the language, have gone on in a single generation to become the business and professional and governmental leaders of their communities, states and nations."

He said neither Montana nor the nation "can afford to waste the talent of a young man or woman simply because the size of their parents' pocketbook is smaller than their capacity to learn and grow."

Noting that "the best we can get for our children" is not an arguable position, Renne acknowledged that "what we can argue about is how we are going to pay for it."

Renne said he was opposed to "soaring property taxes" and cited the case of a Helena home where property taxes had increased from $181.36 to $417.23 in 10 years. He also restated his opposition to a general sales tax.

"The only fair solution is taxation based on ability to pay," Renne argued, "with all people in the state paying their fair share to meet the human needs of our people."

"We all can and do complain about taxes, but if we want good quality schools, without fancy frills, taxes have to be collected to pay for them. We do need good teachers and good facilities so that both teacher and child can work together with parents to get good quality education at every level, including all six units of our university system," Renne declared.

Economic development, Renne said, is tied directly in with education "for we are presently losing half our college graduates to other states for lack of opportunity for creative, rewarding and challenging occupations for them."

"We can provide new enterprises keyed to our abundant resources rather than continue to be a colony where resources and labor are exploited for the benefit of capital from outside our state," Renne added.

"But we can only do this by accepting the challenges of the future. That's really what this election is all about--leadership for the future in which the quality of our society becomes as important as the quantity of the economy," Renne said.

The Associated Press sent the story in this manner:

BILLINGS (AP) -- "Education universally available is the key
to our future," Roland Renne, Democratic candidate for governor, told a Billings civic club Monday.

Renne said he is opposed to "soaring property taxes" and cited the case of a Helena home where property taxes increased from $181 to $117 in 10 years. He also stated his opposition to a sales tax.

The United Press International's version:

BILLINGS, OCT. 12 (UPI) — "Education universally available is the key to our future," Democratic candidate for governor Roland Renne told a service club breakfast here Monday.

Renne campaigned in Billings until 9:30 a.m. and then left for Butte to join President Johnson's campaign visit to the mining city.

He said neither Montana nor the nation "can afford to waste the talent of a young man or woman simply because the size of their parents' pocketbook is smaller than their capacity to learn and grow."

Renne said there is no argument to "the best we can get for your children" but "what we can argue is how we are going to pay for it."

The former Montana State College president again restated opposition to what he called "soaring property taxes" and to a general sales tax.

"The only fair solution is taxation based on ability to pay with all the people in the state paying their fair share to meet the human needs of our people."

Renne said we all can complain about taxes but if we want good quality schools without fancy frills, taxes have to be collected to pay for them.

The only firm statements of Renne's political position in the preceding release were those referring to the importance of education, the sales tax and "soaring property taxes." A less clear-cut statement is that "the only fair solution is taxation based on ability to pay..."

If considered in the context of the entire release, that might suggest an increase in the state's income tax. Both the AP and the UPI stories reported the first three points and the UPI also included the reference to "taxation based on the ability to pay" and several paragraphs consisting largely of direct quotations which enlarged upon Renne's position, although stating no positions that could be considered
controversial.

In summary, both the AP and UPI included the main points of the release and the UPI story, in addition, included several secondary points and enlargement on the major points. That seemed to be the pattern in nearly every case that Renne's releases were used by both the UPI and the AP, although the example cited over-emphasizes the average difference in length.

Lashman and Renne criticized specifically the Associated Press' handling of Renne's release following his tour of the nine state institutions. That release, and the AP rewrite version, follows:

Bozeman--"Short-sighted, budget-rigging policies of the Babcock administration have not only mortgaged the lives of the 4,000 people in state institutions," Roland Renne said today. "They have also placed an exhorbitant promissory note on the homes and farms of Montana citizens.

"Both present and future generations will have to pay unnecessary property taxes later to make up for present neglect," the Democratic gubernatorial candidate said on completion of his tour this past week of each of Montana's nine public institutions.

"Despite the real concern of skilled administrators and dedicated staffs for the human needs of the unfortunate and misguided who are confined in these institutions, the present penny-wise, pound-foolish policies of Governor Babcock prevent them from providing the treatment and rehabilitation so vitally necessary," Renne declared.

"It is short-sighted and far more costly to skimp on staff, facilities and maintenance now, thus leaving for future generations even more burdensome property tax loads to pay for recurring welfare cases and repeat criminal and juvenile offenders.

"If the people of Montana could see, as I have seen, the peeling paint, the leaky roofs, the over-crowding in some institutions and under-utilization of space in others, they would understand how handicapped our present administrators and staffs are by shortages of personnel and by inadequate facilities.

"It is only in a primitive society that the old and feeble and the sick are turned out into the night to starve and die. In our modern society we have accepted the Judaeo-Christian ethical commitment to care for the unproductive members of our
society and to attempt to restore those we can to useful lives with their families.

"To do any less is to shirk our moral responsibility," Renne declared.

"I was shocked by the large amount of physical plant maintenance which has been deferred or postponed. Current requests for deferred maintenance alone are larger than the total appropriation for buildings and equipment provided in the current biennium," he said.

Renne said the budget cut of 1961 has never been fully restored. "Where support has been increased, it brings us just about back where we were in 1961—below standard in almost every case, and marking time instead of making progress.

"There is very little room to spare in any of our institutions. But where there is unused space, it is usually because of poor planning at the state level or because of a shortage of trained personnel to provide needed service," Renne added.

"In every case there is a crying need for field workers and parole officers whose services could often reduce institutional populations. In some instances policy changes by the Board of Institutions would help improve functions and services. In other cases, legislation may be necessary to provide better care at a lower net cost.

"But in any event, it will take leadership from the governor if the people of Montana are to understand the problems of our institutions well enough to provide the support necessary.

"I propose to give that kind of full-time leadership to major state problems. I propose to tell the people of Montana truthfully and honestly what the costs will be. I propose to give the Director and the Board of Institutions full opportunity to develop proper policies and programs and to suggest realistic budgets," Renne said.

Accompanying Renne on the visits to all nine institutions was his wife, Mrs. Polly Renne. Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor R. V. Bottomly joined in the trip to the State Industrial School at Miles City.

"We were most impressed by their whole-hearted devotion to helping the people in their care as best they can with the severely limited means at their disposal. Where rehabilitation is virtually impossible, the custodial care is designed to meet the needs of the individuals. Housekeeping in nearly every instance is excellent, though cleanliness might be improved.

"The people of Montana can be proud of the personnel who are trying so hard to help the unfortunate and misguided; but they would be ashamed if they could see the lack of help and facilities the Babcock administration has provided," Renne concluded.

The release, as sent by the Associated Press:

BOZEMAN (AP) -- Montana's Republican administration has "penny-wise, pound-foolish policies" toward state custodial
Institutions, leaving the burden on future generations, Roland R. Renne charged Sunday.

"Short-sighted, budget-rigging policies of the Babcock administration have not only mortgaged the lives of the 4,000 people in the state institutions," the Democratic nominee for governor said. "They have also placed an exorbitant promissory note on the homes and farms of Montana citizens."

Renne, who had finished his tour of nine institutions, said he "was shocked by the large amount of physical plant maintenance which has been deferred or postponed."

He said there is unused space as well as overcrowding "usually because of a shortage of trained personnel to provide needed service."

Again, the Associated Press captured the essence of the original release in its rewrite, although much of the release elaborating on that essence is omitted. There is no distortion in the Associated Press story. There can be legitimate debate, however, on whether the Associated Press should have reported more fully what Renne said. Such a determination must be based on personal evaluation and will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

However, it should be pointed out now that a story's influence is not a direct variable of its length. In other words, a short story may have a greater impact than a long one. The wire services, in cutting out unnecessary words, making the releases more concise and the leads shorter and more interesting, also probably improve the impact of stories.

It should be pointed out that there was evidence the Associated Press was trying to treat both candidates fairly. For instance, when both candidates addressed sessions of the Montana Education Association in Missoula, the night AP story used a general lead to the effect that the candidates did the lecturing and the teachers the listening. Approximately equal space was given to a summary of each candidate's
The AP summarized a letter Renne wrote to the Montana Kaimin, the student newspaper at Montana State University.\textsuperscript{12}

In general, whenever a Renne release contained a specific proposal or charge that was new, it was used by the Associated Press. On October 11, for instance, Renne, in a press release, outlined an eight-point program to build the state's economy. The AP printed nearly all of the information in the release, as did the UPI.\textsuperscript{13}

There were exceptions to that performance. For instance, the Associated Press did not use an October 3 release on Renne's request for an audit of the Centennial Train finances. The UPI used releases on October 3 and September 26. Controversy involving the train later became one of the more lively issues of the campaign.

The Associated Press also failed to report Renne's proposal in a press release for October 19 for programs to assist farmers and ranchers in record keeping. The AP may have thought the issue was not newsworthy; if so, Babcock's answer to the proposal would not be newsworthy, either. But it was sent over the wire October 20.\textsuperscript{14}

Most other instances of Renne charges not reported by the AP concerned statements which were of minor importance or had been the

\textsuperscript{12}Associated Press files, October 22, 1964. The United Press International handled the story in a similar manner; however, more attention is being given the Associated Press here because the charges were made against that wire service.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, October 29, 1964.


\textsuperscript{15}It should be noted that the omission of the Renne story and the inclusion of the Babcock story may have resulted from different news situations the two days.
subject of previous campaign debate.

Most of the study thus far has dealt with the Associated Press because the complaints were made against this wire service. However, the UPI campaign stories also were studied. In general, as mentioned earlier, the UPI used more of Renne's releases, both in number and in length. There was no indication of distortion in what was used. Of the three releases used by the AP and passed over by the UPI, one dealt with Renne's refusal to debate Victor Overcash, former John Birch Society coordinator in Montana.\(^16\) Another concerned Renne's charge that Carl W. Bell, whom Babcock had appointed to the Montana Aeronautics Commission, was a member of the John Birch Society.\(^17\) That latter release points up a specific area of difficulty in covering the Renne campaign.

Originally, Dr. Richard Weber, Valley County Democratic chairman, charged that Bell, president of the Montana Chamber of Commerce, was a Birch member. Neither wire service would use the story before it could interview Bell, especially because the charge was being made by a minor party official. David C. Beeder, in an AP article, explain the situation as follows:\(^18\)

The release carrying Dr. Weber's charge originally was released through Joe Kelly, executive secretary of the Democratic Central Committee. About a week later on the morning of October 30, a second

\(^{16}\) Roland Renne press release for October 17, 1964.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., undated.

release was delivered, quoting Renne on the subject of Weber's charges about Bell. This release was written in a Halloween slant and quoted Renne as warning "of political hobgoblins, gillies [sic], ghosties and things that go boom in the night." Later the same day, a third release was issued to replace the second. This final release omitted the Halloween references but had Renne quoting Dr. Weber to the effect that Carl W. Bell, "an admitted Bircher," had been named by Babcock to the Montana Aeronautics Commission. The AP checked by telephone with Dr. Weber, who said he had two signed statements from Glasgow residents saying they had heard Bell say he was a Birch Society member. He refused to give the names of the people, however. Bell was on a hunting trip and could not be reached.

In an interview in Missoula on Friday, October 30, L. Edward Lashman of the Renne campaign complained about the UPI and the AP killing the original release. "Any charge made against Roland Renne is printed before it even is investigated," he charged. The next day papers across the state carried the story.

The Associated Press used the third of the three releases but included an explanation—which seems justified—of the entire procedure surrounding the story. The AP had attempted to investigate the charges

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19 According to an interview with Gordon Bennett on December 31, 1964, the first Renne release was replaced because Renne decided that the Halloween slant did not add to the image he was trying to create.

20 Lashman interview, loc. cit.
and to give the accused a chance to answer them.\textsuperscript{21} The UPI did not use the story, Remington said, because of the danger of libel in accusing a person of being a John Birch member, because the service could not reach Bell to get his comments on the charge and because, just several days before the release appeared, the Helena bureau had been warned by higher authority in the UPI organization to handle last-minute campaign charges with extreme care.

It was more difficult to study the wire services' treatment of the Babcock campaign because no complete set of releases was available. However, there seems to be no reason for complaint about the Babcock coverage. Both the AP and the UPI gave adequate and fair summaries of the several Babcock releases which were studied.

At least part of the Babcock advantage in space in the AP coverage compared with Renne's advantage in the UPI coverage came from stories which more directly concerned Babcock as Governor as well as candidate. For instance, Babcock's disclosure of his personal finances got eight inches of wire copy from the UPI and 13 inches from the AP; the Governor's talk to the Medical Association, in which he announced his support of assistance to the indigent elderly, got four and one-half inches from UPI and ten inches from the AP.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21}Despite Lashman's charges, there is no reason to suspect the Associated Press would have handled differently a similar charge from Governor Babcock. When the Republican lieutenant governor candidate, Ted James, charged that Renne, Democratic lieutenant governor candidate R. V. Bottomly and Democratic Senator Lee Metcalf were involved in a conspiracy which would result in Renne's elevation to the United States Senate, Renne's denial was carried the next day.

\textsuperscript{22}Associated Press and United Press International files, October 16 and 23.
In short, there is no conclusive evidence that either wire service was unfair to Governor Babcock or Roland Renne. Specifically, there is a lack of evidence to prove charges made against the Associated Press by the Democrats. Although the AP can be criticized on several counts, there is no evidence of distortion of Renne’s releases. It must be added, also, that it is easy to be an armchair editor. News judgment which seems incorrect now may not have seemed so under the original circumstances.

It is likely the Democrats’ complaints about the Associated Press really stem not from what seemed to be distortion of Renne’s releases but from what probably seemed to be merciless and unfair cutting. Some critics undoubtedly will point to the number of stories and inches filed for each candidate as final proof of bias on the part of the AP. Such reasoning does not take into consideration the fact the Governor, even as a campaigner, was still an integral figure in government. Nor does it take into consideration the fact that the political statements of Babcock may have been more judiciously edited, better prepared and fresher than those of his opponent. In short, the critics may have forgotten that the job of a wire service is to report news, not everything a candidate says simply because he says it.

A study of Renne’s press releases for October reveals many deficiencies. If the releases are an accurate summary of Renne’s campaign (and certainly his own releases should provide such a summary), the candidate spent little time discussing specific proposals and considerably more time repeating charges.

For instance, of the 33 Renne releases studied, 17 included at
least a statement accusing Babcock of extremism, Birch influence or
being closely allied with Barry Goldwater and the radical right. The
Birch-Goldwater charges were the main subject of six releases and
were the subject of at least a paragraph in eight others. The issue
may have been a vital one to Montana, as Renne claimed, but it ceased
to be newsworthy after so many repetitions. The same criticism applies
to the issue of Babcock's salary from his trucking company, which was
first brought up in September, was the lead subject in four October
releases and was mentioned in eight others.

One of Renne's criticisms of newspaper coverage of his campaign
was that headlines used such expressions as "Renne Lashes at Babcock"
or "Renne Slams at Somebody," giving the impression the statement was
a vicious attack. Yet his own news releases contained terms such as
Renne "took a crack at," Renne "jibed," and Renne "needled."

In addition to being repetitious, the releases were too general.
They did report that Renne had proposed establishment of a state
development credit fund, tax credits for the homes of persons over
65, a "revitalized" state Water Board, continuation of the stream
diversion law, assistance to farmers including help in financial
record keeping, and participation in the food stamp program and the

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23 Roland Renne press releases, October 1, October 7, 1964.
24 Ibid., October 21, 1964.
26 Ibid., October 12, 1964.
27 Ibid., October 9, 1964.
28 Ibid., October 30, 1964.
29 Ibid., October 19, 1964.
manpower development and training program. But those proposals were buried under a deluge of repeated charges and general statements such as "Renne spelled out a program of economic development, educational improvement, water and resource development, job creation and reduction of property taxes whose 'soaring rise' he called 'the most serious threat to private property in Montana.' Although Renne may have spelled out the programs in his speeches, his releases seldom did.

It is ironic, then, that one of Renne's criticisms about the press coverage was that newspapers failed to report his proposals in detail. "These [programs of economic growth and development] were almost completely buried, or, in many cases, never even mentioned," Renne said. "They probably would be mentioned merely by saying, 'Renne also emphasized a five-point program for economic development and growth' but did not spell it out so that people really didn't know whether I was being specific or not." If that criticism applied to newspapers, it also applied to Renne's own releases.

In summary, a study of the releases and of the AP and UPI handling of those releases reveals no conclusive evidence of unfairness. That the AP sent over considerably more inches on Babcock than on Renne and that the UPI sent slightly more on Renne does not mean either service was unfair. Fairness should be assumed unless bias can be proven. Unfortunately, critics of the press often operate from the

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31 Ibid., October 7, 1964. Similar statements appear in the releases of October 18, October 6, October 14, and October 25, 1964.

32 Renne interview, loc. cit.
opposite premise: bias should be assumed unless fairness is proved.\textsuperscript{33}

One criterion in evaluating wire services should be whether they are satisfying the needs of members or clients. For that reason, editors of the 13 newspapers studied were asked whether they thought wire service coverage of the gubernatorial campaign was adequate and fair.

Answering "yes" were 12 of the 13 editors: Woody Laughnan, Lewistown Daily News; Burl Lyons, Kalispell Daily Inter Lake; Edward Coyle, Missoula Missoulian; Robert E. Miller, Helena Independent Record; G. Nicholas Ifft, Bozeman Daily Chronicle; Robert Gilluly, Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican; Herb Watts, Jr., Havre Daily News; Walter Nelson, Butte Montana Standard; Francis Powell, Livingston Enterprise; Duane Bowler, Billings Gazette; E. P. Furlong, Great Falls Tribune, and Charles Stauffer, Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner. Two editors, Stauffer and Gilluly, based their opinions on observations of other newspapers since the Dillon Tribune-Examiner and the Ravalli Republican subscribe to no wire service. Two editors qualified their answers with references to Babcock's advantage as an incumbent. Furlong of the Great Falls Tribune (AP, UPI) said he believed coverage was fair, "but I believe more stress was placed on doings and sayings of Babcock, possibly because of his importance as incumbent." Lyons of the Kalispell Inter Lake (UPI) said wire service coverage was adequate and fair "with the qualification that the incumbent has an advantage and every story concerning the incumbent when he is running for

\textsuperscript{33}For an opinion on whether the Associated Press should have covered Renna's campaign more thoroughly, see Chapter XI.
re-election can be construed as a political story."34

Laughman of the Lewistown paper (UPI) believed the wire services did "an excellent job on all levels. Some papers, however, were obvious failures, notably the [Great Falls] Tribune which did not adequately do a job for the citizens of the largest city in Montana."

The only editor who thought wire service coverage was not adequate and fair was Robert Scanlan of the Miles City Star (AP), who complained: "Both wire services seemed to accept everything the candidates sent them, regardless of continuity or newsworthiness. Much copy was absolute garbage as far as I am concerned."

He continued:

I think the wire services should have a story on the various state candidates and wrap them up in one story for each party, giving each candidate a paragraph or two, depending strictly on the news value of his remarks. During the past campaign, newspapers paid a lot of money for wire services and the wire turned out to be a free distribution center for political ads disguised as news.

Even if wire services were remiss in some of their campaign functions, the AP and the UPI publish nothing. The final decision of what information is to appear in the papers remains with the individual editors.

The results of those decisions will be discussed next.

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34 All information in this chapter from Montana editors was gathered from answers to a questionnaire mailed in November, 1964. See Chapter V.
CHAPTER VIII

THE NEWSPAPER STUDY

Copies of the 13 daily newspapers from October 1, 1964, through November 2, 1964, were studied to determine how Montana newspapers covered the 1964 gubernatorial campaign. Study of the coverage in the final month of the campaign seems to be the pattern in nearly all assessments of press performance in election campaigns. That period is the most active part of the campaign and the length of time allows a large enough sample from which generalizations can be drawn.

In selecting methods for the study, preference was given to those that would be easy to apply and to understand.¹ To determine the amount of space given to each candidate for campaign material (as defined in Chapter VI), the number of stories and pictures and the number of inches of text and pictures for Babcock and Renne were totaled.²

¹See Granville Price, "A Method for Analyzing Newspaper Campaign Coverage," Journalism Quarterly, XXXI (Fall, 1954), 447-458. The use by Price and others of devices such as "Z scores," standard deviations and statistical proof of the coder's reliability seems to have little purpose. Because the impact of this thesis depends on the reader's understanding of the findings, no attempts will be made to clutter the conclusions with scientific data, the value of which is not apparent even to the author.

²Some studies of campaign news have separated each story into "statements," then presented the total statements for each candidate. (See Chilton R. Bush, "The Analysis of Political Campaign News," Journalism Quarterly, XXVIII (Spring, 1951), 250-51). However, according to Granville Price, "The differentiation exhibited by measuring the differences of percentages of column-inch totals was closely parallel to the differentiation produced by the far more
The following rules were used for measurement:

1. Just the text, not the headlines, was measured.

2. Separate totals were kept for page 1 coverage and inside coverage.

3. When a story was continued from page 1 to an inside page, it was counted as a page 1 story, but the inches were divided between page 1 and the page on which the story was continued.

4. Pictures were counted when either candidate was a primary figure in the picture and when the picture concerned the campaign.  

It is necessary to emphasize again that those measurements taken alone are not intended to be a valid indication of fairness in coverage. There is no more reason to assume each candidate should get equal coverage than there is to assume one should get twice as much coverage as the other.

As Markham and Stempel write:

tedious method of counting statements. ... [and] it was concluded that serious error was not likely if, in analyzing newspaper news of a two-party presidential campaign, news story units are counted rather than statements. However, this short-cut precluded contrasting favorable and unfavorable news about separate candidacies, a contrast that may be desired in some kinds of analysis." (See Granville Price, op. cit., p. 456). Because there seems to be no need for such a contrast in this study, the story-measurement rather than statement-measurement method is used.

Several pictures included local party workers in front of huge posters of Renne or Babcock. Because the candidates dominated the pictures to such an extent, those pictures were included in this study. For example, see Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican, October 28, 1964, p. 1.
The standard of equal space or equal treatment for both parties has been consistently rejected as unsatisfactory. Such an arbitrary standard not only denies the right of the newspaper editor to play the news according to its news values; but it also leaves unanswered the question of how much inequality in treatment may be due, not to consistent bias, but to the difference in the competition of other news, in the timing of news breaks, in the relative efficiency of campaign headquarters, and in the many other exigencies of newspaper production and techniques.4

The inadequacy of equal coverage as a standard for measuring press fairness increases when one candidate is an incumbent. Some stories which a reader (or researcher) considers political may have been considered by the reporter and deskman as reflecting the actions of the government rather than the campaigner. The newsman's decision may be wrong, but it may not reflect prejudice, as the term "bias" suggests.

The same points apply to equality in display. For the purpose of this study, a "headline index" was devised to measure the play each story received. The index was conceived with the idea that a separate measure of headlines was necessary because of claims by some partisans that stories about their candidate received poor play.5


5In the Columbia Journalism Review, there is a warning about the dangers of striving for equal display: "Most newspapers have learned the first lesson of impartiality—that of equal display. But in 1960, this kind of impartiality began to show its dangers along with its virtues. In future elections, editors could conceivably return to a more conscious exercise of substantive news judgment. No matter how special its subject matter, a campaign remains news, not mechanics." See "Campaign Coverage: An Appraisal of 1960—And Implications for 1964," Columbia Journalism Review (Fall, 1961), p. 13.
The following formula was used as a headline index: the number of lines in a headline was multiplied by the column-width of the headline. One point was added for headlines with kickers. For example, a three-column, two-line headline would be worth 6; a two-column, two-line headline with kicker 5, and a one-column, three-line headline 3.

This system can be criticized because it does not seem to consider page placement of the story. In other words, a one-column, three-line headline at the top of the page might attract more readers than would a two-column, two-line headline in the middle of the page. In nearly all cases, however, the headline with the higher count by the above described method also had the better position on the page.

The system is also deficient, its critics can claim, because it does not consider the size of the headline type. Again it can be argued that through observation of the newspapers studied, it was found newspapers used type that generally did not vary greatly in size for any one headline width. For instance, many papers relied mainly on 18- and 24-point type for their one-column headlines and 24-, 30- or 36-point type for their two-column headlines. In a few instances, where a one-column headline might differ greatly from others within a paper, correction in the count was made accordingly. For instance, the usual one-column, three-line headline would be given a value of 3; however, a one-column, three-line headline in very small type would be given a count of $1\frac{1}{2}$.

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6 A kicker is a short line of smaller type above the main headline.
When the headline indexes for all the stories for each candidate were totaled for a paper, the total was divided by the number of headlines to get an average headline index which, for the reasons discussed above, also is a type of display index. The advantages of this index are that it uses figures that are easy to obtain and small enough to be easy to work with. Its primary advantage is that it is the best system available for the information sought. 7

The following rules were used in headline measurement:

1. When a story was continued, the original headline only was counted unless the report of the gubernatorial candidate's remarks were on the continuation page only.

2. Headlines of body type were not counted.

3. Headlines over stories containing remarks of Babcock and Renne both were counted if the headline applied only to Babcock or only to Renne.

4. Headlines over roundup stories were counted only if the headline was based on the remarks of either Babcock or Renne.

Markham and Stempel (op. cit., p. 14) divided headlines into the following classifications: main streamer (six columns or more on the top of the page); second streamer (six columns or more, but not the largest headline); two-column; main head (strong one-column head); secondary head; subordinate head, and filler head. However, to convert this material to terms that could be easily compared, number values would have to be assigned, just as was done in the system being used.

Price (op. cit., p. 453) employed an index to obtain the predicted readership of a political story. The index was as follows: Determine the position index (a 3-point scale depending on position on the page and page in the paper). Multiply the position index by 15, subtract the height of the headline on the page in inches and add one-half the size of the type in the main deck in points. This system seemed to be too time-consuming and also seemed to take into consideration factors which the deskman probably would not consider when assigning or writing a headline for a story. Deskmen would, in most cases, attempt to assign width and depth of headlines in terms of the value of the story.
What is the value of recording the number of inches devoted to each candidate and a headline index for each candidate if equality in play and space cannot be considered the ideal? The value is in comparing the differences in space and play given by each of the daily newspapers. Granville Price states:

It was hoped that a scheme for showing the directional intensity of a newspaper's political leanings in each of several areas of news performance, and in relation to the directional leanings of other newspapers, would have meaning and usefulness for both editors and consumers of news. Such a scheme would avoid use of the term "bias." It would merely show a relative position, leaving it to the editor and the reader to apply the limits of "right" and "wrong" to the scales.

In other words, no attempt will be made to determine how many inches or what size headlines should have been given by any paper to either candidate. Such an attempt would be only armchair editing, because many factors--among them the news situation of the day--influence coverage. However, newspapers of similar size face common problems in campaign coverage, and a comparison of coverage will indicate if news judgment varied considerably among the papers.

Before that comparison is presented, individual reports will be given on each of the 13 newspapers studied. Those reports will include not only the information discussed above but a short study reporting any significant or outstanding phases in the newspaper's gubernatorial campaign coverage. Special attention will be given to articles written by staff members of the papers, any peculiarities of display that might not appear in the headline index and the wording of headlines. That

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8 Price, op. cit., p. 146.
Last category particularly is important, because, as Percy H. Tannenbaum states in *Journalism Quarterly*, a headline serves not only "as an index by attracting attention to a particular item, but it may also serve as an index in terms of influencing the interpretation of a story."

Tannenbaum says "often the content of the headline, and perhaps the first few paragraphs of the story, is all the reader does glean from a particular news item." 9

Finally, special attention will be given to complaints made by party chairmen in the county where the paper is published.

**Billings Gazette**

The *Billings Gazette* gave nearly equal news coverage to Tim Babcock and Roland Renne during the period studies. Display also was similar. (See Table 3.)

Three visits by each candidate were reported in the *Gazette*. Renne's visits resulted in five stories and Babcock's in four. However, Babcock received five pictures in connection with his appearances in his former hometown and Renne had none.

Both candidates spoke to the Chamber of Commerce in one of their appearances in Billings. Each man's speech received approximately 20 inches of coverage, with Renne getting page 1 coverage and Babcock

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10Renne visits were reported in the *Gazette* on October 7, 12, and 30 and 31 (same visit). Babcock visits were reported on October 21, 25 and 28.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Babcock</th>
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<th>Joint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Duane Smith, GOP chairman for Yellowstone County, thought the Gazette, which editorially backed Babcock, favored neither candidate in its news columns. Both he and Democratic Chairman Chester Blaylock said the campaigns of Babcock and Renne were covered adequately. However, Blaylock said his own measurements from September 26 to November 2 showed Babcock had received approximately 463 column inches to 255 for Renne. He continued:

If this was bias, in my opinion, it was on the front page and in the use of pictures. For instance, a cursory check of the paper from Sept. 26 to Nov. 2 shows no pictures of Renne [there was one on October 7] and 118 column inches of pictures of Babcock. Almost any excuse would do to get Babcock on the front page. During the primary, it was announced that Babcock would be opening his headquarters in Helena and that coffee and doughnuts would be served. This great gem of news was given headlines. On the other hand, I believe that all the press releases that Renne released were run.

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11 Billings Gazette. October 7, p. 1; October 24, p. 2. Renne's story probably received front-page play because it concerned primarily a B.A. degree for Eastern Montana College of Education. Babcock's comments on the B.A. degree were reported in the lead story on page 1 on October 18.

12 Duane Smith and Chester Blaylock questionnaires. All questionnaires referred to in this chapter were sent in November, 1964, and returned by the respondents in November and December, 1964.

13 Also illustrative of the different totals that can be obtained in campaign measurement, depending on which stories are considered campaign material, is the difference between my figures (Babcock, 200 inches; Renne, 189½ inches) and those of a Montana State University senior in a separate study (Babcock, 247; Renne 172½). See Lester Hankinson, "The Gubernatorial Race as Presented by the Billings Gazette," unpublished paper presented to journalism senior seminar, Montana State University, Missoula, December 1, 1964, p. 4.

14 Blaylock questionnaire.
Although Renne did not get as much front-page coverage as the Democrats would have liked, Blaylock said the Gazette "still is an infinitely better newspaper today than it was under the A. C. M. [Anaconda Company]. At least the issues are discussed."\(^{15}\)

Gazette Managing Editor Duane Bowler said deskmen were told "there should be something in the paper every issue about what the major candidates were doing or not doing."\(^{16}\) To do this for Renne, the paper relied much more heavily on news releases and Gazette reporters than it did on its two wire services (see Chapter IX).

**Bozeman Daily Chronicle**

The Bozeman Daily Chronicle, published in Roland Renne's hometown, gave nearly equal space to the two candidates for Governor. (See Table 4.) Although Editor G. Nicholas Ifft III said the paper endorsed Babcock editorially, neither party chairman—Democrat Paul Visscher or Republican Leonard Wing—thought the paper had supported either candidate.\(^{17}\)

The Chronicle evoked particular censure from Roland Renne, who said the people in his home county had no idea what he was saying throughout the state because of the poor coverage in the Chronicle.\(^{18}\) On the other hand, Ifft was one of the few editors who thought Renne was less cooperative than was Babcock.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{15}\)Ibid.

\(^{16}\)Duane Bowler questionnaire.

\(^{17}\)G. Nicholas Ifft, Paul Visscher, Leonard Wing questionnaires.

\(^{18}\)Interview with Roland Renne, November 20, 1964.

\(^{19}\)Ifft questionnaire.
### TABLE 4

**BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE**

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<tr>
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<td>3·4</td>
<td>3·5</td>
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</table>

*Four headlines on Babcock stories on page 1 not countable.*

**Two headlines on Renne stories on page 1 not countable.*

***Two headlines on Renne stories on inside pages not countable.*
Democratic Chairman Visscher indicated that neither candidate was favored in the news columns, but Republican Chairman Wing claimed Renne was given an advantage. Wing supported his contention in this manner:

"[The Chronicle] failed to print submitted copy on Babcock and failed to have reporters cover Babcock meetings. [It] cooperated with Renne boosters. I cannot recall seeing a picture of Babcock in the Chronicle, either before or after the election. Inchwise, the Chronicle has printed twice as much Democratic favorable propaganda as they have Republican slanted."

In fact, Babcock received slightly more coverage and considerably more front-page coverage than did Roland Renne. Reports of Babcock appearances in Bozeman were printed in the Chronicle on October 1, 12 and 27. Several Bozeman-dated Renne releases were carried but none apparently originated from a local speech. There were no pictures of either candidate during the period studied.

The statement by Democratic Chairman Visscher seems to summarize the Chronicle's campaign coverage: "Although the Chronicle refused some items we wished to include in our news reports, I believe that Dr. Renne was given as much and as favorable publicity as his opponent." 21

Although the Chronicle used several of Renne's releases rather than the Associated Press' version of them, the paper apparently never

---

20 Wing questionnaire.

21 Visscher questionnaire. A study done by a Montana State University journalism senior showed that from September 1 to November 2, 1964, Babcock received a total of 356 inches of coverage compared with 309 inches for Renne. The figures include stories of activities, favorable letters to the editor and photographs. See William H. Walter, "The Bozeman Daily Chronicle: Its Role in the 1964 Election Campaign," unpublished paper presented to journalism senior seminar, Montana State University, Missoula, December 2, 1964, p. 6.
had a personal interview with Renne or local story coverage of a Renne speech.

Butte Montana Standard

The county party chairmen of Silver Bow County were a unique pair among those polled in that neither thought their home-county paper, the Montana Standard, had been unfair or biased in its coverage. Both men, Democrat Joseph Shea and Republican Roy Murray, said neither Babcock nor Renne was favored in the news columns and coverage was adequate for both candidates.\textsuperscript{22}

Standard Editor Walter Nelson noted Babcock got more coverage in the paper because he was the incumbent but said attempts were made to equalise the coverage.\textsuperscript{23} The advantage in space given Babcock was considerable, with the Governor getting 159\textsuperscript{\frac{1}{2}} inches compared with 84\textsuperscript{\frac{1}{2}} for Roland Renne. (See Table 5.)

Reports of Renne speeches in Butte were carried in the Standard October 29 and November 2. Babcock visits to the Mining City were reported on October 11, October 22 and 23 (same visit) and October 31. Each candidate, during one of his visits, spoke at the Butte Kiwanis Club. Both appearances were given front-page coverage and approximately equal space.\textsuperscript{24} Both candidates also addressed rallies during visits.

\textsuperscript{22}Roy Murray and Joseph Shea questionnaires.

\textsuperscript{23}Walter Nelson questionnaire.

\textsuperscript{24}Babcock, speaking on October 21, received 11\textsuperscript{\frac{1}{2}} inches, 4 of which were on the front page. (Montana Standard, October 22, pp. 1, 23). Renne, speaking on October 28, received 16 inches, 6 of which were on page 1. (Montana Standard, October 29, pp. 1, 2).
### Table 5

**Butte Montana Standard**

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<th>Category</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside</td>
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  - Multi-Column: 6, 1

- **Page 1 Headline Index**: 5.33, 4

- **Inside Headlines**
  - Single-Column: 4, 9*
  - Multi-Column: 10, 7

- **Inside Headline Index**: 3.9, 2.5

*One headline on Renne story on inside page not countable.
Babcock's remarks led off the Republican rally story and received front-page coverage; Renne's remarks, however, were upstaged by the Democrats' number one attraction—Senator Mike Mansfield—and were not reported until the page on which the story had been continued. Babcock's advantage in local coverage came by virtue of the fact he made one more campaign visit to Butte than Renne did during the period under study. Babcock got six stories on three visits compared with three stories on two visits for Renne.

The only headline that can be criticized as having editorial overtones was one appearing on the Standard's front page October 22: "Republicans Score Points/In Giant Rally in Butte." It is open to question, of course, whether the Republicans did "Score Points."

Although the Standard editorially supported neither Babcock nor Renne, one of its editorials brings into sharp focus Babcock's campaigning ability in strongly Democratic Silver Bow County:

He [Babcock] complimented Butte on its community spirit and civic pride; he lauded Silver Bow County for having jacked itself out of a fiscal morass, tactfully refraining from mentioning that the lifting was done by a Democratic county administration, after a previous Democratic regime had caused the trouble—and, with equal tact, refraining

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25Montana Standard, October 22, p. 1, and November 2, pp. 1, 7.
This example brings up another factor in considering press coverage of the election. Whenever Babcock appeared at a Republican rally, he automatically got top billing because he is the state's leading Republican figure. However, Renne, never before a candidate, by necessity took second billing to Senator Mike Mansfield and sometimes to Representative Arnold Olsen, both of whom were running for re-election.

26Renne made a third visit to Butte during the visit of President Johnson; however, he made no major addresses.
from mentioning that the necessary reforms were accomplished with vital aid from several departments of a Republican state administration which he heads.27

All of the material used by the Standard in reporting both the Babcock and Renne campaigns was either wire service reports or stories on Butte appearances.

Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner

The Dillon Tribune-Examiner, Montana's smallest daily newspaper, covered political candidates only when they were in the Dillon area. (See Table 6.)

During October, Babcock made one visit to Dillon and Renne made none. The only countable campaign story was the Babcock visit, made in conjunction with the Republican campaign caravan. Five inches of the 9-inch caravan story concerned Babcock, and the paper used a 2 x 3 picture of the Governor in conjunction with his visit.28

Coverage of the Governor's visit certainly was not overdone. The story did contain some color phrases, such as "enthusiastic welcome"; such terms, rightly or wrongly, are a part of many newspapers in small communities and cannot be cited as examples of bias.

Mrs. Alta Lee Pilon, the Republican county chairman, was satisfied

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27 Editorial in Montana Standard, October 25, p. 4.

28 Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner, October 1, p. 1, and October 5, p. 1. Another 2 x 3 picture of Babcock and the muscular dystrophy poster boy, a Dillon lad, was not counted as campaign material because, judging from the cutline, the major intent of the picture was to aid the muscular dystrophy drive and to picture the local youth. In addition, the photo was used nearly two weeks after the Governor's campaign visit. See Dillon Tribune-Examiner, October 13, p. 1.
<table>
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</tbody>
</table>
with the coverage given Babcock and said neither candidate was favored in the news columns of the Tribune-Examiner. "The Dillon paper," she said, "was most co-operative and fair to both parties all through the campaign." ²⁹

Jim Womack, the Democratic county chairman, did not agree. He charged the paper supported Babcock editorially and in its news columns. ³⁰ However, as mentioned earlier, no editorial endorsement of Babcock or any other candidate was found in this study.

"The local press," Womack said, "did nothing for Renne but publish his paid ads." ³¹ As noted before, Renne did not visit Dillon in October, so the standard measures of fairness employed for other papers cannot be used. However, the paper, on several occasions, did devote space to coverage of several local Democratic meetings and in September had articles concerning a visit by Mrs. Renne and the appointment of a Western Montana College student to the State Renne for Governor Committee. ³²

There are no indications the Tribune-Examiner was unfair to either candidate.

Great Falls Tribune

If equal coverage were the criterion for judging campaign coverage, the Great Falls Tribune would rank near the top among Montana

²⁹Mrs. Alta Lee Pilon questionnaire.
³⁰Jim Womack questionnaire. ³¹Ibid.
dailies. Roland Renne received 195 inches of picture and news space during the period studied, and Tim Babcock received 189\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. (See Table 7.) Babcock, however, had a slight edge in the headline index and in front-page coverage.

The equal coverage is particularly surprising because E. P. Furlong, Tribune managing editor, said stories were selected on their news value rather than in an attempt at equal coverage. The Tribune, however, did keep a log of the amount of space given to each major candidate, although Furlong said the main purpose of the tally was "to prove that we had stories about the candidates" rather than to attempt to give candidates equal coverage. "It amounts to a protective device," he said, explaining that he got the idea when Alex Blewett, the Republican nominee for United States Senator, complained during the primary campaign that he could not get news coverage in the Tribune.

Two visits by Roland Renne and three by Tim Babcock were reported in the Tribune, although not in detail. A picture of Babcock was published on one of his visits. None was published of Renne while he was in Great Falls. Renne's first visit was reported in two stories, his second in one. Each Babcock visit got one story.

---

33E. P. Furlong questionnaire.

34James D. Crane, "A New Twist in Election Coverage: Great Falls Tribune Keeps an Election Log," unpublished paper for journalism senior seminar, December 1, 1964. The Tribune log from June 15 to November 2, 1964, showed that Babcock had received 1,012 inches of coverage to Renne's 694\(\frac{1}{2}\). Again, however, the figures are not comparable to those in this study because of the difference in decision of what to measure. See "Editor Keeps a Log on Political Stories," Editor & Publisher, December 19, 1964, p. 47.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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*Eight headlines on Babcock stories on inside pages not countable.

**Nine headlines on Renne stories on inside pages not countable.
The Tribune carried replies of Babcock and Renne to a series of ten questions asked by the congressional action committee of the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce. The answers were given by the candidates at separate sessions, Babcock on October 7 and Renne on October 26. The Tribune made considerable use of roundup stories, running a total of 17 Babcock and Renne stories as parts of roundups. The roundups included paragraphs about several candidates, with each candidate's remarks separated by bold-face subheads. The Tribune seemed to reach a point where further use of roundup stories would have shown a lack of news judgment because the roundup suggests the remarks of each candidate have approximately equal news value.

James Paul, the Democratic chairman of Cascade County, was satisfied with the Tribune's coverage of the gubernatorial campaign. He said the paper favored neither candidate in the news columns and adequately covered the campaign of Roland R. Renne. However, M. K. Felt, the Republican chairman, did not agree. He said:

As the Great Falls Tribune is clearly a Democratic newspaper and wholeheartedly supported, both in news coverage and editorially, the campaigns of President Johnson and Senator Mansfield, they naturally were giving news coverage preference to Candidate Renne. Although they editorially did not come out in support of either gubernatorial candidate, it was quite

35 Great Falls Tribune, October 8, p. 32, and October 27, p. 11. The Babcock answers were carried by the Associated Press but the Renne answers were not. It is impossible to determine the reason for this; however, the Tribune may not have called in the Renne story to the Associated Press or the AP may have missed the Renne story when it checked the morning Tribune. (The author did not spot it until the third time through the issue because the article was in an outer column of a double-page advertisement and blended in with the ad.)

36 James Paul questionnaire.
evident that Mr. Renne was receiving more publicity than Gov. Babcock. The only examples I can give of this are probably the noticeable amount of front-page space that was given Renne while the bulk of Babcock’s space was deeper in the newspaper. Again, I say this is evident because the Tribune is a Democratic newspaper and I don’t think anyone can dispute that.37

Although the Tribune is considered a Democratic paper editorially, there were no indications during the period studied that Renne received better front-page treatment than did Babcock.38

Although letters to the editor were not included in this study, the Great Falls Tribune’s letters section deserves special mention. Research done by Dan Foley, a senior at Montana State University, showed the Tribune published 313 letters, 270 of which dealt with political matters in the month before the election. Foley’s research showed 47½ of the letters directly concerned the gubernatorial campaign, with 27½ favorable to Renne and 20 favorable to Babcock.39

Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican

Montana’s second smallest daily, the Hamilton Ravalli Republican, like the Dillon Tribune-Examiner, covered the candidates only when

37M. K. Felt questionnaire.

38In a letter accompanying his questionnaire, Felt said that although the Tribune is a Democratic paper the Great Falls Leader "perhaps leans toward the Republican point of view. I would state in generalities that the Leader was extremely fair to Governor Babcock...[and that] Governor Babcock could have perhaps had a little better exposure than did Candidate Renne [in the Leader]."

39Dan Foley, "Letters to the Editor: Great Falls Tribune," unpublished paper presented for journalism senior seminar, Montana State University, Missoula, December 11, 1964, pp. 1, 5. By comparison, the Missoulian published 66 letters, 49 of which dealt with politics, and the Montana Standard published 72, 54 of them dealing with politics.
they were in the paper's circulation area. (See Table 8.)

Each candidate visited the Bitter Root Valley once during October, affording an excellent opportunity for comparing coverage. The Republican comes out well in the comparison.

The paper supported Babcock editorially and gave him a slight advantage in total coverage, mainly through the use of two pictures of the Governor and only one of Renne. The Babcock appearance (reported in the October 2 issue) received better play but was more newsworthy for several reasons: (1) Babcock commented on the proposed job camp in the Republican's circulation area, an issue which had been hotly debated in Ravalli County. (2) Babcock's remarks were contained in a report of the entire Republican caravan's visit to the valley; thus, the play reflected coverage of all Republican candidates, rather than just Babcock.

Both party chairmen, Dave Ayers, Republican, and Charles Dillon, Democrat, seemed generally satisfied with the Republican's performance, although Dillon indicated he thought Babcock was favored in the paper's news columns, perhaps because he was the incumbent. He said, "many of Renne's items were given second page covering, if any," a reference apparently to local activities of Renne supporters. However, Dillon

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10 Renne's visit, which included a speech to the Hamilton chapter of the American Association of University Women, was billed as "non-partisan." However, unlike the incumbent who has ministerial duties to carry out during the campaign, the challenger must be considered to be campaigning in nearly all his statements. The inclusion of this particular speech as a political one also can be justified because of Renne's remarks on financing higher education in Montana, the State Board of Education and other phases of state education on which he had been commenting regularly in campaign speeches. See Ravalli Republican, October 19, p. 1.
### TABLE 8

**HAMILTON DAILY RAVALLI REPUBLICAN**

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<tr>
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indicated the Republican had covered adequately the campaign of Renne."\(^1\)

Republican chairman Ayers said, "I think the paper cooperated fully as far as our candidate was concerned and was surprised (not annoyed) at all the coverage it furnished the opposition."\(^2\) Ayers added a postscript that if a comment on a biased paper were desired, "send me a questionnaire on the Western News."\(^3\)

**Havre Daily News**

The Havre Daily News offered limited coverage of gubernatorial campaign events outside its circulation area. (See Table 9.) That factor coupled with the fact Renne apparently did not visit Havre during October made the paper’s coverage difficult to assess.

Both the Hill County Democratic and Republican central committee chairmen objected to the Daily News' handling of the campaign. The Democrat, Gordon Hoven, said neither candidate was favored in the news columns but he believed Babcock got "better spacing of news and pictures." He felt the Renne campaign was covered adequately. Hoven was the only county chairman of the 26 answering the questionnaire who thought his party's candidate did not cooperate adequately with the press. Renne, he explained, "never called on the press personally."\(^4\) However,

\(^1\) Charles Dillon questionnaire.

\(^2\) Dave Ayers questionnaire. Ayers' surprise, perhaps, stems from the performance of the Republican in past campaigns under different ownership. Having been employed at the paper, the author personally knows Republicans formerly were favored occasionally in the paper's news columns.

\(^3\) The Western News, a weekly newspaper published in Hamilton, is strongly Democratic.

\(^4\) Gordon Hoven questionnaire.
### Table 9

**HAVRE DAILY NEWS**

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**Page 1 Headline Index**: 6.66, 4

**Inside Headlines**

- Single-Column: 1, 1
- Multi-Column: 2, 0

**Inside Headline Index**: 3.33, 2
Daily News Editor Herb Watts believed both candidates were cooperative. 45

The Republican chairman, William McElroy, thought Babcock's campaign was covered inadequately by the Havre daily, although he believed neither candidate was favored in the news columns. He strongly attacked, however, the Scripps League which recently bought the Daily News:

Havre Daily News has been purchased by a chain strictly for profit concern that has suspended many community services and columns. They are an automatic pipeline for national columnists and A&P [sic] releases which were presented without editing, many of them biased.

The paper is now no longer "rural" and more interested in profit than supporting any party. They ran cartoons derogatory to the Republicans nationally. Weak efforts by the editors were largely ineffective in a union town. The other paper in town is controlled by the Farmer's Union--No comment necessary on this one! 46

However, Babcock got considerably more news coverage than did Renne during October. Eighty-one inches of that coverage were on Babcock's visit to Havre, covered in the issues from October 19-21 with three pictures and two stories. In one story, several editorial phrases were included: "large and enthusiastic audience," "drew a round of applause," "swing with gusto," "the governor . . . spoke of the unwarranted attacks being made by R. V. Bottomly . . . ." 47

The Daily News issue following a Renne visit in September was studied in an attempt to compare treatment of Babcock and Renne. Unfortunately, Renne had visited Havre Saturday (September 26) and the

45 Herb Watts questionnaire.
46 William McElroy questionnaire.
next issue of the Daily News was two days later (September 28). By that time the visit was less newsworthy. However, the paper did devote 30 inches in front-page pictures and 5 inches of story on the back page to the visit. The story contained no "color" words as did the Babcock report.

Because of the limited coverage of the gubernatorial campaign and the fact that there were no comparable visits by the candidates, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the fairness of the Havre Daily News coverage.

Helena Independent Record

The Independent Record gave more space and better front-page coverage to Tim Babcock during the campaign but slightly better story play on the inside pages to Roland Renne. (See Table 10.)

No particularly damning examples can be cited after studying the Independent Record's news coverage, although the Lewis and Clark County Democratic chairman, Robert Cummins, believed the paper favored Babcock in its news coverage. He said the editor refused to carry a press release "in its entirety or without changing it." Undoubtedly Editor Robert E. Miller would plead guilty to that charge and explain that an editor's job is to use only material he believes is newsworthy.

\textsuperscript{48} Editor Watts, in his questionnaire, said, "A general checkup after the campaign showed virtually no difference in the amount and the type of coverage given each gubernatorial candidate. Most of [the] stories were carried on [the] front page." That was not the case for October, but it is possible that it might be true for the entire campaign period.

\textsuperscript{49} Robert Cummins questionnaire.
### TABLE 10

**HELENA INDEPENDENT RECORD**

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<td>5(^**)</td>
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\(^*\)Two headlines on Babcock stories on inside pages not countable.
\(^**\)Two headlines on Rennen stories on inside pages not countable.
and to cut and rewrite releases that contain unimportant or previously reported material.

Cummins also charged the Democratic candidate always was upstaged until late in the campaign. "We did not get the benefit of column placement or page placement (headlines etc.). However, as our chances for success grew in the last three weeks we got better positioning." This study shows, however, that the average headline on Renne stories was slightly larger than that on Babcock stories on the inside pages. Babcock did get much better front-page coverage.

The Lewis and Clark Republican chairman, George Bennett, believed neither Renne nor Babcock was favored in the news columns and Babcock's campaign was covered adequately. The study indicated a lack of substantial proof of qualitative bias by the Independent Record. Renne's charge that newspapers had him "lashing" and "slamming" was not borne out in the Independent Record, which had him "criticizing" and "saying." In fact, on two occasions, it was Babcock who was "flaying" and "blasting": "Babcock Blasts/Absenteeism/Charge by Foes" and "Babcock Flays/Demo Opponent."

An obviously misleading headline was on a story of October 9 reporting Renne's claim that the Republican party still was controlled by radicals, despite the resignation of Vic Overcash, regional John

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50 Ibid.
51 George Bennett questionnaire.
52 Independent Record, October 15, 1964, p. 5.
53 Ibid., November 1, 1964, p. 3.
Birth Society coordinator. The *Independent Record* headline read, "Renne Campaigns Against Overcash."\(^5^4\)

A story by Thomas E. Mooney, who also is Helena correspondent for the other Lee newspapers in Montana, described Renne's philosophy in the following terms which might be construed as editorial judgment: Renne is "an advocate of a more free-spending philosophy" than Babcock is.\(^5^5\) However, the paper carried a well written report of a Renne speech in Helena in its October 16 edition. Renne's news release on his tour of state institutions was reprinted in full. (Renne believed that release was treated particularly shabbily by the Associated Press.) In addition, the *Independent Record* reprinted several other Renne releases as well as ten AP stories about Renne.

**Kalispell Daily Inter Lake**

The *Inter Lake* devoted considerably more space to Babcock campaign stories than to Renne stories during October, though the editor, Burl Lyons, said an attempt was made to give the candidates equal coverage.\(^5^6\) Babcock received nearly three times as much picture and news coverage as did Renne. (See Table 11.) Two Babcock and two Renne visits to Kalispell were reported during October (on October 5 and 30 and October 20 and 28, respectively).

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\(^5^4\)The headline may have done as much harm to Babcock as to Renne because it suggested that one had to campaign against the John Birch Society in order to defeat Babcock.

\(^5^5\)The *Independent Record*, October 4, 1964, p. 18. The story was used in several other Lee newspapers.

\(^5^6\)Burl Lyons questionnaire.
TABLE II
KALISPELL DAILY INTER LAKE

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Both of Babcock's visits were reported on the front page and Renne's visits got inside-page coverage. In addition, both Babcock visits were covered by a photographer, while neither Renne visit was. At least one of Babcock's visits was particularly newsworthy because the follow-up story reported his views on the Soldier's Home at Columbia Falls, an issue of importance to Inter Lake readers. Renne's visits, in contrast, included discussions of the Babcock-Coldwater relationship and Babcock's United Nations Improvement Day proclamation. Renne had issued a statement earlier in the campaign about the Soldiers Home, and the statement was carried in the Inter Lake on an inside page with a one-column headline.

Robert Keller, Republican chairman of Flathead County, was satisfied with the Inter Lake's performance and believed the paper showed no bias in its news columns. Concerning the entire campaign, he said Renne had received greater coverage since he had visited the Kalispell area "probably a half a dozen times," while Babcock had visited the area only twice. "As a consequence," he wrote, "Dr. Renne received greater press coverage but he earned it."

However, John Bartlett, Democratic county chairman, thought

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58Ibid., October 20, 1961, p. 2; October 28, 1961, p. 2. The October 28 story is another example of a report of a Democratic rally starting on page 1 with an account of Senator Mansfield's statement and including Renne's remarks on the page on which the story is continued.

59Ibid., October 12, 1961, p. 3.

60Robert Keller questionnaire.
there was bias in favor of Governor Babcock. He gave these reasons:

It is difficult to assess how much my Democratic prejudices were and are influenced by the fact that the managing editor is a former Republican county chairman. However, in my opinion, the "leads" were slanted, and we had to provide the news while the paper sought out Republican news.61

The effort on the part of the Inter Lake to gather news is difficult to determine now. Babcock received considerably more coverage in pictures and news, however, than did Renne, despite the Inter Lake's stated attempt at equal coverage.

There was no sign of headline or story distortion favoring Renne or Babcock. And on October 28 on the first page, the paper reported Democratic and Republican rallies identically.

**Lewistown Daily News**

Among the newspaper studied, the Lewistown Daily News was the only one that gave considerably more space to Roland Renne than to Tim Babcock. The paper's editor, Woody Laughman, was the only editor who thought Renne was more cooperative with the press than was Babcock.62 (See Table 12.)

The Lewistown daily also differed from most other papers studied in that its chief critic was the Republican county chairman, Arthur Hoff, who believed the news columns were weighted in favor of the Democrats. Hoff said examples of the favorable treatment for Renne were the coverage given the candidates when they were in the Lewistown area: "Renne would be given good coverage. But the same was lacking

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61 John Bartlett questionnaire.

62 Woody Laughman questionnaire.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Babcock</th>
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*One Babcock page 1 story ran under a picture and had no headline.

**One headline on Renne story on inside page not countable.
whenever Tim Babcock was in the area." He claimed stories were slanted and said, "We had the Governor in town at least twice when the paper never even covered it."63

Democratic Chairman William Spoja, who said neither candidate was favored in the news columns, did not feel the campaign of Roland Renne was covered adequately. "Local activities of Renne were occasionally played down, although not to a serious degree," he wrote.64

He said the newspaper adversely affected Renne's campaign by reprinting an editorial that suggested what he called a "communist-socialist" connection with the Renne campaign. Although the paper also printed editorials lambasting Babcock, Spoja said "the emotional appeal of the anti-Renne editorial was greater...."65

The editorial comment on which Spoja based part of his complaint is not part of this study. However, the areas of complaint of his Republican counterpart are.

Although it is difficult to determine if it were his only trip to Lewistown during October, Governor Babcock was given coverage in the Daily News when he addressed the Montana School Boards Association. His speech was reported and the October 17 edition carried his picture on the front page.

Two visits by Renne were reported in the Daily News during

63 Arthur Hoff questionnaire.
64 William Spoja questionnaire.
65 Ibid.
October. On page 1 of the October 14 issue, the paper carried Renne's picture which was exactly the same size as the one of Babcock. After both visits (reported on October 14 and October 1), the Daily News carried one of Renne's news releases word-for-word. The paper covered his first visit with an interesting and informative interview, covering subjects like Renne's book, a site for the state industrial school and a bachelor-of-arts degree for Eastern Montana College of Education at Billings.

There was no indication of unfairness in any of the headlines.

Livingston Enterprise

The Livingston Enterprise, which attempted to combine the criteria of equal coverage and news value in story and headline selection, gave similar coverage to the candidates during the last four weeks of the campaign. (See Table 13.)

Twenty-four of the 32 campaign stories used were short summations of candidates' speeches, contained in a "With the Candidates" column. In that column, news of the presidential, vice presidential and gubernatorial candidates was included as well as summaries of the activities of lesser state candidates. No separate headlines were used for the stories, although each had its own dateline. For that reason, there were only four countable headlines for Babcock and three for Renne.

Each candidate visited Livingston once during October; however,

67Francis Powell questionnaire.
### TABLE 13

**LIVINGSTON ENTERPRISE**

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| **Number of News Inches** |         |       |       |
| Page 1             | 7       | 9½    |       |
| Inside             | 46      | 36    |       |
| Total              | 53      | 45½   |       |

| **Number of Pictures** |         |       |       |
| Page 1              | 1       | 1     |       |
| Inside              | 0       | 0     |       |
| Total               | 1       | 1     |       |

| **Number of Picture Inches** |         |       |       |
| Page 1             | 3       | 3     |       |
| Inside             | 3       | 3     |       |
| Total              | 3       | 3     |       |

| **Total News, Picture Inches** | 56   | 48½   |

| **Page 1 Headlines** |         |       |       |
| Single-Column       | 0*      | 0     |       |
| Multi-Column        | 1       | 2     |       |

| **Page 1 Headline Index** | 4   | 4.5   |

| **Inside Headlines** |         |       |       |
| Single-Column       | 2**     | 0***  |       |
| Multi-Column        | 1       | 1     |       |

| **Inside Headline Index** | 3   | 3     |

*One headline on Babcock story on page 1 not countable.

**Twelve stories were included in campaign roundups and did not have countable headlines.

***Eleven stories were included in campaign roundups and did not have countable headlines.
Babcock apparently made no speech and his visit evidently consisted of a two-hour tour of the Northern Pacific shops. The Governor's visit received no coverage that could be counted in this study. Renne's visit was covered in a front-page story of his address to a Renne-for-Governor smorgasbord.

The figures cited seem to dispel the charge by Wilbur Sullivan, Democratic chairman from Park County, that there were "many more releases on Babcock than Renne." Another of Sullivan's charges seems to have grown out of a misunderstanding about the relations of the Associated Press and member papers. The Democratic chairman charged that the Enterprise withheld news from the Associated Press. "A striking example of this was October 5, 1964, when Renne and other candidates were on a county-wide caravan during the day and were speakers at a smorgasbord that evening," he said. Coverage appeared in the local paper but the request for an AP release was ignored, he claimed.

But the Enterprise story on Renne's address contained no strikingly new proposals; the Enterprise may have called the story

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68 Livingston Enterprise, October 15, 1964, p. 5.
69 The Governor visited Livingston between 2 and 4 p.m., according to the Enterprise story. This perhaps explains the absence of an interview, because the 2-4 p.m. hours are particularly busy ones for the staff of a small afternoon daily.

70 Livingston Enterprise, October 6, p. 1. It is not clear whether this meeting was covered by the Enterprise or whether the information was gathered from a release.

71 Wilbur Sullivan questionnaire. 72 Ibid.
73 Renne discussed job opportunities, property taxes, Babcock's financial dealings and, according to the story, "his programs for industrial development, property tax relief, education and resource development." See Livingston Enterprise, October 6, 1964, p. 1.
to the AP and the AP may have decided it was not newsworthy.

The Enterprise's "neutral attitude" bothered Dr. David Colmey, the Republican county chairman:

I felt that the Livingston Enterprise went to such lengths to be neutral that [it] didn't really create the interest in the campaign that would be expected of a local newspaper. However, [it] did invite editorials from both parties and attempted to provide party viewpoints in this manner.

I felt that [its] neutral attitude was carried to the point that [it was] somewhat inadequate in its coverage of both candidates.

This was only to a slight degree, and my attitude and interest in political news is naturally biased.74

**Miles City Star**

The Miles City Star, although it did not give complete coverage of either candidate, gave about five times as much coverage to Tim Babcock, the candidate it had endorsed. (See Table 14.)

Babcock and Renne received almost exactly the same type of coverage when each visited Miles City in October. The difference in total coverage came in the amount of outside-area coverage given, with Babcock holding a 10-1 advantage over Renne in number of stories.

Although Babcock's birthday party celebration publicity was not a part of this study, the Star gave considerable space to pre-stories about the event.75 One story included this opinion: "The assembling of heads of state itself in contrast with the Democrats' emphasis on

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74 Dr. David Colmey questionnaire.

75 A study by a Montana State University senior showed the Babcock birthday party received a total of 153 inches of coverage in the Miles City Star. See Les Gapay, "Of Birthday Parties and Stone Salesman," unpublished paper presented for journalism senior seminar, Montana State University, Missoula, December, 1964, p. 2.
<table>
<thead>
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federal level campaign speakers, reflects Babcock's strong beliefs in strengthening government at the state level and his opposition to federal aid where local government can perform."76

As might be expected, Dr. S. C. Pratt, the Republican chairman in Custer County, was satisfied with the news coverage and believed neither candidate was favored in the Star's news columns. "I feel that even though the Star favored Tim Babcock and the Republican Party editorially," he said, "good, equal news coverage was given both candidates."77

The Democratic county chairman, R. A. Grant, was much less laudatory. He believed Babcock was favored in the news columns and the Star did not cover adequately the campaign of Roland Renne. The Star, he wrote, "overlooked" the context of Renne's remarks and intent. "I am sure Mr. Renne was willing to cooperate, but the press did not particularly care to cooperate as it was never around when Mr. Renne was in town, not even at the special dinner meeting in honor of Renne." He said the Star did have a "fairly good writeup" of the dinner meeting, but apparently the story had been submitted by a Democratic party member.78

Robert Scanlan, editor of the Star, said the paper covered local and trade area political meetings and used wire releases only if they were "legitimate news."79 Among the 13 Montana editors polled, he was

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76 Miles City Star, October 11, 1964, p. 12.
77 Dr. S. C. Pratt questionnaire.
78 R. A. Grant questionnaire.
79 Robert Scanlan questionnaire.
the most adamant in criticism of the performance of both wire services, charging they sent out "political ads disguised as news." 80

Missoula Missoulian

Visits in Missoula on the same day by Roland Renne and Tim Babcock afforded an excellent opportunity to judge campaign coverage by the Missoulian. (See Table 15.)

Both candidates addressed sessions of the Montana Education Association meeting in Missoula October 22. The next morning the Missoulian front page had a three-column picture of Renne and Babcock together, an eight-column headline, "Babcock, Renne Talks Feature MEA Sessions," and two stories, written by Missoulian staff members, reporting each man's speech. Both reports were 12 inches long. Remarks each man made at a noon meeting of a civic club were reported in a joint story on an inside page. A press conference by Renne was reported in depth on page 5 (14 inches) and a Babcock statement (13 inches) on Eastern Montana College of Education was carried on page 2 with the same sized headlines. Babcock had spoken the evening before at a Republican rally, and his remarks were reported by a Missoulian reporter in an 8-inch story on page 10. The night of October 23, Renne addressed a rally, which was covered by the Missoulian in a 12-inch story on page 1. It is difficult to imagine how coverage could have been more complete.

Both candidates visited Missoula on campaign trips once more during October, Babcock on the 1st and Renne on the 31st, and their

80 Ibid.
### Table 15
**MISSOULA MISSOULIAN**

<table>
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<th>Joint</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Stories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of News Inches</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Pictures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Picture Inches</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1</td>
<td>67(\frac{1}{2})</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67(\frac{1}{2})</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total News, Picture Inches</strong></td>
<td>269</td>
<td>211</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page 1 Headlines</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Column</td>
<td>0(^*)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Column</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page 1 Headline Index</strong></td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inside Headlines</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Column</td>
<td>4(^**)</td>
<td>6(^***)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Column</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inside Headline Index</strong></td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\)One headline on Babcock story on page 1 not countable.

\(^**\)One headline on Babcock story on inside page not countable.

\(^***\)One headline on Renne story on inside page not countable.
speeches again were reported similarly by Missoulian staff members.  

There were no indications of headline bias. Terms such as "blasts" and "lashes out" were used in headlines and stories; however, they were used both for Babcock and for Renne and may have described properly what the candidates were doing.

On October 4, the Missoulian reported the Democratic chairman of Yellowstone County, Chester Blaylock, had said that the only way Eastern Montana College of Education would get a liberal arts degree would be for Roland Renne to be elected governor. The story was not from a wire service and apparently was picked up and rewritten from another newspaper's account. The Missoulian opposed the granting of the degree to EMCE and there was considerable opposition in Missoula, the home of Montana State University, to granting the degree. Because the Missoulian was not in the habit of picking up statements by minor politicians in other parts of the state, the decision to run the story seems unfair to Renne. Each candidate, however, had his opinion on the EMCE issue recorded in the Missoulian several times during the campaign.

Although not included in this study, the Missoulian ran a "Political Forum" printing statements of Babcock and Renne and other major candidates on campaign questions asked by the editor. Five

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81 Missoulian, October 2, p. 1, and November 1, p. 2 (jump from page 1).

82 One Missoulian headline, "Renne Proposes/Realistic Budget," is a good example of a headline into which bias could be read (Missoulian, October 6, 1964, p. 7). Obviously, quotation marks are needed around the word "Realistic," to make it clear "Realistic" is Renne's word and not the Missoulian's. However, the line was full and there was no room for the quotation marks. The headline is an example of poor journalism, but it would be unfair to cite it as an indication of bias.

Babcock and Renne statements were included in the Forum during October.

Eugene Clawson, Republican chairman of Missoula County, was satisfied with the Missoulian coverage of the Babcock campaign, saying neither candidate was favored in the news columns. Clawson added that the press helped kill Senator Barry Goldwater's chances of becoming president. "This was a terrible display of unfairness to a great man," Clawson said. The Missoulian editorially endorsed Lyndon B. Johnson for president.

Democratic Chairman Thomas Murray based his criticism of the Renne campaign on its reporting of Renne activities outside the Missoula area. He said:

For many weeks before the final two weeks of the campaign, no news of Renne's campaign activities in other areas appeared with any prominence in the Missoulian. Many people, as a result, asked, "Why isn't Renne out campaigning?" If Tim did anything or said anything at any time or place, he was favorably written up in the Missoulian. For many months Tim's smallest activities were featured and Renne's activities were not reported at all. The Missoulian was extremely careful in assisting the Babcock forces to disassociate from Goldwater after it was obvious in August that Tim could go down with Goldwater if not separated.

Analysis of the Missoulian's coverage of non-local Babcock and Renne news during the first 15 days of October—weeks before the final two weeks in the campaign—showed Renne had nine stories and one picture compared with eight stories and no pictures for Babcock. There was one joint story. Babcock's news inches totaled 64, compared with 55 for Renne (not counting a 20-inch picture). In other words, in the first few weeks of October, coverage of the two candidates on a statewide basis was nearly equal.

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84 Eugene Clawson questionnaire. Clawson and the Missoulian clashed early in 1964 when he allegedly accused the paper of communistic connections. 85 Thomas Murray questionnaire.
CHAPTER IX

STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF COVERAGE

Tim Babcock received considerably more political news coverage from October 1 through November 2 than did Roland Renne. Totals for coverage by the 13 newspapers show Babcock got 1,777 inches of news and picture space (59 per cent of the total) compared with 1,240 inches for Renne (41 per cent of the total).

When photographs are excluded, the difference is less: Babcock, 1,271 column inches (57 per cent) and Renne, 974 column inches (43 per cent). In both cases, however, the Babcock advantage is substantial.

A total of 3,017 column inches of news and picture space was devoted to Babcock and Renne from October 1 through November 2, 1964. The column-inch totals in each paper follow:

- Billings Gazette . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 489
- Missoula Missoulian . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 480
- Great Falls Tribune . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 384½
- Butte Montana Standard . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 355
- Helena Independent Record . . . . . . . . . . . 267
- Kalispell Daily Inter Lake . . . . . . . . . . . . 257
- Bozeman Daily Chronicle . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 217
- Havre Daily News . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 194
- Lewistown Daily News . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 119½
- Livingston Enterprise . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 104½
- Miles City Star . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 88
When considering those figures, it should be remembered no allowance is made for differences in size of body type. For example, a 3-inch story in the Missoula Missoulian would measure about 2½ inches in the Butte Montana Standard. Because column inches have been used as the unit of measurement throughout this thesis, however, no attempt now will be made to convert to a different measure.

For the remainder of this thesis, the figures for news coverage only will be studied. Admittedly, photography can play a vital role in campaign coverage. This study, however, has concentrated on news
coverage of the candidates and will continue to do so. But it should be noted that several papers offered good photo coverage of both Babcock and Renne and that several others failed to record pictorially any part of the campaign.

At this point the two smallest newspapers in the state—the Dillon Daily Tribune-Examiner and the Hamilton Daily Ravalli Republican, will be dropped from statistical study. Both papers covered the campaign only when the candidates were in their circulation areas; neither carried wire service reports. Both papers did adequate jobs in their limited campaign coverage.

A study of the remaining 11 newspapers shows they fall into three distinct groups in amount of coverage given the campaign remarks of Babcock and Renne. Those groups are (1) Billings Gazette (389\(\frac{1}{2}\) column inches), Missoula Missoulian (356\(\frac{1}{2}\)) and Great Falls Tribune (324\(\frac{1}{2}\)); (2) Helena Independent Record (267), Butte Montana Standard (240) and Bozeman Daily Chronicle (217); (3) Kalispell Daily Inter Lake (111), Livingston Enterprise (98\(\frac{1}{2}\)), Lewistown Daily News (89\(\frac{1}{2}\)), Miles City Star (70\(\frac{1}{2}\)) and Havre Daily News (59).

It is more meaningful to consider the papers as parts of two groups, divided according to circulation. Group I comprises the Billings (36,924 daily circulation), Great Falls (36,686), Butte (24,273) and Missoula (18,159) dailies. Group II comprises the papers in Helena (8,514), Kalispell (6,895), Bozeman (5,111), Miles City (4,609), Havre (4,066), Lewistown (3,749) and Livingston (2,901).\(^1\)

\(^1\)Montana Press Association, Newspaper Directory and Rate Book (Montana State University, Missoula, 1965), p. 2.
All papers in both groups have wire service reports available; all in Group I are morning papers and all in Group II are evening papers.

A statistical comparison of the papers follows.

**Group I**

In order of circulation, the four papers in Group I presented the following amount of coverage of Babcock and Renne remarks in the month preceding the general election.

1. **Billings Gazette** ...... 389\(\frac{1}{2}\)
2. **Great Falls Tribune** ...... 324\(\frac{1}{2}\)
3. **Butte Montana Standard** ...... 244
4. **Missoula Missoulian** ...... 356\(\frac{1}{2}\)

The percentage of coverage given each candidate varied moderately among the four papers, although the number of local visits remained relatively constant. The percentage of coverage, excluding pictures, given Babcock is shown in Table 16, in which the number of reported visits by each candidate also is listed.

**TABLE 16**

**PERCENTAGE OF COVERAGE GIVEN BABCOCK BY FOUR MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Space % Given Babcock</th>
<th>Number of Babcock Visits</th>
<th>Number of Renne Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butte Montana Standard</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missoula Missoulian</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings Gazette</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Falls Tribune</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Standard, Gazette and Tribune carry both United Press International and Associated Press reports. The Missoulian is a member of the Associated Press only.

The percentage of front-page gubernatorial story coverage devoted to Babcock was greater in most cases than the Governor's percentage of total space. In other words, Babcock received more space throughout the papers than did Renne and his advantage in front-page coverage was particularly great (See Table 17).

TABLE 17
PERCENTAGE OF FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE GIVEN BABCOCK BY FOUR MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Col. In. of Front-Page Coverage</th>
<th>Space % Given Babcock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Falls Tribune</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana Standard</td>
<td>43½</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings Gazette</td>
<td>38½</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missoula Missoulian</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each paper also gave Babcock an advantage in the front-page headline index, which, as explained earlier, also is an indication of display. The following percentages were obtained by adding the display indexes for both candidates and figuring the Babcock percentage of the total. Thus, if Babcock had a headline index of 4 and Renne a

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See page 102 for explanation of headline index.
headline index of 2, Babcock's advantage would be 67 per cent (4 divided by 6). The Babcock percentage and the number of countable headlines for each candidate are shown in Table 18.

TABLE 18
BABCOCK PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE INDEXES IN FOUR MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Index % Given Babcock*</th>
<th>Number of Babcock Headlines</th>
<th>Number of Renne Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Falls Tribune</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings Gazette</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butte Montana Standard</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missoula Missoulian</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The percentages in this column represent the size of the average Babcock headline compared with the average Renne headline. A percentage of 50, for example, means that the average Babcock headline was the same size as the average Renne headline. A percentage of 60 would mean that the average Babcock headline was larger than the average Renne headline.

The Babcock percentage generally was less for the inside headline indexes (see Table 19).

Group II

In order of circulation, the seven papers in Group II presented the following column-inch coverage of campaign remarks of Governor Babcock and Mr. Renne:

1. Helena Independent Record . . . 267
2. Kalispell Daily Inter Lake . . 111
TABLE 19
BABCOCK PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INSIDE-PAGE HEADLINE INDEXES
IN FOUR MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Index % Given Babcock*</th>
<th>Number of Babcock Headlines</th>
<th>Number of Renne Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butte Montana Standard</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings Gazette</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missoula Missoulian</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Falls Tribune</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The percentages in this column represent the size of the average Babcock headline compared with the average Renne headline. A percentage of 50, for example, means that the average Babcock headline was the same size as the average Renne headline. A percentage of 60 means that the average Babcock headline was larger than the average Renne headline.

3. Bozeman Daily Chronicle . . . . 217
4. Miles City Star . . . . . . . . 70½
5. Havre Daily News . . . . . . . . 59
6. Lewistown Daily News . . . . . 89½
7. Livingston Enterprise . . . . . 98½

Thus, only two of the seven smaller papers—the Helena Independent Record and the Bozeman Daily Chronicle—gave considerable coverage to the campaign remarks of Babcock and Renne.

The amount of coverage given each candidate varied much more among those seven papers than it did among the newspapers in Group I. Table 20 shows the percentage of gubernatorial campaign space each paper devoted to the remarks of Babcock. The number of reported local visits
by each candidate is of particular importance in understanding the percentages because many of the papers covered little of the Renne and Babcock campaigns other than local appearances.

TABLE 20
PERCENTAGE OF COVERAGE GIVEN BABCOCK BY SEVEN MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Number of Babcock Visits</th>
<th>Number of Renne Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Havre Daily News</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles City Star</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalispell Daily Inter Lake</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena Independent Record</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston Enterprise</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman Daily Chronicle</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewistown Daily News</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Helena, the state capital of Montana, is Babcock's hometown.

**Bozeman, the home of Montana State College, is Renne's hometown.

All the papers except the Kalispell Inter Lake and the Lewistown Daily News are members of the Associated Press. The Kalispell and Lewistown dailies are subscribers to United Press International.

The difference is great in percentages of front-page gubernatorial campaign space devoted to Babcock (see Table 21):
TABLE 21
PERCENTAGE OF FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE GIVEN BABCOCK BY SEVEN MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Col. In. of Front-Page Coverage</th>
<th>Space % Given Babcock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kalispell Inter Lake</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena Independent Record</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles City Star</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havre Daily News</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman Daily Chronicle</td>
<td>57 1/4</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston Enterprise</td>
<td>16 1/2</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewistown Daily News</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar range is shown in the Babcock percentages of the page 1 headline index (see Table 22).

TABLE 22
BABCOCK PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE INDEXES IN SEVEN MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Index % Given Babcock</th>
<th>Number of Babcock Headlines</th>
<th>Number of Renne Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helena Independent Record</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalispell Inter Lake</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles City Star</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewistown Daily News</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havre Daily News</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston Enterprise</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman Chronicle</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The percentages in this column represent the size of the average Babcock headline compared with the average Renne headline. A percentage of 50, for example, means that the average Babcock headline was the same size as the average Renne headline. A percentage of 60 means that the average Babcock headline was larger than the average Renne headline.
As in Group I, the Babcock percentage of the total headline index decreased for the inside pages (see Table 23).

**TABLE 23**

BABCOCK PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INSIDE-PAGE HEADLINE INDEXES IN SEVEN MONTANA DAILY NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Babcock*</th>
<th>Number of Babcock Headlines</th>
<th>Number of Renne Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Havre Daily News</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalispell Inter Lake</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston Enterprise</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman Daily Chronicle</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena Independent Record</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles City Star</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewistown Daily News</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The percentages in this column represent the size of the average Babcock headline compared with the average Renne headline. A percentage of 50, for example, means that the average Babcock headline was the same size as the average Renne headline. A percentage of 60 means that the average Babcock headline was larger than the average Renne headline.

**Story Source**

The newspapers of both groups depended on wire service reports for a considerable portion of their news about the gubernatorial campaign. However, the percentage of wire service coverage would be less in nearly all the papers if one considered the number of inches rather than the number of stories because the stories reporting the
local visits of Tim Babcock and Roland Renne generally were longer than the wire service stories.

The amount of dependence on wire service reports is shown in Tables 24, 25 and 26. The classification "other" includes all stories --either locally written or candidates' releases--not bearing a wire service dateline.

**TABLE 24**

GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN STORY SOURCES
IN DAILY NEWSPAPERS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED PRESS MEMBERS ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Paper</th>
<th>Babcock Stories</th>
<th>Renne Stories</th>
<th>Combination Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havre</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles City</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missoula</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage 77 23 60 40 88.5 11.5
### TABLE 25

**Gubernatorial Campaign Story Sources**
**In Daily Newspapers That Are United Press International Subscribers Only**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Paper</th>
<th>Babcock Stories</th>
<th>Renne Stories</th>
<th>Combination Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UPI</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>UPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalispell</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewistown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 26

**Gubernatorial Campaign Story Source**
**In Daily Newspapers That Carry Both UPI and AP Reports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Paper</th>
<th>Babcock Stories</th>
<th>Renne Stories</th>
<th>Combination Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>UPI</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butte</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Falls</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER X

WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY: SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

The figures in Chapter IX show Governor Babcock got more total coverage, more front-page coverage and larger front-page headlines than Renne did. They show the two candidates, in most cases, received similar display on inside pages. But do they prove the press was biased in favor of Tim Babcock?

The answer is a firm "no."

The figures, taken alone, show only the amount of space and type of coverage devoted to each candidate. No attempt was made to state what the "right" amount of coverage would have been. The figures are of use, however, in pointing out that newspapers of comparable circulation differed considerably in their coverage. In other words, the news judgment of each paper can be compared with the judgment of other papers of a similar size. Such comparisons must be made with extreme care, especially among the smaller papers which presented fewer than 100 column inches of coverage. It is possible, also, that a paper ranking far from the mean in any category is "more right" than an "average" paper in the group.

When considered with the findings discussed in earlier chapters, the figures gain more meaning. They show, for instance, that blanket indictment of or praise for the performance of Montana daily newspapers as a group is unreasonable because of the divergence in amount and type of coverage by the 13 newspapers studied.
When considered with the study of the individual newspapers in Chapter VIII, the figures strongly suggest that a few papers which gave a preponderance of coverage—both quantitatively and qualitatively—to one candidate should take a hard look at their news policies. Most papers, however, gave evidence of attempting to be fair in their news coverage.

Why, then, did Babcock receive considerably more coverage than Renne did?

The primary reason—recognized by politicians and journalists alike—is that Babcock was an incumbent. When he spoke, the newspaper editors heard not only a candidate for governor but the voice of the state administration. The situation is not unique. In 1962, for instance, incumbent Congressmen Arnold Olsen, Democrat, and James Battin, Republican, each received more coverage than did their opponents. Battin got 59 per cent of the coverage in the Eastern District Congressional campaign and Olsen received 51.7 per cent of the coverage in the Western District campaign.¹

The same pattern existed in other races in the 1964 campaign, according to studies by Montana State University journalism seniors. For instance, one study showed Democratic Senator Mike Mansfield received a total of 226\(\frac{1}{2}\) column inches of space in the Missoula Missoulian for his political and senatorial activities from October 1 through November 2 compared with 105 column inches for his Republican opponent, Alex Blewett. Similarly, Mansfield received 186 column

inches from the *Great Falls Tribune*, which gave Blewett 98 column inches.²

If it is reasoned that an incumbent is more newsworthy, it follows that he would receive more front-page coverage than would a challenger. That happened in the gubernatorial campaign. It also happened in the presidential campaign, where Lyndon Johnson, during the last month of the campaign, received the following advantages in front-page column-inch campaign coverage: *Billings Gazette*, 548½ for Johnson to 302 for Goldwater; *Great Falls Tribune*, 581-3/4 to 311½; *Helena Independent Record*, 291-3/4 to 77-3/4; *Missoula Missoulian*, 361 to 337½, and *Butte Montana Standard*, 476 to 130½.³

Incumbency was not the only factor that boosted Babcock's advantage in news coverage. Another influence was the type of campaign Roland Renne waged. Without judging the truthfulness of the charges Renne leveled at the Babcock administration, one must conclude the charges ceased to be newsworthy after constant repetition.

In an address in Helena soon after the primary election, Renne said:

> We must tell the people of Montana how we propose to get our state moving again. We must spell out how we propose to deal with the problem of jobless citizens, both to improve

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their compensation when they are laid off, and to improve their opportunities for employment. . . .

We must spell out for the people of Montana our plans for economic growth. . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

We must spell out for the people of Montana how we propose to develop our resources for the benefit of our people. . . .

We must spell out for the people of Montana how we propose to improve our educational system so that our young people have every advantage they need for success in an increasingly complex world. . . .

We must spell out for the people of Montana how we propose to govern our state more efficiently. . . .

We must spell out for the people of Montana how we propose to improve the tax structure of this state and to lift the burdens on the individual property owner. . . .

But during the period studied, Renne's releases did not "spell out" those programs. His supporters may claim he was spelling out the proposals in his speeches; nonetheless, his news releases did not reflect such a positive emphasis, and the news releases were the basis for most of the reporting of his campaign.

A third factor accounting for the Babcock advantage in coverage is that newspapers depended on wire service reports for a large part of their campaign news, and the Associated Press—the larger newspaper wire service in Montana—filed more campaign stories on Babcock than on Renne. In many cases, as noted in Chapter VIII, the candidates received approximately equal coverage when they spoke in the newspaper's town.

In nearly all the papers, the proportion of coverage from sources other than wire services was greater for the Renne campaign than it was for the Babcock campaign (see Tables 24, 25 and 26). That suggests

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1Roland Renne, political address, Civic Center, Helena, Montana, June 26, 1964.
many papers—particularly the smaller papers and the *Billings Gazette*—used Renne's original releases rather than wire service rewrites. Although it is difficult to prove, the greater dependence on sources other than wire services for Renne stories may reflect an attempt by editors to achieve more equal coverage of Babcock and Renne. At any rate, the practice of sending the releases to daily newspapers as well as to wire services apparently paid off in increased coverage for Renne.

What about the specific complaints of Renne, his campaign aides and the county chairmen of both parties?

Some complaints, as pointed out in Chapter VIII, were based on a lack of understanding of the function of newspapers. Some chairmen of both parties seemed to expect coverage that newspapers could not and, in many instances, should not provide. They expected papers to reprint dutifully every release about their candidate, but to chop mercilessly the opponent's releases.

Several of the campaign participants seemed willing—and even eager—to castigate newspapers on the basis of obviously inadequate research. Particularly among the county party chairmen—both Republican and Democratic—there was a tendency to see things that did not exist. In many instances, newspapers were not as unfair in their coverage as party chairman were in their criticism of the coverage.

In short, some chairmen simply do not understand the function of the press. They seem to think it is the job of the press to publish whatever information is given it, without changing or
questioning the form of that information.

Renne complained that the press refused to address him in any way but "Dr. Roland R. Renne." Yet, the Associated Press and United Press International stories referred to him as "Roland Renne" throughout October. In many cases, the newspapers also referred to him as "Roland Renne," although several wandered back to the familiar "Dr. Renne" in headlines and local stories. Inclusion of the title certainly shows no evil intent on the part of newspapermen. Roland Renne had been "Dr. Renne" for years; tradition is difficult to change overnight.

Another criticism was that headlines were misleading and that the press misrepresented Renne by suggesting that he was viciously attacking his opponent. Most of the misleading headlines apparently resulted from the difficulty of always writing an accurate summary of a story in a limited number of words. Although the use of terms such as "lashing out" in headlines seems ill-advised, there were times during the campaign that both candidates seemed to be "lashing out" and "viciously attacking." Unfortunately, the editor cannot read the candidate's mind; he can read only the candidate's press statements.

The exigency of the short headline count and the pressure of turning out many headlines will continue on occasion to result in headlines that do not reflect the total meaning of the story. The situation obviously is unfortunate; the criticism that it is poor journalism is justified, but it is not proof of bias.

Some of the party workers—both Democrats and Republicans—should heed the advice of Republican Senator Thruston B. Morton of
Kentucky, who, after the Republican defeat in November, told the Republican National Committee the party had to quit complaining about the news media and establish "cordial relations with the press."

"If we make news, we will get it," he said. "Republican candidates have got to run against their Democratic opponents and not the local newspapers or television stations."

The diversity of Renne's advisers and the poor organization of his campaign could only hamper the press' attempt to give adequate coverage. There are strong indications, furthermore, that several persons in the higher echelon of the Renne campaign—although not Renne himself—completely misunderstood the function and working of the press and were convinced before the campaign started that the press would be biased. Such a belief undoubtedly was reflected in their relations with newspapers. As Renne noted, the daily newspaper editors are a friendly group. Certainly, then, the first step to remedy unfair coverage would have been to discuss the complaints frankly with the newspapermen and wire service personnel involved.

In short, there is no conclusive evidence the wire services or daily newspapers dealt with Roland Renne any differently from the way they would have dealt with any challenger running a similar type of campaign.

Does that mean that Roland Renne's campaign was treated adequately by the Montana press?

No, it does not.

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Undoubtedly every daily editor and wire service worker in Montana is aware of the advantage an incumbent has in an election. The incumbent's views already are well known to the voters, and, unless he obviously has failed in his duties, it is easier to vote for the known candidate than for his opponent, whose views almost always are less well known. Certainly one of the press' functions during a campaign is to help the voters learn the views of the challenger.

Although Roland Renne had been an important figure in Montana for two decades, his political views were not widely known. And although newspapermen and wire service personnel realized Babcock was especially newsworthy because he was Governor, at least one wire service—the Associated Press—and many papers seemed to overlook the other side of the argument: that the press had a special function in reporting the political views of Roland Renne because those views were not as well known as the Governor's. In one sense, Babcock was more important as a news source because he was Governor; in another sense, Renne was more important because voters were not acquainted with his political views. Is it not news to report the previously unknown views of an important figure? Was not Roland Renne an important figure? Were not his political views largely unknown?

Certainly such a function is increasingly being realized by newspapers throughout the country. For instance, the Toledo (Ohio) Blade gave Senator Barry Goldwater 16 per cent more space than it gave President Johnson during the 1964 campaign, although the paper editorially supported Johnson. The totals do not include 900 column
Inches of space used in reprinting Goldwater's book, *The Conscience of a Conservative.* "This [the reprinting] was done," the Blade reported, "not only to help offset the natural advantage accruing to an incumbent president but to give our readers a chance to get acquainted with the views of the lesser-known candidate in his own words."

In short, newspapermen need to realize not only that an incumbent's remarks are important because he is a government official, but that a challenger's remarks are important because his views often are not well known to voters.

Does any candidate—whether incumbent or challenger—deserve coverage if he repeats charges and does not spell out specific views in his press releases? Such were the charges by Montana journalists about both Roland Renne and Tim Babcock in the recent campaign. The answer is "no" if the press has made every possible attempt to force the candidates to discuss the issues. Yet, there were precious few times—at least during October—that questions put to Renne or Babcock about those issues were reported. The newspapers and wire services would report the speeches of each candidate. They would repeat from press releases that Renne also emphasized a five-point program for economic growth. But there were few apparent attempts by reporters to question Renne about his program and how he would put it in effect.

The Babcock campaign was afforded the same treatment, but an incumbent does not need a probing reporter to get his beliefs across.

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6Reprinted editorial comment from the Toledo (Ohio) Blade, November 10, 1964, p. 18.
to the public as much as a challenger does. The incumbent's beliefs have become known throughout his years in office—in his dealings with the Legislature and through his official pronouncements.

There were instances during the campaign in which newspapers probed candidates' minds for clear-cut statements on issues. In fact, Editor Edward Coyle of the Missoula Missoulian noted that it appeared "that some of the best stories out of the gubernatorial campaign were released by neither candidate but resulted from questions asked them or situations that arose in spite of the candidates."  

The point is that if the candidates refused to address themselves to the issues, the newspapers should have confronted them with questions such as, "Do you favor a sales tax?" or "How are you going to get the money to improve the custodial institutions if you aren't going to raise taxes?"

That type of question requires reporters who are aware of the election issues and the problems government has faced and likely will encounter. In short, it requires political reporters—men who are given the time to learn the real issues of the campaign and who have the ability to phrase questions to determine the candidates' views on those issues. Hopefully the reporter could travel with each major candidate for at least several days. As Duane Bowler, managing editor of the Billings Gazette, noted, it is desirable but financially impossible to assign a reporter to each major candidate. But it

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7 Edward A. Coyle questionnaire.

8 Duane Bowler questionnaire.
might be possible for the larger papers to assign a reporter to politics in general and free that reporter to cover in depth the local campaigns of the candidates and travel for several days with each candidate. Several papers could combine efforts in assigning reporters to travel with the major candidates.

Journalists bemoaned the fact that newspapers and wire services were plagued with political news releases during the recent campaign. They complained that the political news release often is prepared for the benefit of the politician rather than for the edification of the voter. But the press will continue to be at the mercy of press releases until it does something to replace them.

For every generalization, there are exceptions. Several of the newspapers, as noted in Chapter VIII, did interview the candidates and publish their answers to questions. An outstanding example was the "Political Forum" column in the Missoula Missoulian.

Five statements from Babcock and Renne on state issues were reprinted in that column in October in answer to questions such as whether the Board of Regents and Board of Education should be separate, what method should be used to solve the beef import problem, and where would money come from for a tax increase if one were needed. The Forum directed the candidates to the issues, and put the remarks of the incumbent and the challenger on the same basis.

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10 Ibid., October 19, 1964, p. 4.
11 Ibid., October 1, 1964, p. 4.
The Forum format could be adopted by other large Montana dailies. Cooperation would be necessary among the papers so that one list of questions—rather than four or five lists—would be submitted to candidates. The editors could agree on eight questions; each editor could supplement those questions with two of special interest in his paper's circulation area.

Such a program should not be limited to the gubernatorial campaign. The Missoulian extended its Forum to candidates for lesser state offices, senator and representative in Congress and the state Legislature. The more offices included, the better; however, space availability naturally and necessarily dictates limits.

Obviously, many of the smaller papers do not have space to run a series of questions and answers for several candidates. In many cases, however, their present political coverage seems haphazard. A charge from one candidate will appear one day, but his opponent's answer the next day will not be run. Anyone who has worked on a smaller daily newspaper knows the difficulty of planning continuity in coverage when the main concern often must be just getting out the paper.

In most instances, the smaller papers can cover the local visits of candidates as well as the larger papers can, a belief supported by findings in Chapter VIII. The main problem seems to be adequately covering candidates when they are outside the paper's immediate circulation area.

One solution to that problem is the campaign roundup which several smaller papers used with some success in the 1964 campaign.
Each major candidate could be given one or two paragraphs of coverage daily, if his remarks merit it. Such a roundup, of course, should not eliminate campaign news elsewhere in the paper, but it would allow the smaller paper to cover in a reasonable amount of space the day-by-day campaign outside its circulation area. It is assumed the larger papers, because of additional space, would not rely on roundups for day-by-day coverage.

Some questions raised in this study must go unanswered. The charge that the Montana press is controlled by big business—more specifically, the Montana Power Company—is similar to charges hurled at the press throughout the nation. No substantial evidence was found in this study to support that charge or the charge that newspapers and the Associated Press are unfair to Democrats.

The question of the influence of the Montana Power Company on the press may itself become an issue in the 1966 senatorial campaign. If Senator Lee Metcalf, a Democrat who has been outspoken against Power Company rates and other practices, seeks re-election, the Power Company, if it ever attempts to influence news and editorial policies, likely will do so at that time. If the Senator seeks a second term, a well-planned study of campaign coverage might provide a partial answer to

12Perhaps the job of compiling such a roundup should rest with the wire services. However, this might encourage the larger papers to rely on roundup stories rather than more complete coverage of each candidate. (Indeed, the Great Falls Tribune showed such an inclination in coverage of the 1964 gubernatorial campaign.) It is true also that if each of the smaller papers prepared its own roundup, the candidates' remarks on issues of local interest could be stressed.
the charges of business influence on the Montana press.\textsuperscript{13} Certainly the critics of the press will be pointing out areas of alleged unfairness in 1966.

Just as certainly, some of the critics in 1966—and in each election year—will be uninformed. But as illustrated by some of the remarks of Roland Renne and county party chairmen, the criticism may suggest areas of press coverage in which improvement is badly needed.

In 1960, political columnist Joseph W. Alsop, Jr., discussing the need for better political reporting, said:

\begin{quote}
If I've criticized my trade's deficiencies, it's because I judge its performance entirely by my opinion of its very high function. It has its high function because our society can operate only if it is informed. I think the vast majority of the people in my trade—the reporters, editors, publishers, and everyone else—are good, patriotic and intelligent men whose aim and purpose in life is to inform the public that they serve. But I also feel that the fearful changes in the world and the new challenges which confront our country rather insistently demand some changes of approach and viewpoint in this trade of mine. Otherwise, the full flow of vital information will not continue; and this flow is what we live by in America.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

If the Montana daily press was unfair to anyone in its coverage of the 1964 gubernatorial campaign, it was not to Tim Babcock or Roland Renne. It was to the Montana voters.

\textsuperscript{13}The 1966 campaign might provide an ideal subject for study for a second reason. It is speculated that Republican Representative James Battin may oppose Senator Metcalf. A Metcalf-Battin race, in a sense, would pit two incumbents against each other. At least the natural advantage accruing to an incumbent would be at a minimum.

\textsuperscript{14}Joseph W. Alsop, Jr., The Fourteenth Annual Memorial Lecture sponsored by the Twin Cities Local, American Newspaper Guild, AFL-CIO, and the School of Journalism, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, October 17, 1960.
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A thoughtful analysis of the American system of government by a Frenchman. Valuable as a source for information on government-press relationship in a democracy.


A colorful, fast-moving book about the 1960 presidential campaign which resulted in the election of John F. Kennedy. White pays particular attention to the press relations of Kennedy and his opponent, Richard M. Nixon.

B. ANNUAL AND MONTHLY PERIODICALS


Bingham notes that much of the criticism directed at campaign coverage by the press is unfair but adds that too often criticism that is fair is not heeded by journalists.


A brief analysis of the diverse critics of the press and a suggestion for the formation of a national board to report on the press' performance throughout the nation.


A statistical study of the congressional campaign coverage given by 11 Montana daily newspapers. No attempt was made to single out papers for criticism or praise.


A comprehensive study and assessment of complaints arising from the coverage of the 1960 presidential campaign. Contains valuable information on the difficulties in covering campaigns and in assessing that coverage.


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Reports of an experiment conducted with groups of psychology students to determine how different headlines influence the total impression created by a story. Valuable as proof of the importance of accurate headlines.

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An interesting account of the number and subject of letters to the editor in the Great Falls Tribune during the month preceding the 1964 general election.

A study that shows the large amount of coverage the Miles City (Mont.) Star gave to Governor Tim Babcock's birthday party and to Charles Lee's off-again, on-again campaign for governor in 1964.


A study listing the amount of coverage the Billings (Mont.) Gazette gave Roland Renne and Tim Babcock during their 1964 campaigns.


A paper showing that Senator Mike Mansfield, a Democrat, got considerably more coverage during the 1964 campaign from the Missoula (Mont.) Missoulian and the Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune than did his opponent, Alex Blewett.


In a study of the press' treatment of Governor Donald G. Nutter, Miss Rollins concludes that the newspapers did not fulfill their function as a check on the government.


A statistical comparison of the coverage given Barry Goldwater and Lyndon Johnson during the 1964 presidential campaign by the Billings Gazette, Great Falls Tribune, Helena Independent Record, Missoula Missoulian and Butte Montana Standard. Johnson got more coverage in each paper.


A study of the coverage given by the Bozeman (Mont.) Daily Chronicle to the 1964 election campaign. Valuable for its statistical totals on the gubernatorial race.
H. MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES


