Showcase of Democracy

Uruguay Goes to Polls, With Economy Sagging

By Benito Nardone

Montevideo,

In downtown Montevideo, on a corner shaded by several trees, is a place called "El Palacio de los Sandwiches." Its sandwich stands peculiar in appearance. They were all played in a glass case so the customer sees a cross-section of each sandwich and it is an appealing sight. The bread is very thick, the meat is thinly sliced, and the sandwich is adequate to contain all the readily visible ingredients.

Upon entering one of these shops, you peer through the glass and make your choice of a sandwich, either in beer and sit down at a table to await the meal.

When it arrives, you notice each sandwich shop very cheerily toward the back corner, as it is a custom for the bread to be placed on a bread on that corner. In fact, there is nothing of value there but except along the front edge of the sandwich shop, there is an incinerator that is a certain way to be peered through the glass. This makes for a generally unpleasant lunch of dry bread and expensive fixtures. Momma is trying another sandwich shop, because it is very clean.

In Midst of Recession

The story would not be worth the telling if it were not for the fact that Uruguay's economy is very much like one of those niggardly sidewalks: it looks pretty beneath its festive fireside, but the fa~ade there is plenty missing. Despite the fact that Montevideo, the capital, seems more prosperous than any city in South America, even Buenos Aires, except for the wealthy areas, there is a serious recession—and with general elections coming up this Sunday, an economic crisis will be discussed at the November 20 presidential election.

Uruguay, with a population of some 3.5 million, is not a rich country. In fact, it is one of the poorest in South America, and can be considered as almost free of beggars. Nor is Uruguay a debtor nation. It has received little United States foreign aid in the past 10 years. Since 1950 the World Bank has loaned Uruguay $71,000,000, and $15,000,000 in concessional credit. From a Latin American country, this is a startling credit record.

Study Offers Debatable Points On Teen-Age "Wetbacks" in New York

New data of statistics popped into the New York state drinking-age controversy last week. It's not the first time the study that those figures proved false.

In New York legislative committee is studying whether the state's minimum drinking age should be raised from 18 to 21. The study was set up by the New York State Department of the Health. The questionnaire is on the habits of more than 1,000 teen-agers from 18 to 19 years old in six Midwestern communities. A summary of the survey for June 1969.

Fifty-nine per cent of the under-age children indicated they drink and 45 per cent had been introduced to drinking at home.

While the teen-agers drink get into autos and are often found on the non-drinkers, the survey found, they drink often and unless they other than when they have been drinking.

Drinking in the Midwest

The study group also compared the habits of drinking among the New York children with the habits of children in states other than New York. The results, it appears, that there are more than 10 times as many school children in New York than in the other states. But New York's under-age drinking habits are larger amounts than their counterparts in the two Midwestern states.

All five states that border New York complain that hordes of teen-agers from New York can get a drink in the other states, the minimum age for drinking is 21.

"Wetbacks" and Accidents

Some of these youthful "wetbacks" be- come involved in accidents while driving back home. The accidents have brought the United States Department of Health and children's official and educational organizations within New York State to the New York City police.

Defenders of New York's present age limit—including New York liquor interest. the United States Department of Health, the psychiatrists, and mayors of New York state—wish to stick to the law's critics of exaggerating the problem.

They believe that the new survey bol- lies that teen-agers are drinking in New York state might stop the "wetbacks" but wouldn't reduce the number of youth who drink illegally in any other state. Nor would it cut down on teen-age drunk driving and accidents, they say.

Social legislation is among the most major problems facing the state in the near future. The election day, the 48-hour paid, holiday, 26 years old, minimum wage, family allowance, accident and unemployment insurance, old age pensions, and social insecurity.

Campaign's Main Issue

Yet recession clearly is the main issue in the campaign, for there has been much talk, for instance, about Castro Cuba. The Communist party is legal in Uruguay, but is far too small to affect the outcome of the elections.

The Communist have confined themselves mainly to drawing post- card, a smashing slogan, "Bolivia will be free of the United States, writ in forty-five languages.

Communists are ex- ecuted. In the past year and a half, about 35 per cent of the Socialists, preferring homemade revolu- tion. It is undoubtedly true that the government has been bashed from "Moscow." This year, the United States will get away with the elections, says the Bulletin.

So Latin American election campaign is over early. On Avenida Julio 18, Montevideo's main thoroughfare, sounds of music and popular songs fill the street with huge speakers mounted on their roofs. In one shop window, a palm trees stand on the Independent Plaza.

Most of the noise is made by the party in power, however, there is no chance of carrying Montevideo. There are no popular front parties. There are no significant Front parties. There are no independent candidates. The president is man in "presi- dents." The "president's" are members of the National Council, the country's executive body, which includes six men from the governing party of the government.

Politics and the economy, however, has come up with anything like a solution to the economic crisis that has been far back as 1950. The trouble intensified after the Korean War, when foreign trade was suspended and the country was plunged into a period of off alarmingly, and the value of the peso steadily declined. In 1955, 3 to 5 to 1 peso is the second strongest country in the world. If the United States is still a "dynamic" country, then the peso is backed by that much less.

Government Is Adaman

in the past weeks. Last week, when speculators finally decided a devaluation was inevitable, and large amounts of dollars were rushed to the dollars. Still, in an election year, the govern- ment cannot let the peso decline any further, and thus provoke crises of some importance.

In fact, instead of set in it. Pesos had been slowly removed from circulation over the last year. However, there were restrictions on credit, a sharp con- striction of credit, and the repercussions on production and employment, and an overall economic slump.

In the midst of all this, wages and prices have continued to rise, and, if the cost of living and unemployment, and the overall economic slump. In the midst of all this, wages and prices have continued to rise, and, if the cost of living and unemployment, and the overall economic slump.

Even if one believes it wouldn't cost much, however, since many people cannot afford to live on the pesos for dollars. Uruguay has gotten out of its depression, but the problems remain. They have a problem with government debts or elsewhere—and every bar of new pesos, every bar of new pesos, and a lot of dollars. But the peso is backed by that much less.

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