THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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● W. C. Dowd, 1865-1937 ●

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1942

Personal Tour

Eyewitness Testimony Takes Precedence Over Opinion

Two or three of the state papers in expressing concern over Tom Jimison's disclosure of conditions at Morganton, have brought up the credibility of the witness. The Fayetteville Observer it was, we believe, which said that Mr. Jimison's charges would have to be "taken with a grain of salt," and The High Point Enterprise confessed "some doubt as to the dependability of Tom Jimison's expose," although the paper thought that the agitation over the State's hospitals was bound to have a wholesome result.

The human eye and the human ear and the human mind are fallible, of course, and it is possible that Mr. Jimison did not see, did not hear and altogether misinterpreted the sights and sounds and circumstances which were the basis for his articles about the hospital. Maybe it were all a dream.

But we can tell our skeptical contemporaries this: that Mr. Jimison persists in believing to this day that what he wrote about Morganton is not only wholly true but a little less than the whole truth. He considers that he put the case with restraint rather than the lack thereof.

And while his statements (as well as the statements of other former patients) are going to have to be verified before they can be allowed, in any fairness at all, to form a judgment against the institution, its administration and personnel, the fact remains that Mr. Jimison was actually an inmate there for more than a year, hence may be said to have a clearer conception than the rest of us of what the place was like.

Strategy

The Japs Needn't Expect An Offensive Any Time Soon

There is no longer any doubt about the master strategy under which the United States and its allies are waging war. As outlined by President Roosevelt, it is a policy of defense, of preventing a break-through, as he put it, until such time as we have built up superior forces. Then, says the President, we will take the offensive.

The one great flaw in such a plan is that our side may not be able to prevent a break-through and so may lose the most important bases from which the ultimate offensive could be most effectively launched. Indeed, the grim events of the past few days have demonstrated that the break-through into Singapore is only the beginning. We stand a pretty good chance of losing the entire southwest Pacific—including Australia and almost certainly the Philippines. The President did not say what alternative strategy he contemplated if his policy of fall-back-and-defend found us completely banished from the South Pacific.

It would be interesting to know where the battlefront would be in Russia today if Josef Stalin had decided to remain on the defensive until the United Nations had furnished him with superior arms. There is no denying that in taking the offensive we would run a grave risk. But if Stalin had not opened an offensive in the Ukraine, it is quite possible that Hitler's headquarters would be in the Kremlin today.

At any rate, it must be a great comfort to the Japs to be assured that they needn't worry about any sustained offensive operations until we have prepared superior forces. We aren't going on the offensive until we are ready and by that time we can be sure that the Japs will be ready too.

Shoot First...

It's Best To Beware The Army's Hair-Trigger

The other evening—Sunday, we believe it was—a reporter asked the general commanding our Panama Canal defense forces what his men would do if an unidentified plane were spotted over the Big Ditch.

"We'd shoot it down," said the General, "and investigate later."

He explained that the defending planes had certain specific areas to patrol and they knew better than to violate orders. Other aerial visitors were not welcome.

Something of the same sort seems to have happened near Granite City, Ill. One Delbert Richardson, a civilian flying instructor, was pleasure cruising not far from a restricted defense area. According to the pilot, he was banking to turn back when a burst of machine-gun bullets ripped through the plane. At 1,100 feet, it was good shooting on somebody's part. One of the passengers was hit and critically injured. By using an emergency gas tank (the main tank was punctured), Richardson managed to get the plane back to the field.

There is no official report on who fired at the plane. The incident could be worked up into a cartoon-strip mystery.

One thing, though, would seem obvious. The Army's got a nervous trigger finger after Pearl Harbor and civilian pilots will do well to beware it.

Experiment

How Loud Must the People Yell To Make FDR Heed?

Some enterprising scientist could do the nation a service by installing a decibelometer on the White House lawn. Had such an instrument been in operation during the six months preceding the appointment of Donald Nelson as production boss, we should know now with scientific exactness how loud and how long the public must shout for administrative reform before President Roosevelt heeds and acts appropriately.

For more than a year of OPM-SPAB muddling it should have been obvious to the Administration that something was wrong. Equally clear was the remedy proposed on all sides: the appointment of one capable administrator with full authority and full responsibility. Yet it was only after criticism reached a crescendo—indeed, not until the night that Wendell Willkie was preparing to address himself to the delay—that Franklin Roosevelt made the decision.

By knowing how many decibels of public wailing it took to get action out of the President on the Nelson reorganization, the people would be able to estimate how loud they will have to shout before Mr. Roosevelt will remove Mrs. Roosevelt as well as La Guardia from the Office of Civilian Defense in order to Nelsonize that top-heavy organization under James Landis. They would know, too, how loud they would have to roar to get Madame Perkins replaced by a Secretary of Labor who enjoys the confidence of both employer and employee.

And perhaps if they knew what it took the people could protest vigorously enough to get Mr. Roosevelt actually to dissolve an agency that failed to function instead of setting up two or three new ones to do its job as he did in the Defense Housing tangle. Then we might even get a few non-defense Government agencies to convert their teeming offices into places where the paper work of the war is done.

Pensions?

Wouldn't Social Security Suit Congress Better?

Congress' brave bill providing pensions for its members when they reach the age of 62 has become law. And so far all attempts to repeal it have been beaten off with great parliamentary valor.

The bill came up so suddenly and was passed so rapidly that few taxpayers had a chance to take it in along with the bad war news.

With the purpose of the act we have little argument. But what is there about Congressmen that makes them deserve it on a year?

If it's Social Security they want, why the Treasury Department is just aching to extend the Social Security Act to somebody else. Surely Congress wouldn't claim that its membership is better than the public at large. Why not extend Social Security to Congressmen and let them live like the rest of the old age beneficiaries on $30 or $40 a month?

Or have we created an American nobility that must be supported in the style to which it accustomed itself?

The word from rebellious Norway is that Kidkup Quisling has been ill for a month. It is not believed this is from anything he ate at testimonial banquets.

Asked to save two to three billion dollars in non-defense funds, Congress proposes a compromise. It would gladly save daylight instead.

The program being interrupted for a news flash that an American sub has sunk three Jap ships in Tokyo Bay, the orchestra resumes with "why don't we do this more often?"

About Jimison Series:

Follow Through

Burlington Times-News:

Governor Broughton has stated he will order an investigation made of conditions at the State Hospital at Morganton, based on the allegations of Tom F. Jimison, a former patient, in a series of newspaper articles now appearing in the daily press.

If Mr. Jimison could have any legitimate motive for penning his revelations it must be in the desire to render a public service to the State and in the interest of those who for one reason or another are patients in the hospital. Such compensation as he may receive from his publishers is not likely to make the job "a paying proposition."

It does not appear that Mr. Jimison under normal conditions could have left the hospital after a year with any bitterness of a personal nature in his mind unless directed against forces of evil beyond the control of the management.

This conclusion is logical, we think, because Mr. Jimison, a patient who volunteered his commitment, was not a patient in the usual sense. He appears to have enjoyed many special privileges, including communion with staff members. Should his revelations prove to be a betrayal of confidence they would be unworthy of notice and should suffice to discredit the man in the eyes of the public.

Routine of special inspections are prepared far in advance. The dust cloth is applied ahead of them. The house is in order and the personnel drilled to meet the investigators. An investigation that sounds to the bottom is quite different and more effective in finding the facts and fixing responsibility.

If and when the Governor calls his investigation, having carefully selected men capable of conducting it, it might be well to move from Morganton to Raleigh, to Goldsboro, and on to any other State institution of a similar nature.

The viewpoint here is that if the Jimison allegations merit any attention at all it should be all-inclusive and thorough. It should determine the cause and effect along with recommendations for improvement.

When all of the data are assembled before the Governor for his inspection the next move should be, if further consideration is in order, to lay the matter to the attention of the General Assembly.

Merely presenting the matter to the General Assembly is not enough. Regularly in the past the heads of these institutions of the State have been before the appropriations committee pleading for more money to improve their facilities. They did not have the support of a strong lobbying punch, with the result that their pleas echo but faintly if at all down the corridors and byways of the legislators where many important decisions are made.

The Governor is not expected to ask this newspaper for advice in the manner of his conduct toward the Jimison remarks. He is competent to cut the pattern for his own plan. It is our belief, however, that should the matter be judged worthy of legislative consideration of a serious nature a special committee of the House and Senate should be named. Recommendations of such a committee should have weight, whereas the committee on insane asylums sinks along with the committee on proposition and grievances—neither of them a Samson.

Probe Fully

Raleigh News & Observer:

Governor Broughton has properly decided that there should be a full investigation by the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, the constitutional agency charged with the supervision of all charitable institutions, into grave charges which have been made concerning the management of the State Hospital for the Insane at Morganton.

This investigation will be conducted independently of the investigation which the board of directors of the institution has ordered to be made by its five new members. The directors are to be commended for their action, but neither the Governor nor the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare could afford to ignore the plain mandate of the Constitution, which says:

"Beneficent provisions for the poor, the unfortunate and orphan being one of the first duties of a civilized and Christian State, the General Assembly shall, at its first session, appoint and define the duties of a Board of Public Charities, to whom shall be entrusted such supervision of all charitable and penal and State institutions, and who shall annually report to the Governor upon their condition, with suggestions for their improvement."

The Governor should see to it that the Board of Charities and Public Welfare has all needed assistance and the investigation should be thorough and complete, both as to the institution at Morganton and other like institutions.

The public is entitled to know all of the facts. If there has been neglect, those guilty should be punished. If there has been no guilt, those against whom charges have been made should be exonerated.

But nothing will fully meet the situation except a full investigation by disinterested parties. When the Governor and the Board meet next week to discuss the situation, they should arrange for that kind of an investigation.

TODAY'S BIBLE THOUGHT

Be happy, but strive to do better and be better: *I have learned, in whatever state I am, therein to be content.—Philippians 4:11.*

Nice Timing!

—By Herblock

Letters to the Editor:

Eating Off The Floor

Editors, THE NEWS:

I have spent almost seven months behind the walls of the insane asylum at Morganton. I was sent there for praying . . . (name withheld) told it that I had tried to kill myself and had me put in a suicide ward there. I was scared half to death and it was awful what I went through. I was afraid to go to sleep for the so-called nurses would team up five and six at a time and put me in the bed and two or three would sit on me. One would hold my hands while the other one put the medicine in my arm to make me go to sleep. I only weigh about 90 pounds. I would pretend I was asleep until they would leave and then I would get up and walk the floor so it would not take any effect on me. They would put me in straight jackets. But I could always get out. One day while I was on that ward they put me in one locked me in a room and were going to put a double dose of medicine in my arm to knock me out for two days and nights. I tore out of the straight jacket, pushed the bed against the door, put the table between the bed and the radiator and told them I would break glass in their faces before I would take the medicine. They were going to turn the water hoses on me. . . .

But Dr. Long promised to move me to another place and not to let them give me the medicine if I would come out. So I came out and he moved me to Ward 79.

I saw some awful things there and went through some terrible things. They would lock me in rooms with no bed or not one thing but a cotton pad and no shoes to put on. Then they would come in every day and wet the floor all over. They didn't even clean it. I had to stand in that mess or lie down like a dog on that old cotton pad. I myself until I was bleeding all over pretending I was going to kill myself if they didn't take me out of there. They took me out and finally I found me a place to get out of there.

So I left. I hoboed a freight to Statesville and walked from there to my Daddy's in Wilkes. (Name withheld) was afraid people were going to find out he sent me there for spite. So he came up there and begged my Daddy to send me back. But he wouldn't hear to it. But did and the sheriff in North Wilkesboro said he had taken a lot of people there to the (the) hospital but never one like me before. He told me that if he had his way about it, he wouldn't take me. I told him I didn't think hard of him at all and that I wouldn't be there long. I was coming back.

So I stayed from last August until a week before Christmas. I went through some more terrible things. Beat, locked in rooms, threatened not to give me any water and even threatened to pour my food on the floor and make me eat it like they did some of the rest of those poor people in there.

I told one of them gals (I don't want to honor them by calling them nurses) that I thought this was supposed to be a hospital and not a dog house.

I have seen them (the female attendants) dress patients to see their people when they came for a visit and just as soon as the visitors would leave they would come charging down the hall, pulling the clothes off the patients and making fun of them for something they had said or done in front of the visitors.

Sometimes they would have them on the floor, flat on their back, dragging them along and pulling on their hose at the same time and making fun. Dumb brutes are treated better than these poor people.

If people who have mothers there could see how they are treated—sometimes tied up by the hands and feet to them little old iron beds, crying and begging somebody to let them up. Some have lain that way for eighteen months. . . .

I am glad that I had sense enough to leave there. I don't claim to have any people since they put me in that place and no one else cares very much for their people or they would look them in a barn before sending them to that place.

The only difference between there and hell is they will have fire to hell . . .

—MISS MARGIE JONES.
Kings Mountain.

City-Wide Call to Prayer

Editors, THE NEWS:

Many parental hearts are bleeding as sons are being called away. Many young men realize when they leave their homes they are taking steps which, in some cases at least, will never be retraced. Many young women are feeling that the light has gone out of the world. Many of all classes are tempted to sigh with Joshua and stand:

"The day is quenched, and the sun has fled;
God has forgotten the world!"

Has the world really rather forgotten God? When Solomon had finished the Temple splendid he knelt, spread his hands toward heaven, and prayed: "If a man sin against his neighbor . . . If thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy . . . If the heavens be shut up that there be no rain . . . If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locusts or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege thy people in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or sickness there be . . . then hear thou from the heavens their supplication, and maintain their cause."

The Lord answered, "I have heard thy prayer . . . If I shut heaven that there be no rain . . . If I send pestilence among my people; if my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." There is thrilling promise there, but there is exacting condition, too. "If my people which are called by my name shall humble . . . and pray . . . and seek . . . and turn, then . . ."

Why not gather in the city-wide prayer meeting at the Second Presbyterian Church Thursday at 12:25 P. M.?

—CHAS. M. BOYD,
President of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Ministerial Association.
Charlotte.

Privileges of A Dog's Life

Editors, THE NEWS:

Have you ever considered the many privileges you could have in Charlotte, if you would just go down and buy a dollar dog license for yourself? You could go around turning over garbage cans, scratching up flowers, using people's porches for toilets; you could stand in your neighbor's yard all day, if you wanted to, and howl and holler. At night when you saw a person coming to the house, you could sneak up and bark, and have a good time scaring him.

I know all the above is true because I've had dogs do this to me, and the dog catcher said he couldn't pick them up because each one had a dog license. Charlotte does have a dog ordinance, and doesn't that ordinance say that a dog must stay in his own yard, or be on a leash if a nuisance?

Apparently some dog owners have no regard for the moral rights, as well as the legal rights of other people to be free of such annoyances. If the officers are afraid they will offend the dogs or the owners of them, each dog could have a label attached when it is brought to the pound, so the dog would not lose his individuality. I suggest a yellow ribbon for garbage-upsetters, for garden-flower-tearer-uppers a purple one, for growlers and barkers a blue one, for porch-users a red one; and for the dog that bites our messenger boys, and nibbles on our children, a lily white ribbon.

Then to amuse the dogs, while they are penned up, if the owners couldn't spare the time, we might here through the WPA, or some such organization, some dog-walker-outers.

Some people say our country is going to the dogs. How about leaving out "the"?

—MRS. PAUL HAMILTON
Charlotte.

"Certain Statements" Were "Misunderstood"

(Editors' note: President Caldwell of the University of Georgia has kind enough to send us a carbon of the following letter.)

Mr. L. C. Guerrant
2209 Malvern Road
Charlotte, North Carolina.
My dear Mr. Guerrant:

I agree with the sentiments expressed in the editorial in The Charlotte News." Any university that sought to secure mass deferment for its students and particularly for its athletes would be deserving of condemnation. The fact is, however, that no one of us at the University has at any time asked for any group deferment of our students. I regret that a newspaper reporter misunderstood certain statements that were made at a meeting of the University System Council.

It is true that we are trying to speed up the program of the University in order to graduate as many of our students as possible before they are called to duty with the armed forces of our country. We feel that we owe this both to the students and to the Nation in this hour of crisis. We are not, however, trying to prevent any of our students from going into the armed forces nor are we trying to delay their entry into the service of our country; we are merely making an effort to train them as well as possible before the call comes.

Please allow me to thank you for your letter and to say to you that I am heartily in accord with its spirit. I do wish to say, too, that the editorial in The Charlotte News was predicated on an erroneous newspaper report and that the University is not guilty of any of the practices which you and other patriotic citizens would condemn.

HARMON CALDWELL,
President,
The University of Georgia.
Athens, Ga.

Myriads Of Clerks

By Raymond Clapper

WASHINGTON

FOR a year we were told that the automobile industry could not be converted to war work, yet that is being done now. Which leads one to think that maybe if an effort were made we could convert a lot of the Government to war work.

This is not so much a matter of dollar economy. All the dollars that could be saved by non-defense economies would hardly be noticed among the billions that must be spent on the war. The point is in other kinds of economy.

As it is going now, thousands of new people are coming into Washington every week. The War Department is trying to add 40,000 civilians, mostly clerical. Mr. Roosevelt has spoken of possibly a quarter-million additional employees coming here during the war. I don't know what there is for so many to do, and employees are coming in faster than they can be digested and put at a full day's work.

WHY NOT CONVERT EMPLOYEES OF NON-WAR AGENCIES

But even on the assumption that most of the additional help will be needed, the question arises whether some of this influx might not be eliminated by converting employees from old non-war agencies to emergency work.

The Government is moving some agencies out of town. Clerical forces, which form the largest percentage of the number, are to go along. Why shouldn't these non-defense agencies moving away take only the key and specialized personnel and leave the routine employees here to be transferred to war agencies? Routine help can be picked up in the new localities. Why move clerks out of Washington and bring in others?

Furthermore there is no reason why some of the personnel in non-war agencies could not be detailed to war work. There has been a considerable amount of that in the higher ranks and among the specialized personnel. In line with the spirit of the times when all non-war activities are being curtailed, it might be possible to reduce the amount of paper work that goes on in the regular Government agency. The life-long effort of the average supervisory employee in Washington is to get as large a staff as he can.

Over the years most of these agencies have more people than are really needed to do the work if it is handled at a wartime pace instead of the traditional Government-office pace.

NEITHER OFFICE NOR LIVING SPACE IS AVAILABLE

Something of this kind will have to be done. The budget director, Harold Smith, estimates that 85,000 new employees will come to Washington this year. Neither office space nor living space is available. A project is up to build 85 blocks in the southwest section of Washington on land now covered by slums. Other projects are for 22,000 units in low-cost housing. For office space they are digging up the beautiful Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. So it would look as if the deeply entrenched bureaucrats could properly be called upon to cut down and allow some of their forces to be converted.

In fact Government departments are full of boondoggling work that now could come under the head of nonessential activity. Jimmy Byrnes, long before he went on the Supreme Court, once said that the nearest thing to immortality on this earth was a Government bureau. Much of this has grown up over a long period of years. More of it developed during the depression when there was some excuse for it.

It is just as bad to use up labor and precious space here in non-essential work as to eat up labor and precious materials in nonessential industry.

Visitin' Around

Spring Here She Comes

(Hamilton's X-Roads Item, Monroe Journal)

There was a plenty of ice and frost this morning but I could hear a pleasant song by a blue bird and a joyful whistle of a red bird. Next Monday is, as the children used to say, Groundhog's birthday, and though we may enjoy some snow yet, it will not be long before Spring arrives in its beauty and we will go out to plant vegetable seed and the flowers will not be forgotten. While everything will not grow and thrive as we have expected as we looked at the catalogues. In my catalogues there is not a grass or weed where it should not be. All vegetables are perfect, not a rotten spot, or a worm-eaten place. I did not notice a single bean beetle.

Just Waitin' Around
(Pinley Item,
Lenoir News-Topic)

Sorry that Mr. Conley Cooke and wife have moved back to Black Berry.

Senator Soaper Says:

What formerly was Siam, too, declares war on the U. S. The decision is assumed to have been unanimous, as the tribes divided against themselves get no vaudeville bookings.

Gorgeous blondes in the service of the Axis are reported circulating through the Americas, but their detection seems inevitable. Sooner or later, they must show up in the picture sections as "Miss Secret Agent of 1942."