EDITORIAL PAGE

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Wash It Up

The Office of Price Administration, of course, is caught up in the tangled skeins which envelop us all. The sudden return from war to peace poses incredible problems for that invaluable agency which has served us so well — and must continue to do so. But there are single instances in which OPA seems to some of us officious and high-handed beyond reason.

There is, for example, the case of the washing machines.

The washing machine, you don't need to be told, is a part of almost every housewife's war-time dream. The public is screaming for it, and it could quickly aid in the reconversion picture. It could fill a ready, anxious market. It could help keep industry humming, and lift onerous burdens from many homes, solve many a vexing laundry problem. The washing machine isn't essential, perhaps, but it's near the top of the list of housewifely desires.

Thus, when a manufacturer released 5,000 of them to the trade, having set a price upon them that was 25 per cent above OPA's ceiling, there was joy in the land. There were complications. The manufacturer had warned dealers that the price was subject to OPA approval, and provided for a rebate to all purchasers in case of price differentials. That was done because OPA hadn't made up its mind as to a final pricing policy (and, we suppose, it couldn't, at the moment).

But even with these provisions, the OPA was not inclined to give the manufacturer benefit of the doubt. It immediately sued him for $150,000 (trebling the amount by which ceilings were violated). As a result those thousands of washing machines rest in dealers' storerooms, much as if attached by Big Court. It doesn't make for quick reconversion that OPA and the manufacturer can't get together, and it seems, from what we now know of the case, that OPA might have moved a wee bit slower.

Next Time

The State Board of Elections, having already spoken its piece about the alleged election frauds in Davidson County, has washed its hands of the whole affair. It finds itself unable to clear up that unlovely situation, in face of Grand Jury action, and so can act only to prevent such occurrences in the future.

It is unfortunate that the Board is unable to exert its authority in this case, and necessary, we suppose, that it find some means of broadening its power in the future. In that connection, however, the Board recommends that legislation be prepared to the end that any such mixups in the future be handled by the Attorney General's office. At the moment the Board chairman, Col. William Joyner, finds that there is no power in North Carolina with authority to reopen the case—neither the Board, nor the Governor, nor the Attorney General.

He proposes to remedy that by giving the Department of Justice jurisdiction, and we suppose that will meet with public approval. It will not, however, remove the cloud of suspicion which now hangs over the political powers that be in Davidson County. We suppose North Carolina will never know the whole of that affair.

In all fairness, however, it must be said that the Solicitor, J. Lee Wilson of the Twelfth Judicial District, was not demonstrably careless of his responsibility in presenting the matter to the Grand Jury. No true bill was requested, to be sure; he only presented State Bureau of Investigation reports and announced that witnesses were at hand. But it develops that he did not delay the case. Instead, he brought it to the Jury's attention at the opening of its present session.

There were only seven questionable votes involved, and a well-known handwriting expert refused to testify that the signatures were those of particular men. Five members of the Jury were Republicans, which argues that the unanimous refusal of that body to push the case was at least non-partisan. Thus, since the SBI report has not been made public, the affair will remain a mystery.

There is one more thing. The fraud, actual or simply alleged, goes back to the absentee ballot again — where almost all of North Carolina's election troubles originate. Throw it out, as we've said before, and election fraud will virtually disappear. That much, we are persuaded, is fact.

Balanced Books

The Army announcement that General George C. Marshall was partly to blame for the Pearl Harbor disaster came as a shock to the nation. Somehow, in all the speculation about that dark day when the war came home to us, there was never a thought that the competent and aggressive director of the vast world-wide Army operations had been at fault. Surely the average citizen is going to agree with Secretary Stimson and President Truman in their stand. Neither is willing to accept condemnation of General Marshal.

And yet there is only admiration for the Army's board of inquiry, which found its own facts and presented them just as it found them. In unhesitatingly placing blame upon General Marshall as well as many of his inferiors, it fulfilled its responsibility. Its integrity is not to be questioned. These men decided, on the basis of evidence before them, that the General had been remiss in his duty to keep the Hawaiian Department prepared for war emergencis.

If the General should properly bear a portion of the blame, then there was nothing for it but that the charge be made public. If, as gossip in the interim has hinted, part of the blame also lay at the White House itself, then other reports should be made public as well.

With investigation of Pearl Harbor so long delayed there is little good that can come of it now. It is proper, to be sure, that the guilt be fixed—and that we should learn lessons from our fatal errors. But we cannot forget that the nation as a whole, from top to bottom, was unprepared for war on Dec. 7, 1941. The people behaved as if they were unwilling to enter the conflict; many Congressmen seemed determined to keep us out at all costs. It is not certain, even yet, that we would have made war, if Pearl Harbor had not come along. So that, even if General Marshall was somehow at fault, we can remember that he was not alone.

It is true enough that the armed services should have been alert to defend us, no matter what the public mind at the moment, but it will require only a little reflection to recall how far we all seemed from war, until that Sunday morning came. Nor is that all.

We have also to remember that General Marshall's brilliant accomplishments as overseer of the greatest military expansion in all history have more than atoned for any possible blame he might bear for Pearl Harbor. Indeed, the nation as a whole has performed magnificiently since that first day of shame and terror. We've come a long, long way since that day. And General Marshall has led us.

As Mount Debt will be around for some time, we shall presently lose our awe of same; in the end, perhaps, alluding to it familiarly as Sam Hill.

For the European, the perils of life are largely over. There remains, though the chance that the pedestrian will be struck by a falling monarch.

The Merry-Go-Round

By Harold L. Ickes

(Editor's note—Secretary of the Interior Ickes, in contributing a guest column to Drew Pearson, sent him the following letter in typical Ickes vein):

"My dear Drew:

"I am as willing as a mountain-climbing burro, but for reasons that appear in the timidly offered pieces herewith, it is literally true that I could hardly think of a darned thing to say. I tried first on Benjamin Franklin. It seemed to me to be somewhat labored and my very candid critic, Jane (Mrs. Ickes), felt the same way about it. So I took an entirely fresh start, again with a result of which I am not at all proud.

"I am sending both efforts to you if only to prove that, even if unavailingly, I have tried. You may use either or neither. You may even splice them together in the bonds of unholy matrimony. I have no pride of authorship. You are at liberty to cut, rearrange or discard altogether—in other words, you can use what you can and can what you can't.

"If your subtle purpose was to discourage me from ever becoming a columnist, you have done a better job than I have. I marvel how you can turn out one a day.

"Sincerely yours,

"(Signed) HAROLD L. ICKES,
"Secretary of the Interior."

WASHINGTON

WHEN I was asked to contribute a column in order that Drew Pearson might have a vacation, I accepted in my most obliging manner. It was one of those invitations that either ought to be declined vigorously or accepted with ostensible good grace. I did not want to find myself in the situation of the man who was invited by an eager hostess to come to dinner on a Monday.

"No," was the reply, "I have an engagement for Monday evening."

"Let's make it Tuesday."

"I am sorry, but I must be out of town on Tuesday."

"How about Wednesday?"

"Wednesday is out, too; I have to attend a meeting of a board of directors."

"That is too bad; can you come on Thursday?"

The answer was (with apologies to Will Hays, Presbyterian elder of Sullivan, Ind., and movie czar) "Oh, hell; I'll come on Monday."

Cabinet Muzzled

There are some subjects upon which I could be spontaneously fluent but which would require asbestos paper for their safe rendering. I simply forgot once again that I am a member of the Cabinet, a discussion of almost any current topic is "verboten."

I am supposed to live in an intellectual vacuum. And so the thrusting facts and opinions that teem within my mind on such subjects as Hirohito, Franco and certain members of Congress and colleagues of mine in the Government must be kept in their place without benefit of midwife.

For years I have wanted to have my say about Generalissimo Franco of Spain. But it wasn't until my surprised eyes ranged the columns of the Portland Maine, Sunday Telegram of Aug. 5, that that at last I became aware that I could speak a piece about Franco. The day before, according to the Associated Press, "The State Department . . . took another crack at Spain's Generalissimo Franco . . ." Assistant Secretary Dean Acheson and Archibald MacLeish said that the neutrality act of 1936 "was never popular" in America. The general conclusion of these outstanding spokesmen was that it had not been realized "until recently how strongly American opinion is and was opposed to Franco and to the role played in Spain by Hitler and Mussolini."

I had been wanting to say this sort of thing for a good many years.

People in the Federal service are prohibited from engaging in "controversies." But what is a "controversy"? If I should say that more oranges are produced in Maine than in any state in the Union, as I understand the rules and regulations under which we operate, not even the Secretary of Agriculture could tell the world that I had a nutty flavor. A denial of even an obvious misstatement becomes a "controversy" and therefore is forbidden. Smart is he who, anticipating an issue, takes a public position with respect to it, thus putting a chip on his shoulder that no one else may knock off.

For instance, take the subject of coal. I have said, and it has not been denied, that many people, not only in Europe, but here, will be chilly, if not cold, next Winter. It is not that there is not enough coal in the world. The trouble is that it is not being produced in large enough quantities. This much I can say without getting into trouble. But when I go further and declare that there are enough coal miners to produce the required amount of coal, I am stepping on thin ice. If I tell where those men are and demand that they be put to the digging of coal, then I am accused of engaging in public "controversy."

Ben Franklin

Therefore, in order to write something that even the most sensitive contemporary cannot even imagine to be "controversial," I will thumb back through the pages of American history until I come to the engaging subject of Benjamin Franklin. He ought to be safe enough and, so far as I know, he has no direct descendants. Or has he?

I will not be regarded as indulging in what anyone might properly regard as a "controversy" in dipping briefly into the life of a man who was a great American during his lifetime and an increasingly great American since his death. According to James Parton, one of Franklin's biographers, "It was his boast that his own newspaper, The Pennsylvania Gazette, during an existence of nearly 60 years under his own management and that of his successors, had never assailed the character of a private individual, nor indecently criticized the conduct of a public man."

Liberty of Press

How Franklin would scream, as with ants in his pants, if he were living today and occupying an editorial sanction in any one of the certain newspapers that do not even need to be called by name!

On one occasion, Franklin wrote and published "an account of the supremest court of judicature in Pennsylvania, viz: the court of the press." The date was Sept. 12, 1789. Franklin's approach to his subject savored of sardonic humor. After remarking that "liberty of the press, a liberty which every Pennsylvanian would fight and die for," is founded on an article of the Constitution of the State, he wrote:

"It seems, indeed, somewhat like the liberty of the press that felons have, by common law, of England, before the conviction, that is, to be pressed to death or hanged. If by the liberty of the press were understood merely the liberty of discussing the propriety of public measures and political opinions, let us have as much of it as you please; but if it means the liberty of affronting, calumniating, and defaming one another, I, for my part, own myself willing to part with my share of it when our legislators shall please so to alter the law, and shall cheerfully consent to exchange my liberty of abusing others for the privilege of not being abused myself.

"It would take less than ten minutes to read this gem of Franklin's. It is worth it.

That's the Trouble With Leaning Too Heavily

Statesmen At Work

(Serious, facetious and comic excerpts from the Congressional Record).

THE Senate was debating the Reciprocal Trade Agreements.

Mr. WILEY. Mr. President, first let me say that I do not wish to go into the question of who is for or who is against this particular proposal. I am frank to say that I have not counted noses. I have tried to reason my way through. As was suggested by my dear friend the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr Tobey) he has reached another result. I give him full credit for being honest and sincere. That is all I myself ask to be credited with. In this very process, Mr. President, I see in operation one great American system of checks and balances. It is in operation right here on the floor of the Senate, thank God. We are of many different race, and we have different economic, social, political, and — what is more—geographical levels. That very situation gives us here on the floor of the Senate the system which we call the American system of checks and balances, and out of the crucible of the clash of ideas we obtain the results, and then we abide by them.

I wish to say again that I do not desire to have Senators begin to count noses as to who is for or who is against, because that is not the way by which I have reached my conclusion.

Mr. TOBEY. I was interested in the Senator's statement that he has not counted noses. Of course, I take the Senator's statement at par. Neither have I counted noses, but I am pleased to know that on this side of the aisle there is a growing number of Senators who will vote for extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, and the number is growing larger every day. Let me tell the Senator, however, that there are other groups in the United States bitterly fighting this legislation, and their representatives are to be found not very far away from here. In the room to the right of this Chamber sit five fat, sleek lobbyists, with pencils and notebooks, jotting down the names of Senators who are for or against the pending measure, attempting to appraise their attitude, and calling Senators from the Senate Chamber and conferring with them, and continuing how to influence Senators to oppose the extension of the reciprocal tariff agreements and a further reduction in tariffs. That is the lobbying system in action, and that is an evil concomitant of Congress.

We are here charged with a great responsibility, and it is a tragic thing that as we sit here debating this far-reaching legislation, these lobbyists sit out there and go into a huddle with a Senate leader in an effort to bring Senators under the force of their arguments and influences, and quid pro quos which, although we do not see them in here, yet function in the Senate lobby around the corner at this very moment, and have been doing so for several days.

So I commend my friend the Senator from Wisconsin for his argument, although I do not agree with him. He has not taken stock of all there is to be considered, but he has presented his argument in a frank and sincere way.

But I say that these lobbyists can go straight to—well, you know where they can go.

Chiang And Opium

By H. L. Golden

BECAUSE of the long and costly aggression of Japan upon China, the work of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek in the field of domestic affairs in China has been all but forgotten.

China has proven many times during the past 2,000 years that she is unconquerable. Time after time she was invaded by Mongols, by Tartars, by at least fifteen other races and nationalities. China either drove off the invader or swallowed him whole, completely absorbing him among her teeming millions of people.

But to one conqueror China has bowed her head. A conqueror that came in the seventeenth century and has held at least 40 per cent of her male population in virtual slavery. This conqueror is opium. When the Dutch began to see the great trade possibilities in China, they "spoked" their export competition with opium to make them more attractive. After a while, however, the Chinese began to use this drug itself without the tobacco.

At first it acts as a stimulant and has an exhilarating effect, but gradually it results in complete lassitude, loss of all ambition and hope, destruction of all restraint and character, and finally leads the victim to a very early grave. The world leaders, among them Woodrow Wilson, realized that China's sorrow of opium was a great obstacle to world progress and they inserted upon a clause in the Covenant of the League of Nations which was to regulate the traffic in opium and restrict its use to legitimate medicinal purposes. As with the rest of the machinery of the League, that, too, fell apart, because the United States was not a part of it.

From 1934 to 1937, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek waged a relentless war against this narcotic. This one-man crusade was probably the most difficult task ever undertaken by any one man, and may yet reach the dusty books of the future as one of the great accomplishments of our times. Chiang provided legislation which completely forbid the production, the sale and the use of opium in China. The nation of the army was such that the most ruthless measures had to be employed, if China were ever to become an industrialized nation.

Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of Chinese were executed—those who had been convicted more than once for the sale of opium. Chiang knew that no great China was possible while eighty millions of her male population were enslaved by this habit. His success was remarkable. So remarkable that it may very well have figured in the calculation of Japan in her dream of Asiatic and Pacific domination. An opium free China would have been a formidable obstacle to the Jap hope for her "Co-prosperity Sphere in Asia."

That Japan was worried over General Chiang's success in his war against opium is proved by the known fact that as fast as her soldiers penetrated into China, opium was brought along in huge quantities. The children were again fed with the narcotic and the Jap policy was to distribute opium free of charge for the first few weeks of occupation of a given city or locality. Then, when the Chinese had again become addicts, they set up their stores and their shops and used opium as a medium of exchange and barter.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek will have to do it all over again. Millions of Chinese, long under Japanese rule, are again addicted to this horrible drug, but his great success ten years ago qualifies him above all others in the world for this important task to redeem millions of his countrymen and to lead a great nation to prosperity.

SIDE GLANCES

By Galbraith

"Why, yes, ma'am, I'm the baby-sitter who put the ad in the paper—I just thought I'd earn a little money after sitting with three generations of children free!"

We Must Keep On

By Marquis Childs

WASHINGTON

INCODED cables back and forth between Manila and Washington and Frankfurt and Washington, the grim arithmetic of military occupation has been worked out to a total that looks like the bare minimum which will enable us to live up to our world responsibilities.

Here is an outline of how American forces will be used in the coming twelve months. It is from top authorities who are doing the planning. For occupation of Japan, General MacArthur has said that he will require 800,000 men until July 1 of next year. Fewer men will mean endangering the lives of all Americans in the islands. With fewer men, it will be difficult or impossible to disarm the Japanese and carry out the other provisions of surrender. It will mean the risk of Japanese rearmament for another and more terrible war of revenge.

In addition, three divisions will be needed for the occupation of Korea. An equal number of divisions — under a hundred thousand men — will be needed to help open up Shanghai and possibly two or three other Chinese ports so supplies can go in to Chiang Kai-Shek's armies.

This last accords with the policy adopted by Soviet Russia in the treaty with China signed recently in Moscow. The hope is that with a minimum of aid, long and indecisive civil war can be prevented. The U. S. has a more direct interest in getting some of China's ports opened for supplies. When that is done, it will be possible to end the costly operation over the Hump into Chungking.

Few Americans realize how this operation has grown. Today, with the lend-lease pipe line still full even though the end of lend-lease has been officially decreed, more than 100,000 tons a month are going into free China. More than 80,000 tons go by air — an astonishing record. The rest goes over the Ledo Road.

This is above all costly in manpower. More than 200,000 American officers and men are working on that supply line into free China. When it is terminated, a large proportion of these men can be released.

From Germany, General Eisenhower has sent in his minimum estimate. He will need, he says, 420,000 men to police the American zone of occupation through July 1 of next year. The coming Winter is likely to be chaotic in Europe, with rioting and bloodshed in Germany.

Both MacArthur and Eisenhower may later be able to pare down their estimates. If the occupation of Japan is peaceful and if the Winter in Germany goes more smoothly than anyone now anticipates, some American forces can be released. But American military authorities will not even hint at such a possibility, since that would bring immediate clamor to accelerate the discharge of men overseas.

As it stands today, this occupation arithmetic adds up to a deficit. With 50,000 a month drafted there will be a deficit by next July 1 of 400,000. That is based on a discharge rate considerably in advance of the present rate.

If Congress scales down the draft or abolishes it, the hands of MacArthur and Eisenhower may be left on a very long limb. The deficit of 400,000 is figured on the assumption that the Army will be able to recruit all the 280,000 regulars now permitted under law. That is highly doubtful. If half that number are signed up, the Army will consider itself lucky.

Strong-Arm Diplomacy

By Dorothy Thompson

THE United States, the only self-sufficient country in the world, and the only member of a great coalition that has not been devastated, the country that has an atomic bomb in its pocket — can act in alternative ways. Recognizing the absolute superiority of its position, it can behave gently, as well as reasonably. Or it can try to force submission.

It is one thing to invite a neighbor to negotiations, and it is another to set terms in advance of negotiations, or bring pressure on another country's press, in the moment when the head of its state is our guest engaged in vital negotiations for his country.

Lend-Lease had to be terminated, and no legal strictures can be brought against its abrupt termination. But the Anglo-Saxon concept of law is of justice tempered with mercy. Mr. Crowley is overzealous in his point if he argues that America was forced to interpret the law as he did.

After the last war similar questions arose, and we took six to eight months to make financial adjustments with our Allies in the transition from war to peace.

The mission that is coming to America with Lord Halifax and Lord Keynes would have come in any case. One would have thought, that in view of the fact that the best friends we have in the world we would have done nothing to cause a crisis in their country. That Britain faces its crisis is clear from the statement of Mr. Attlee and Mr. Churchill, now leader of the opposition, who joined together in the face of what was a crisis. If nothing else. Both knew that Lend-Lease would be terminated, but expected that some modus vivendi would be mutually found to bridge the gap in a serious moment.

And it is all but certain that a bridge will be found.

And however strong we are, let us never make the mistake of believing that we shall not need friends in this world.

The abrupt cancellation of Lend-Lease hits France, too. France, in economic and colonial questions, is more dependent on us than Britain. General de Gaulle faces a stern domestic situation. It is in his interest and ours that he should be able to alleviate internal difficulties before the French elections. But how is he received? By an unprecedented rebuke to the France press, not only directly, but to General de Gaulle himself.

This is a matter of more far-reaching implications than Lend-Lease. The French press, like our own, is free; it is not an instrument of the state. In suggesting to the head of the French state that he should do something about the French press, President Truman is taking a line hitherto only used by totalitarian states. The German embassies, in the neutral states, such as Sweden and Switzerland, constantly brought pressure on their governments to restrain the anti-German tone of writers in the press. The Russians, who find it extremely difficult to understand a free press, tend to hold governments responsible for what appears in newspapers.

I make no apologies for the French press. I have criticized it myself and in France, to French journalists. But that is the job of journalists and not the job of our President. For does the President want General de Gaulle to call in the press and bring governmental pressure upon them? Suppose he does, and succeeds. The next day another state—for instance, the Soviet Union—might send a representative to General de Gaulle and even to President Truman asking the same favors for his state. Certainly General de Gaulle could ask President Truman to discipline the press of the United States. So where would all this end? In the suppression of the free press? Or in the argument that we are so strong that we don't have to practice reciprocity?

No irreparable damage has been done, but we should hold high-handedness. Bretton Woods and the San Francisco Charter are only abstract documents. What counts in relations between countries are relations. Let us remember that the strongest country can mobilize the world against it and then it is no longer strong at all; even with the atomic bomb—which, incidentally, we got through agreement with Britain—and which will not remain a monopoly.