'God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen'

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Reorganization Could Be Scuttled

IT is something of a rarity these days to come upon a public issue that is not, properly or improperly, classified as liberal or conservative. Even the reorganization of Congress probably cannot be placed in that neutral category (it involves change, and is therefore suspect on the far right) but it comes close. The present rather limited plan authorized by the 79th Congress was the result of bi-partisan effort, and more important, it has been endorsed by thoughtful Congressmen of every shade of opinion in both parties.

But there is danger that the reorganization project, although now authorized, may yet be abandoned. A new private committee with a letterhead studded with the names of sponsors ranging from Henry Luce to Bishop Oxnam has been formed to alert the public to that danger. Only a few sections of the Reorganization Act such as the increase in salaries for Congressmen, points out this National Committee On Strengthening Congress, are actually law. Seventy-five per cent of the real accomplishments of the Act are embodied only in a proposed set of rules which are not mandatory but must be adopted by the 80th Congress.

Among the sections that might be scuttled is that calling for reduction of standing committees from 81 to a streamlined 34. The new method of handling Federal funds under a Congressional budget also might go by the boards. Without these essential provisions the Reorganization Act would only be a Congressional pay raise bill, guaranteeing no increase in efficiency in return for higher salaries.

The National Committee believes that, even if it is adopted in its entirety, the Reorganization Act does not go far enough. It would also like to see the filibuster abandoned, and party policy groups established to guide, and be responsible for, party legislation.

What this amounts to is an effort to make sense out of our present legislative system. It would help make possible the enactment of a coherent legislative program, regardless of its political complexion. It would confer no greater benefits upon one party than it does upon the other. Although it would cut down on his committee assignments (the root cause of the most immediate threat to the plan) it would actually increase the power of the average Congressman by returning to the Congress as a whole some of the powers that are now exercised by its committees, and sometimes by individual committee chairmen.

The dismal record of the 79th Congress, which produced neither a coherent liberal program nor a coherent conservative program, stands as the best evidence of the pressing need for a change in our way of doing legislative business. Every citizen has a very real stake in the effort to see that the Reorganization Act is not sacrificed to political expediency.

Faint Voice, Inside An Egg

IT is perhaps a fitting commentary on our time that the most cogent criticism of the United Nations appears regularly in *The New Yorker*, a magazine specializing in humor, sophisticated fiction, and assorted *belles lettres*. The author of *The New Yorker's* notes and comment on UN (now collected in book form under the title, *The Wild Flag*) is E. B. White, one of the most gifted writers of this or any day. But it is not so much his literary skill that distinguishes Mr. White's output; rather is his singleness of purpose and his steadfast refusal to be distracted from UN's basic concept, the establishment of a world organization endowed with sovereignty superior to that of the member nations.

While other editorial experts lose themselves in the welter of unilateral agreements, power balances, boundary agreements, navigation treaties and diplomatic maneuvers out at Lake Success, Mr. White quietly points out, with consistent good humor, that none of this has any real relation to the central problem facing the nations. That problem, he insists, is the maintenance of peace through world government, and it can never be solved by traditional diplomatic procedures. This week he says of the disarmament negotiations which have been variously hailed as a great forward step:

> The disarmament debate strikes us as misleading because it implies that the abating of force means the beginning of peace. Force, not the absence of it, is the essence of peace. We live in a world with force, as we know it in these times, is that it exists for each nation and doesn't exist for the human community. We can write a multilateral treaty prohibiting the use of atomic energy, but it will differ in no important respect from the treaty we wrote concerning poison gas some years ago. Poison gas wasn't used, but we had another war just the same, and it was a beauty. In any treaty between nations regarding arms or regarding anything else, there is an implicit veto, since each independent nation's first concern must be for its own principles and its own safety, and the treaty can be honored and observed only to the extent that its observance is nationally expedient. It is a good idea to remember, through the discussions of atomic energy, that there has never been international control of anything at all during the critical moments when control was actually needed by the people. Mr. Bevin correctly stated the matter of force when he addressed the Political Committee on November 21st: "I ask . . . that there be consideration of the whole problem . . . (in order) to build a structure of disarmament that will enable governments to come to a conclusion as to whether it is of such a character that they can to a large extent surrender their sovereignty to the United Nations. Now, sir, that really is what is involved in the question of disarmament." Sir, it certainly is.

Mr. White never allows himself the luxury of cynicism, or of undue optimism. He regards UN within a limited frame of reference, measures its accomplishments against its stated goal. Over-simplification? Perhaps, but Mr. White believes that the choice before the nations is also quite simple: world government or destruction. In this light the great competition between East and West, between capitalistic democracy and Russian Communism, between large nations and small, is no more than a distracting side issue. These differences must be resolved, or at least adjusted, not for the purpose of giving this or any nation advantage in a new alignment but because they stand as a barrier in the way of sovereign world government.

Watching the UN delegates pack up and head home for Christmas after a year in which there has been no material progress toward true world unity, Mr. White writes a brief and eloquent summary: "But . . . the United Nations has performed one valuable function in its first year: it has shown that although the world community has no political reality, it has a conscience and a voice. The voice is faint, like that of a chick inside an egg. We don't know yet whether it will work itself into the open."

The High Cost Of Football

THE professionalism of college football has now reached a stage where a college head who steps forward to condemn it is open to a suspicion of hypocrisy. The only instance we can recall of a college suddenly de-emphasizing the game in the middle of winning streak occurred at Pittsburgh some years ago, and from the look of the season's records (Pitt's back in the big time) it appears that the experiment is now only a memory on the skyscraper campus. Chicago also got out and stayed out, but the usual critic is the president of a small college that doesn't have much of a look-in on the Saturday jackpot anyway.

Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, superintendent of West Point, the greatest football factory in the land, put a new twist on this the other day when he charged that it is the college presidents' fault that football has gotten out of control. "Too many college presidents are inclined to turn their heads the other way instead of making it their business to see that the policies on which there are general agreement are carried out," he said. "This would restore athletics to their proper perspective in the educational scheme . . ."

An excellent point, but General Taylor is hardly the man to raise it. He happens to head one of the two institutions of higher education in the United States which offer all their students free room, board, clothing, and tuition, a salary, and guaranteed employment upon graduation. With this sort of inducement, the service academies have been able to lure football talent away from any and all their competitors, sometimes snatching a likely prospect out of another institution's T-formation in mid-season. The phenomenal Army football team of recent years, now being disbanded by graduation, would hardly fit into anybody's conception of an amateur aggregation out to do or die for dear old Alma Mater.

Most college presidents, we suspect, turn away from their athletic programs because they know what they will find there will disgust them, and that there isn't much they can do about it. Frank Graham of the University of North Carolina tried to clean up the mess some years ago on a Conference-wide basis, but succeeded only in adding to the hypocrisy that is the worst aspect of the situation. The Graham Plan has long since been lost in the excitement of the pursuit and capture of Choo-Choo Justice.

The sad truth is that a college must play professional football these days or not play at all in the big league. Students and above all alumni will never agree to abandoning the game, and few college presidents have been willing to swallow the other alternative—standardizing the rules to permit the open payment of salaries to the large, rapid young men who wear their colors. That, however, will be the ultimate way out, we believe. A distasteful solution in many ways, but far better than the corrupt system that now provides pleasant and exciting Saturday afternoons for a vast and still-growing audience.

Unlike the pastor who was violently upset by a cake baked in the shape of the Bikini atomic bomb, we merely mistook it for a bride's first try at popovers.

In the Antarctic, Adm. Byrd won't look for uranium particularly. However, if a large piece of the stuff turns up in a game of duck-on-the-rock he might mention it in a P. S.

People's Platform

Dry, Without Reservation

COLUMBUS, OHIO

Editors, THE NEWS:

THE editorial, "Another Voice, The WCTU sets an example," which is indicated to have been reprinted from the Columbia (S. C.) Record, in your issue of Nov. 19, 1946, quoting me on the authority of the United Press as saying, "We have tried prohibition and it is not the answer for the WCTU," has been called to my attention.

I made no such statement to the United Press, nor anyone else. I stand without reservation for the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. So does the National WCTU, of which I am vice-president, and the Ohio WCTU of which I am president.

—MISS MARY B. ERVIN,
President, Ohio WCTU.

(NOTE: The Columbia Record accepted the United Press report in good faith, as did we in reprinting the editorial. We are glad to set the record straight.—Eds., THE NEWS.)

A For Asininity?

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

SURELY the unusually discriminating editors of THE NEWS were nodding when they made bold to publish the editorial on "Henry Wallace and the World" on December 16. Admittedly Mr. Wallace needs a good deal of defending, but it strikes me that the "A" you so cavalierly awarded Henry for effort might have borne a more appropriate citation: let us say, for Asininity.

The difficulty in applauding the remarks by Wallace which you quoted seems to me to lie in the fact that they do not mean anything. To earn respite from the "senseless efforts" (I quote you) to shut Henry up, would it not be fair to ask him to make sense himself?

Henry's pen to us produced little that was either thoughtful, practical, original or sensible—and, withal, had the pungency of a marshmallow. Passing by his curiously "slanted" statement of what we can admit are facts (though few patriots would agree that a refusal to feed another's army was treason, per se) let us consider the form of Henry's song which excited you to rush to his standard. "Our Program for Peace is to abolish the causes of war" (a thought much in vogue amongst public escapists of all breeds—also makes an excellent program for abolition of disease, poverty, marital discord and falling hair).

Real security is gained when democracy is practiced everywhere" (a truism if true, only,—and of course we will require a world convention of Henry Wallaces to define "democracy"). "When living standards are raised" (good for dispensing many nostrums for public ills such as wage increases, tax reductions, and Fords). "When all nations accept world law" (an invention of Grotius and prior souls lamented for some generations past).

"Leaders of the present bipartisan bloc maintain peace settlement must be made before security is established" (a good many recent employees of the Government will be duly grateful that their employment could be terminated pending the establishments of Mr. Wallace's program).

"I answer that there will be no permanent settlement and no security until a world welfare program is begun."

(If I recognize something familiar in that "welfare program." I will join in the country's fervent prayers for Henry's brilliant and continued success—as a magazine writer.)

I think it a pity that you should clutch your very capable pen in defense of one who so little deserves you as a reader, far less as a champion. If you wish to attend some worthy casualties of the windmill, why not E. B. White—or H. G. Wells—or any titter of at least minimum skill?

—ROBERT LASSITER JR.

(NOTE: For our opinion of Mr. White see the editorial on this page, "Faint Voice, Inside An Egg." Mr. Lassiter errs when he charges us with flocking to Henry Wallace's standard; we flock only to defense of his right to be heard. We believe that Mr. Wallace stands on firm ground when he states the facts in his general case for internationalism, however fuzzily, but we usually part company with him when he begins to outline his specific plans for political action, international or otherwise. Our point is that Henry Wallace is the only politician of national stature who even dares question the bi-partisan, anti-Russian foreign policy which has been established by Messrs. Byrnes and Vandenburg. We have believed from the beginning that this major shift in diplomatic direction should be subjected to a great national debate, but when Henry Wallace made his ill-timed, ill-conceived effort to raise the issue he was promptly maryred, and warning was thus served on members of both parties to stay away from foreign policy in the Congressional campaign. All this has been done in the name of unity, but how can a people be united behind a policy that has never been publicly examined in detail, much less submitted to them for approval? We concede that Henry Wallace is a frail vessel and that his logic leaves something to be desired, but he stands at the moment as the only loyal opposition in sight. He therefore gets our "A" for effort by default, and, right or wrong, he still deserves, as we said in the sentence Mr. Lassiter didn't finish, "a respite from the senseless effort to shut him up by painting him red."—Eds., THE NEWS.)

Wholesale

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

ABOUT this inflation that is causing wage earners like myself so much concern.

Nylon ladies hose are now selling in our Charlotte stores from $2.00 up. A friend of mine bought a dozen pair of 51 gauge nylon hose the other day direct from a manufacturer and the invoice price was $1.03 per pair.

Why aren't our Charlotte merchants satisfied with a reasonable mark-up on their merchandise? Most of them add a 100 per cent profit on the invoice price. This is only one item that I happen to know about. Are you charging them a 100 per cent more for their advertising? Are their employees paid a 100 per cent more wages? I don't think so.

It makes me wish we could all buy from the manufacturer.

—SAM GOLDBERG.

The People's Platform is available to any reader who cares to mount it. Communications should be less than 300 words, typewritten if possible, and on only one side of the paper. Brevity and politeness will be elected—otherwise anything goes. Each letter must be signed, although, in exceptional cases and upon request, we will withhold the writer's name.—Editors, THE NEWS.

Marquis Childs

Mr. Nathan's Report

WASHINGTON

THE propagandists in the battle of profits vs. wages are setting off their big guns. This controversy does at least one thing. It makes us all look a little closer at the roots of the system in which we live.

The present battle started with the "analysis" prepared for the CIO by Robert R. Nathan Associates, Inc. In a carefully staged presentation, Nathan announced his conclusion that a 23 per cent increase is necessary to "bring real weekly earnings back to the January, 1945, level."

His report was in many ways an over-simplification. It assumed that the money which goes into profits passes out of the main stream of buying and spending. Taking his theory literally, you have to believe that only through wages are purchasing power and jobs created.

But the flaw in the Nathan theory is in the base on which he builds. He says that a 23 per cent increase in wages is possible without a rise in prices. Theoretically that may be possible. Perhaps it can be demonstrated by statistics and on charts.

THEORY & PRACTICE.

Theory, however, is one thing and what is happening all around us today is quite another thing. A little background points up what this contrast between virtuous theory and greedy practice really means.

Nathan was one of the Government economists who helped to persuade the President that industry could give an 18 per cent pay rise without seriously affecting the level of prices. His theory then—as a deputy director of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion—was the same as that expressed in his CIO analysis. Profits, so his theory goes, have gone up much more than wages and therefore business can cut off a wedge of the profit pie and share it with the wage earner at no cost to the consumer.

But in practice, after the 18 per cent wage boost, the opposite happened. Price began to spar. Nathan's figures show that while the cost of living went up only 3.5 per cent from January, 1945, to May, 1946, the increase by the end of this year will probably be 20 per cent.

Even before price controls were removed, the bulge in the price level was pretty prominent. Whether rightly or wrongly, in accord with the wage-profit theory business was passing along the cost of the wage increase.

Today we have no price controls at all. Why Nathan and his friends in the CIO think prices will be held down after a second round of wage increases, is hard to see. Self-restraint is not enough.

SIGNIFICANT POINT

A significant paragraph at the end of Nathan's report was generally ignored:

"We do not suggest that a policy of major wage increases is in itself sufficient to assure a continued stable and equitable expansion of economic activity. On the contrary, complementary policies are required in a great many fields. Fiscal and particularly tax policies need to be altered drastically to exercise control and restraint. Other controls of a direct character are also necessary to meet special shortage situations. Curbs to monopoly and to concentration of wealth need to be redesigned and administered with a new determination. At the same time, we need to provide, especially through the long-overdue expansion of our social security system, for the maintenance of effective demand where the needs are greatest. . . . Major wage increases at this time are but one element in such a well-rounded program for sustained economic growth and a wider diffusion of the benefits of such growth among all our people."

In other words, we need a lot more planning by Government to keep the proper ratio between wages and profits in accord with the Nathan theory. The verdict on Nov. 5 was for a lot less planning. That is a political fact as big and as solid as Nathan's economic facts.

The controls are going even before the Republican Congress comes in. Over the last week-end, Mr. Truman threw out just about all that was left of the controlled housing program. The attitude of the men around the President is to move quickly and beat the Republicans to it.

LACKS POWER

The CIO today does not have the political power to compel industry to give over a share of profits to the worker. They can close industry down. But that might very well be disastrous for the entire economy, including the members of the unions.

Reports from the country indicate that a wage increase of 12 or 13 per cent will be possible with only a bitter struggle and without influence on prices. If the policy-makers in CIO are sensible, they will accept that compromise.

Samuel Grafton

Impersonal Housing

NEW YORK

SINCE anyone at all is now allowed to build a house for his own occupancy, the veteran will from here on out be forced to compete for shelter with men who have lumps of black market money put away in wall safes, with sports characters who are swell on making arrangements, and with every Aunt Tilly who has been left a nest egg by some good man and true, and who feels that now is the time to build herself more stately mansions. The veteran has had the training for this kind of unequal contest. But all is not lost, for Mr. Truman says, in effect, that as people build new houses for themselves, they will leave old ones, and the veterans can perhaps move into some of the old ones.

LEFT-OVERS FOR VETS

The veterans thus become something like the poor, who customarily move, in advancing waves, into abandoned and decaying neighborhoods. We have long used housing left-overs to shelter the poor, but it is a little shocking to see this method deliberately and formally proposed as one answer to the veterans' needs. It makes about as much sense as would a clothing rationing program under which the well-heeled would be allowed to buy all the clothes they wanted, on the ground that this would increase the supply of cast-offs.

Mr. Truman obviously hopes that if there is enough housing activity, enough boom and hullabaloo, without ceilings or controls, the total number of rooms will edge upward. So it will, in a lopsided and distorted way; but the important thing about the new program is the manner in which it illustrates the change which has come over our philosophy of government in the last year.

This has been a change from the individual approach to a kind of mass, or organic approach, from the human to the statistical, from the retail to the wholesale, so that instead of being concerned with a particular veteran, Mr. John Smith, and his need for a house, we now engage in big, muddled, grandiloquent gestures by which, we hope, enough activity will be created so that some benefit will slop over for John Smith.

BOND BROKEN

The bond between the individual and his Government is being broken. It was the same way with price control. Price control, as originally set up, kept its eye on the individual; it made sure that Mrs. Maude Jones would pay eleven cents, instead of thirteen, or seventeen, for her box of cereal. This was superseded by a plan under which controls were knocked off, in the hope that production, or over-production, or recession, or what-not, somehow would in the end, deliver a box of cereal to Mrs. Jones; but during the long intervening months before all this happens Mrs. Jones has simply been forgotten.

This Government no longer communicates with individuals; it broadcasts. It has adopted what might be called a doctrine of incidental benefits; but the incidental benefits are hypothetical, while the immediate concessions to selfish interests are real. It is all very reminiscent of the Hoover days, when unemployment relief was opposed (that would have meant direct contact between the individual and his Government) and when aid to the business organism was favored instead, on the theory that some of this might dribble down and moisten the bottom. The Wheel has turned, under conservative pressure, and we are now back again to a Government that does not want to know our names.

EASIER THIS WAY

It is so much easier to do these things statistically; statistically, a year or two from now, it will be shown the number of new rooms, by the number of veterans, every veteran will have a house, even though he may still be sleeping under a kitchen sink. A truly liberal government would want to know his name, and where, in fact, he was sleeping; but it is so much easier to do these things by a page of long division, than to have an office at which every man who has served his country could turn up in person, and nod to his Government across a desk, and say, I am John Smith, and I need a house.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Bricker Hurt '48 Chances At Grid Dinner

WASHINGTON

REPUBLICAN candidates who attended the Gridiron Club dinner—and most of them were there—were unhappy about only one thing. They wished that Senator-elect John Bricker's speech could have been broadcast to the nation instead of being delivered, off-the-record, to select dinner guests who weren't supposed to mention it above a whisper.

For if the general public had heard the new Senator from Ohio, his chances for the GOP nomination would have pretty much gone up in smoke.

Bricker talked for 22 explosive minutes—longer than any other guest. If he had sat down after six minutes, he would have been a success. But he went on to deliver a stump speech before one of the most sophisticated audiences in the world—Ambassadors, Cabinet members, Senators, newsmen, and rival GOP candidates. He harangued them as if he were addressing a jury rather than speaking to the judge.

Furthermore, he made the mistake of insulting the President to his face. That is something never done at a Gridiron dinner. The President is twitted and jibed, but no one ever hits him below the belt.

Truman Replies

WHEN Truman finally got a chance to hit back, there were smiles on Democratic faces for the first time since Nov. 5. He did a beautiful job. Either the President is better at extemporaneous speaking than at formal speaking, or else he had had an advance peek at Bricker's manuscript. At any rate, without any sign of irritation, he gently threw Bricker's barbs back. Referring to the Ohio ex-Governor's sarcastic promise to investigate everything connected with the Truman Administration, the President said:

"I want to advise my friend from Ohio that I know something about investigating myself."

Then he went on, tongue-in-cheek, to suggest that the Republicans should investigate every Democratic Senator elected in November, since, according to the GOP view, they could not possibly have been elected without some irregularity.

Truman also said he had tried to seek the advise of Republican leaders.

"But," he added, with a helpless look around the room at the variegated array of rival presidentials, including Senators Taft, Vandenberg, Joe Martin, Governor Dewey, Senator-elect Bricker and Minnesota's ex-Governor Stassen, "there are so many leaders."

In serious vein, Truman outlined a six-point program for the Republican Congress—including cutting the budget, reduction of taxes, curtailing the national debt, amalgamation of the Army and Navy—and challenged the Republicans to help him put them across.

Perhaps his neatest barb was aimed at Rhodes scholar Senator Fulbright of Arkansas who proposed that the President resign and let the Republicans take over full reign for the next two years. Without mentioning Fulbright's name, he turned to the British Ambassador and said:

"I've come to the conclusion, Mr. Ambassador, that it's a mistake to send our young men to Oxford to study. A land college in Ohio is much better."

Truman laughed good-naturedly at the skits aimed against his Administration. The scene in which the Democratic high command was at sea in a storm listening to the President play the piano off-key seemed to tickle him immensely. Whenever the piano-player struck a sour note, he roared. . . . Another who enjoyed the dinner was Tom Dewey. Last year Dewey made an excellent speech. This year he sat and roared at the antics of his presidential running-mate, whom he has never liked, make a terrible speech. . . . One thing in Bricker's speech which struck a sour note was his attack on Democratic "socialism." At a time when the nation faces continued domestic crisis, Bricker, in mean and nasty mood, brazenly threw co-operation out the window.

Iron Curtain Stays Down

ASSISTANT Secretary of State Bill Benton, who has tried desperately to lift the iron curtain, recently was prevented by the Russians from visiting Moscow.

Benton was scheduled to fly to Moscow with Chester Bowles, his old advertising partner, two weeks ago. But the Russians found Benton had only 48 hours in which to make the trip, let him get as far as Berlin, then stalled him for 48 hours, claiming Moscow weather made it impossible for his plane to land.

Finally, Benton went back to Paris, where he checked by coded cable with the American Embassy in Moscow, found that the weather in Russia had been perfect during the time he was being barred from the Soviet capital.

Note—Benton, who is in charge of State Department information, has tried to beam radio broadcasts into Russia in order to give Russian people the truth about the USA. Many Russians don't even know that the American Army and Navy participated in the war against Japan.