THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

W. C. DOWD JR., Publisher · J. E. DOWD, Editor · HARRY S. ASHMORE, Associate Editor

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Let's Stick To The Rules

A bigger, better library and a greatly expanded parks and recreation program should stand near the top in any listing of Charlotte's needs. *The News* spoke strongly for them in the recent bond election campaign, and expects the chance to speak for them again. But the voters chose to ignore these needs in favor of others. They decided against spending money on them in a well-publicized campaign, under a set of rules made clear to everyone remotely interested. Voters and registrants knew well in advance that the count would be against registration on certain measures.

Under those conditions people of the City and County expressed themselves. Many voters obviously registered and did not vote, purposely to cast ballots against these items. All such voters will have a legitimate campaign if Mayor Baxter and other City and County leaders win their proposed test case of the constitutionality of the law requiring a vote against registration.

We have previously questioned the wisdom of this statute, suspecting that it may often make the progress of local government more difficult, simply by making it doubly hard to float bond issues. But the wishes of a large number of voters, staying away from the polls in the knowledge that they were voting against these proposals, must be considered.

It is very well to continue pressing for municipal improvements, and to strive for election laws which place a minimum of stress on the slow-moving democratic processes. But it strikes us as grossly unfair to a great many voters to attempt to reverse the decision they helped to make by setting aside the conditions under which they cast their votes.

The fact that a majority of those actually voting favored both the library and parks and recreation expansion would seem to indicate that the electorate favored the bond issues and tax rate increases. But it cannot be denied that many of those who registered and did not appear at the polls were voting just the same. Not all of those missing on election day were dodging their duties as citizens. They were making their choice, and their rights in the matter are as vital as those of the many who want and need improved facilities.

Franco Asks For Trouble Again

FOR a few days there, while we were wondering whether there would be any United Nations left, we forgot about Francisco Franco. Even the UN Committee, busy shuffling its papers and trying to decide whether Falangist Spain is a threat to world peace, might overlook him if he could hold his tongue. But he persists in popping off, as if he were not content to remain a minor problem. He was in top form.

He denies, he says, that there are any political problems left to be solved in Spain. They were washed out in "our" blood and "our" effort. The United Nations, he says, are fighting their own problems, and can't solve them. Why, then, should they be picking at Spain, a Spain which built its own foundations seven years ago, and worked its way up with "rigorous exactitude?" He said he would finish the building of Spain when the United Nations decided to leave him alone.

What he means, you know, is that Spain solved its problems in a bloodbath, the blood furnished by Republicans. Its foundations were laid by German and Italian troops, upon the rubble of the Spanish Republic. Its seven years have been spent in blood, and under the shadow of the Axis. "Rigorous exactitude" speaks of the dungeon and the gallows, the firing squad and the bridle. He meant that Spain's problems were its own, and no one else's, because he intends to keep the Spanish people in a cage.

Franco has his points. There are greater dangers to peace at the moment than totalitarian Spain. But there is no longer room for the naive belief that the internal problems of any nation have no bearing on other peoples. That was an anachronism in 1936, when France and Britain invoked the principle in defiance of those who saw the coming of war. In the past seven years we have paid for that folly.

The Russians are still right about Franco and his Spain, as they were right ten years ago. The United Nations committee will uncover no new evidence, and if they brand Franco as the menace he manifestly is, the only official action will come in severing diplomatic relations with Spain. Simply on the basis of Franco's little fireside chat, such a move will be ineffective and ridiculous. Franco is the last standing idol of the Axis, and if that isn't clear now it never will be.

A Sheep In Sheep's Clothing

NORTH Carolina's one-party system isn't ideal by any means, but it's comfortable to most of us. The electorate has strung along in most years with the one-faction principle, without a thought of complaining. Thus, when CIO's Political Action Committee invaded a couple of Congressional districts in the state you'd have expected things to pop. There has been nothing more than a few scattered yells about the Reds. Strangely enough, the campaigns are dragging along about as usual.

The PAC picked a hot race in the Fifth District, where Congressman John Folger is defending himself against vigorous Thurmond Chatham, the Elkin manufacturer. It first planned to back a third candidate, who withdrew in favor of the incumbent, and is apparently working hard to keep Chatham out of Washington. But there have been no riots, no bloody scenes in the streets. Somehow, PAC at work in the state didn't seem to make much difference.

The labor group has also been digging away in the Sixth District, where Incumbent Carl Durham is battling both Earle Rives and D. E. Scarborough of Greensboro. The PAC is behind Scarborough, reported to be trailing badly at the moment. And PAC is reported, too, in the Eighth District, where C. B. Deane and W. E. Horner are running. There, as in the other districts, there has been no upheaval, no display of fireworks. PAC seems to flow right into Tar Heel politics without ruffling the waters.

There must be something radical and ominous in the way the CIO and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare beat the bushes to get voters registered in those districts. There must be; Tar Heels expected the foreigners to come, if ever, breathing fire and brimstone. When they turned out to be ordinary vote-hustlers there must have been disappointment.

According to Capital reports State officialdom still looks about suspiciously, as if expecting some kind of foul play. But any group long in office, we suppose, would stir uneasily at the approach of any determined new opposition, on whatever scale. At any rate, North Carolina has felt the tread of the PAC now, and the bulk of the electorate, unsuspecting, has not even felt a tremor. Our disillusion is acute.

Another Voice

Is It A Good System?

IN his Raleigh correspondence W. Tom Bost raises a quizzical eyebrow anent the North Carolina system for conducting special elections for tax supplements and such like.

He points out that progressive measures are often defeated because the "vote against the vast majority of the people actually voting may cast their ballots in favor of it.

It is true that this often does happen. Sometimes the shoe may be on the other foot, when a group of people who are vitally interested in some measure register and vote while the indifferent and opposed may not take the trouble to register. But while this event no doubt does actually occur now and then, it is quite possible that there have been more instances in which good measures have been licked" by the registration."

Under the plan, there must be more votes cast for the measure voted on than the total of those voting against it plus the total of those not voting—or the favorable votes must out-number those not voting if votes actually are cast in opposition to the measure.

Thus, as Mr. Bost observes, those citizens who are opposed to a measure merely have to register. Then by staying at home and not voting they can throw their ballot against it. But it is safe to say that not all the nonvoters who have registered in such instances are opposed to the proposed measures. Some simply forget about the election, are called suddenly out of town, become ill and are unable to go to the polls, or find themselves hindered in some other way.

The fairer, simpler method of conducting these special elections would be to eliminate the "vote-against-the-registration feature," and allow the aye votes to stand over against the nays. Simplicity in voting methods is always the fairest, most efficient and most democratic approach to the solution of civic and political problems. The present system makes it possible for clever opposition groups to manipulate the lethargy of the indifferent citizens to their own advantage, since to register and then not vote is appealing to the lazy and indifferent citizen.—*Twin City Sentinel.*

A shortstop who jumped to the Mexican league has jumped back because he "couldn't understand what the other players were saying". Well—what do other players usually say to shortstops?

A sign of runaway inflation is seen in the $100 top set for the Louis-Conn fight. For that money put into a war bond, the citizen used to get Anzio, a Normandy landing or Okinawa.

'Well, What Country Are We Living In Today?'

Burning Question

Surrender Now Or Later?

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

JOHN L. LEWIS is a thoroughly bad egg. I have had my ear to the ground for some time now, and that is the result of my findings.

John L. is a great deal like the weather used to be down around the Mississippi River, that is, everybody is all the time complaining about him, but nobody does anything about him except in a castigatory sort of way.

I have a suggestion that will save the country millions of dollars if they will act on it promptly enough. That is, give John L. whatever he wants, and give it to him quickly. He is going to get whatever he pleases in the end, and I think that everybody except, perhaps, Judge Alley knows it.

Judge Alley says that this sort of thing can end in a civil revolution. You and I know that it IS a civil revolution. Judge Alley sees no reason why the Government shouldn't seize the mines, and distribute the coal. All the rest of us know, including John L., that the coal has to be mined before it can be distributed to any great extent.

Now, my idea is this. Everybody that is anybody has known all the time that we would eventually tell John "okay", but the various folks up in Washington want to first get their names on the record (or off it) as considering him a heel, etc. In the meanwhile, our economy goes to the dickens.

John L. has now given us a breathing spell. Let's take the next week and call him all the bad names we can think of—there was a line in a News' editorial the other evening that might fit him, i. e., "Life—not merely in Salisbury but in all the United States—has been sprayed by some mysterious, macrocosmic skunk". That would be a good line for Judge Alley to open court with once or twice. But for goodness sake let's guarantee John L. everything he wants before this two weks reprieve has run its course. Us folks down Power Brake Company way is hurting.

—A. E. BASSETT.

Wait 'Em Out

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

MR. S. CLAY WILLIAMS, chairman of the board of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., reminds me of a novel which was popular a few years ago, entitled, "Impatient Virgin". He seems to be "champing at the bit", impatient for the flood gates of wild spending and rising prices to be opened—and bring about a slow but sure dissipation of the savings and war bonds now belonging to the average citizen.

This presents a strange paradox in our present-day economic tug-of-war. The little guy to whom an extra slice of meat, or a suit or an extra two bucks in the pay envelope means much seems to be all for continued controls of prices, whereas the big business fellow is intent upon seeing the mad scramble of the 1920s begin—and soon.

After the last war they gave me sixty bucks with my discharge. That first day I paid the sixty bucks for a twenty-two dollar suit of clothes—and that marked the end of that. Of course, some folks will come along and say, "Well, now you can't even buy a suit"; but removing controls is not the remedy. The remedy is a little good old conservative American horse sense—"just wait 'em out, boys"—"just wait 'em out"—the goods will have to appear sooner or later and the more patient you are the more certain you are that your wife will not have to wheel a dog cart loaded with money down to the store to get a loaf of bread for the kids. Just "wait 'em out."

To do what Mr. Williams asks would mean that we would again mount that spiral staircase on the way to the merry-go-round of the 1920s, when the American way of life became the paper way of life—bootblacks buying Wall Street stocks on margin and the prices of commodities and goods rising with the entry of each new customer; and let us not forget, please do not forget—that the Liberty Bonds of our great nation declined to 70 cents on the dollar. And then what happened? The boys who shouted "Open her up"—"Remove the controls", now loudly proclaimed that "the day of reckoning" had come—and when the smoke cleared away, all the bank savings were gone, all the Liberty Bonds were gone, all the earned insurance premiums were mortgaged, and a home with less than four mortgages surrounding it did not feel like home at all—and all folks had to show it was a few stock statements, some new shoes with open toes for about $20 a pair, and a couple of silk shirts with stripes.

Mr. Williams makes much use of the "BOO" strategy to fight the OPA. On three occasions in his letter he refers to "Somebody" in the OPA whose intention it is to "ignore the people" and "to ignore the Congress." If Mr. Williams knows of someone in the OPA who is indulging in activity or ideology beyond his sphere of duty prescribed by law, he should publicize it, just as Mr. Bowles mentioned the names of the lobbyists fighting tooth and nail to destroy price control.

No, Mr. Williams the little people must give this lesson in conservatism—removing the controls of the OPA and bringing about a wild stampede of buying is radicalism. The cold, non-buying, price-examining, cash-on-the-barrel-head conservative is the one who made America great—and any other course is pure radicalism.

—B. H. EIDSON.

(NOTE: Well said, but what Mr. Williams said was that OPA shouldn't be hanging on, what with a big supply of cigarettes on hand.—Eds., THE NEWS).

Fie On Russia

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

WHY are we afraid of russia? (No capital letter required there.) Why in hell should we feed her or any other nations? Have we not been suckers long enough? Sure charity begins at home. I have a wife who is a diabetic. She can not get proper diet or the food she should have—for instance whole wheat—why?

Is the Government going to allow us back on rationing again, to save and fatten up other nations so they can, when time comes, have more wars? I say the hell with them.

What will be the consequences? War and more war. If we don't look out for ourselves we will not be uneasy of what the other party is going to do, but if we give the shirts off our backs to them, it will be too bad for us, and our children to come, which we should have known long ago, by being too soft hearted.

—E. T. OSTROM.

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. Libel and obscenity will be deleted—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

Do Strikers Gain?

WASHINGTON

AS the gears of industry grind to a stop, emotions—fear, anger, hatred—reach the boiling point. It is an atmosphere in which rash and hasty action may produce consequences even more threatening than those confronting us today.

So much heat has been generated by the industrial warfare of the past six months and so little light. In his article before the United States Chamber of Commerce and in an article in the current Atlantic Monthly, Harvard's Professor Sumner H. Slichter makes more sense than anyone else on the issue of unions, collective bargaining and wages.

First, Professor Slichter tries to answer the question whether the strikes have worthwhile from the union standpoint. Certainly, he concludes, they were not worthwhile on the basis of the wage increases that were won.

Not until early in 1948 will the workers in General Motors be as well off as they would have been had they not struck and had they worked readily without any wage increase whatsoever. Not until 1953 will they be as well off as they would have been had they accepted the company's compromise offer of 13½ cents and thus ended the strike earlier.

WAGE FIGURES

According to Professor Slichter's calculations, it will be more than two years before the employees of the U. S. Steel Corporation will have made up for their refusal of the company's compromise offer of 15 cents an hour increase. Two and a half years will be required before the employees of General Electric are as well off as they would have been had they accepted the company's compromise offer of 13½ cents.

"Some people argue," says Professor Slichter, "that the time needed for wage increases to compensate for time lost and take that occurs between two organizations when they really represent the segments of an industry. Through real bargaining comes mutual understanding. Understanding means improvement in profits and wages.

There has been talk of the "case for John L. Lewis." That is untrue. There is a case for the miners—an incontrovertible case on the score of safety, pensions and so on. But Lewis has not made that case. Lewis is a man of deals. And deals do not mean bargaining for the workers.

In any democratic meaning of the phrase, there has never been collective bargaining in the coal industry. In the past when wage negotiations have been up, Lewis as boss has holed up in a big suite in a luxury hotel in New York. Finally he has made a deal with the boss of the operators.

NO GIVE & TAKE

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In part this was because of the working of the income tax carry-back provision, which compensates corporations if their profits, under certain circumstances, fall below a level fixed in the law. Under this provision, General Motors got from the Federal treasury $34,415,000.

COSTLY LESSONS

But these economic losses to workers and to companies might be justified, as Professor Slichter sees it, if the two parties were learning to bargain together. That is, if they were learning to live together in comparative harmony under the American system of free enterprise.

Government intervention is a danger. If it is repeated in strike after strike through the fact-finding technique, or whatever technique, the danger is that the pattern will be set once for all. Wage-fixing by law will be the next step. The strait jacket of Government will close around a large section of our economy.

The coal miners will have to work a long time to make up for their losses in the current strike, even though they get increases above those granted any other union. They have been out for 42 days.

Is it worthwhile? Are the two parties learning to bargain? No! John L. Lewis, up until the so-called truce, declined to bargain in any real sense. He made demands and he refused to discuss those demands.

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Samuel Grafton

Hoover And Famine

NEW YORK

THE fight over food is political. This does not mean it is political in the crude sense that Mr. Herbert Hoover is running for President, or anything of that sort. Mr. Hoover's aims are larger; he would rather that the country went right than that he were President, so to speak; and his report on food is political in the sense that it seeks to justify an ultra-conservative national course in dealing with the world famine: it seeks to lay a basis for that course, and to defend it against all comers.

Ultra-conservative opinion fears rationing more than anything else, for reasons which seem to it good and sufficient. Rationing represents national planning; it represents bureaucrats snooping about and weighing people and peering into the national dinner plate; it represents government as a steward, careful and concerned and powerful; it carries the connotation that each farm is a regulatable element in the national economy, rather than a free enterprise which can operate, even whimsically and capriciously, on its own.

THREATS TO PRICES

Rationing represents a threat to high farm prices, for, by reducing demand, it might make it possible for the Government to accumulate stocks of food without having to pay premiums to draw them off the farm. Rationing might lead to vigorous steps toward rationalizing our food production, such as Federal aid for small farmers, and reduction of non-essential crops. For all these reasons, rationing seems to ultra-conservative opinion to be unlovely and unattractive; and whether Mr. Hoover has been moved by these reasons, or by others, the plain truth is that for many weeks he has been conducting a curiously-mixed twin battle against both rationing and the world famine; and, of course, he has been losing both fights.

It is impossible to gloss over the heavy political flavor of Mr. Hoover's pronouncements. On March 21, in Paris, he said rationing was unnecessary because it would take three months to set it up, while the worst of the food crisis would be over in four months. Now, seven weeks later, he says that the food crisis will be over in five months, and that therefore rationing is still unnecessary; in other words his four-months crisis has become a seven-months crisis, but he still opposes rationing. Before he left on his world trip, Mr. Hoover declared that Secretary of Agriculture Anderson should be given more power—to raise farm prices; our leading apostle of Government economy is willing to have the Government spend more money if by that means the bogey of rationing can be headed off.

DEFICIT REDUCED

Mr. Hoover now comes home with the news that the world grain deficit has been reduced from 11,000,000 tons to only 3,600,000 tons; wonderful, good news, but it turns out that this remarkable new figure has been reached largely by reducing estimates of need. And in his Cairo speech of April 19, Mr. Hoover revealed that his "estimates are based on a starvation diet of 1500 calories, inclusive of local food supplies; i. e., that many of Europe's people will sicken and die even if they receive the total supply which Mr. Hoover proposes to send them.

Mr. Hoover's sincerity is not in question; his opposition to rationing is entirely sincere, but it seems unquestionable that it colors his view of the world. The neat figures are engraved on the prim graph lines of his mind; one reads them, and then one learns elsewhere that Vienna is starving on 867 calories a day, and that Poland is eating seed wheat, and there seems little connection between Mr. Hoover's world and the real world; and one sees again how our domestic political argument looks like a civil war on a starving planet, a strange American battle being fought out over the emaciated bodies of little foreign children.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Army Closes Secret Soviet Radio Station

WASHINGTON

THE War Department is now closing down one of the most unique wartime arrangements ever made involving another country—a Russian radio station located right inside the Pentagon Building.

Lifting of wartime secrecy now makes it possible to tell the inside story of this Russian radio transmitter.

Shortly after the USA and the USSR became allies, the Soviet Embassy complained that it was not able to communicate to Moscow. Apparently the Embassy did not trust American or British communications channels. Moreover, under the Federal Communications Act it is illegal for any foreign country to operate a radio transmitter in the United States. Receiving sets can be used, but not sending.

When this problem was placed before President Roosevelt, he decided to cut red tape—and the law—by establishing a Russian radio station right inside the War Department. Technically this was still illegal; but when located inside the Pentagon Building no one knew about the transmitter except the Army, and it was sworn to military secrecy.

Therefore the Russians were given a special section of the Pentagon Building which they alone controlled. Russian guards policed this section night and day. No American was allowed inside. A total of 70 Russian officers and men staffed this extra-territorial area. It was as if a small section of American soil were set aside, subject to Soviet jurisdiction and law.

Truman Ladies And Protocol

PROBABLY the President doesn't know too much about it, but Mrs. Truman and daughter Margaret poked a finger into the State Department the other day and tried to tell Secretary James Byrnes how he should run one phase of American diplomacy. They wanted a special friend of theirs, Stanley Woodward, appointed chief of protocol.

The man who holds this job arbitrates where visiting big-wigs, Cabinet ladies and Supreme Court Justices shall sit at official dinners. It was created about the time Dolly Gann and Alice Longworth began vying with each other as to which should precede the other at dinner; and, while the job at first was not considered important, Jimmy Dunn, the first protocol officer, proved that its close social connections could be of value when they eventually hoisted him to Assistant Secretary of State.

Secretary Byrnes had planned to appoint efficient Allan Dawson as chief of protocol, replacing retiring George T. Summerlin. In fact, Byrnes had even drafted a message to Montevideo, where Dawson is serving in the American Embassy, telling him of his appointment. But suddenly he got a call from the White House.

Presidential Secretary Matt Connelly was on the phone, saying that President Truman wanted charming Stanley Woodward to be chief of protocol.

Irked at being told who should get a relatively routine job, Byrnes asked Connelly why the President wanted Woodward. Connelly finally confessed that Margaret and Mrs. Truman had taken a fancy to him. As assistant chief of protocol, he had helped out on various White House dinners.

OPA Fight Backfires

A HOT fight is brewing inside the National Retail Dry Goods Association, which has been spearheading the anti-OPA drive. Powerful members, including the R. H. Macy Co., New York, and the City Store Chain, are out to oust President Benjamin Namm and Executive Secretary Lew Hahn as a result of their backstage lobbying in Congress, especially with Congressman Fred Hartley of New Jersey.

The story goes back several months to an NRDGA meeting in which the entire question of OPA was discussed. Namm, head of a Brooklyn department store, and Kahn argued for a strong drive against the price agency, while a powerful bloc within the association favored the price control principle but wanted administrative OPA changes.

Finally a compromise was reached, with Namm and Kahn given the green light to go ahead with a drive for changes in the pricing administration to wipe out "inequities."

Emanuel is also a power in Republic Steel, the Aviation Corporation of America and the National Association of Manufacturers—which has been calling for the abolition of OPA. Friends say that it was Emanuel who finally convinced Hamm that the National Retail Dry Goods Association should get behind the NAM drive.

Because of the membership vote, Namm never quite dared call for the complete abolition of OPA, but he did inform NRDGA supporters behind a number of amendments which, in their practical effect, mean the end of OPA.

Public Relations Link

In addition, he hired the Hill & Knowlton Public Relations Agency to plan the NRDGA campaign. It is significant that Hill & Knowlton also handle public relations for Aviation Corporation and Republic Steel, two of the Emanuel enterprises.

The campaign was extensively successful in the House—in fact, too successful. Pressure from the buying public on NRDGA members became heavy enough to worry them. In addition, the moderates such as Macy's, Neiman-Marcus in Dallas, and Jelleff's in Washington, remember all too well what happened after the last war.

As a result even Namm and Hahn are now worried by the Frankenstein monster they helped build—the House OPA Bill, and Congressman Hartley of New Jersey, their chief spokesman in Congress, has begun to change his tune.