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The Impasse In Housing

It has been estimated that by the first of the year more than 6,000,000 families will be doubled up in one-family dwellings, in-laws piled on in-laws in most cases. Another 10,000,000 families will be existing in sub-standard dwellings — dilapidated houses, abandoned storebuildings, trailers, etc. This is the general outline of the American housing problem. Our failure to meet it is written in figures such as those on file at the office of the Charlotte Building Inspector — only 82 dwellings of all types completed here in the first six months of 1946.

The need for permanent housing in the United States is generally fixed by all concerned at something like 15,000,000 new units, enough to keep every contractor and FHA busy for a decade. Moreover, past performance by FHA, and the very nature of its limited authority, guarantee against any serious overlapping since the FHA operates only in economic areas where private building is unprofitable. It may be true, as the Home Builders claim, that FHA is stockpiling critical materials and withholding them from private channels. But it is also true that the end of OPA is bound to increase building costs temporarily at least, until private low-cost housing of the type so desperately needed, will be out of the question.

The housing shortage is an emergency, the most critical of all our domestic problems. Building to meet the needs of the millions of homeless veterans and displaced civilians cannot be delayed on the basis of the unsupported promise of private builders that they will some day be able to provide all the houses the country needs. No contractor today can undertake the construction of adequate houses designed to sell for less than \$5,000 or to rent for less than \$25 a month, nor could he ever, except in periods of general depression when building costs were abnormally low.

The plain truth is that both Government and the private building industry have failed to meet their joint obligation in the months since the war ended. The running battle between them is the direct cause. Many Government regulations were unreasonable, some even punitive. But throughout the industry there has been a deliberate refusal to submit to any Federal control, and the result showed in the notorious building materials black market, which could only have operated through normal channels of supply.

The tragedy of this running battle is that there is not now any true competition between FHA and the private builders, nor is there likely to be for many years to come. The conflict has now spilled over into the field of veterans' housing. The Charlotte Home Builders Association, as part of a program sponsored by their national organization, recently charged that the FHA is "deliberately misrepresenting private building's ability to provide veterans' housing." The immediate target of their wrath was Robert S. Ellender, one of the editors of The Chicago Sun, who recently published a book supporting public housing, in particular the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Bill, and arguing that the traditional opposition of contractors and building trades unions to modern building practices makes Federal action imperative.

It's A Pretty Fix, Indeed

It is probably bad grace for a newspaper which has consistently criticized Mecklenburg court officials for their casual handling of witnesses in criminal cases to reverse itself now and complain because a potential, or perhaps possible is a better term, witness is being held in jail by the State. But it seems to us the detention of Tommy Braswell, key witness in the Stacks case, isn't satisfactorily explained by Solicitor Whitener's statement:

I had information that he was arranging to remove himself from the jurisdiction of this court and for that reason the bench would be rather loath to arbitrarily release him now and then maybe find that he has departed for parts unknown. Then suppose that by chance the Supreme Court ordered a new trial of the Stacks murder case. Wouldn't things be a pretty fix, indeed. But what if, by chance, the Supreme Court doesn't order a new trial in the Stacks case? Then the State will have held in custody for something like six months a man against whom it has preferred no charge. That, we would say, is a rather pretty fix in itself.

There are many strange ramifications of the Braswell detention. There were im-

lications of perjury in the Stacks trial, and Braswell's testimony had some odd gaps in it. But the State has lodged no charge of perjury against its witness. The police records show that Braswell entered jail voluntarily, apparently after he had been threatened by parties unknown, some two months ago. But if he is there on a voluntary basis why did the Solicitor place him under bond as a material witness? And why was the bond set at \$5,000, a figure which even the Solicitor regards as unusually high?

We have no doubt Mr. Whitener has acted in good faith, and possibly on the basis of perjury information he has not seen fit to divulge. Certainly jailing a material witness would be understandable if trial were pending. What makes this case so odd is that the trial has already ended, while only an appeal to the Supreme Court, undertaken by the defense, is pending. Braswell is being held in custody on the chance that the Supreme Court will order a new trial, which seems, on the surface, pretty thin justification.

Our original suggestion was that the grand jury might very well look into this unusual court business. It still seems like a good idea.

The Degeneration Of Democracy

WE HAVE noted for some time that department stores, when boasting in print that they are offering for sale scarce items, append a note in small type warning their customers that mail and phone orders will not be accepted. This is understandable, an entirely democratic, no-favorites process. But one of the New York stores has now embellished the usual notice; in large type it proclaims: "No mail orders. No phone orders. Just run right up to our fifth floor and get in line."

It is difficult to criticize such apparent honesty, but we must confess that we view this blunt invitation to stand and wait with some misgivings. Apparently the American people are so conditioned by the American people so that their traditional distaste for line-standing has vanished. Surely this is a symptom of the degeneration of our democracy.

If there is to be a buyers' strike let it begin here. There is no time to lose. The world we are convinced, will end not with a bang, not with a whimper, but when all its inhabitants are finally standing, patient and dull-eyed, in line.

Under the Russian savant's plan for lengthening the life span to 150 years, we'd be our own posterity; and it would serve us right.

In this latest role of book agent, we are to understand the ex-head of American Commies, Earl Browder, is turning over new leaves? The need is suggested for a pseudonym for Robert, the latest of the alleged Jacksons—something between "Stonewall" and "Shoelace Joe."



People's Platform 'We Didn't Know The Truth...'

(NOTE: Some years before the war a Charlotte girl, married to an Englishman and living in the United States, toured the continent with her husband. They became friendly with a young German, or as friendly as his fanatical devotion to the cause of Adolf Hitler permitted, and until World War II interrupted it they maintained a regular correspondence. The Englishman fought for his country; so did the German. Here is the letter that renewed the contact after seven years.—Eds., The News.)

WEBSRUENDE, GERMANY YEARS ago, in September, 1939, I received your letter. There's been a long and terrible war in the meantime. What happened to you and your family? I suppose you are still alive along with your people and I hope all of you are in good health. This war wasn't necessary, was it? Well, it happened anyway and we can't alter it. Fact is that our people are not happy. We don't keep it probably the best way for all of us. The Germans didn't know what happened in their own country in those last 42 years of their life. Hitler and his gang made a hell of a country out of Germany, which is completely destroyed now, those men did it. They were not in the last days of the war. They led us in this hell of a way we are in now. The Germans are starving in a big way. You can't buy anything, no clothes, no shoes, no cigarettes, no books and no food, nothing at all. The German towns are destroyed, in many cases completely. Sometimes 2 and 3 families are living in but one room which is their living room as well as their kitchen or bedroom. Westermunde is damaged about 80 per cent. Our inhabitants are still here, except those who died in the night of the air raids. But in addition to this nearly 10,000 American soldiers are living here; of course they got the undamaged houses and flats, so the civilians are living in cellars, small wooden houses erected in the outskirts or even still among the ruins with no roof above them. There is no material at all to get. The houses built up again. There is no gas or coal or even firewood to prepare food or heat the living rooms. There is no material at all to keep the rain off, there isn't even any water in some parts of the town. That's but a small amount of those who are being held in the black market where you can buy everything you want for immense prices. Murderers, crooks, and thieves are busy in the black market where you are safe, your life always in danger. You see, Herbert, that's what the Nazis made out of you. You've been here, you saw marvelous spots of our country, the valley of the lower Rhine. Nowadays you wouldn't even recognize these places you visited in peacetime.

The German people are guilty insofar as we didn't stop the Nazis, but let them do all their horrible and wicked things. The German propaganda was well organized, to protect all the people full of cruelty and terror. We only saw your bombing raids, your night-bombing, your dropping of bombs in the towns and villages, killing many thousands of women and children and we didn't know that things happened amongst our own people, more terrible and bloody, cruelly committed by men and women of our own blood and race. And now we've to suffer for what we have done.

Let the judge sentence the speeder to say, thirty or sixty days with a governor on his car, the governor so adjusted as to prevent him from exceeding a speed of 45 miles an hour. After about thirty or sixty days of driving at this speed on the State highway, the character of the driver usually forms the habit of driving at this speed, and no faster. Then, though the governor be removed, at the end of the term, entrance, the habit persists. An official seal of the type used on boxcars should be affixed to the governor. If at the end of the time the driver is released, the seal should be removed, with the character could be gaged for non-compliance with court order, which could very easily run into more money than the average, or even sub-average, citizen could afford to pay. If the habit-formation idea doesn't work, there is recourse to suspension of license and compulsory non-use of private automobile. Or the salt mine.

Governors For Speeders CHARLOTTE Editors, The News: THE death rate due to auto accidents on North Carolina highways is rising steadily. And excessive speed is the fundamental cause of highway accidents. The customary treatment for speeders—for those who actually show up in court—is a fine and a lecture. In these days of loose money, a fine for speeders does practically nothing toward curing the sin. It only creates a certain amount of annoyance and produces from the speeder some hasty remarks concerning the cop who arrested him. Here is a substitute penalty, which would have constructive effects based on the principle of habit formation: Let the judge sentence the speeder to say, thirty or sixty days with a governor on his car, the governor so adjusted as to prevent him from exceeding a speed of 45 miles an hour. After about thirty or sixty days of driving at this speed on the State highway, the character of the driver usually forms the habit of driving at this speed, and no faster. Then, though the governor be removed, at the end of the term, entrance, the habit persists. An official seal of the type used on boxcars should be affixed to the governor. If at the end of the time the driver is released, the seal should be removed, with the character could be gaged for non-compliance with court order, which could very easily run into more money than the average, or even sub-average, citizen could afford to pay. If the habit-formation idea doesn't work, there is recourse to suspension of license and compulsory non-use of private automobile. Or the salt mine.

—W. E. LINDAU

Drew Pearson's Chaplains Irate Over a Substitution Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON ADMIRAL Nimitz is trying to hush it up, but a hot row has broken out in the Navy's chaplain division over alleged discrimination against chaplains with combat records, some of whom have been denied admission into the regular Navy and others transferred to minor posts. Four well-known chaplains already have resigned as a result of the dispute. They are: Capt. Raymond E. Egan, a Catholic, former chaplain of the battle-scarred airplane carrier Enterprise. In addition to the claim of combat chaplains that they are being relegated to minor posts, their non-combat colleagues get the top commands, many are also over the Navy's failure to crack down on prostitution in Japan. A number of Protestant chaplains who served in the Pacific contend that the Navy is abetting the growth of prostitution in Tokyo by an indifferent policy in regard to the "Yokohama Club." These chaplains further charge that those who have fought prostitution in Tokyo have been disciplined for their efforts—many of them transferred from Tokyo to Guam after speaking out about the salaha houses. Commander Cook soon will resign and his resignation probably will be followed by that of another well-known combat chaplain, Capt. Maurice Sheehy of Washington, D. C., a Naval reservist with five battle stars, who served on the Saratoga. Jim Farley's Feud INSIDE reason why Speaker Sam Rayburn took the unprecedented step of removing the names of two members of the House of Representatives from the Congressional Record was Jim Farley. The former Democratic chairman, who doesn't want Senator Jim Eastland, Governor of New York, to have his friends working overtime for him. Farley has been sending newspaper articles to Congressional friends for insertion in the Congressional Record. Some of the articles are so long that they have to be reprinted and mailed in franked envelopes to New York voters. Last month, Farley's material for the Record became stronger. Insertions were made and even insulting to Senator Reed were made by Representatives Douglas and Weaver of North Carolina. One of the records was by Senator Boykin, now seeking the nomination for Governor Post of that state, would doubtless resent outside interference in his political life, but he didn't seem to mind interfering with New York. The Boykin piece, written by reactionary George Sokolsky, a plant politician who waxes more and more "right-wing" as the year goes by. It's a nasty campaign Farley is carrying on—kind of, though they don't know it, the nation's taxpayers are helping to pay for it. Note—There will be no mailing of the article put in the

WASHINGTON TWO senate politicians from Kentucky are responsible for working out the "compromise" OPA bill, at least as far as the Truman Administration. The formula came from OPA chief Chester Bowles, who was formerly Leader Alben Barkley that in this way it would be possible to have a bill that would be workable for price control. Barkley had in fact agreed to restoration of the Taft amendments to the OPA bill, modified that its author, the persistent Senator from Ohio, was willing to accept the compromise. Passage of such a bill would have put the President in an extremely embarrassing position. If he had signed it, Taft could have claimed a victory and the public would have wondered why it had been rejected in the first place. A second vote would have seen a severe blow to Barkley's position in the Senate. SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT The Kentucky compromise, as worked out between Porter and Barkley, is a slight improvement over the measure voted by Truman. It is minus the worst feature of the Taft amendments which would have forced price up, even when there was no justification for price increases. Barkley is in a dead earnest when he says it's absolutely the best that can be got out of the Senate. The long debate over the compromise, he referred nearby once or twice to his desire to resign as majority leader.

The revised bill as reported out by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee contains most of the amendments that Chester Bowles denounces as to why it should not be assigned as economic stabilizer. It divides authority between the Federal Administration and the Secretary of Agriculture, which would make enforcement of the law difficult. It abolishes OPA's Maximum Average Price plan, intended to encourage manufacture of low-cost commodities. But the auto and appliance dealers must be allowed their full pre-war discounts.

PHOTO production is at an all-time high, yet the Taft and Wherry talks about "incentives" to get more production. And milk cows are being slaughtered. Wherry talks about "incentives" to get more production. And milk cows are being slaughtered. Wherry talks about "incentives" to get more production. And milk cows are being slaughtered.

REMEMBER THAT AD? We are notoriously forgetful, but some of us will not soon forget that advertisement of the NAM which said "Would you like some butter or a roast of beef?" and then blamed the OPA for scarcity of the beef today. If we have the price.

Peter Edson Science Shenanigans

WASHINGTON THE political wire-pulling that is a science research bill passed by the Senate on July 6, has taken a new twist with the introduction of still another measure sponsored by Rep. Mahon of Arkansas. This is the sixth science bill to appear in Congress since the passage of the Mahon atomic energy bill nor the Mitchell air policy bill nor another half dozen assorted military research bills. But the Thermanians behind this Mills bill are worthy of Opa and John Birch. In the beginning, early in the war, the only law-maker who gave a word of support to the science was Senator Harley M. Kilgore of West Virginia. He introduced the original bill which was a Science Foundation bill, but nobody paid any attention. Then, last July, Dr. Vannevar Bush, head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, launched a blue-covered report called "Science: The Endless Frontier." That stirred up a little more enthusiasm.

RARE COINCIDENCE By rare political coincidence, Senator Warren G. Magnuson of Washington and Congressman Mills immediately introduced identical bills to put into effect all the recommendations of the Bush report. Senators Byrd of Virginia and Fulbright of Arkansas and Congressman Edson of Kentucky also introduced bills to give science a push. The reasons for these changes are fairly obvious. The exact, or physical, scientists have no use for the social sciences. The Eastern universities in the smaller states are largely supported by endowments and are not dependent on Government-financed research. In general, they are against public ownership of patents. Any new discoveries they make, even if the research is paid for by Government money, they want to keep and profit from themselves.

Record by lame-duck Representative Zebulon Weaver of North Carolina. Weaver has told friends he did not want to make the insertion and that he would like to see the bill passed. He said also that he would have refused even then had he read the article carefully. He says he definitely will not permit the making of reprisals. Senator O'Daniel's Son HERE are some of the details of how Senator O'Daniel's son, Mike, tried to oust Wesley Brent, just returned from the "Red" front. Learning that Mike O'Daniel had rented the rent-another apartment in the building 33 a month, Brent went to O'Daniel and told him that he was "quite reasonable." "Oh, that doesn't apply to you," O'Daniel replied coldly. "Your rent will be fifty dollars a month." An argument ensued during which the war vet told the son of the Texas Senator. "I hope the people wake up and chase your father out of the building," Brent said. "I will personally contribute to the next campaign against him." "There isn't much you can do," shot back young O'Daniel. "Write in the driver's seat now. Don't you think we know how to drive? We've been driving for years."

"I'm sure you did," Brent replied. "In fact, you probably had some advance information." Brent received his situation order by registered mail. Note—Brent's family was the oldest tenant in O'Daniel's building. Brent himself was back from the Pacific July 13 last when he reached his home.